

LIQUOR POLICY REFORM IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

A Presentation to MLA John Yap

Parliamentary Secretary to British Columbia Minister of Justice
and Attorney General for Liquor Policy Reform

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Impaired Driving in British Columbia

In 2010, road crash deaths claimed an estimated 387 lives. Of those, 43.12%, or 167, were impairment-related.

The per population rate of impairment-related crash deaths in British Columbia was 3.69 people in every 100,000. The national average was 3.17.

Youth and Impaired Driving:

Impaired driving among young people is a particular concern, as 16-25 year olds are over-represented in impairment-related crashes. In 2010, 42 young people in that age group were killed in impairment-related crashes.

B.C. GRADUATED LICENSING AND EXTENDED .00% BAC LIMIT: 2013

	Stage 1	Stage 2
Minimum Age	16	17
Minimum Length	12 months	24 months (18 with driver ed.)
Nighttime Restrictions	12 a.m. – 5 a.m.	None
Passenger Restrictions	1 passenger, excluding supervisor	1 passenger, other than family, unless supervised
High-Speed Road Restrictions	None	None

- Extended .00% BAC Limit Beyond GLP: None
- Earliest Age at which .00% BAC Limit Ends: 18½
- Legal Drinking Age: 19

Impaired Driving in British Columbia

B.C. CRASH DEATHS AMONG YOUTH: 2010

Age Group	As % of Total Population	Total Number of Crash Deaths	Impairment-Related Crash Deaths		
			Number	As % of Total Crash Deaths in Age Group	As % of Impairment-Related Crash Deaths Among All Ages
16-19	5.1%	26	17	63.5%	10.5%
20-25	8.6%	39	25	64.9%	16.1%
16-25	13.7%	65	42	64.3%	26.6%
All Ages		387	157	40.6%	100%

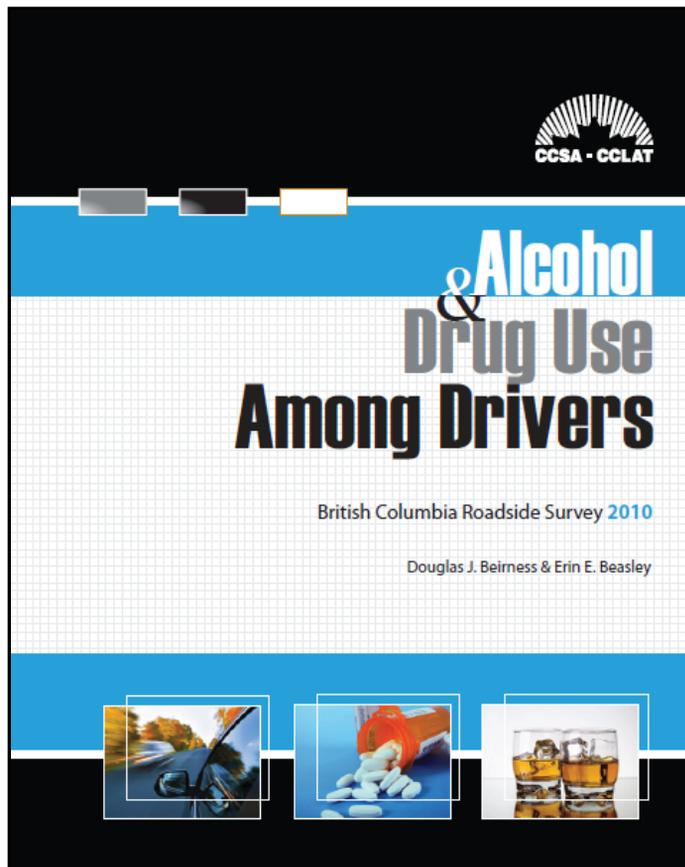
B.C. CRASH INJURIES AMONG YOUTH: 2010

Age Group	As % of Total Population	Total Number of Crash Injuries	Impairment-Related Crash Injuries		
			Number	As % of Total Crash Injuries in Age Group	As % of Impairment-Related Crash Injuries Among All Ages
16-19	5.1%	3,068	974	31.7%	10.5%
20-25	8.6%	4,602	1,493	32.4%	16.1%
All Ages		45,666	9,281	20.3%	100%

Impaired Driving in British Columbia

2010 British Columbia Roadside Survey (Beirness and Beasley):

- 10.7% of drivers had a positive BAC
- 1.8% had BACs between .05% and .08%
- 2.2% had BACs over .08%



Leading the Way in Impaired Driving Legislation

In September 2010, British Columbia introduced significant changes to its impaired driving laws, with a particular focus on strengthening its immediate roadside prohibitions.

