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TITLE: The Totally Deaf Driver in California, Part I

DATE: July 1963

AUTHOR(S): Ronald S. Coppin & Raymond C. Peck

REPORT NUMBER: 15

NTIS NUMBER: PB-220025 Part I

FUNDING SOURCE: Special legislative appropriation and Federal Highway Administration

PROJECT OBJECTIVE:

To determine whether or not the driving records of deaf drivers differ from those of non-deaf drivers, and whether or not deafness or other factors are responsible for any differences found. Specifically, the study was designed to ascertain whether the deaf driver represents a special risk to public safety and, if so, to suggest any necessary licensing restrictions or unique training needs.

SUMMARY:

Samples of deaf and non-deaf drivers were matched on five variables-age, annual mileage, occupation, sex, and area of residence. These matched samples were compared on traffic conviction and accident records. No significant differences were found for females; deaf males had similar violation records to, but 1.8 times the accident rate of, their nondeaf counterparts. Demographic data indicated that deaf drivers drove a significantly greater number of miles per year and were more heavily concentrated in lower socioeconomic strata than the nondeaf.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Further research was suggested to consider the specific types of accidents and their precipitating factors as well as analysis of driving performance by type of deafness (e.g., congenital vs. adventitious). It was suggested that the need for further or specialized training might be explored, as very few of the deaf drivers reported any formal driver training. No such research has been undertaken by the Department; however, the study has been used as a reference and quoted by researchers and traffic safety officials in other states and countries. It was quoted in the Federal Register, 12/23/76, 41(248), as a basis for the U.S. Bureau of Motor Carrier Safety's policy prohibiting deaf persons from operating interstate commercial vehicles.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Published in the *Highway Research Record*, 79, 35-44, 1965. Presented at the 43rd annual meeting of the Committee on Highway Safety Research.