



## MEDIA RELEASE

### BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation Drafts Safe Driving Policy for B.C. Businesses

**Burnaby, B.C. / January 18, 2010** – The BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation is pleased with the provincial government’s introduction of new legislation prohibiting the use of cell phone and other electronic handheld devices while driving a vehicle.

“Cell phones have made getting a hold of someone almost instantaneous,” says Allan Lamb, executive director of the BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation. “The luxury of instant communication is being abused by drivers, in some cases with deadly results, and legislation like this will hopefully save lives.”

Recognizing the danger and the cost to companies when employees are injured due to traffic crashes, the BCAA Traffic Safety has drafted an employer’s policy for cell phone and texting use.

On their website, the foundation has posted a template and guidelines to help businesses, large and small, develop a safe driving policy for their employees.

“This policy is intended for use by companies and organizations whose employees drive as part of their job description,” explained Lamb. “There are many businesses in this province that operate fleets of vehicles and they will need to address the new legislation with their employees.”

For most of us using a personal communication device has become part of our daily lives. We use them for professional and personal use. We use them most when we are trying to do something else, including driving, and that is when multi-tasking can be deadly.

Driver distraction is one of the major contributing factors in collisions in B.C. (ICBC Traffic Collision Stats 2007) and many drivers use cell phones and BlackBerrys to get work done while commuting to and from work, driving to meetings and appointments, or making deliveries.

The law, which came into effect January 1, 2010, prohibits drivers from:

- Operating or holding hand-held cell phones or other electronic devices.
- Sending or reading emails and/or texting (e.g., BlackBerry, PDA, cellphone).
- Operating or holding hand-held music or portable gaming devices (e.g., MP3 players, iPods).
- Manually programming or adjusting GPS systems, whether built into the vehicle or not, while driving. Settings must be programmed before driving.

Only hands-free cell phones and devices that require one touch to activate will be permitted.

Drivers in the Graduated Licensing Program are prohibited from using all prescribed devices including hands-free cell phones.

A new fine in the amount of \$167 will begin to be levied on February 1, 2010. If drivers are caught texting or emailing they will receive an additional three penalty points. Drivers in the GLP will also receive the \$167 fine and three penalty points for any violation of this legislation.

These changes bring British Columbia in line with the provinces of Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland. Alberta recently announced that it intends to introduce similar distracted driving legislation this fall.

For more information about the BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation's Safe Driving Policy visit the "Hot Topics" section on their website at [www.BCAATSF.ca](http://www.BCAATSF.ca).

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#### **About BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation**

The BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation is a non-profit registered charity working with families, communities and business partners to reduce the number and severity of traffic crashes and injuries in B.C. For more information visit [www.BCAATSF.ca](http://www.BCAATSF.ca) or call 604-298-5107.

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