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TITLE: Development of a Provisional Licensing Program for New California Drivers

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PROTECT OBTECTIVE:

To examine the feasibility of provisional licensing procedures for new California drivers and to analyze potential program components.

SUMMARY:

Provisional (graduated) licenses generally involve several steps and require the new applicant to maintain a safe record and comply with certain restrictions before full driving privileges are granted. In order to study the possibility of provisional licensing for young California drivers, a literature review was conducted to identify and summarize young-driver problems. Components of provisional and probationary licensing programs were also identified and analyzed, leading to the development of an initial model.

Two surveys were performed to determine the feasibility of the initial provisional licensing model. The first survey, conducted by an independent research firm, gauged public opinion on various aspects of the model. The second survey was used to gather comments from persons in a variety of traffic safety disciplines. These surveys indicated substantial support for the provisional licensing concept, lack of support for additional fees to fund a provisional licensing program, and lack of support for mandatory seat belt and motorcycle helmet use for young drivers.

The final model was developed following these surveys. This model included such elements as a distinctive provisional license with a one-year term, a mandatory instruction permit period, parent participation, various license restrictions for young problem drivers, a youth-oriented driver improvement program, and driver manuals for new drivers. The report recommended implementing this model for original applicants aged 17 and under on a pilot basis. A quasi-experimental (multivariate time series) design was to be used to evaluate the traffic safety effects of provisional licensing in terms of accidents and convictions. Other options and less comprehensive models with lower ongoing costs were also presented for management consideration.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

This report was used in further developing a provisional licensing model (*A Recommended Provisional Licensing System for California*, California Department of Motor Vehicles, Division of Driver Safety and Licensing, April 1982), which led to a demonstration project authorized by SB 483 (Speraw). The Department implemented the program for original applicants under age 18 on October 1, 1983.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

See Hagge and Marsh, Report #116.