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TITLE: The Effects of Adding Safe Driving Content to Written Law Tests Administered to Original Drivers License Applicants

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PROTECT OBTECTIVE:

A group of original California driver license applicants, composed of experienced (out-of-state) drivers and inexperienced (first-time) applicants, were administered new, expanded written licensing tests. Questions testing Vehicle Code knowledge and knowledge of non-codified safe driving principles were included in order to evaluate possible differential effects on subsequent driving record. The tests were also administered using different passing scores.

SUMMARY:

The results for the 12-month period following written testing indicated no differential effects on subsequent driving records for out-of-state drivers. However, first-time applicants who were administered new tests having similar pass score thresholds as the standard test had significantly more collisions in the year following testing compared to the control group, which received the standard DMV law test. However, there was no evidence of an accident increase among subjects receiving the new test in conjunction with a more stringent passing score requirement. Test score correlations with subsequent driving records were similar for the two tests. Those who had fewer errors had fewer traffic convictions than applicants who made more written test errors. But because there was no evidence that implementing the new tests would result in a decrease in accidents, continuation of the standard test was recommended.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The recommendation was followed.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

None.