

SHOULDER RUMBLE STRIPS INFORMATION PAGE

*What Are Shoulder Rumble Strips?
(a.k.a. 'SRS' or 'rumble strips')*

**From the U.S. Department of Transportation
—Federal Highway Administration:**

A *shoulder rumble strip* is a longitudinal design feature installed on a paved roadway shoulder near the travel lane. It is made of a series of indented or raised elements intended to alert inattentive drivers through vibration and sound that their vehicles have left the travel lane. On divided highways, they are typically installed on the median side of the roadway as well as on the outside (right) shoulder.

Shoulder rumble strips (SRS) are a relatively new feature on BC highways. *Although the BCCC is opposed to rumble strips due to their adverse effect on cycling, we have worked together with the British Columbia Ministry of Transportation from the beginning to lessen the impact for bicyclists.*

Why Are We Opposed to Shoulder Rumble Strips?

SRS present significant hazards and impediments to cyclists, including:

- reduced shoulder width
- a hard-to-see surface that can result in a fall
- increased propensity for a roadside to gather debris
- forced separation of cyclists from the travel lane

In addition, we object to these installations on the grounds that they compromise the safety of cyclists while trying to compensate for motorists who are: driving with excessive speed; driving while drunk or drowsy; distracted; inattentive.

We have worked long and hard to get the Ministry of Transportation to cease installation of these features, and have worked with them to develop guidelines for installation of them where they insist. To date, a number of installations have occurred which are counter to the agreed-upon guidelines, and in locations where the purported necessity of installation ran counter to the Ministry's original purposes i.e., on sections of roadway in which run-off-road crashes were known to have occurred.

Negotiations with the BC Ministry of Transportation (MoT)

Shoulder rumble strips (SRS) are a relatively new feature on BC highways. Although the BCCC is opposed to rumble strips due to their adverse effect on cycling, we have worked together with MoT from the beginning to lessen the impact for bicyclists.

We are continuing our strong efforts to ensure that when SRS are installed on BC highways, they are only installed according to the set guidelines established in consultation with the BCCC. In several areas of BC, these installations have been done incorrectly, and the BCCC has been successful in seeing these corrected. Despite our efforts and working closely with the Ministry,

improper installations are still put in place. The BCCC takes firm steps to ensure this will not continue.

The BCCC proposed that the MoT look into alternatives to shoulder rumble strips. Various options were discussed, with the non-installation of SRS being the recommendation. Tactile Rain Line was proposed as a less hazardous option than SRS to bicyclists. MoT is now considering the Tactile Rain Line option for some areas. The BCCC will continue to monitor the situation.

Brief History of BCCC Involvement with SRS:

- **1996 - 1999:**
BCCC pursues MoT about persistent SRS rumours for BC.
- **Fall 1999 - Spring 2000:**
BCCC consultation with MoT on SRS guidelines.
- **April 2000:**
SRS Guidelines approved by MoT Executive; BCCC continues to oppose SRS and to monitor MoT actions.
- **April 2003:**
MoT proposes new SRS guidelines which jeopardise the safety and mobility of cyclists.
- **May 2003:**
MoT provides copy of new SRS guidelines to BCCC--BCCC writes to Minister in opposition.
- **June 2003:**
MoT notifies BCCC that proposed new guidelines will not be implemented.
- **July 2003:**
Proposed meeting with MoT on SRS does not take place. BCCC continues to push for this.

BCCC consultation with the Ministry on shoulder rumble strips pre-dated the development of the Provincial Cycling Advisory Committee (PACC) and in fact was one of the cornerstones of setting up the PACC.

Summary of Current Status:

In April 2003, the Ministry of Transportation's Engineering branch proposed a new set of guidelines regarding shoulder rumble strips (SRS) that would increase the risk to cyclists. Despite the Provincial Cycling Policy specifying that the BCCC is to be consulted on such changes, we were not informed until late May.

The BCCC has always insisted on close interaction with MoT on developments regarding SRS. Having consulted extensively on the guidelines and provided a clear list of our concerns and requirements, we were extremely disappointed to see a new set of guidelines developed which would result in a decreased in cyclist safety and mobility.

The BCCC acted quickly to prevent this latest implementation by writing a letter to Minister Judith Reid and to Ministry staff, and copied to Premier Gordon Campbell. As a result, the proposed changes to the guidelines were withdrawn. The original guidelines (developed in conjunction with the British Columbia Cycling Coalition) remain in place.

As a result of the BCCC's pro-active measures, the new version of the guidelines was dropped, and MoT reverted to the original guidelines.

Ministry staff notified us that a meeting specifically addressing SRS would be arranged for July 2003. As of August, this meeting has not yet been convened, despite continued requests by the BCCC.

