
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2014TRAN0042-000903
July 2, 2014

Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure

Actions to improve safety on B.C.'s rural highways

KAMLOOPS – As a result of the provincewide Rural Highway Safety and Speed Review, changes that will help improve safety and mobility are coming to B.C.'s rural highways.

This review was undertaken to assess four key aspects of road safety on rural highways, including the setting of appropriate speed limits, requirements for winter tires, keep right except to pass, and wildlife collisions.

SPEED LIMITS:

For the Speed Limit portion of the review, the ministry assessed approximately 9,100 kilometres of rural provincial highway. The ministry will take the following actions:

- Adjust the speed limit on 35 sections of highway covering 1,300 kilometres (approximately 15% of the length of highway reviewed).
- Introduce a new maximum speed of 120 km/h on certain sections of divided multi-lane highways.
- Pilot variable speed zones on sections of the Trans-Canada, Coquihalla and Sea-to-Sky highways.
- Commit to ongoing monitoring and evaluation of speed limits and safety measures with the Road Safety Executive Steering Committee.
- Work to improve the way that data critical to identifying trends in highway safety is shared among all Road Safety Executive Steering Committee members.

WINTER TIRES:

As a result of technical analysis in the Winter Tire portion of the review, the ministry will take the following actions:

- Bring forward changes to the Motor Vehicle Act to clarify that Mud and Snow (M+S) and mountain/snowflake tires are defined as winter tires.
- Modernize the studded tire and chain regulations.
- Change the dates winter tires are required on high mountain passes to the new timeframe of October 1 to March 31 (was October 1 to April 30).
- Install new winter tire signs to clarify the requirements.
- The ministry will extend additional resources as it continues to work with its road safety partners to promote the 'Shift into Winter' campaign, which reminds motorists to prepare their vehicles, 'know before they go,' and to drive to road conditions.

KEEP RIGHT EXCEPT TO PASS:

The ministry will take the following actions following the Slow-Moving Vehicle portion of the safety review:

- Bring forward changes to the Motor Vehicle Act to give police better tools, through clearer language, to enforce the requirement for slower vehicles to keep right.
- Adopt new signage and pavement markings to increase voluntary compliance of 'keep right' requirements.
- Pilot signage on Highway 4 advising motorists with more than five vehicles following to pull over.

WILDLIFE COLLISIONS:

Through the technical analysis as part of the Wildlife Safety review, measures have been identified that can further improve safety on corridors with higher instances of wildlife collisions. The ministry will take the following actions:

- Pilot two active wildlife detection systems on Highway 3 between Cranbrook and Sparwood.
- Install gateway signs at the entrance to highway corridors with higher instances of wildlife collisions.
- Increase the use of flashing LED warning signs in high crash locations.
- Increase the use of wildlife fencing in high crash locations.
- Additionally, the ministry will continue to monitor wildlife incidents, identify high-risk sections, and implement further measures such as required.

Safety of motorists on provincial highways remains a number one priority. The Province will continue to closely monitor safety on all provincial highways and is committed to the ongoing evaluation and monitoring of speed limits and safety measures, working closely with the road safety community through the Road Safety Executive Steering Committee.

This committee includes the ministry as well as health professionals such as the Provincial Health Officer and the Chief Coroner, the RCMP and local law enforcement, ICBC, WorkSafeBC, and RoadSafetyBC. The Province will also work to improve the way that data critical to identifying trends in highway safety is shared among all committee members.

The number of serious crashes on provincial highways has decreased by 28% since 2003. This is the direct result of targeted and strategic enforcement, driver education, improved vehicle technology, and increased penalties.

Also contributing to this reduction in serious crashes is the government of B.C.'s investment of nearly \$14 billion into highway infrastructure since 2003. This investment includes the addition of:

- 6,500 kilometres of rumble strips,
- 80 intersection improvements, many on high-crash locations identified by ICBC,
- 180 kilometres of new four-lane and six-lane highway,
- 30 new passing lanes,
- 28 new roundabouts, and
- 15 active warning sign systems, including vehicle activated warning signs, LED directional arrows, congestion signs and message signs connected to weather stations.

Public consultation for the Rural Highway Safety and Speed Review took place from Nov. 29, 2013 to Jan. 24, 2014. Concurrently, the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure conducted technical work, including research from other jurisdictions, and an engineering

assessment of the speed, safety, design and land use for all of the individual highway segments identified for speed increases.

