



BLOCK WATCH®
An Informative Newsletter for British
Columbia Published Monthly by the
Block Watch Society of BC.
www.blockwatch.com

DRIVE SMART IN WINTER CONDITIONS

Be cautious of the winter hazards - snow covered roads and black ice. When the snow begins to melt, the potential hazards will include standing water, flooded areas, potholes and even black ice if temperatures remain low. For all of these types of winter hazards, drivers need to remember the same two key tips – reduce your speed and increase your following distance. The more time you have to react to any hazard the better. And of course, expect delays and get in the habit of checking road conditions at drivebc.ca before heading out, especially for possible road and highway closures.

ICBC recommends having the 'At the scene of a crash' claims card in your vehicle. Experiencing a crash can be frightening and stressful, and these cards are designed to help customers remember all the vital information they need to gather in order to make a claim. The cards are available from local Autoplan brokers, ICBC Claim Centres or can be downloaded from icbc.com.

ICBC asks customers to be patient and suggests having the following information ready:

- your vehicle licence plate number
- the driver's licence number of the person driving your vehicle
- the licence plate and driver's licence numbers of the other vehicle(s) involved
- where the crash happened
- when the crash happened

source: http://icbc.com/about%20ICBC/news_room/2009news_releases/dec_09#2p

Block Watch News January 2010

NEW DRIVING RULES COME INTO EFFECT – JAN 1, 2010

Effective Jan. 1, 2010, the province would be banning the use of hand-held cell-phones and portable devices used for games or texting while driving. Hands-free technology will still be allowed, but for those who just can't keep their phone from their ear, a new fine will be in place by February, and drivers caught texting will also receive penalty points.

According to research, cell-phone use is the number 1 cause of distracted driving, and in B.C., more than 100 people die each year as a result of distracted driving.

As of Feb. 1, a driver talking on a hand-held phone or electronic device will be subject to a fine of \$167. In addition, drivers caught texting or emailing will be subject to three penalty points.

For new drivers in the Graduated Licensing Program (GLP), there will be a full ban on all cell phone and electronic devices, including hands-free.

Sources: <http://www2.canada.com/burnabynow/news/community/story.html?id=4c1f648b-ee4f-4053-b495-42320cf163eb>
http://icbc.com/about%20ICBC/news_room/2009news_releases/dec_09#1g

FRAUD – 2 COMMON SCAMS

Two common scams are detailed below:

Recently, investigations have been conducted concerning frauds which have been specifically targeted toward the elderly in our communities. They generally follow the same pattern:

A telephone call is placed to an elderly person, supposedly from a grandson / great grandson, where the fraudster begs money for bail or legal assistance. The fraudster advises that he is being held in custody regarding an offence such as impaired driving and "time is of the essence to get a lawyer prior to court or risk a criminal record." The victim, believing a family member is in trouble, wires the money as directed.

An increased reporting of cheque overpayment frauds has also been noticed.

A classic example would start with the potential victim placing an advertisement offering short term accommodations for the Olympics on the Internet. The fraudster would respond to the advertisement stating that they wanted to rent the property, however, their employer has cut one large cheque to cover all expenses associated to the Olympic trip. The fraudster would then offer to "trust" the victim to cash the cheque and wire the overpayment back. Once cashed, the cheque would be found to be fake and the victim responsible for the entire amount paid out by the bank.

What you can do:

First, do not send money.

If you have lost money and are a victim of fraud, report it to your local police.

Source: <http://bc.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/ViewPage.action?siteNodeId=50&languageId=1&contentId=12589&index=2>

TOP 10 STOLEN CARS IN CANADA IN 2009

1. 2000 Honda Civic SiR 2-door
2. 2003 Cadillac Escalade ESV 4-door AWD
3. 1999 Honda Civic SiR 2-door
4. 2006 Chevrolet/GMC Trailblazer SS 4-door 4WD
5. 2002 Cadillac Escalade EXT 4-door AWD
6. 2005 Cadillac Escalade ESV 4-door AWD
7. 1997 Mitsubishi Eclipse Spyder 2-door
8. 2000 Audi S4 Quattro 4-door
9. 2006 Hummer H2 4-door AWD
10. 2005 Cadillac Escalade 4-door 4WD

“We’re seeing two very different forms of auto theft,” said Rick Dubin, Vice-President, Investigations, IBC. “One type of thief is just looking for a car that’s easy to steal, with no approved anti-theft electronic immobilizer, which can be used for transportation, stripped for parts or used to commit other crimes.

The other type of thief goes after newer, high-end vehicles. Although these are harder to steal, sophisticated organized crime rings can make a strong profit by shipping them overseas, chopping them for parts, or changing their vehicle identification numbers (VINs) and selling them to unsuspecting consumers.”

Source: http://www.ibc.ca/en/insurance_crime/top_ten_stolen_cars/2009.asp