For drivers over .08% BAC

- Immediate 90-day driving ban
- Administrative penalty, licence reinstatement fee, impound charge, mandatory interlock device fee, educational program fee



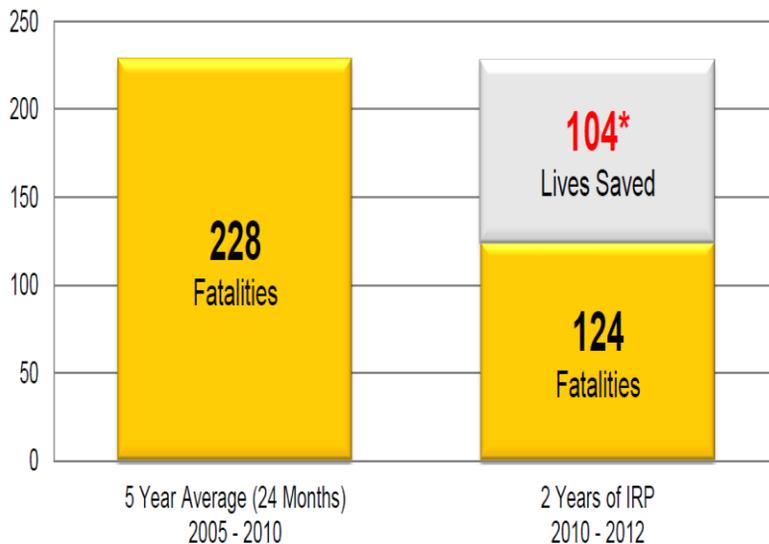
Photo Credit: CBC

For drivers in the warn range (.05% BAC and higher)

- 3-day driving ban
- Corresponding vehicle impoundment
- Administrative penalty (escalates for repeat infractions), licence reinstatement fee, impoundment fee

Leading the Way in Impaired Driving Legislation

In the two years following the introduction of British Columbia's tougher impaired driving sanctions, alcohol-related crash deaths decreased by 40%, compared to the average over the previous five years, representing 104 lives saved.



British Columbia Roadside Survey (Beirness and Beasley):

Driver BACs	2012	2010
Total drivers with a positive BAC	8.3%	10.7%
BACs between .05% and .08%	1.4%	1.8%
BACs over .08%	1.6%	2.2%

Alcohol Sales

Alcohol is not an ordinary commodity. Alcohol is a drug and, if not used within reasonable limits, can have a significant negative impact on individual health and well-being, and on overall public safety.

Alcohol is linked with more than 65 medical conditions and is a contributing factor in injuries, impairments and deaths caused by illness, impaired driving, homicides, suicides, falls, drowning, assaults, fires and other adverse events that threaten public safety and community well-being.

Governments have a responsibility to control and regulate alcohol sales in the interest of public safety.

Impact of Alcohol on Society:

According to the National Alcohol Strategy, alcohol results in the deaths of an estimated 4,285 Canadians in 2002 and cost society \$14.6 billion in lost productivity and health care and law enforcement costs.

The Centre for Addictions Research in British Columbia noted that there were 18,752 alcohol-related deaths between 2002 and 2011. Over that same time period, there were 190,000 alcohol-related hospital admissions.

Increased Revenue Versus Increased Costs:

The promise of increased revenues is often cited as a reason for privatizing alcohol sales, but that reasoning fails to consider the additional costs that will be incurred as a result of increased alcohol consumption (via increased access to alcohol). The cost of alcohol-related harms in society often outpace the revenues generated through alcohol sales. In British Columbia, for example, the cost of alcohol-related harms (\$926 million) are higher than the revenue generated (\$852 million) through alcohol sales.

