

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

SPEECH TO THE SELECT STANDING COMMITTEE ON PRIVATE BILLS AND PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS ON BILL M217 – DASHBOARD CAMERAS IN COMMERCIAL VEHICLES ACT March 4, 2026

Jeannette Van Den Bulk
Deputy Commissioner, Office of the Information and Privacy
Commissioner for British Columbia

I would like to begin this morning by recognizing the traditional territories of the Ləkʷəŋjínəŋ people, also known as the Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations, where we are meeting today.

The *Personal Information Protection Act*, or PIPA, governs the collection, use and disclosure of personal information by organisations in BC. Its purpose is to do so in a manner that recognises both the rights of individuals to protect their personal information and the needs of organisations to collect it to do business. This Bill does an end run around the important protections built into our privacy legislation.

I would like to focus on two main areas of concern: first, the significant financial and administrative burden this will place on businesses in BC, and second, the widespread privacy impact this requirement will have on those going about their public lives. These concerns stem from the substantial collection of personal information that would be required by this bill.

I will start with the administrative burden this will place on businesses. PIPA sets out several requirements for organizations that collect personal information, including the requirement for organizations to respond to requests from individuals for copies of their own personal information.

For example, if I cross the street and am captured on a tow truck operator's dashcam, I could request a copy of that video from the tow truck company. If other pedestrians are also in the cross walk, the tow truck company would be required to blur out their images before providing the footage to me.

Both blurring out images and providing the video footage can be a time-consuming, expensive and technical process.

Organisations are also required to have reasonable security in place for any personal information they collect. In this context that could mean:

- Physical controls - such as access to and protection of the cameras and resulting footage – whether storage is in the device, on a server or in the cloud,
- Administrative controls - such as ensuring all drivers are trained on the use of the cameras, written privacy and security policies as well as breach response plans, and
- Technical controls – for example this may include encryption to secure the footage, role-based access to ensure only those with a need can view the footage, and audit logs showing who has accessed it.

Last year, BC's Passenger Transportation Board discontinued a mandatory camera program for taxis in BC. The Board cited several reasons for its decision, including data accessibility and technological challenges. This is a cautionary tale about the complexities of mandating surveillance for BC organizations, many of which are small or medium businesses with limited resources and capacity.

While the administrative burden is a consideration, I do not want to bury the headline – this Bill is also extremely privacy invasive. I read comments in the media that there are no privacy concerns as everything recorded by a forward-facing dashcam is happening in public.

The BC Supreme Court recently followed the Canadian and British courts in expressly stating people do not automatically lose any privacy interests when they put their image or conduct in public view.

The Supreme Court of Canada also held that privacy is “not an all-or-nothing-concept” and that being in a public space “does not automatically negate all expectations of privacy with respect to observation or recording.”

A critical principle of privacy in PIPA is for an organisation to only collect information that a reasonable person would consider appropriate. Why do organisations that deliver pizza, or exterminate rodents, or paint fences need to collect personal information for road safety?

These cameras can and will collect sensitive personal information and more than just faces of pedestrians or other drivers. Today's cameras are high definition, with night vision, facial recognition, automated license plate recognition and other features. Potential sensitive information collected from every law-abiding adult and child going about their daily lives.

The potential for scope creep, where technology installed for one purpose is used for another purpose, is significant. The temptation to use already recorded footage to know more about clientele, or to monitor employees, can be great – especially if there are enhanced functions such as AI to quickly review footage.

Surveillance is often the first and easiest solution. However, as a society we must avoid the temptation to too easily leap to a simple approach. There are appropriate use cases for surveillance cameras – but they need to be legal, authorised and proportional.

Surveillance can be used in a targeted, measured manner when we need it without weakening the principles of the society we are trying to protect.

While imposing surveillance across BC might seem like a good way to improve road safety, there are many other actions that the government could take that would not diminish personal privacy or impose regulatory burdens on commercial vehicle operators. We encourage legislators to examine these less invasive, less burdensome alternatives.

In closing, we do not consider the installation and operation of dashboard cameras on ALL commercial vehicles in BC as proposed under Bill M217 to be a proportional, appropriate response to the problem of improving road safety.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.