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TITLE: The Effectiveness of Accredited Traffic Violator Schools in Reducing Accidents and Violations

DATE: September 1979

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REPORT NUMBER: 71

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FUNDING SOURCE: Departmental Budget

PROTECT OBJECTIVE:

To evaluate the effects of accredited traffic violator schools (TVS) on traffic safety.

SUMMARY:

The effect on subsequent driving record of requiring traffic violators to attend classes at accredited schools (TVS) rather than face the usual penalty measures was evaluated. No significant difference in subsequent mean number of accidents or convictions was found between those subjects attending classes and those given waivers of attendance; additional analyses of public versus privately owned schools, and single eight-hour versus several shorter sessions, produced no significant evidence of interactions. Generalization was hampered by the selective nature of the schools studied; 60% of the courts contacted refused to allow subjects assigned to traffic violator schools to be placed in a no-school control group. Thus, the study was restricted to 129 schools utilized by the 52 courts that agreed to cooperate. The authors recommended either discontinuing the DMV accreditation program or upgrading standards and improving the monitoring process, including a requirement that all TVS assignments be reported to DMV.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

A TVS Ad Hoc Committee was established, and presented a report to the Director in November, 1979. Issues, possible solutions, and problems were outlined. Two recommendations were made: Repeal 1660-61 CVC (DMV accreditation), and seek legislation to curtail the abuse of traffic violator diversion programs by limiting multiple attendance and by requiring that all referrals to TVS be reported to DMV. In 1982, the legislature passed legislation (SB 1455-Davis) requiring courts to report all TVS dismissals to DMV, subject to the requirement that the information be used by DMV for research purposes only and only divulged to requesting courts. This legislation was enacted into statute effective January 1, 1983.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Journal of Safety Research, 12(2), 68-77, Summer 1980.