



Lee-Ann Holbrook demonstrates to the media yesterday one of the eight 'code-blue' boxes installed in Vancouver's Harbour Centre parking lot. JON MURRAY — THE PROVINCE

## Safer parking plan is reducing crime

Chances of falling victim to a crime in a Vancouver parking lot are one in 1,300 — and that's in the safe lots.

Started a little more than a year ago, a joint initiative by the Vancouver police and business and community groups is making lots safer.

Twenty-five lots are now certified under the Safer Parking Initiative and another 12 are undergoing certification, said Colin Brown of sponsor Canadian Direct Insurance. "In the first year, we've seen a 25-per-cent decrease in crime in Safer Parking locations," said Brown. "But even today, there's a one-in-1,300 chance that you will be a victim of crime in a parking lot in Vancouver," he said. "The chances of that happening are four times that in places

that are not certified."

Polaris Realty made its Harbour Centre parking lot part of the initiative.

"In the last 2½ to three years we've reduced crime in here by 93 per cent," said Douglas Hume. "It does work, but you have to invest some time, money and effort." The upgrade at Harbour Centre totalled \$1.5 million and went toward changes like newly painted white walls and better lighting and signage.

Every floor has assistance stations, where the push of a button sets off a blinking blue light and connects to a security desk that's manned 24 hours a day. One of the 17 cameras in the facility gets trained on the area where the call originated.

— Staff Reporter