



NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure

B.C. government improves safety, mobility on Trans-Canada Highway

REVELSTOKE – As part of B.C. on the Move, the Government of B.C.'s new 10-year transportation plan, Transportation and Infrastructure Minister Todd Stone announced priority actions for the Trans-Canada Highway to improve safety, access and mobility for motorists.

The ministry is committing to shorten the duration of road closures on the Trans-Canada Highway when there is risk of an avalanche at Three Valley Gap near Revelstoke. Right now, using the current technology of dropping explosives from a helicopter, avalanche control is effective, but it can only be done in daylight and when weather allows. Many times this leads to closures that can extend to more than 16 hours.

Today, the ministry has announced a Request for Expression of Interest will be issued to bring in a new avalanche-mitigation system along the Trans-Canada Highway at Three Valley Gap. Remote-control explosive devices will be constructed to remotely initiate avalanches to address unstable snowpacks. The devices will not be dependent on good weather conditions or daylight to operate. The new system will significantly reduce the duration of highway closures for avalanche control. It is anticipated that the new devices will be installed in 2016.

Also, to help traffic flow more efficiently through Revelstoke and Golden, the ministry has implemented a new traffic light signal timing system called Automax. If an intersection gets a line-up of vehicles, Automax will detect it, using loops installed in the pavement. Traffic-signal timing will be adjusted automatically to relieve intersection congestion. This system has been installed at three signalized intersections along the Trans-Canada in Revelstoke and two in Golden.

In addition, the ministry will be installing 20 new digital variable speed limit signs along Highway 1 between Revelstoke and the Perry River Bridge near Malakwa. The electronic signs will be linked to sensors in the road surface, and adjusted based on road conditions, to notify drivers of a safe speed to travel in adverse weather conditions. The signs can also be adjusted during traffic congestion and incident response. The digital signs will be installed this fall, and there will be a testing period before they become fully operational.

Digital variable speed limit signs will also be installed on the Coquihalla and the Sea to Sky Highway. This was a recommendation from the ministry's 2014 Rural Highway Safety and Speed Review, to help boost safety on the highway network. This is part of the ministry's \$25-million-per-year Roadside Safety program, as announced in B.C. on the Move.

B.C. on the Move is government's 10-year plan for the improvement of the province's transportation network. The actions prioritized in B.C. on the Move will enhance safety, grow the economy, maintain and replace aging infrastructure, and support trade for B.C.'s expanding

resource sectors through Canada's Asia-Pacific Gateway. Over the next three years, the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure will invest up to \$2.5 billion to improve B.C.'s transportation network.

Quotes:

Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Todd Stone –

“Improving highway reliability and mobility is a major component of our 10-year transportation plan, B.C. on the Move. In addition to continued four-laning of the Trans-Canada, we also want to shorten the time that people are stuck in their vehicles during a road closure and open up the Trans-Canada as quickly as possible, to get people and goods moving again. That's why we are bringing in this new technology for avalanche mitigation work, which will significantly reduce road closures.”

Shuswap MLA Greg Kylo –

“I value safety upgrades along the Trans Canada, to help local residents, truck drivers and travellers arrive safely to their destinations. Along this section of highway, weather conditions can switch from rain to snow very quickly, and it's not always easy to know what speed you should be travelling. I am happy to see that new digital speed limit signs will be introduced to help drivers stay safe on the highway.”

Chief Officer Neil Dubord, chair of the B.C. Association of Chiefs of Police Traffic Safety Committee –

“Speeding is the leading cause of fatal car crashes in B.C. Seven out of 10 speed-related crashes are related to driving too fast for the road conditions. Police across B.C. are urging drivers to be alert, slow down and adjust their driving for the conditions.”

Quick Facts:

- The ministry provides a provincewide program to ensure safety from avalanches for motorists on the highway. This program manages more than 60 avalanche areas that include over 1,400 individual paths.
- The ministry employs highly trained avalanche professionals who monitor weather and snowpack conditions continuously during the avalanche season.
- Highway 1 travels through some of B.C.'s most challenging avalanche terrain. In an average year, the highway can be closed for nearly 200 hours. During high snow years, this can increase to nearly 400 hours.
- The new remote control explosive devices will minimize the duration of highway closures along the Trans-Canada at Three Valley Gap significantly.

Learn More:

B.C. on the Move is available online at: <http://engage.gov.bc.ca/transportationplan/>