

March 18, 2009

CCMTA - 2009 Police Partnership Award

Nomination - Capital Regional District Integrated Road Safety Unit, Victoria, BC

Situation: In 2007, 54 persons were killed on Vancouver Island highways. Island District lead the province for the most numbers of persons killed. Alcohol and/or drug impairment was the leading causal factor in over 50% of all fatal and serious injury collisions on the Island.

Task: Working in conjunction with Island District Traffic Services, the Capital Regional District Integrated Road Safety Unit membership undertook to aggressively target impaired drivers. The Unit also undertook to partner more closely with area Crown Counsel to increase our successes in prosecuting impaired cases.

Action: The Membership within the Unit got together. They saw that they could step up their own efforts to contribute to harm reduction. They committed to a target of 15 impaired investigations per member for the year. We realized early on that gaps in knowledge and report writing existed that would be barriers to success unless we tackled these items first. Unit Management undertook to train and equip the Membership with the proper courses to better detect these drivers. Two more Members were trained as Drug Recognition Experts, adding to two existing trained members. All the members received SFST training, The Unit's Road Supervisor was qualified as an 'impaired expert' by the courts. She provided in-house training over several weeks for impaired report writing, evidence gathering, changes to impaired driving legislation and new Case Law.

Several of the senior members on the Unit that were proficient in impaired investigations and prosecutions and committed to mentoring new colleagues to the Unit that were often uncomfortable investigating impaired and high driving. The Unit's shift schedules were changed to target impaired drivers exclusively from 3 PM to 1 PM every Thursday, Friday and Saturday afternoon and evening shift.

The two teams combined their efforts every Friday evening and additional overtime for outside members was offered to concentrate on the Friday and Saturday shifts targeting impaired drivers.

Unit Managers and Senior Members met with the three individual Crown Counsels within the Capital Regional District, along with Regional Crown, to discuss a common report acceptable to all prosecutors for charge approval. In the past, what was acceptable by one Crown was acceptable by the other. This was frustrating investigators and limiting our successes. In the end the Unit was able to achieve a consensus. A uniform reporting narrative was developed that also helped new impaired investigators to cover all the necessary steps from the start to the end of their investigations.

The Unit also went to the media and different policing partners in the Region to bring impaired driving offences to the forefront and were able to link the message that CRD IRSU meant business, that we were an aggressive, proactive impaired driving enforcement unit. We traveled outside of the Capital Regional District on several occasions to work with other provincial traffic units and IRSU Unit. We brought in both NI IRSU and GV IRSU to concentrate on community lock downs and/or target major arterial highways. We also worked this messaging through regular meetings with MADD, releasing timely impaired driving video to the media, we worked with our traffic safety committee by doing infomercials on SHAW and took part in phone in Q&A's regarding road safety with local radio stations.

Results: At the end of 2008, we evaluated what we set out to do with what we accomplished. The Unit achieved a number of significant successes. The entire Island District realized a 18% decrease in traffic fatalities over 2007. The Capital Regional District experienced a dramatic drop in fatalities, from 16 in 2007 to 12 in 2008, for a 25% decrease. We saw a direct correlation for the reduced fatality count in 2008 by increasing the Unit's number of dedicated impaired enforcement hours and a commitment by the team to increasing their individual officer initiated impaired investigations. Initiated impaired investigations went **from 94 in 2007 to 211 in 2008 (for an average of 14.9 impaired investigations per member for the year - just shy of the 15 investigations per member goal.**

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