

TITLE: Toward a Dynamic System of Driver Improvement Program Evaluation

DATE: January 1976

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REPORT NUMBER: Unnumbered (NRN049)

NTIS NUMBER: None

FUNDING SOURCE: None

PROJECT OBJECTIVE:

To advance knowledge in the area of program evaluation as it specifically applies to driver improvement.

SUMMARY:

A number of prior driver improvement research studies were reviewed. The evidence indicated that traffic violations are reduced, at least temporarily, by a variety of driver improvement techniques. The evidence for accident reduction was more equivocal, although the report notes that a few relatively well designed studies had reported statistically significant accident reduction. It is argued that the statistical and psychological aspects of accidents prohibit high correlations and large treatment effects. The methodological shortcomings of past driver-improvement research are discussed, and the research design characteristics of an optimum evaluation system are outlined. An evaluation system under construction at that time in California is noted in the paper as fulfilling most of these optimum characteristics, such as built-in experimental replication, randomized treatment assignment, timely on-line computer-generated effectiveness measures, high statistical power, and cost-benefit modeling. One of the major methodological issues in past evaluation efforts is identified as being the handling of drivers who do not show up for, or who do not complete, the treatment. The need for considering the entire treatment program (shows and no-shows combined) as the primary unit of evaluation is stressed.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

An evaluation system meeting the requirements set out in this paper (the Post Licensing Control Reporting and Evaluation System, or PLCRES), was implemented in California in February, 1975. Annual status reports were produced for departmental management and the Legislative Analyst. PLCRES was replaced by the Negligent-Operator Treatment Evaluation System (NOTES) in 1985. NOTES produced annual cost-effectiveness reports from 1985 through 1988; in 1990, NOTES reports began being issued biennially.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Published in *Human Factors*, 18(5),493-506,1976.