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Tougher Consequences for Drinking and Driving

Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal

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The province is taking a tough stance on drinking and driving with a new law that takes effect Oct. 26.

Legislation passed last fall toughens the consequences for people caught driving with a blood-alcohol level of .05, including increased licence suspensions.

"Impaired driving is a leading cause of fatalities and injuries on Nova Scotia roads," said Bill Estabrooks, Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. "By taking more impaired drivers off our roads, we're making them safer for all Nova Scotians."

"This is one more step we are taking to show that this province is serious about getting drunk drivers off our roads," said Justice Minister Ross Landry. "In order to change drinking and driving behavior, we must continue our fight through awareness, education and enforcement."

Currently, people who register .05 on a roadside alcohol screening test receive a 24-hour licence suspension. Under the new law, licence suspensions will increase to seven days for a first offense, 15 days for a second and 30 days for a third. People will also be required to pay a licence reinstatement fee.

"The new legislation will lead to increased sanctions and consequences for those who make the wrong decision and choose to drink and drive," said RCMP Insp. Sput McCarthy. "Strengthening our impaired driving laws should add to the overall safety of Nova Scotia's roads and ultimately save lives."

"Halifax Regional Police welcomes any measure that combats impaired driving and strives to make our roads safer," said Deputy Chief Christopher McNeil. "We are hopeful that the tougher penalties will serve to remind motorists of the importance of not driving under the influence."

The province is launching a public awareness campaign this month reminding drivers of the new penalties.

"MADD Canada is pleased to see these measures come into effect in Nova Scotia," said Margaret Miller, past president of MADD Canada. "Longer administrative licence suspensions are an effective way to take impaired drivers off our roads and deter those who might otherwise get behind the wheel while impaired. As a result of this measure, we will see fewer

impairment-related crashes, deaths and injuries."

In 1998, the province introduced the 24-hour suspension for a .05 blood-alcohol level.

FOR BROADCAST USE:

The province is taking a tough stance on drinking and driving with a new law that takes effect on October 26.

Legislation passed last fall toughens the consequences for people caught driving with a blood-alcohol level of point-zero-five including increased licence suspensions.

People who register point-zero-five on a roadside alcohol screening test now receive a 24-hour licence suspension. Under the new law, licence suspensions will increase to seven days for a first offense, 15 days for a second and 30 days for a third. They will also have to pay a licence reinstatement fee.

Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal Minister Bill Estabrooks says impaired driving is a leading cause of fatalities and injuries on Nova Scotia roads.

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