

Issue: Enforcement Services Immediate Roadside Sanctions Pilot Project

Background: For the past three years, impaired driving has ranked in the top three priorities of Strathcona County residents in the Policing Priorities Survey.

In 2025, Enforcement Services officers will begin a six-month pilot project, where a select group of Peace Officers will have the authority to conduct mandatory alcohol screening on drivers pulled over for various traffic violations and apply immediate roadside sanctions when necessary.

Question: What is mandatory alcohol screening?

Answer:

- Mandatory alcohol screening allows a law enforcement officer, who has an approved screening device on hand, to test a breath sample of any driver they lawfully stop, even without reasonable suspicion that the driver has alcohol in their body.

Question: When was mandatory alcohol screening introduced?

Answer:

- Mandatory alcohol screening became part of the Canada's Criminal Code [Section 320.27\(2\)](#) in December 2018.
- The RCMP, Edmonton Police Service, Calgary Police Service and other law enforcement agencies implemented mandatory alcohol screening shortly after it became law.
- Strathcona County Enforcement Services will be the first to introduce mandatory alcohol screening by Community Peace Officers in Alberta.

Question: Why is mandatory alcohol screening needed?

Answer:

- Impaired driving stands as one of the leading causes of criminal death and injury in Canada.
- Studies indicate that as many as half of the drivers exceeding the legal blood alcohol concentration limit might go unnoticed during roadside check stops.
- Implementing mandatory alcohol screening has been shown to be an effective traffic safety strategy that will discourage and more effectively identify alcohol-impaired drivers.
- Additionally, in several other jurisdictions like New Zealand, Australia and some parts of Europe, where mandatory alcohol screening was enacted, the rates of impaired driving and fatal road collisions were substantially reduced.
- To continue to evolve the role of our Community Peace Officers and

demonstrate commitment to our residents, the implementation of additional authorities for mandatory alcohol screening and immediate roadside sanctions is consistent with Strathcona County's strategic goal of creating a healthy and safe community.

- Furthermore, obtaining this advanced authority aligns with the vision of Strathcona County Traffic Safety Strategic Plan: ensure no one is seriously injured or killed while travelling on Strathcona County's roads.

Question: What does this mean for drivers in Strathcona County?

Answer:

- When a driver is pulled over for various traffic violations (such as speeding or distracted driving) by a Peace Officer participating in the pilot project and equipped with an approved screening device, the officer will request a breath sample from the driver, even if there are no signs of impairment.
- **Drivers will not be pulled over for the sole purpose of completing an alcohol screening.** The screening will only be required once a driver is pulled over for other various traffic violations. This does not include checkstops that are exclusively used to determine the sobriety of drivers.
- **Officer discretion will still be exercised.** A driver may not be subject to an alcohol screening device in extenuating circumstances; however, the intent of the mandatory alcohol screening policy is to apply it in all cases.
- Behavioral cues and officer observations alone have not served as a meaningful deterrent, and obvious signs of intoxication may be absent especially with those who routinely drive impaired.
- Impaired driving can have serious and life-long consequences. Mandatory screening will help reduce serious collisions and incidents, resulting in safer roads in our community.

Question: What are the consequences for impaired driving?

Answer:

- If a driver fails the mandatory alcohol screening, the Peace Officer will apply Immediate Roadside Sanctions for Impaired Driving under the *Traffic Safety Act*. A Notice of Administrative Penalty will be issued by the Peace Officer and the driver's license suspension will begin immediately. The driver will also face the following penalties:

FIRST OFFENCE	SECOND OFFENCE	THIRD OFFENCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 90-day driver's licence suspension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 90-day driver's licence suspension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 90-day driver's licence suspension
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12-month Alberta Ignition Interlock Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 36-month Alberta Ignition Interlock Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lifetime Alberta Ignition Interlock Program
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30-day vehicle seizure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30-day vehicle seizure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30-day vehicle seizure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning Ahead Course (1 day) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact Course (2 days) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$1000 fine + victim fine surcharge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$2000 fine + victim fine surcharge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$2000 fine + victim fine surcharge
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charged under the Criminal Code 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charged under the Criminal Code

Question: What is the role of the RCMP and when does a sample demand become a criminal code investigation that is the jurisdiction of the RCMP?

