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TITLE: The Effect of Renewal by Mail for Drivers with Less than Four-Year-Clean Records (Interim Report)

AUTHOR(S): Mary K. Janke

FUNDING SOURCE: Departmental Budget

DATE: November 1985

REPORT NUMBER: 101

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PROTECT OBJECTIVE:

To evaluate the traffic safety impact of allowing drivers with a two-year-clean record, but less than a four-year-clean record, to renew their licenses by mail.

SUMMARY:

Under a demonstration program authorized by the Legislature (SB 483, 1982), almost 500,000 drivers less than 70 years of age, whose driving records showed no entries for the two years preceding the date of expiration of their licenses, and who had no major convictions or fatal accidents (but could have other driving record entries) within the four years preceding this date, were randomly assigned to either a treatment or a control group. This subject selection process continued for one year, from October, 1982 to October, 1983. Treatment group members were allowed to renew their licenses by mail. control group members were required to come to a field office and pass vision and knowledge tests in order to renew.

This interim report covers driver records over a period of 18 months following the mailing of extension statements or renewal notices. During this period, there was no evidence that the extension program as a whole resulted in either increased accidents or traffic convictions for the group offered renewal by mail, as compared to the control group.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Program status quo was maintained, in accordance with a recommendation not to expand the program to drivers ineligible at that time until the full 4-year evaluation had been completed. The final report (#118) generally confirmed the findings of the interim report, though a crash-increasing effect of the program on a small subgroup of drivers was identified. Despite this, the program was expanded to include drivers with two-year-clean records. (It was later expanded further to include drivers with one negligent operator point within the two years prior to license expiration, but this change has not been evaluated.)

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Final report is Janke, Report #118.