

BC Coalition of People with Disabilities

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Over 30 years of advocacy

May 28th 2009

Dear Mayor and Council,

Re: Use of cell phones and other handheld devices while operating a motor vehicle

At a recent BC Coalition of People with Disabilities (BCCPD) Board meeting, Valerie Thoem, a BCCPD director who is also on the Mayor's Advisory Committee for Disability Issues in Duncan, reported on a survey conducted by Cowichan Independent Living in the Cowichan Valley. The survey was on the use of handheld devices being used by people operating motor vehicles.

The Board discussed the dangers inherent in using these devices and the tragic consequences that are often the result of drivers being distracted while using handheld cell phones. The BCCPD's membership includes many individuals who have been severely disabled in traffic accidents and are lifetime wheelchair users as a consequence.

The BCCPD is very concerned about automobile accidents in view of the proliferation of cell phones and other handheld devices. For example, this week in the media we heard about the tragic story of a young man who was killed in an accident as a result of texting on his cell phone while driving. The Board was unanimous in its support of the following motion:

We strongly endorse the resolutions by the Mayor's Advisory Committee for Disability Issues, which requests a ban on the use of handheld communication devices, while operating a motor vehicle, with exemption provided for police and other emergency personnel.

We feel very strongly that every effort should be made to take every possible precaution to prevent these tragic accidents. We are writing to you in the hope that you will join us in advocating for a ban on the use of handheld communications devices in BC.

Yours sincerely,

Al Hanet
President

Jane Dyson
Executive Director

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