



News Release:

Analysis reveals only 5.6% of crashes on the Malahat cited by police as exceeding the speed limit

CRD Traffic Safety Commission admits little to no data supporting campaign for Photo Radar 2.0

Freedom of Information requests to ICBC reveal that a campaign by the CRD Traffic Safety Commission (TSC) for point-to-point speed cameras on the Malahat was done in the absence of evidence that speeding (over the limit) has been a significant contributing factor in crashes on the roadway. The data shows unremarkable overall numbers of Malahat crashes and calls into question the almost singular focus of high-profile speeding campaigns by police.

SENSE BC researcher Derek Lewers requested ICBC data which shows that exceeding posted limits was cited as a contributing factor in only 5.6% of all crashes through the entire 10-year time period. This data was only obtained with difficulty after months of repeated requests and one complaint to the Office of Information and Privacy Commission.

Crash data shows the category of “speed” as a top contributing factor, however this intentional aggregation includes both speed above and below the speed limits (“*too fast for conditions*”). Crash data from BC and elsewhere in North America typically shows that two-thirds of “speeding” crashes occur below the limit, and the Malahat data reflects the same. As such, these “speed” related crashes are not addressed by either police speeding campaigns nor automated enforcement (*eg. photo radar, point-to-point, time over distance*).

However, when pressed for an explanation for CRD TSC’s aggressive campaign to install Automated Speed Enforcement on the highway, CRD TSC Chair Barb Desjardins stated in an email to Lewers dated September 28, 2017, “Specific road data was not a deciding factor for TSC members, because the police officers who regularly attend TSC meetings indicate speeding is continuously an issue on the Malahat. You may want to direct your request for road data to ICBC.”

Past chair of TSC Colin Plant also wrote to Lewers on September 29, 2017, “The Traffic Safety Commission did not compile the in-depth data (*traffic count, crash rates, crash rate comparisons*) you have requested in your email to Chair Desjardins. The data you requested on current conditions would be best obtained through a query to ICBC.”

SENSE BC’s Lewers expressed disappointment in the findings saying “It is very discouraging that public servants, whom we should rely on for good policy and law, not only didn’t do their homework but instead pushed an expensive and punitive speed camera-based agenda against motorists seemingly under false pretenses. They lobbied the province for a solution to a problem which they invented or perceived, and wasted valuable taxpayer resources in doing so.”

Top 10 Contributing Factors – Malahat Crashes	
Driver Inattentive	25.6%
Other (police comments)	20.3%
Road Condition (ice, snow, slush, water)	17.9%
Driving Too Fast For Conditions	12.6%
Following Too Closely	11.4%
Weather (fog, sleet, rain, snow)	9.2%
Wild Animal	8.2%
Driver Error/Confusion	7.7%
Exceeding Speed Limit	5.6%
Failing to Yield Right of Way	5.1%



Lewers continued: “The CRD TSC has operated a website with at least one promotional video for Average Speed Cameras (<https://youtu.be/dAx7MuBg-fc>) and rallied the public through various media outlets and press releases to push a narrative that those exceeding the posted limits are frequently the reasons for high profile Malahat road closures. They are not, and we are calling them on it. Crash rates on the Malahat are unremarkable according to the information we’ve received directly from ICBC and MOTI. This committee didn’t do their work. What is astounding, is that in over 90 million trips on the Malahat, police cited excessive speed as a factor in ONE crash. Yet police resources continue to be focused on speed impounding 19 vehicles on the December 7th weekend where owners lose the use of their car for a week and costs in excess of \$2,000 in fines, impound fees, risk premiums, and penalty point premiums. Police issued another 63 speeding tickets this past weekend. Valuable Police resources are being wasted enforcing technical violations of low limits” said Lewers.

Malahat Quick Facts:

The Malahat roadway examined is approximately 28 km long. It [averages 24,739 vehicle trips each day](#) which translates into 90,000,000 trips over a ten-year period. The accompanying ICBC data shows:

- 414 crashes were reported on the Malahat over the ten-year period. One crash per 217,400 trips.
- For those 414 crashes, police identified 685 contributing factors.
- More than half of the crashes are property-damage-only (PDO) - 224 of the 414 crashes or 54%.
- Only **one** crash (out of 414) was associated with excessive speed (40 km/h over the posted limit)
- Too fast for conditions (not Exceeding Speed Limit) was cited in 12.6% of crashes.
- Driver inattention was the overriding factor, present in 25.6% of crashes.
- MOTI reports that the crash rate on the Malahat is lower than the provincial average for this type of road, with most crashes occurring at major intersections and merging sections of the highway.

SENSE BC Co-Founder Ian Tootill urges MOTI Minister Claire Trevena to continue the comprehensive speed limit reviews which were launched by the previous BC Government. These reviews should result in properly set speed limits on all provincial roadways so that motorists aren’t subjected to arbitrary and costly enforcement, and so that police resources are more effective and focused. “While we are pleased with the recent decision by Minister Trevena that the province is not installing Point to Point Speed cameras, we are demanding the limits reflect the upper end of safe travel speed for the safe majority of drivers, which according to most recent available MOTI data, suggests the limits would be up to 95km/h rounded up to the nearest 10 (100 km/h) on that roadway. “Let’s put our police resources to work effectively, watching for aggressive, incompetent and impaired drivers, and stop robbing the ordinary hard-working British Columbian who is not negatively impacting road safety.” Said Tootill. “Let’s work to better educate our drivers in all aspect of road safety before they are first handed the keys to our roadways.”

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Background data can be downloaded at: <https://sense.bc.ca/doc/malahat.pdf>

Page 1: Initial FOI from ICBC showing aggregate data (note that "speed" is one category).

Page 2: Subsequent FOI from ICBC with more detail (speed broken down into three categories).

Page 3: Our combined analysis of the ICBC data.

Note: Police can assign up to 4 contributing factors per entity (*entities are drivers, pedestrians, or cyclists*)