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# RNC expects more convictions for impaired driving by drugs

CORY HURLEY  
The Western Star

CORNER BROOK — The city's RNC has a "Saint" on staff whose presence is expected to lead to a crackdown on impaired driving by drugs.

Const. Brad Saint, drug recognition expert, is trained to detect whether a person is under the influence of drugs.

His knowledge and expertise were put to use in Corner Brook Thursday after the RNC received a complaint of a possible impaired driver in the area of Confederation Drive.

As the result of an investigation, a 23-year-old male was arrested and charged with impaired driving by drug and breach of a recognizance.

Const. Saint said the onus is on the officers in the field to determine, mainly from the actions and reactions of the subject, whether there is suspected impairment. In the incidents when impairment by alcohol is ruled out, more than likely through utilizing a road side screening device or breathalyzer, impairment by drugs is suspected.

The subject is then brought to headquarters and handed over to the drug recognition expert for evaluation. A series of divided attention and physical tests — including blood pressure, body temperature, and pulse rate — is conducted. The subject is then requested to provide a urine sample.

The only time blood testing is done is when the subject is unable to provide testing.

"It's new here," Const. Saint, the only trained expert on staff here, told The Western Star Friday. "Before this was brought in and we had this training in place, it was difficult for the officers on the road. Quite often they knew something wasn't right with the driver they were dealing with, but they didn't know how to recognize it.

"Fortunately that has changed and what you are seeing is an increase in the people being brought in."

Thursday's incident was the third such charge laid in the Corner Brook area. There has been one conviction and this is the second before the courts. The 23-year-old was released on an undertaking to reappear in provincial court on March 4 at 9:30 a.m.

"Even courts here haven't had a whole lot of experience with it, but they are going to," Const. Saint said. "It's new and is one of those things that, as the law enforcement community becomes more aware of how to detect it, you will see the increase in prosecutions."

He said it's key for the public to know that impairment by drugs can be by both the prescription and non-prescription variety. He said charges for impairment of prescription medication can be laid the same as illicit drug use — whether it is abuse of the medication or impairment through its regular use.

"A lot of people don't realize, they go to a doctor and they are prescribed a medication for a condition they have, if that affects their ability to operate a motor vehicle, pharmacies are required to put that on their medication," he said. "A lot of people are under their prescribed medication and, because it is prescribed, they think they can drive the car, be impaired, and it's OK. That's not the case."

Another concern is the misinformation about driving under the influence of drugs.

"The police have a concern about marijuana use amongst our youth," Const. Saint said. "Some of them have the misguided opinion that they are not impaired when they are using this. That is a big, big mistake.

“Our officers are becoming very educated in the fact that it does impair and the expertise is available to them now to detect if these individuals are impaired.

“If they are, the same penalties apply — they lose their licence, they are fined.”






02/02/08

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**T George from ontario writes:** Corner Brook's Saint should not flatter himself, nor consider his abilities of recognition to be superior than that of his co workers. I am willing to bet the MR Saint is no angel himself, and that he puts his publicly funded drug benefit plan to use as necessary. It would be a special incentive indeed to be afforded time off with pay when we feel under the weather but as reality dictates, this luxury is not standard amongst the voting majority. Mr Saint should take a long hard look at the eyes he sees in his own mirror as the medicine he swallows might one day be his own. Get back to work and let the rest of us do the same.

Posted 02/02/2008 at 9:47 AM | [Alert an Editor](#) | [Link to comment](#)

**Greg from NL writes:** Impairment is impairment - people are still a danger on the roads, and they should be dealt with accordingly. Most legal medications that have serious side effects have warnings on them and if you don't heed them and get picked up by the cops - then it's your own fault.

Posted 02/02/2008 at 11:20 AM | [Alert an Editor](#) | [Link to comment](#)

**imie from nl writes:** Well I guess we know who the stoners are who post on here....

Posted 02/02/2008 at 3:24 PM | [Alert an Editor](#) | [Link to comment](#)

**Rumps Martin from Ontario writes:** The Western Star once again did not question this obvious police press release.

Why do you always tuck in the pocket of the police?

There is another whole side to this story.

An officer can only demand a physical coordination test (SFST test) or breath sample.

The power of a police officer to demand a body fluid sample (saliva, urine or blood) is still under review and is merely proposed legislation.

Do not be fooled by police wishful thinking.

Know your rights!

Posted 02/02/2008 at 8:05 PM | [Alert an Editor](#) | [Link to comment](#)

**Rumps from Ontario writes:** Look at the last paragraph!!!

<http://www.justice.gc.ca/en/cons/did/theory.html>

This is the law!!

Shame on the Western Star for buying into police propoganda.

Posted 02/02/2008 at 9:04 PM | [Alert an Editor](#) | [Link to comment](#)

**rumps from ontario writes:** Even the Canada Safety Council has great problems with the above proposed legislation.

<http://www.safety-council.org/info/traffic/impaired/drug-impaired.html>

Any medical tests anywhere anytime must be done by your doctor.

Don't let these mildly trained police people near you.

They can only suggest you take tests.

You are under no legal obligation to take any medical tests.

Personally, I don't want any police state wannabe doctor sticking a needle in me.

Thank God!

Canada has not stooped that low.

Posted 03/02/2008 at 1:11 AM | [Alert an Editor](#) | [Link to comment](#)

**Rumps from ontario writes:** To The Western Star:

I give up!

The more I research this story,the more I realize what poor reporting you gave us.

Where are your researchers??

Do you just 'rip and print' every media release.

Just because it comes from the 'police' doesn't make it fact.

They have an agenda to prevent impaired driving. I can appreciate that.

But!

They obviously used 'scare tactics' here which you bought into hook line and sinker.

You scared my poor elderly relatives into not driving anymore out of fear they are doing something illegal.

Total bulls-t.

What total total irresponsible journalism.

Shame on the lot of you.

Hang your heads in total shame for disgracing your profession.

Posted 03/02/2008 at 2:35 AM | [Alert an Editor](#) | [Link to comment](#)

**dave from nl writes:** Just in case anyone is wondering...NO, THEY CAN NOT FORCE BLOOD TESTS, THEY LIED, AGAIN.

Posted 03/02/2008 at 7:09 AM | [Alert an Editor](#) | [Link to comment](#)

**rumps from ontario writes:** Dave,

Please do not blow off your steam in my wake!

Your opinions are always ill informed and I want nothing to do with you.

I stand alone.

Posted 03/02/2008 at 9:06 AM | [Alert an Editor](#) | [Link to comment](#)

**Mike M. from Cr. Bk. NL writes:** Now I know where you are coming from,very disappointed in the purpose for all your comments rumps. The last one gave away your true nature(intention).WAKE-up before you drown!

Posted 03/02/2008 at 10:52 AM | [Alert an Editor](#) | [Link to comment](#)

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