
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

320 MORE COP CAMS TO CATCH DRUNK, DANGEROUS DRIVERS

NEW WESTMINSTER – The Province will spend \$1.8 million to more than triple the number of in-car police cameras across B.C. to back more impaired and dangerous driving charges with indisputable evidence, Solicitor General John van Dongen announced today.

“We’ve all seen on TV the kind of footage these cameras gather: impaired drivers falling out of their vehicles, trying to flee on foot or even assaulting police officers who’ve just pulled them over,” said van Dongen. “This footage is irrefutable, puts judges at the scene of a crime, saves police paperwork and court time, and leads to more guilty pleas and convictions.”

The new cameras will bring to approximately 450 the number of patrol-car cameras across B.C., with 260 new units to be installed in RCMP traffic-duty vehicles and 60 in vehicles used by the Province’s 11 independent municipal police departments to promote road safety. Last April, the ministry funded the purchase and installation of 33 in-car cameras for use by independent departments, complementing the approximately 100 then in use by RCMP Traffic Services and Integrated Road Safety Units.

“Impaired driving alone continues to kill or injure about 3,300 people in B.C. every year,” said Supt. Norm Gaumont of RCMP B.C. Traffic Services. “Solid evidence like car-cam footage leads to convictions and, in turn, more consequences than ever for impaired and dangerous drivers – including mandatory use of an ignition interlock device after a single alcohol-related driving conviction.”

Research also shows in-car cameras make police work safer, more efficient and more accountable, by:

- Documenting traffic violations in a more timely way, saving officers time in court.
- Confirming that officers have complied with procedures and policies.
- Providing training information for traffic officers and others in the justice system.

The additional patrol-car cameras follow yesterday’s introduction of improved bait-car camera technology. Bait Car Live will give police dispatchers the ability to watch and listen to auto thieves in real time, improving police and road safety by providing officers with more information to guide them in stopping stolen vehicles and apprehending suspects. Previously, police had to stop a bait vehicle before retrieving and viewing footage from it.

The BC Association of Chiefs of Police strongly supports the use of in-car camera technology and recognizes provincial investments in them as reinforcing the Province’s commitment to make B.C. highways the safest in the country.

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The patrol-car cameras will cost about \$7,300 each installed. Police agencies will cover the minimal operating costs.

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For video footage of two recent incidents recorded by in-car cameras in B.C. police vehicles, please visit www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/mediaroom/events/2009-apr-02/ online.

1 backgrounder(s) attached.

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