Alcohol Sales

Public Opinion Favours Government Controls on Alcohol Sales

Proponents of privatized alcohol sales often suggest the public is demanding increased access and convenience. However, research over the past 15 years indicates the public does not want to see alcohol made more available.

A Centre for Addiction and Mental Health study showed that Ontario residents are very supportive of provincially-run liquor stores and related control measures, and generally do not favour increased marketing of, or greater access for, alcohol products.

A 2005 MADD Canada survey reached similar conclusions. Respondents were supportive of a balanced approach in which access to alcohol is controlled by a provincial liquor board. The majority of survey respondents felt that increased availability would lead to more impaired driving and more sales to minors and intoxicated people.

Opinion surveys indicate the public favours the provincial liquor corporations as an effective model that balances consumer access, selection and service with the need to manage alcohol consumption and minimize alcohol-related harms and costs.

Privatizing Alcohol Sales: International Experience

Increasing the availability of alcohol (higher density of stores, long hours, lower prices, etc.) leads to increases in a broad range of alcohol-related harms in society, including impaired driving.

Sweden's alcohol-related road crash fatality rate increased from 19% (1997) of total road crash fatalities to 28% (2002) when the availability of alcohol was increased and costs went down.

Studies in **Western Australia** and **Iceland** found an overall increase in alcohol-related problems such as violence and impaired driving when hours of alcohol sales were extended.

A **United States** study showed that states with a system of government-controlled alcohol sales had lower binge drinking rates among high school students and lower alcohol-impaired driving death rates among people under 21 years of age than those states which allowed private alcohol sales.

In 2004, **Finland** decreased alcohol taxes by an average of 33% and eliminated quotas on alcohol imported from other countries (Estonia, Russia). The rationale for these policy changes was to make Finland more competitive in the sale of alcohol products.

- Since the changes were made, sales of alcohol have increased significantly in convenience stores and service stations.
- In one generation, consumption of alcohol among men in Finland doubled, and consumption among women increased six times over. Since the 1970s, drinking to the point of intoxication among women has increased by a factor of 13.
- As a result of these increases, Finland is now considering measures to reduce alcohol consumption by 20%. Among the measures being considered: prohibiting alcohol sales on Sundays and holidays; reducing hours of sale; raising taxes on alcohol; and lowering the permitted alcohol content of beers, ciders and pre-mixed drinks.

Privatizing Alcohol Sales: Canadian Experience

Increasing the availability of alcohol (higher density of stores, long hours, lower prices, etc.) leads to increases in a broad range of alcohol-related harms in society, including impaired driving.

Alberta:

Alcohol consumption increased in Alberta the year alcohol sales were privatized, while rates in other parts of the country decreased.

The number of liquor stores in Calgary increased more than tenfold between 1995 and 2003, from 23 stores to nearly 300. Police reports document a rise in impaired driving charges and family violence cases in areas of the city with the highest density of liquor stores.

British Columbia:

Following the privatization of retail alcohol sales in British Columbia, the number of liquor stores in the province increased from 786 in 2002 to 1,294 in 2008.

During that same timeframe, alcohol consumption increased by 8%.

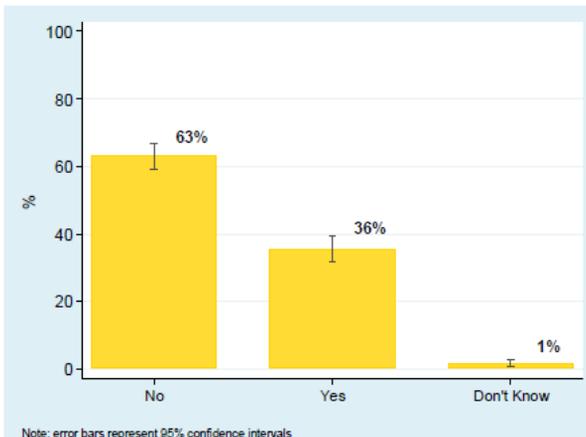
A 2011 study found that those areas with more private sales outlets than government-run stores had significantly higher rates of alcohol-related deaths involving local residents. There was a 27.5% increase in alcohol-related deaths for every extra private liquor store per 1,000 British Columbians.

