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Department of Motor Vehicles
Research and Development Branch
2570 24th Street, MS H-126
Sacramento, CA 95818-2606
(916) 657-5805

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TITLE: The Effects of Range vs. Non-Range Driver Training on the Accident and Conviction Frequencies of Young Drivers

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AUTHOR(S): Dell R. Dreyer & Mary. Janke

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FUNDING SOURCE: Contract with San Juan Unified School District

PROJECT OBJECTIVE:

The purpose of this study was to compare the relative effectiveness of a driving range vs. non-range driver education program in increasing skill and reducing accidents and convictions among teenage drivers.

SUMMARY:

The sample consisted of 2,057 students from five California high schools who were assigned randomly either to a traditional driver training program (N = 918) or to an experimental program utilizing a driving range (N = 1,139).

The traditional program included 12 hours in the simulator and 12 hours on the road (three behind-the-wheel, nine observation). The experimental program had ten hours in the simulator, eight hours on an off-street driving range, and six hours on the road (two behind the wheel, four observation). Each program was preceded by 45 hours of classroom driver education, for a total of 69 hours for each program.

Aspects of performance during driver training were measured, as well as performance on tests required for driver licensing and the number of days between training and licensing. In addition, Department of Motor Vehicles files supplied information on subjects' accident and conviction records within the year following the beginning of driver training. Results showed that nonrange students performed significantly better on the following training variables: knowledge posttest ($p < .01$), simulator score ($p < .01$), and driver course grade ($p < .05$). There were no significant differences between range and non-range students on driver licensing test scores or in the amount of time spent in becoming licensed. However, range students had fewer total accidents than non-range students ($p < .05$) in the year following the beginning of training. Time spent on the range during training was not related to frequency of accidents or convictions for range students. Cost-benefit aspects of range training were discussed. It was pointed out that range training is operationally less expensive than traditional training, but costs of constructing a driving range may vary appreciably.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

No expansion of range training resulted .. possibly because of the costs involved.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Published in *Accident Analysis and Prevention*, 11(3), 1979.