



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Province doing a good job of managing its avalanche safety program, but improvements can be made

VICTORIA – The [Office of the Auditor General of British Columbia](#) has released a new audit report: [Avalanche Safety on Provincial Highways](#).

The audit examined whether the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure is effectively managing its avalanche safety program to:

- ensure the safety of highway users; and
- minimize the frequency and duration of avalanche-related road closures

Key findings

Overall, the audit concluded that the ministry is effective in its management of the avalanche safety program.

“There haven’t been any avalanche-related deaths on provincial highways in the last 20 years,” said Michael Pickup, auditor general. “And over a similar timeframe, both the frequency and duration of highway closures have shown a decreasing trend. That’s good news.”

“But our audit also found areas the ministry can improve on.”

Not all data on avalanche paths, road closures, and incidents were recorded or up to date, which hinders performance monitoring and analysis.

Recommendations

The report contains eight recommendations focused on improving highway user safety and reliability, all of which were accepted by the ministry. The recommendations include updating and recording information on avalanche paths, road closures, and avalanche-related incidents to better monitor performance and analyze trends.

Background

From early fall to late spring, many stretches of B.C. highways are at risk of avalanches. There are about 1,600 avalanche paths that pose risk to highway users.

Avalanches on highways can injure and kill people, damage vehicles and property, and close highways. They also restrict the movement of people and goods, potentially harming provincial and local economies.



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Auditor General
of British Columbia

In B.C., the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure is responsible for avalanche safety on provincial highways. Through its avalanche safety program, the ministry forecasts avalanche hazards and undertakes control work to keep highways safe and reliable.

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About the Office of the Auditor General of British Columbia

The auditor general is a non-partisan, independent officer of the legislature who reports directly to the legislative assembly. The Auditor General Act empowers the auditor general and staff to conduct audits, report findings and make recommendations.

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