

MAKING THE MALAHAT SAFER

NO SERIOUS CRASHES OR INJURIES IN TWO WEEKS

July 2, 2007 -- Two weeks of stepped-up enforcement and publicity has resulted in a big reduction in speeding on the Malahat, a significant increase in seatbelt use, and most importantly, no serious crashes.

During the two-week campaign coordinated by the CRD Traffic Safety Commission, only two minor wet-weather collisions occurred on the Malahat, neither of which resulted in anyone being hospitalized. Emergency agencies say there are usually several injury crashes a week on that 25km stretch of the Trans-Canada Highway.

Speeds: Using handheld laser radar units, speeds of several hundred northbound and southbound vehicles have been regularly measured at different locations.

The percentage of drivers going more than 10kph over the limit dropped from 91% before the campaign to 18%, while drivers going more than 30kph over the limit dropped from 19% before the campaign to 1%. The most dangerous speeders – those going more than 40kph over, which garners a \$483 fine for excessive speeding – dropped from 8% to almost none (2/900), with none clocked going +60kph over.

<u>Speeds *</u>	<u>Before campaign</u>	<u>Week 1</u>	<u>Campaign end</u>	<u>Fine</u>
+10kph over	91%	48%	18%	
+20kph over	36%	9%	4%	\$138
+30kph over	19%	2%	1%	\$196
+40kph over	8%	1%	<1% ¹	\$368
+60kph over	½%	0/300	0/900	\$483

* No significant change in speeds was detected at night compared to daytime speeds, but speeds were noticeably higher on weekends. ¹ Vehicles going more than 40kph over the limit included a Greyhound bus heading for Nanaimo, which was clocked going 130kph at dusk on June 30.

Seatbelts: Using a video-camera set-up on the highway median at the northern and southern ends of the Malahat, of drivers and passengers who could be clearly seen, fewer than 4% are still not wearing seatbelts. That compares to 11-20% unbelted before the campaign began. Not wearing a seatbelt now fetches a \$167 fine.

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Anecdotal observations:

- Many drivers told us during the campaign that they no longer felt “intimidated” into speeding by tailgating drivers on single lane sections of the Malahat.
- By the second week of the campaign, officers often had to wait up to 10 minutes before they could find a vehicle doing more than 20kph over the posted limit.
- At least a half-dozen drivers who resumed speeding after being ticketed, were ticketed again farther along the Malahat, and at least two drivers admitted to having been ticketed three times in the space of an hour. One was going 48kph over the speed limit.
- While speeding generated the most tickets, officers and inspectors took numerous drivers and vehicles off the road for other reasons, including impairment by drugs, alcohol or fatigue, no insurance, driving while prohibited, and unsafe loads or vehicles. At night, 1 in 3 drivers and vehicles stopped for speeding had other infractions.

The CRD Traffic Safety Commission will now review the results and prepare a list of recommendations which will be presented shortly to the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, and to the Ministry of Transportation.

Among the draft recommendations under discussion by the Commission are to:

- Create a dedicated Road Safety Unit for the Malahat, so there can be constant multiple enforcement points targeting not just speeding, but also other dangerous driving habits as well as unsafe vehicles.
- Implement ongoing public awareness campaigns to make drivers aware of the dangers, the likelihood of being caught, and the consequences.
- Extend median barriers – leaving frequent small gaps for emergency vehicles.
- Publicize the technical rationale for the speed limits being what they are on each section of the Malahat.

Note: please stress in any reporting of the above that these are merely draft recommendations which have yet to be discussed by the full CRD Traffic Safety Commission, and may, or may not, end up being submitted to the Province.

To provide feedback on the campaign, a feedback link has been created on the home-page of the CRD Traffic Safety Commission website, which is www.traffic-safety.ca

For more information, or to schedule interviews, please contact:

Chris Foord
Co-Chair
CRD Traffic Safety Commission
cell: (250) 896-2144
email: ChrisFoord@shaw.ca

Alan Perry
Malahat Project Coordinator
CRD Traffic Safety Commission
cell: (250) 883-1103
email: AlanPerry1070@hotmail.com