Recommendations:

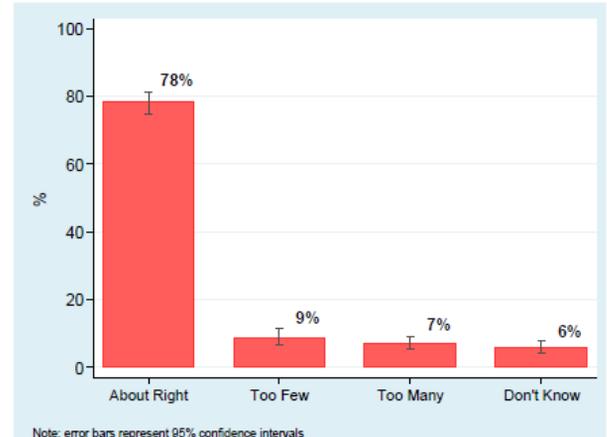
Maintaining an Effective Public Safety Framework With Respect to Alcohol Sales

1. Maintain the current system of alcohol sales; do not extend hours of operation or increase the number of privatized retail outlets in grocery or convenience stores. As survey data from the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health indicates, the majority of survey respondents are not in favour in increasing access to alcohol or privatizing alcohol sales.

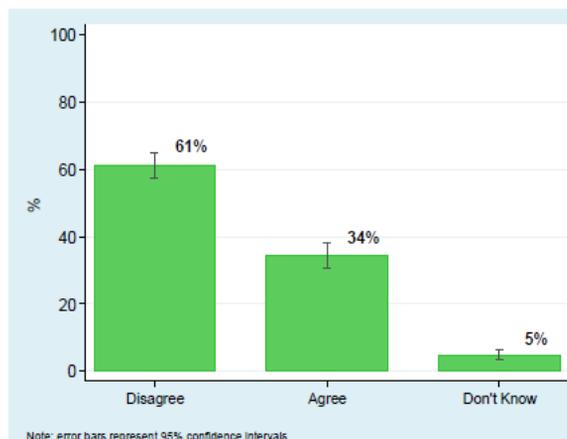
Corner stores: Percentage of Ontario adults ages 18+ responding whether or not alcohol should be available in corner stores, 2011 CAMH Monitor (n=1,040)



Number of outlets: Percentage of Ontario adults ages 18+ responding whether there are too few, too many, or the right number of places to buy alcohol, 2011 CAMH Monitor (n=1,040)



Privatization: Percentage of Ontario adults ages 18+ responding whether they agree or disagree that all LCBO stores should be privatized, 2011 CAMH Monitor (n=1,040)



Recommendations:

Maintaining an Effective Public Safety Framework With Respect to Alcohol Sales

- Expansion to grocery stores should only occur if they are run by the provincial liquor corporation. (Effective models of grocery store sales can be found in Manitoba and Ontario, where the outlets are run through the provincial liquor corporations.)
- Performance of private liquor stores must be improved before further expansion is considered. Private liquor stores do not perform as well as government-controlled liquor stores with respect to preventing sales to minors or intoxicated individuals. Overall alcohol-related deaths are higher in areas with more private stores; British Columbia saw a 27.5% increase in alcohol-related deaths for every extra private liquor store per 1,000 people.
- Continue and expand Liquor Control and Licensing Branch (LCLB) Minors As Agents Program.
- All alcohol sellers should be required to report to the LCLB on the results of their challenge and refusal programs to prevent the sale of alcohol to minors. Those numbers should also be included in the LCLB's annual report. Consider the following statistics from the Liquor Control Board of Ontario:

Liquor Control Board of Ontario Challenges and Refusals



Recommendations:

Maintaining an Effective Public Safety Framework With Respect to Alcohol Sales

6. Make it mandatory for police services to report to the LCLB when the sale of alcohol from a licensed establishment is thought to have contributed to any serious injury or death as a result of an impaired driving crash. (The Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario [AGCO] has an effective mandatory reporting model.)

