



MEDIA RELEASE

CITY OF BROOKS “Alberta’s Centennial City™”

For immediate release

February 01, 2010

MUNICIPAL TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT – DISTRACTED DRIVING

The City of Brooks Municipal Enforcement Unit will help to make Brooks and area driving habits safer.

As a result of traffic studies completed in 2006 in Alberta, a comprehensive strategy was developed to reduce traffic-related deaths and injuries in Alberta. The Alberta Traffic Safety Plan Calendar is one of these strategies that will help direct the enforcement activities of the City of Brooks Municipal Enforcement Unit in 2010.

Distracted driving is identified as the focus for enforcement for the month February 2010. Research indicates that driver distraction contributes to 20 – 30 percent of all traffic collisions. While Brooks Municipal Enforcement unit does not investigate traffic collisions, the aim of our enforcement is to support our enforcement partner, Brooks RCMP Detachment, who does investigate traffic collisions.

Distracted driving is defined as the diversion of attention from driving as a result of the driver focusing on a non-driving object, activity, event or person. This diversion reduces awareness, decision-making or performance, leading to increased risk of driver error and collisions.

Brooks Municipal Enforcement Unit will direct enforcement efforts throughout the City of Brooks, the County of Newell, Village of Duchess, Village of Tilley, Village of Rosemary and Town of Bassano.

Distracted drivers are three times more likely to be involved in a collision than the attentive driver. Reaching for a moving object in your vehicle increases the risk of a collision or near collision by 9 times; listening and talking on a handheld device increases the risk by 1.3 times. The most common distractions are adjusting a CD or radio, other occupants in the car, moving objects in the car and things outside the car.

Section 115 of the Alberta Traffic Safety Act prohibits drivers from operating a vehicle without due care and attention, or without reasonable care and attention, or without reasonable consideration for persons using Alberta roads. These offenses are punishable by a \$402 fine and 6 demerits.

DID YOU KNOW?

- A driver in rush hour traffic needs to keep track of 3000 items including signs, traffic lights, other vehicles, passengers, pedestrians, and road and weather conditions. Compare that with a fighter pilot who only needs to keep track of 300 items in a regular non-combat mission.

- A car going 50km/hr travels about 13.9 meters (45 feet) in one second. One second is enough to be distracted, leading to a collision.
- That many factors contribute to this issue, including the technological advances over the last 20 years, a preconceived notion that one must be connected to work and home at all times, perceptions that driving is an unproductive task, and people trying to accomplish more in less time.

To be safe attentive driver;

1. Plan ahead. Pre-set radio or CD player. Do not make adjustments unless the vehicle is stopped.
2. Make sure children are comfortable and properly buckled up before leaving.
3. Stop if you have to use a cell phone. (Note: Simply talking on a cell phone while driving is now an offence in B.C. and Saskatchewan.)
4. Do Not:
 - Read while driving
 - Drive with a pet animal in your lap - \$172.00 fine!! - For permitting an animal to impede free access to steering, brakes etc.
 - Eat while you are driving
 - Apply make-up and other personal grooming.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Greg Lynch, Manager of Municipal Enforcement at (403) 362-2331.