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ICBC's game plan for Games time

The top five tips to enjoy a safe 2010 Winter Games on our roads

With more than 250,000 visitors expected in the Lower Mainland and Whistler for the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, our roads will be busier than ever with extra passenger and commercial vehicles, taxis, buses and pedestrians. While ICBC is well prepared to deal with the anticipated increase in claims in February, there are some important things to keep in mind. Here are ICBC's top five tips for having a safe and enjoyable 2010 Winter Games experience:

1. **Be a good host:** An increase in visitors will mean more motorists that are unfamiliar with B.C.'s roads. This is our chance to be good hosts and display smart driving skills to visitors by slowing down and keeping our distance from other vehicles – drivers and pedestrians unfamiliar with our roads may need a bit more space. If you are unfortunate enough to be involved in a crash and the other person involved is not insured by ICBC, it is important that you record as much information as possible to help your claim go smoothly. Get the licence plate of any other vehicles involved, along with the driver's address and phone numbers (including their temporary contact details while in B.C.), email address and, most importantly, the name of their insurance company and their policy number. ICBC's *At the scene of a crash* claims card can help you recall the pertinent information you'll need. The cards are available from Autoplan brokers, ICBC claims centres or can be downloaded from icbc.com
2. **Be a role model:** As of January 1, it is now illegal in B.C. for drivers to use hand-held cellphones and other hand-held communications and entertainment devices – including BlackBerry devices, PDAs, iPods or manual programmable GPS systems. The goal of the new law is to make our roads safer for everyone and we all play an important role in that. The focus for January has been public awareness but, as of February 1, police will start issuing tickets of \$167 and there is also the potential to receive demerit points on your driving record. So now's the time to start letting calls go to your voicemail, ask a passenger to take your calls while driving or to invest in a hands-free device.
3. **Commute creatively:** For anyone living in the downtown core of Vancouver, road closures, significantly reduced on-street parking and tens of thousands of more pedestrians are going to be a reality that will make driving more challenging. Given that, now is the ideal time to look at alternative transportation options for getting about or for your daily commute to work during the 2010 Winter Games. There will be many public transportation choices, or consider cycling to work, tele-working or changing your work hours to avoid the Games-time peak travel times in downtown Vancouver of 7 to 9 a.m. and 2 to 7 p.m. All of this will help the overall goal of reducing traffic during the 2010 Winter Games by at least 30 per cent. To plan your commute visit travelsmart2010.ca and the City of Vancouver's website at: olympichostcity.vancouver.ca.
4. **Drive smart:** If you are going to be driving during Games time then ensure you and your vehicle are adequately prepared. Every January and February in B.C. means mixed weather conditions – heavy rain, sleet, fog, and snow – and a high number of crashes – a total of 45,000 on B.C. roads during those months in 2008. Prepare your vehicle for a range of conditions and make sure you plan your trip ahead of time. A great resource in planning your journey is drivebc.ca, which will advise you of delays, and possible road and highway closures.
5. **Party safely:** The 2010 Winter Games will be a party the likes of which we have never seen before, but it's important that we all have a good time responsibly. Help make these the safest Winter Games ever by providing your guests with a safe ride home – encourage the use of transit, designated drivers and have taxi numbers on hand. It's also possible to have a lot of fun without alcohol – a hot apple cider, a smooth and creamy Kootenay Koffee or a tart and tingling Lemon Fizz are fun and easy-to-make mocktails treats. For these quick and simple recipes go to icbc.com

For many more tips on how to enjoy a safe 2010 Winter Games on the road, visit icbc.com/on_road_2010/.

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ICBC's 2010 Winter Games licence plate sales top 175,000

Customers can win Paralympic tickets in ICBC's *Tickets to 2010* promotion

With less than one month to go, more than 175,000 British Columbians are now proudly displaying their support for the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games by getting *Behind the Drive* with a special edition 2010 Winter Games licence plate from ICBC.

"These phenomenal sales really demonstrate the passion and enthusiasm British Columbians have towards the 2010 Winter Games, which are now just 24 days away," said ICBC's Jeff Schulz, vice president, strategic marketing. "The *Behind the Drive* program has provided a way for British Columbians to show their Olympic spirit and all profits go directly to supporting the 2010 Winter Games and Canadian athletes."