Answer:

- The role of the RCMP would be to take over impaired driving investigations when the Community Peace Officer determines that aggravating factors are present. Aggravating factors are as follows:
 - Impaired driving causing bodily harm;
 - Impaired driving causing death;
 - Impaired driving with a passenger under the age of 16; and/or
 - Impaired driving with a previous conviction within the past 3 years.
- If RCMP are unavailable to assist in the event that a Community Peace Officer comes across an impaired driver with a youth passenger, or with previous convictions, the Community Peace Officer may still proceed with provincial sanctions. The crown would prefer that any stop with the aggravating factors proceeds with criminal charges instead of provincial sanctions, but it is not required.

Question: Does this apply to impairment due to drugs? What is our process if we suspect a driver is high?

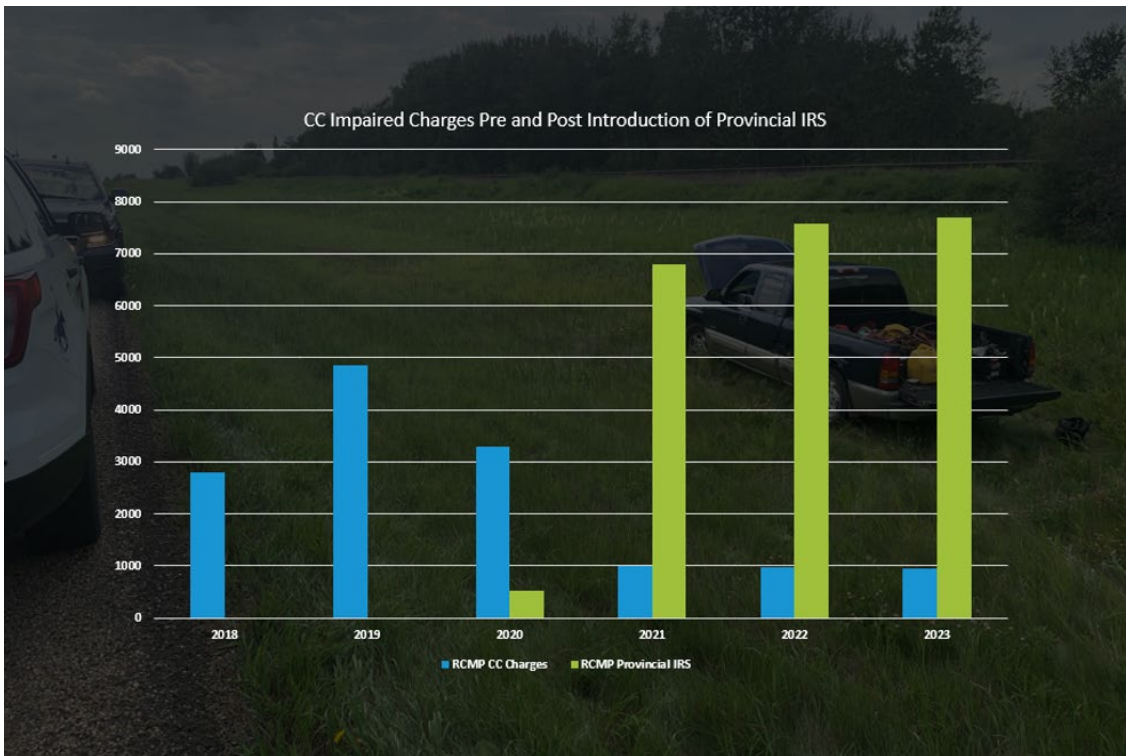
Answer:

- The Solicitor General has instructed the County that Community Peace Officers will not deal with drug impaired driving during this pilot project. If a Community Peace Officer suspects drug impairment, they will be required to call the RCMP to attend and conduct Standardized Field Sobriety Testing.

Question: What will happen with the pilot project is complete?

Answer:

- At the end of 2025, all Strathcona County Peace Officers will be trained to deliver mandatory alcohol screening.
- Monthly check-in meetings will be held to evaluate the project's success over the course of one year.
- As more drivers are asked to provide breath samples, we may see a spike in impaired driving charges in the community as the RCMP has provincially.



Graph provided by Alberta RCMP

Question: How do I find out more information?

Answer:

- Information about impaired driving and mandatory alcohol screening in Canada: https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/cj-jp/sidl-rlcfa/qa_c46-qr_c46.html
- Information about penalties for impaired driving in Alberta: <https://www.alberta.ca/impaired-driving-penalties>

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