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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

### **BAIT CARS ON GUARD TO PROTECT GAMES-GOERS' VEHICLES**

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.

“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.”

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:

- 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.

“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.”

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](http://www.baitcar.com).

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

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