



October 9, 2009

Drug-impaired drivers to be charged under new legislation

Expansion of AALS comes into effect October 15

Edmonton... Law enforcement will have an additional tool to increase traffic safety and keep impaired drivers off Alberta's roads. Individuals who are impaired by drugs while driving could have their driver's licence suspended as a result of the expansion of the Alberta Administrative Licence Suspension (AALS) program to include drug-impaired driving-related offences.

On July 2, 2008, the federal government's Bill C-2 established parity between drug and alcohol-impaired driving offences for the first time in Canada. Amendments to the *Traffic Safety Act* were made last fall to allow the AALS program to suspend individuals driving while impaired by drugs. This ensures the law is applied equally to individuals charged with either alcohol or drug-driving offences.

Prior to Bill C-2, a police officer who suspected that a driver was drug impaired could only request voluntary testing. There was no sanction if the driver refused. This left officers with little chance of pursuing a conviction on the basis of drug-impaired driving.

Currently, AALS automatically imposes a minimum three-month suspension or disqualification on drivers who are charged with an alcohol-related offence for providing a breath or blood sample over 80 milligrams per cent or refusing to provide either a breath or blood sample.

Expansion of the Alberta Administrative Licence suspension program to include drivers impaired by drugs will come into effect on October 15.

For more information, go to <http://www.transportation.alberta.ca/525.htm> to view the *Traffic Safety Act* or www.saferoads.com and click on driver safety for information on AALS.

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