

## **B.C. INTRODUCES CANADA'S TOUGHEST IMPAIRED DRIVING LAWS**

Effective September 2010, British Columbia will introduce Canada's most immediate and severe impaired driving penalties. Why? To save lives, curb repeat offenders and get impaired drivers off the road.

In memory of Alexa Middelaer, there is a provincial goal: reduce alcohol-impaired driving fatalities by 35 per cent by the end of 2013. Middelaer was four when she was killed by an alleged drunk driver in Delta two years ago.

Under changes to the Motor Vehicle Act (MVA), drivers who provide a failing breath sample above 0.08 or refuse to provide a breath sample will face an immediate, 90-day driving ban and a \$500 fine. As well, their vehicle will be impounded for 30 days. They may also face criminal charges.

Drivers caught once in the "warn" range (between 0.05 and 0.08) in a five-year period will face an immediate, three-day driving ban and a \$200 fine; a second time, a seven-day ban and a \$300 fine; and a third, a 30-day ban and a \$400 fine.

In addition, drivers who blow once in the "fail" range, or three times within five years in the "warn" range, will be required to participate in the Responsible Driver Program. They must also use an ignition interlock device for one year, which tests a driver's breath for alcohol every time they operate their vehicle.

The new, roadside-issued, 90-day bans mean officers will no longer need to take drivers to the station for a full breath analysis in order to impose a driving ban longer than 24 hours.

Effective immediately, there are also a number of changes to the Motor Vehicle Act.

Motorcyclists and their passengers – All motorcycle drivers and their passengers will be required to wear a helmet that meets certified safety-industry standards. Drivers will be responsible for ensuring passengers under age 16 are wearing an approved helmet. Unapproved helmets will be subject to potential seizure by police.

New riders will be restricted to less powerful motorcycles. Passengers, including those under 16 must be able to position their feet on foot pegs or floor boards.

Seat Belts – The exemption for not wearing a seat belt for a medical reason is being discontinued, as current medical advice is that there are no medical reasons to not wear a seatbelt.

For more information, check online at [www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/osmv/](http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/osmv/), or [www.gov.bc.ca](http://www.gov.bc.ca).