

The following is only an abstract of one of our earlier reports. An email request for a printed or PDF copy of the complete report can be generated by clicking on the **Report Number** of this report in the table of reports on the [Research Studies and Reports](#) page. The PDF copy of the complete report was created by scanning an original, printed copy, and thus is only *partially* searchable and *is not* accessible, but is fully printable.

A printed or PDF copy of our studies and reports may also be requested by mail or phone at:

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

For a request by mail, please include the report number and your name, address, and phone number. Also, please state whether you are requesting a printed copy, a PDF copy, or both. For a PDF copy, please include your email address.

TITLE: Traffic Violator School Dismissals: The Effects of Citation Masking on Accident-Risk Assessment and on the Volume of Department of Motor Vehicles' License Control Actions

DATE: September 1987

AUTHOR(S): Michael A. Gebers, Helen N. Tashima & William C. Marsh

REPORT NUMBER: 113

NTIS NUMBER: PB88- 128822

FUNDING SOURCE: Departmental Budget

PROTECT OBJECTIVE:

To evaluate the effects of citation masking on accident-risk assessment and on the volume of Department of Motor Vehicles' license control actions.

SUMMARY:

SB 1455, enacted on January 1, 1983, required that California courts report traffic violator school (TVS) dismissals to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) for research purposes only. Dismissals were not to be reported to any persons or agencies other than the courts. This report was the product of an investigation into the effects of TVS citation masking on accident-risk assessment and on DMV license control actions.

A total sample of 158,780 subjects was randomly selected from three sources: (1) drivers assigned to TVS, (2) drivers who received DMV negligent-operator (neg-op) treatments, and (3) drivers representative of the California driving population. Demographic and driver record data are presented for each group.

The analyses indicated that the loss in prior driver record data when TVS citations are dismissed and masked resulted in a substantial underestimate of the accident rate of TVS subjects. The enhancement in the actuarial utility of DMV records resulting from a January 1, 1986 law change, allowing the public disclosure of TVSS following the first within any 12-month period, was very slight. The results also indicated that: (1) a TVS dismissal was significantly more predictive of future accidents than was an additional conviction, and (2) approximately 24,000 Level 3 and 10,000 Level 4 DMV negligent-operator interventions (normally probations and suspensions, respectively) were circumvented over a 3-year period because of TVS dismissals.

It was recommended that legislation be enacted to abolish or greatly restrict the use of TVS citation dismissals.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

As of 1992, 25 courts had discontinued the practice of dismissing citations of drivers attending TVS.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

See Peck, Kelsey, Ratz, and Sherman, Report #71; Peck & Gebers, Report #133; Gebers, Report #147; and Gebers, Peck, Janke, and Hagge (1993), R&D monograph.