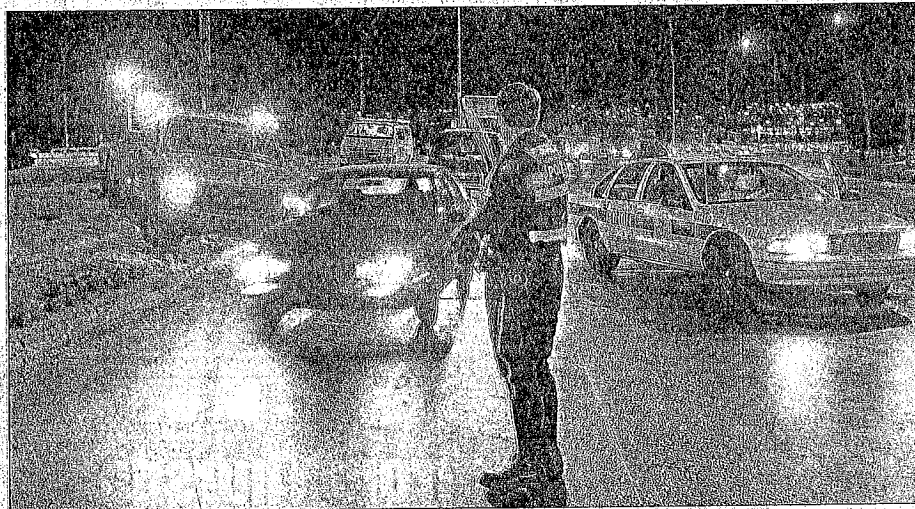


Bill 26 boosts sales of personal breathalyzers

Police prefer drivers not use the devices

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CALGARY HERALD



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Sales of personal breathalyzer devices in Alberta have jumped in the wake of the provincial government's push to get tougher on drinking and driving by imposing penalties on drivers who have a blood-alcohol level between .05 and .08, including greater powers to impound vehicles.

province during the announcement of the new law. We're seeing that same swing in Alberta right now," Salter said.

He estimated that sales are up 10 times in Alberta in recent weeks.

In two years, Salter said he's sold

thousands of the devices, which online go for \$67 to \$300.

He claims the readings are accurate to within .005.

"It's definitely something you can use over and over," Salter said.

Police say they have concerns with

personal breathalyzer devices, such as whether a person who has been drinking can operate it properly and they question how the products are made and calibrated.

"Any drinking creates a level of impairment. What we're talking about

is how impaired they are," said RCMP spokesman Sgt. Patrick Webb.

"By far what we recommend is don't worry about testing devices. Get a designated driver, take a taxi or find another way to not get behind the wheel. If you're that concerned that you have to be onto one of these instruments, the question is there. So you shouldn't be behind the wheel," Webb said.

Police in Calgary say drunk driving charges are down slightly so far in 2011.

In the first 10 months of the year there have been 2,458 impaired driving charges handed out, compared with 2,483 in the same period in 2010. There have also been 2,282 24-hour suspensions issued from January to October, which is down from 2,412 in the corresponding time frame last year.

Salter said the device is meant to help educate people who don't know how much they've had to drink and not to encourage them to drink more if they test lower than expected.

The results shown by his devices will not stand up in court or sway police, he added.

"The law says you can drink and drive. The law says you can't drink too much and drive," Salter said.

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