

Tougher drunk-driving law takes effect Sept. 1

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Alberta's tougher drunk-driving rules will take effect at the tail end of patio season and as students head back to university campuses, on Sept. 1. One of Alison Redford's

earliest moves as premier was also the most contentious on her agenda; legislation to bring in three-day licence suspensions and vehicle seizures for drivers with .05 blood-alcohol content or higher.

Transportation Minister Ric McIver confirmed Sunday the new penalties come into force

at the start of September.

This year, the month begins on the Saturday of the Labour Day long weekend, often a time of highway-patrol blitzes.

"The most important thing for people to remember is the rules haven't changed. The penalties are stiffer, but the rules haven't changed,"

McIver said.

The province will launch a publicity campaign about the changes this summer.

Come Sept. 1, drivers shouldn't expect to get off with a warning, said McIver.

"There's nothing planned at this time to have a grace period," he said. "The reason

for that is the rules are the same. If you were law abiding before this legislation and your behaviour stays the same, then nothing will change."

McIver said, he plans further consultation with the hospitality industry over the summer.

Currently, blowing between

.05 and .08 can net motorists a 24-hour licence suspension, and .08 or higher is a Criminal Code offence.

Wildrose campaigned in the last election on promises to scrap the new rules.

WITH FILES FROM JAMIE KOMARNICKI, CALGARY HERALD