ICBC customers who still want to display their support for the 2010 Winter Games can purchase the plates from any Autoplan broker for the remainder of this year. The 2010 Winter Games licence plates are available for an initial fee of \$35 (annual renewal fee of \$25 until 2012) and, as an official provincial licence plate, can continue to be displayed on your vehicle even when the 2010 Winter Games are over.

In addition, any ICBC customers who purchase a 2010 Winter Games licence plate from now until February 7 will be thanked for their continued support by being entered into four weekly draws to win four event tickets to the Vancouver 2010 Paralympic Winter Games. ICBC previously rewarded plate purchasers with a draw to win 150 pairs of Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games event tickets.

Motorists all over British Columbia are showing their support with approximately 119,000 plates sold in the Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley, 21,000 sold on Vancouver Island, 27,000 sold in the Southern Interior and 11,000 sold in Northern B.C.

"The success of this plate program has been remarkable," said Dave Cobb, executive vice president & deputy CEO at VANOC. "These licence plates have allowed British Columbians to showcase themselves as proud supporters of the Games and athletes."

ICBC launched the *Behind the Drive* program in April 2007. The mountain-scene depicted on the plates is that of Mount Garibaldi Park located 13km north of Squamish, and was chosen to capture the spirit of the 2010 Winter Games while showcasing one of the most scenic areas between Vancouver and Whistler.

To learn more about ICBC's 2010 Winter Games licence plates, how to win event tickets and to read about some of B.C.'s Winter Olympic and Paralympic athletes, visit behindthedrive.com. Additional information about 2010 Winter Games licence plates is available at local Autoplan broker offices or at www.icbc.com.

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Smart driving tips for new cellphone ban — January 14

Over the past several weeks, many drivers have seen the advertisements and highway signs reminding them they can no longer use hand-held cellphones and other electronic devices while driving in B.C. As we approach the end of the one-month grace period, the Province, ICBC and police are reminding drivers to adopt smart driving behaviours.

Driving is a complex task that requires our full attention. When you are behind the wheel, anything that competes with your attention will impair your ability to notice what's going on around you, increasing your risk of being in a crash.

The goal of the new law is to make our roads safer for everyone and we all play an important role in that. Here are some smart driving tips should your cellphone ring while you're driving.

Let it go to voicemail. Better yet, turn it off to avoid the temptation. Be a role model and help create a culture where friends, family and colleagues don't expect you to pick up right away. Let callers know on your voicemail that you may be driving and there may be delay before you return their call.

Ask your passenger(s) for help. If you're travelling with someone else and your cellphone rings, ask them to take the call for you.

Pull over before you answer or return a call. Your life and the life of people around you are much more important than your phone call.

Focus on the road. Multi-tasking while driving has become a common practice, but studies show that drivers who talk on a cellphone lose about 50 per cent of what's going on around them, visually, and are four times more likely to get into a crash. Maintaining focus on the road should be a driver's priority.

Ask your caller if they're on the road. If you're returning a call, and you suspect your caller is driving, set an example and suggest talking when it's safer to do so. We all have a responsibility to make our roads safer.

Use a [hands-free device](#) ^{ca} if you need to take a call, and:

- Keep the conversations brief.
- Keep a consistently safe speed - research shows drivers on cellphones tend to vary their speed up and down.
- Make sure your device is securely fixed to your vehicle and doesn't obstruct your view.

Safe driving is about making smart driving decisions – driving is a complex task that demands all of our concentration if it is to be done safely. Be a role model and set an example – your smart decisions can have a significant influence on others.

For more smart driving tips, visit icbc.com.

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RCMP investigation requested by ICBC determines no criminal activity involved — January 11

RCMP today announced that their investigation into the sale of vehicles repaired at ICBC's Burnaby-based research and training facility resulted in a determination that there was no criminal activity.

The RCMP has recommended that no charges be laid against individuals employed by ICBC or against the corporation itself. Results of the investigation revealed that processes undertaken within ICBC regarding the handling of Total Loss ("write-off") cases and the purchasing of vehicles by ICBC employees through the auction process were not criminal in nature.

