



VANCOUVER POLICE DEPARTMENT
Operations Division
Traffic Section

December 6th, 2006

To: Stephen Hayes
Supervisor, Service Delivery
Coast Mountain Bus Company

From: Andy Hobbs
Inspector i/c Traffic Section

Subject: Coast Mountain Bus Company Driver Training

Dear Stephen:

First, thank you for hosting our recent meeting. It was a great exchange of information with regards to many road safety issues and it was good to meet you and your co-workers.

As we agreed, I am including a number of concerns that we raised. Our concerns are by no means intended to be critical of all of your drivers and I believe that in the context of our conversation, that would have been clear to any observer. The majority of drivers are in compliance with the regulations with respect to road use and I hope that our perspective provides additional opportunities to enhance your in-service training for drivers.

Traffic lights-Based on our observations and public complaints/comments, any failure to stop for traffic lights combined with the practice of honking the horn through yellow and red lights is dangerous. I would encourage your training to remind drivers that both lights actually require them to come to a stop. However, we recognize that if the driver is unable to safely stop for the yellow light, the sounding of the horn is a reasonable added safety measure.

Blocking intersections-There is a need to accurately judge the available distance through an intersection when entering on a green so as to not "plug" the intersection—particularly in the congested downtown core.

Lane straddling-I recognize that in some cases, due to road design and some other factors, this practice is necessary to avoid collisions. However, it should be kept to an absolute minimum. For instance, w/b Hastings approaching Cambie, straddling the lane should occur between Carrall and Cambie and not prior to Carrall.

Safety triangles/equipment-When a Bus is broken down on the side of the road, safety triangles should be used to supplement the 4 way hazard lights that can dim over time.

Signals-The correct use of signals when approaching or leaving a stop. Use the appropriate signals (as you mentioned your training already covers) rather than the 4 way hazards to signal a stop. The hazard lights can create frustration and confusion to other drivers and road users. The exception being of course, that if a driver needs to have a prolonged stop to assist with disabled passenger.

Section 169.1 (1) (a) MVA-This section, in part, requires drivers to yield to a bus stopped, standing or parked if: the bus displays a sign or device requiring the vehicle to yield to the bus; and the bus driver has signaled an intention to move onto the traveled roadway. Subsection (3) reads "Despite subsection (1), a bus driver must not move a bus into the traveled portion of the highway unless it is safe to do so."

While most drivers operate according to the intent of section 169.1, based on my own observations, observations of other police officers, public comments and complaints, it is clear that a minority of drivers do not appreciate the meaning and application of subsection (3) and I would appreciate its inclusion in your training.

Speeding-Bus drivers are professionals with the difficult job of navigating large vehicles through congested streets with a myriad of hazards and obstructions including other drivers, cyclists and pedestrians. There are schedules to try to meet and dealing with the public can be a challenge. A variety of factors and pressures can cause some drivers to exceed the posted speed limit. While it may seem obvious, I believe that speeding is a significant contributing factor in collisions and I would appreciate your support by including the obvious, obeying speed limits, in your training. We have had a couple of recent examples where bus drivers have been stopped for (allegedly) going 90-100 kmh. This not only tends to diminish the professional image of bus drivers but it is also an unacceptable safety risk to the public.

If you decide that you would like to have a police officer participate in any of your training or if you have any concerns or questions, please contact me via e-mail or at 15(1)

I want to thank you again for the opportunity to discuss our concerns and I hope that you are able to resolve some of the concerns you raised as well. I look forward to future discussion and the opportunity to work together in a cooperative manner to make the roads safer and more efficient for everyone.

Sincerely,

Inspector Andy Hobbs
Officer i/c Traffic Section
Vancouver Police Department

15(1)

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