Public input and information gained through the technical review was used to identify and prioritize these highway and safety improvements.

The speed limit increases are supported by an engineering assessment of each section and are approved by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure's Chief Engineer. Speed limits are the maximum speed for ideal conditions. Drivers are reminded to check DriveBC before leaving home and to reduce speed in inclement weather or poor road conditions.

Quote:

Transportation and Infrastructure Minister Todd Stone –

“Safety on our highways is our number one priority, and is the foundation for every decision that has resulted from this review. The actions we’re taking were the subject of a thorough technical review by our engineers, and the ministry is committed to ongoing monitoring and evaluation of speed limits and other highway safety measures.”

Learn More:

The Rural Highway Safety and Speed Review Technical Summary Report and the Consultation and Engagement Summary Report are available online.

Technical Summary Report:

www.th.gov.bc.ca/publications/reports_and_studies/RuralHwySafetySpeed/Rural_Hwy_Safety-Speed_Review_technical.pdf

Consultation and Engagement Summary Report:

www.th.gov.bc.ca/publications/reports_and_studies/RuralHwySafetySpeed/Rural_Hwy_Safety-Speed_Review_engagement.pdf

High-resolution images of the new provincial highway signage:

Keep right, let others pass: <http://ow.ly/yrx6T>

Winter tire usage: <http://ow.ly/yrx0Y>

Highway 4 pilot – slow traffic delaying 5 vehicles use pullout: <http://ow.ly/yrwWF>

Wildlife corridor: <http://ow.ly/yrwEU>

Maximum 120 km/h: <http://ow.ly/yrwSL>

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BACKGROUND

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Speed limit changes to rural provincial highways

Speed limits will be adjusted on approximately 1,300 kilometres of provincial highway. This is approximately 15% of the over 9,100 kilometres of provincial highway reviewed during this process. The majority of recommended increases are limited to an additional 10 km/hr.

Unless otherwise noted, new speed limits will be phased in over the summer.

Fraser Valley and Fraser Canyon:

Highway 1 Whatcom Road (Exit 95) to junction with Highway 3 (74 km)

New speed limit: 110 **(in effect today)**

Previous speed limit: 100

Highway 1 East of Lake of the Woods Rest Area to Boston Bar (55 km)

Current speed limit: 80, 90

New speed limit: 100

Highway 1 Boston Bar to Falls Creek (24 km)

Current speed limit: 90

New speed limit: 100

Highway 7 Vehicle pull-out west of Haig Scale, Agassiz to Highway 1 junction, Hope (5 km)

Current speed limit: 90, 100

New speed limit: 100

Sea to Sky:

Highway 99 Eagle Ridge Interchange, Horseshoe Bay to south of the Stawamus River Bridge near Squamish (35 km)

Current speed limit: 80

New speed limit: 90

Highway 99 North of Depot Road, Squamish to Function Junction, Whistler (45 km)

Current speed limit: 80, 90

New speed limit: 100

Highway 99 South of Whistler Heliport Road to Pemberton Boundary (21 km)

Current speed limit: 80

New speed limit: 90

Highway 99 East of Lillooet near the Pavilion Lime Plant to the Highway 97 junction (22 km)

Current speed limit: 90

New speed limit: 100

Vancouver Island:

Highway 1 Three 80 km/h sections between Bench Road, Cowichan Bay and Beck Road, north of the Nanaimo Airport (totalling 10 km)

Current speed limit: 80, 90

New speed limit: 90

Highway 19 Parksville to south of Willis Road, Campbell River (114 km)

Current speed limit: 110

New speed limit: 120

Highway 19 Duncan Bay Road to Menzies Road, Campbell River (4 km)

Current speed limit: 80

New speed limit: 90

Highway 19 Campbell River to Sullivan Road, Sayward (44 km)

Current speed limit: 90

New speed limit: 100

Highway 19 North of Campbell Way, Port McNeill to Douglas Street, Port Hardy (35 km)

Current speed limit: 80, 90

New speed limit: 100

Southern Interior:

Highway 1 Six Mile Rest Area near Tobiano to Savona (12 km)

Current speed limit: 90

New speed limit: 100

Highway 1 Chase to Hilltop Road, East of Sorrento (25 km, excluding 60 km/h section through Sorrento)

Current speed limit: 90

New speed limit: 100

Highway 1 Canoe (near Salmon Arm) to Highway 23 South, Revelstoke (58 km, excluding 60 km/h section through Sicamous)

