



## NEWS RELEASE

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*For Immediate Release*

### **Ombudsperson able to receive complaints as ICBC's new rate model takes effect**

**Victoria** – As ICBC's new insurance rate model comes into effect September 1<sup>st</sup>, the BC Ombudsperson is reminding vehicle owners that his office can investigate complaints about ICBC.

"Vehicle owners should take a close look at their next insurance policy to ensure the information being considered by ICBC in determining their renewal rate, such as accident history, is accurate," said Ombudsperson Jay Chalke. "We recommend that vehicle owners try to solve their problems directly with ICBC and its agents first, but if they still believe they have been treated unfairly, our investigators may be able to look more closely at individual complaints."

ICBC's new driver-based rate model will assess premiums based on each driver's 10-year driving history. Crashes will now follow the driver, not the vehicle. ICBC states that the pending changes are meant to reward safe drivers and to hold drivers with at-fault crashes and serious driving convictions accountable.

"This is a major overhaul of how insurance premiums are calculated," said Chalke. "ICBC has indicated that under the new scheme some insurance rates will go up, others down. As ICBC implements this new scheme, it is important that ICBC treats customers fairly, which includes accurately calculating how the new rate scheme is being applied in individual circumstances and explaining that calculation to policy holders." ICBC has added an online rate estimator to its website [www.icbc.com](http://www.icbc.com). The rate roll-out will happen over the next year as vehicle owners renew their insurance policy or purchase a new policy.

"There is no question that these are significant changes, and in our experience, whenever we see large-scale changes being applied by public bodies in practice, fairness issues arise," said Chalke. "I encourage ICBC to learn from their experience as the new rate structure is implemented and make necessary adjustments to improve fairness in real time."

The BC Ombudsperson receives 7,000 to 8,000 complaints and enquires from the public each year. ICBC is the top non-government organization that people complain to the office about. The Ombudsperson is independent from government and impartially investigates complaints of unfairness about a wide range of public sector entities including crown corporations such as ICBC and BC Hydro, BC provincial government ministries, municipal governments, health authorities and public schools and universities. The Ombudsperson's services are free and confidential.

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