

**MEDIA RELEASE**

For Immediate Release

December 12, 2007

## **DON'T CRASH THE PARTY THIS HOLIDAY SEASON**

(Burnaby, BC) – The BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation is reminding drivers not to crash the party this holiday season by driving while impaired – and that means drugs too.

While alcohol is still the leading cause of impairment when it comes to driving offenses of this kind, drug impairment, is on the rise.

A report released last year by in *The Road Safety Monitor: Drugs and Driving* found among other things that an estimated 520,000 Canadians drove after using marijuana or hashish in the previous year. According to the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse young males are driving under the influence of cannabis as often as, or more often, than they drive under the influence of alcohol.

“Most drivers have fortunately changed their attitudes toward drinking and driving but there appears to be a lack of education toward drugs and driving,” states Allan Lamb, executive director for the BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation. “Impaired drivers kill 2 people every week on BC roads and I suspect many of these drivers are impaired by a drug other than alcohol,” said Lamb.

While tests show that alcohol consumption results in more aggressive driving behaviours like speeding, drivers who use cannabis are more likely to drive slowly, are less alert, have problems with time/distance perception, and exhibit latent braking tendencies – all of which are extremely dangerous driving behaviours in themselves.

Impaired driving is not just about alcohol and illicit drugs according to Cpl. Dave Savoy, Drug Recognition Expert for the Surrey RCMP. “Prescription tranquilizers and narcotics can have adverse effects on coordination and reaction time if not taken accordingly.” Savoy adds that, “people may think that marijuana and prescription medications have a lesser effect on their ability to operate a motor vehicle safely. The truth is when prescription drugs are not taken accordingly they are just as, if not more dangerous than illegal drugs. Depending on the individual, some prescription drugs when abused, can have the same outward results as someone who is very intoxicated - sluggish movements and slurred speech for example. The person's ability to operate a motor vehicle will more than likely be impaired by the prescription drugs that they are abusing. This is easy to see because when someone is taking a prescription and they are not getting the desired effect or pain relief from the dosage that is prescribed, they then increase the dosage on their

own accord, when the body feels that this dosage is not enough they increase it again and so on until without realizing it they are taking an impairing level of the prescription medication, and then getting behind the wheel of a car. A deadly combination.”

Driving is impaired when the ability to do so is affected by any substance or condition that changes the mood or perception of reality of the driver. Alcohol or drugs, illicit or prescription, and even fatigue and stress will impair your driving. A combination of any or all of these things can be deadly.

Time is the only thing that reduces the effects drugs and alcohol. The BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation is asking partygoers not to get behind the wheel if they have consumed alcohol or drugs.

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**Note:** Backgrounder and Tip Sheet that accompanies this news release available at <http://www.tsfbcaa.com/content/custompages/news.aspx>

**About BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation:**

The BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation (TSF) is a non-profit registered charity working with families, communities and business partners to reduce the number and severity of traffic crashes and injuries in B.C. For more information contact visit [www.bcaatsf.ca](http://www.bcaatsf.ca) or call 604-298-5107.

**Available for Interview:**

Allan Lamb, Executive Director for the BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation  
Cpl. Dave Savoy, DRE Surrey RCMP - Traffic Services

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