Through the Provincial Cycling Advisory Committee, we are requesting additional safety measures surrounding SRS, including advance warning signs, possible paint treatments and milling the rumble strips into the fog line (as is done in some jurisdictions in the US).

For more details on the rumblestrip issue, please see the [May](#) and [July](#) updates linked below, [requests for input](#) and information on two [cyclist injuries](#) that occurred as a result of shoulder rumble strips. At the bottom of the page are links to the proposed (now rejected) and existing [MoT guidelines](#), as well as links to [other information on SRS](#).

[SRS Update--May 2003:](#)

Ministry proposes SRS guidelines that jeopardise the safety and mobility of cyclists --BCCC acts quickly to prevent implementation.

The BCCC has always requested close interaction with MoT on developments regarding shoulder rumble strips (SRS). Having consulted extensively on the guidelines and provided a clear list of our concerns and requirements (directly via the BCCC, and through the Provincial Cycling Advisory Committee), we were extremely disappointed to see a new set of guidelines developed which would jeopardise the safety and mobility of cyclists.

[SRS Update--July 2003:](#)

BCCC Pressure on Ministry Averts Negative Changes to SRS Guidelines

Due to pressure from the British Columbia Cycling Coalition, the MoT's Engineering Branch has withdrawn its proposed changes to the Shoulder Rumble Strip (SRS) guidelines.

[More details...](#)

Since April 2000, there have been numerous cases of rumble strips not installed to specifications. MoT has fixed up one or two locations and ignored the rest. Many of the concerns we had initially expressed have turned out to be well founded. We have passed on this information and asked for a resolution to these issues. There has been no response. The proposed guidelines would have eliminated the need to evaluate routes for SRS suitability prior to their installation.

This a clear indication that we need to push even harder to make our needs known. We have worked hard, invested a great deal of volunteer time and negotiated in good faith with MoT representatives in developing the original guidelines. We did not achieve all that we wanted, but did manage to positively influence the guidelines first developed in the spring of 2000.

More work needs to be done, and we continue to monitor the actions of the Ministry. Further updates will be provided as they are available.

At the April 2003 meeting of the Provincial Advisory Cycling Committee we requested a detailed listing of the existing and proposed shoulder rumble strip installations in British Columbia. We have not yet received this information. Once it is provided to us, we will make it available here.

We want your input!

If you are aware of improper or dangerous rumble strip placements, please contact us.

Cyclist Injuries -- We have been contacted regarding two separate cyclist injuries involving shoulder rumble strips:

- **Friday, May 16, 2003**
-- near Hope, B.C.
- **Saturday, July 19, 2003**
-- southern approach to the Malahat, just north of Victoria, B.C.

More details on these incidents as well as input from the cycling community can be found on our [SRS injuries](#) page.

Do you have an opinion or observations you would like to share about this type of road installation, or do you now avoid routes with SRS? Please contact us.

If you or anyone you know of has had an injury or a near miss due to SRS, please let us know. You can find our contact information at <http://www.bccc.bc.ca/contact.htm>.

As well, you may want to contact the MoT Claims Manager:

Marc Daubner
Ministry of Transportation
Phone: 250 387-7579
Fax: 250 356-9724
E-Mail: Marc.Daubner@gems1.gov.bc.ca
PO Box 9850
STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, BC, V8W 9T5

Kindly CC us on all correspondence--info@bccc.bc.ca.

Guidelines

[MoT Provincial Rumble Strip Guidelines \(Original, April 2000\)](#) (PDF, 2.8 MB)

Developed in conjunction with the British Columbia Cycling Coalition

(Note: In May 2003 there was a revision of these guidelines resulting in a draft document which would have increased the negative impact on cyclists by SRS. Due to pressure from the BCCC, these proposed guidelines have been withdrawn.)

SRS Links

(Note: the views expressed in these resources are not necessarily those of the BCCC)

[North Vancouver Rumble Strip Guidelines](#) (PDF, 6 KB)

[U.S. DoT—Federal Highway Administration \(FHWA\)](#)

Technical Advisory Paper on Roadway Shoulder Rumble Strips

Includes definition of SRS, background on rumble strip development and use, when use of rumble strips is warranted, what types of SRS designs are most often used, how SRS are typically installed, how the adverse effects of SRS on cyclists can be reduced, FHWA's recommendations for the installation of shoulder rumble strips, and references.

[Colorado DoT](#)

Bicycle-Friendly Rumble Strips—PDF Files

Includes full report, plus appendices covering Rumble Strip Photos and Plans, Bicycle Rider Information, and Sound and Vibration Data