

CTV Toronto



Ont. considers tougher rules for young drivers

Updated: Thu Jul. 10 2008 5:57:31 PM

ctvtoronto.ca



Premier Dalton McGuinty speaks to reporters on Thursday, July 10, 2008.

The Ontario government is considering new restrictions on young drivers, including a cellphone ban and extension of a zero tolerance law on alcohol.

Premier Dalton McGuinty hinted to reporters Thursday morning the changes are coming, but no official timeline has been set.

"We will continue to look at these kinds of issues on an ongoing basis to make sure we're doing everything we can to ensure our roads are safe," McGuinty said.

On Wednesday, Transportation Minister Jim Bradley said the province has been working with police forces and safety groups to make Ontario's roads safer.

One of the organizations involved is Mothers Against Drunk Driving, which says too many young people are still dying in car accidents.

While Bradley notes the province's roads are among the safest in North America, he says there is always room for improvement.

The minister says he is looking at all aspects of road safety, including the graduating licensing system, which is among the most stringent in

Canada.

Some of the proposed changes include:

- Banning young drivers from using cellphones
- Limiting the number of passengers they carry
- Imposing a blood alcohol limit of zero for drivers under 21

Under the current system, drivers with a G licence over the legal drinking age of 19 can have a blood-alcohol limit of up to .08 before they are charged with a crime. Drivers with G1 and G2 licenses aren't allowed any alcohol in their system.

The Ontario government says collision rates have dropped substantially since the graduated licensing system was implemented in 1994.

Bradley's comments for change come amid renewed calls for improvements to the licensing system after three young people were killed in a car accident in Muskoka last week.

And in May, three young women were killed near Cobourg when the driver, who was on a cellphone, made a U-turn in front of a tractor-trailer.

With a report from CTV Toronto's Paul Bliss and files from The Canadian Press