

August 26, 2005

Immediate licence suspensions help reduce number of impaired drivers.

Edmonton... Automatically suspending the licences of people charged with impaired driving is helping reduce the number of drunk drivers on the province's roads.

According to a study completed for the Alberta government, there was a 24 per cent drop in the number of repeat impaired drivers and a 19 per cent reduction in the number of repeat offenders involved in alcohol-related collisions that cause injury or death.

The study also found there was a drop in the percentage of fatal collisions that involved drinking drivers, from 23 per cent before the licence suspension program came into effect to 19 per cent afterward.

"The results show that having tougher consequences that are swift, certain and severe, helps change the behaviour of drivers who might otherwise continually drink and drive," says Dr. Lyle Oberg, Minister of Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation.

Other highlights of the study include:

- a 6 per cent reduction in the number of casualty collisions involving alcohol;
- a 12 per cent reduction in the number of fatal collisions involving alcohol; and
- a 7 per cent reduction in the number of night-time casualty collisions involving alcohol.

The Alberta Administrative Licence Suspension program came into effect on December 1, 1999. Under the program, drivers who are charged with alcohol-related offences automatically receive a three-month licence suspension, whether or not they are convicted. The suspension is extended to six months if the offence results in injury or death. A court may impose an additional suspension upon conviction.

Government contracted Howard Research and Management Consulting to conduct an evaluation of the effectiveness of the program in changing the incidence of impaired driving behavior and alcohol-related collisions. The study compared the three-year period before the program came into effect with the three-year period immediately following.

The report can be found at:

<http://www.trans.gov.ab.ca/Content/doctype47/production/aalsevaluationexecsum.pdf>

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Backgrounder attached

Media enquiries may be directed to:

Liz Owens
Driver Safety Research and Traffic Safety
(780) 427-6775
Liz.owens@gov.ab.ca

Eileen McDonald
Communications
(780) 422-0842
e-mail: eileen.mcdonald@gov.ab.ca

To call toll free within Alberta dial 310-0000.

Background

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Alberta Administrative Licence Suspension (AALS) program

- The Alberta Administrative Licence Suspension (AALS) program came into effect on December 1, 1999.
- The AALS program introduced:
 - an immediate 24-hour licence suspension;
 - a 21-day temporary permit to allow the driver to set his or her affairs in order.
 - an automatic three-month licence suspension or disqualification for providing a breath or blood sample greater than .08 or refusing to provide a breath or blood sample;
 - an automatic six-month licence suspension or disqualification if the offence results in bodily harm or death.

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Liz Owens
Driver Safety Research and Traffic Safety
(780) 427-6775
Liz.owens@gov.ab.ca

Eileen McDonald
Communications
(780) 422-0842
Cell: (780) 913-4609

Eileen.mcdonald@gov.ab.ca

To call toll free within Alberta dial 310-0000.

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