7. Implement a risk-based licensing system. This enables enforcement efforts to focus on the 5% who failed to adhere to the LLA and requires licensees to have liability insurance. (In Ontario's risk-based licensing system, the AGCO can place conditions on licensees to reduce risk. Such conditions may include limits on operating hours, education on practices to prevent service to minors and intoxicated individuals.)

8. Implement a *Last Drink Program* through the LCLB. Under the program, people who are charged with impaired driving are asked where they consumed alcohol that night, allowing for the identification of licensed establishments which may not be adhering to the principles and regulations of the Liquor Act.
 - Enhances public safety
 - Reduces over-service
 - Identifies impaired driving linked to licensed establishments
 - 1st instance – education
2nd instance – provide toolkit on over-service
3rd instance – designated for risk-based licensing

Last Drink Program and Durham Regional Police (Ontario)

RIDE Statistics: 2010 – 2011 Comparison

<i>Criminal Code Charges</i>	2011	2010
Total Number Charged with Criminal Impaired Driving Offences	155	138
Total Number Coming From Licensed Establishments	92	87
% Coming from Licensed Establishments	59%	63%
Administrative Road-Side Suspensions	2011	2010
Total Number of Road-Side Suspensions	142	154
Total Number Coming from Licensed Establishments	92	111
% of Total	65%	72%

2011

- Four licensed establishments responsible for 31% of charges/suspensions coming from licensed establishments.
- 16% (48) of charges/suspensions were youth violating the .00% BAC requirement for young drivers (36, or 75%, were male).

2010:

- Four licensed establishments responsible for 32% of all charges/suspensions coming from licensed establishments.
- 18% (52) of all charges/suspensions were youth violating the .00% BAC requirement for young drivers (49, or 94%, were male).

Recommendations:

Maintaining an Effective Public Safety Framework With Respect to Alcohol Sales

9. Have the LCLB implement a province-wide Call 911 program to report impaired drivers to police.

Effective Call 911 Programs:

- 911 calls to report suspected impaired drivers increase between 45% and 80% in the first year of program implementation.
- Impaired driving charges and roadside licence suspensions increase between 30% and 80%.
- Police interception rates of 911 calls range from 20% to 50%.
- In Nanaimo, the 2009 launch of a Call 911 program was credited with increasing 911 calls concerning suspected impaired driving by 110% and resulting provincial 24-hr licence suspensions and criminal charges by 100% and 33%, respectively.



10. Control inducements by manufacturers in the selling of their products. Limits should be 10% of the product cost to a maximum of \$5.00.

11. Increase the cost of alcohol by:
 - Setting a minimum cost of \$1.50 for a standard drink
 - Index alcohol prices to inflation (Ontario/LCBO)
 - Develop a strategy to price based on alcohol content

Recommendations:

Maintaining an Effective Public Safety Framework With Respect to Alcohol Sales

12. Consider changing the rules on alcohol sampling:
 - Prohibit free samples of alcohol products
 - Product samples can be sold for \$0.50 or higher (not to exceed 20% of a standard drink and limit of one per individual)
 - Free sealed samples can be given on a one-per-individual basis, not to exceed the size of a standard single drink.
 - Prohibit sampling of high-alcohol products.
13. Ensure the LCLB and police have the needed resources to ensure any liquor reform modernization keeps public safety as a high priority.
14. Consider implementing a Best Bar None Program. (Ontario and Alberta have good models to consider.)
15. Enhance server training programs by making it mandatory for management to take a Safer Bar Program (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health Model)

Supporting Information and Hand-Outs Provided

- *Provincial Liquor Boards: Meeting the Best Interests of Canadians* (MADD Canada)
- *Reporting by Police Services of Alcohol-Related Incidents to the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario* (Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services)
- Letter to Ontario Municipalities About Maintaining Current Provincial Alcohol Sales System (MADD Canada, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Ontario Public Health)