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TITLE: California Vehicle Registrations and Drives Licenses - 1946-1958

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PROTECT OBTECTIVE:

To summarize the Department of Motor Vehicle's growth in workload since 1946 and to make comparisons with other states and the United States.

SUMMARY:

Since the end of World War II, California has experienced a tremendous growth in its population. Coupled with this population growth is an even greater growth in the workload of the Department of Motor Vehicles.

The report should be useful as a basic set of historical statistical information regarding California vehicle registrations and drivers' licenses.

In 1946 the Department registered less than 3 ½ million vehicles including automobiles, commercials, trailers, and motorcycles. Since that time, the number of registrations has increased approximately 350,000 (or 10 percent) per year to a total of just under 8 million vehicles registered by the end of 1958.

Ten years ago with 7.3 percent of the nations' driving age population, California registered 6.6 percent of all new autos and trucks sold in the United States. In 1956, with 8.6 percent of the population, California registered 9.8 percent of all new autos and trucks sold. Thus, the demand for new vehicles in California has increased slightly faster than has the population growth. California now registers 5.1 new vehicles for every 100 persons.

Population and registered slightly over 10 percent of all vehicles. Based on vehicles per 100 driving age population, California continues to register about 12 more vehicles per 100 population than does the United States as a whole. However, notice from Chart I that California ranked eleventh in this respect behind such states as Wyoming, Nevada, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Kansas, North Dakota, South Dakota Arizona, and Colorado. This is explained in part by the lower population density.

Three out of every four Californians of driving age (over 16 years old) currently hold a valid California driver's license. During the past ten years, this proportion has increased by about 10 percent. In the period 1948-58, the rest of the nation licensed persons of driving age at a faster rate than California. Ten years ago California licensed about 10 percent more of its driving age population than did the rest of the United States. However, in 1958 this difference in rates dropped to 4.3 percent.

Even though there has been only a gradual increase in the annual issuance of original operator's licenses during the period, there has been a much sharper rise in the number of renewals.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

None.