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TITLE: An Abstract of The Effectiveness of a Uniform Traffic School Curriculum for Negligent Drivers

DATE: June 1971

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REPORT NUMBER: 37.1

NTIS NUMBER: PB-208440

FUNDING SOURCE: Departmental Budget

PROTECT OBTECTIVE:

Evaluate the effectiveness of a uniform traffic school curriculum developed for the traffic violation repeater.

SUMMARY:

Drivers in four California cities appearing before the traffic court for a recent traffic violation were randomly assigned by the judge to either the new traffic school (the Uniform Driver Improvement School or UDIS) or to a control group. A sample of violators attending the regular or standard traffic school in Los Angeles was also randomly selected for additional comparisons. A mail questionnaire was used to obtain additional information not available on the subject's driver record.

Comparisons between the school and control groups on various biographical and prior driver record variables indicated that the judges exercised some selectivity in the treatment assignment. Therefore, various statistical adjustments were necessary to control for these biases. The effectiveness of the UDIS program appeared to compare favorably with that of the regular or standard traffic school program for male drivers, although the results were more suggestive than conclusive.

Cost-effectiveness figures showed that the accident reduction produced by the UDIS resulted in a savings of \$3,807 per 100 male drivers, which is substantially less than that achieved by the Department of Motor Vehicles' one-session Group Educational Meeting (GEM). Therefore, the UDIS or similarly lengthy courses should not be considered desirable alternatives to the GEM or implemented on a statewide basis without further modifications to improve cost-effectiveness. These modifications might include (1) shortening the length of the course, (2) modifying course content to improve those types of drivers who did not benefit from the course, and (3) focusing only on those drivers who benefited from the course. The authors feel that a more systematic approach would be to utilize the more extensive court school programs for those drivers who continue to violate after having already received a warning letter and attended the short-session GEM. However, implementation of an integrated state driver improvement program will require greater coordination between DMV and the courts than has existed in the past.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The report has had no discernible impact on court violator schools (see Peck et al., Report #71; Gebers et al., Report #113). It has been instrumental in causing this department to avoid adopting lengthy multi-session meeting programs.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Received Certificate of Commendation, 1972 Metropolitan Life Awards, for Research in Accident Prevention. Published in *Accident Analysis and Prevention*, 4(1), 13-47, 1972 and *Journal of Traffic Safety Education*, 19(4),5 & 39, 1972.