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BY TODD COYNE AND EMILY JACKSON

VANCOUVER SUN tcoyne@vancouver.sun.com

emilyjackson@vancouver.sun.com

Excessive speed could cost you thousands, plus impoundment of your vehicle

New provisions in B. C.'s Motor Vehicle Act will cost excessive speeders dearly once they take effect later this month.

Starting Sept. 20, drivers caught speeding in excess of 40 kilometres over the posted speed limit can expect to pay as much as \$ 737 for ticket, towing and storage fees up front while their vehicle is held for a mandatory seven-day impound.

Subsequent costs include a \$ 320 ICBC driver-risk premium charge every year for three years, and three demerit points on their driving records. And that's just for first-time offenders.

Those busted for excessive speeding a second time will have their vehicles impounded for 30 days and can expect to shell out as much as \$ 1,243 up front, plus a \$ 370 annual driver-risk premium each year for three years.

For third-time and subsequent excessive-speeding offences within two years, drivers will suffer a 60-day vehicle impoundment and be charged as much as \$ 1,903 plus an additional \$ 430 ICBC premium each year for three years.

B. C. superintendent of motor vehicles Steve Martin said Friday it's important drivers understand that these new anti-speeding measures are mandatory and not at the discretion of traffic-enforcement officers.

" You're going to be stranded on the highway," Martin warned speeders. " If they've got their family in the car and they're heading up to the Okanagan for a long weekend on the Coquihalla, they're still going to lose their car."

Martin said an average of 167 people are killed due to excessive speeds on B. C. roads every year, and that May and September are the deadliest months, with more drivers trying to make the most of their first and last long weekends of the summer.

Martin said the solicitor-general's and public safety ministry latched onto the idea of mandatory impounds for speeders after seeing positive results from similar measures in Ontario that took effect in September of 2007.

" They introduced significant fines ranging from \$ 2,000 to \$ 10,000 and also vehicle impoundments, and what they have seen are better road-safety outcomes as a result. In terms of fatalities per hundred thousand, Ontario leads the country in results."

Martin said that while the province will not necessarily deploy more police to crack down on speeders come Sept. 20, traffic enforcement will be fully aware of the new laws and motivated to enforce them.