Current speed limit: 90, 100

New speed limit: 100

Highway 1 Highway 23 North, Revelstoke to Anderson Road, Golden (101 km excluding parks)

Current speed limit: 90

New speed limit: 100

Highway 3 Start of Highway 3 (Exit 170) to junction with Highway 5 Coquihalla (7 km)

Current speed limit: 100

New speed limit: 110

Highway 3 Sunshine Valley to Manning Park East Boundary (33 km)

Current speed limit: 80, 90

New speed limit: 100

Highway 3 Sunday Summit to Whipsaw Creek, west of Princeton (22 km)

Current speed limit: 80

New speed limit: 90

Highway 5 Hope (Exit 177) to Othello Road (4 km)

New speed limit: 110 **(in effect today)**

Previous speed limit: 100

Highway 5 Othello Road, near Hope to Highway 1 junction, near Kamloops (200 km)

New speed limit: 120 **(in effect today)**

Previous speed limit: 110

Highway 5 Heffley to Little Fort (67 km, excluding 60 km/h section through Barriere)

Current speed limit: 90

New speed limit: 100

Highway 5A Old Hedley Road, north of Princeton to Highway 97C junction (36 km, excluding 70 km/h section through Aspen Grove)

Current speed limit: 80

New speed limit: 90

Highway 6 New Denver to Purdy Road, north of Hills (15 km, excluding 70 km/h section through Hills)

Current speed limit: 80

New speed limit: 90

Highway 6 Purdy Road, Hills to Upper Brouse Road, Nakusp (22 km)

Current speed limit: 90

New speed limit: 100

Highway 33 South of Gallagher Road to McCulloch Road (32 km)

Current speed limit: 90

New speed limit: 100

Highway 33 North of Highway 3 junction, Rock Creek to Westbridge (12 km)

Current speed limit: 90

New speed limit: 100

Highway 97 North of Willow Drive, 70 Mile House to BCR Overpass, 100 Mile House (37 km)

Current speed limit: 100

New speed limit: 110

Highway 97 Gatzke Road, north of Oyama to College Way, south of Vernon (16 km)

Current speed limit: 90

New speed limit: 100 – Pending completion of engineering assessment to determine if median barriers are required before implementation of the new speed limit.

Highway 97 Highway 97A junction near Swan Lake to Westside Road (6 km)

Current speed limit: 80

New speed limit: 90

Highway 97A north of Smith Drive, Armstrong to Highway 97B junction, Enderby (18 km excluding 50 km/h section through Enderby)

Current speed limit: 90

New speed limit: 100

Highway 97A Highway 97B junction, near Grindrod to Sicamous (33 km, excluding 50 km/h section through Grindrod)

Current speed limit: 80

New speed limit: 90

Highway 97C Merritt to Aspen Grove (22 km)

Current speed limit: 100

New speed limit: 110

Highway 97C Aspen Grove to Drought Hill Interchange, Peachland (78 km)

New speed limit: 120 **(in effect today)**

Previous speed limit: 110

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Consultation informs improvements to highway safety

Speed limit review:

The majority of participants in the southern part of the province support increasing speed limits.

- 56% in Central B.C.
- 72% in the Okanagan
- 61% in the Southern Interior
- 81% in the Lower Mainland
- 55% on Vancouver Island

For the Coquihalla/Trans-Canada Highway corridor, 70% supported a speed increase.

Participants in the Northern region were more divided on speed limits.

- 52% of participants indicated they would prefer no change to speed limits.
- 42% of participants indicated that speed limits should increase.

Winter Tire review:

68% of participants in the public consultation indicated they change their tires for winter driving, and 63% use tires with the mountain/snowflake symbol. As well, the ministry's technical analysis has determined that studded tire and chain regulations are out of date.

Slow-moving vehicles review:

Public consultation found that people were generally divided across all regions on the degree that slower-moving vehicles were a safety concern. The exception was Highway 4 from Parksville to Tofino, for which 70% of respondents expressed a safety concern with slower-moving vehicles.

Wildlife review:

Participants in the public consultation did not often find wildlife to be a concern in the South Coast and Southern Interior. Participants in the central and northern parts of the province felt more likely to find wildlife to be a safety concern.

The ministry's data on reported wildlife accidents indicates that collisions involving wildlife are prevalent and identifies a number of higher risk areas.

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