The investigation was requested by ICBC to review the designation and sale of vehicles repaired at the Material Damage and Research Training (MDRT) facility prior to 2008. RCMP had the full cooperation of ICBC during the investigation and conducted an extensive and thorough inquiry.

From the beginning, ICBC has been proactive in dealing with the situation and has focused on moving forward by implementing all of the recommendations of the PricewaterhouseCoopers report, which include:

- The research and training facility no longer repairs vehicles for sale.
- Employees and members of their immediate family are not permitted to purchase any ICBC salvage, either directly or indirectly through a friend, acquaintance, family member or other proxy.
- The repair of personal vehicles at the facility is not permitted under any circumstance.
- Policies and procedures have been updated to ensure all vehicles are properly designated.
- Launch of a free online service through icbc.com that allows customers to check a vehicle's status to determine if it has been involved in a crash.

ICBC has also followed up on its commitment to make things right with customers by contacting those who purchased vehicles repaired at MDRT, and either repurchased those vehicles or inspected and re-designated them.

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For Immediate Release	
January 26, 2010	
BAIT CARS ON GUARD TO PROTECT GAMES-GOERS' VEHICLES	
<p>SURREY – With an estimated 250,000 people a day taking public transit during the Olympics, police will flood Park & Ride lots with bait vehicles to help keep auto theft at a six-year low, Solicitor General Kash Heed announced today.</p> <p>"This year, B.C.'s auto crime enforcement month coincides with the largest influx of visitors our province has ever seen," said Heed. "Strategic deployment of bait cars, which has cut auto crime by more than half since 2003, will provide drivers with greater peace of mind when they leave their vehicles for the day."</p> <p>In keeping with this year's auto enforcement month theme of "Securing the Best Winter Games Ever – Making Auto Crime a Priority," key components of the Integrated Municipal Provincial Auto Crime Team's (IMPACT) strategy during the Winter Games are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deploying bait cars at: all 22 Park & Ride locations; five VANOC Parking and Departure Hubs; Games Training and Preparation Centres. • Planting bait cars with property, such as cameras and laptops, that are marked with brand new MicroDot DNA technology. This new tool will enable police to easily identify stolen items and provide indisputable evidence in court. • Monitoring of auto crime throughout the Games with surveillance conducted as needed. The team will be intelligence-led as crime analysts will identify where the problems are on a daily basis. • Deploying undercover cars equipped with Automatic Licence Plate Recognition technology, which can scan up to 600 plates an hour, to locate stolen vehicles. <p>"Note to thieves: The Games are not your ticket to easy pickings because we are not going to sit back and allow you to detract from people's overall enjoyment of the Olympics," said Sgt. Gord Elias of IMPACT. "Anywhere you see a lot of cars, there will be bait cars. Steal one and you will go to jail."</p>	

During Auto Crime Enforcement Month, police forces across B.C. will also ramp up their efforts to arrest car thieves and further drive down the number of vehicle thefts and break-ins. ICBC statistics show 2,000 fewer vehicle thefts in 2009 - a 15 per cent decrease from 13,000 in 2008. In addition, 4,000 fewer thefts from vehicles in 2009 represent a 15 per cent decrease from the 23,000 reported in 2008.

Overall, auto crimes are down by more than half since 2003. The 11,000 car thefts in 2009 represent a 55 per cent reduction from the 26,000 in 2003, while vehicle break-ins dropped 52 per cent, from 40,000 to 19,000, over the same period.

"These latest reductions in auto theft are great news for our customers, as fewer claims help keep insurance rates low and stable," said Nicolas Jimenez, director of road safety for ICBC. "Car owners can do their part to help keep these numbers falling by ensuring they leave their valuables out of sight, and the doors locked, when they leave their vehicle."

The Province uses many strategies to battle vehicle theft. Also ready to join the action are police dogs and the Air One and Air Two traffic helicopters to track down suspects who try to flee.

For more information on the IMPACT Bait Car program, go to www.baitcar.com.

For more detailed information on auto theft statistics, go to <http://icbc.com/road-safety/prevent-autocrime>.

For more information on government services or to subscribe to the Province's news feeds using RSS, visit the Province's website at www.gov.bc.ca.

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