

TITLE: Conviction Rate for a Sample of Citations Issued by the California Highway Patrol

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AUTHOR(S): California Department of Motor Vehicles

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PROJECT OBJECTIVE:

To gain information on the composition and disposition of citations issued by the California Highway Patrol for violations of California's road laws.

SUMMARY:

A sample of 8,834 citations issued by the California Highway Patrol was collected to determine the proportion of matching court convictions that reached the Department of Motor Vehicles' driver record file. Data on several factors related to conviction status were reviewed and associated limitations on the interpretation of results are discussed in the report. It was found that the conviction rate for violations was about 85% when Failures-to-Appear (roughly 4% of the citations located in the driver record file) were removed. The highest rate of conviction relative to citations (85.7%) was exhibited by drivers 60-85 years old, and the lowest rate (77.5%) was exhibited by drivers under 18 years old. Less than 1 % overall of the first convictions listed on the abstract were for a violation different from that originally cited. Six percent of the drunken driving arrests were changed to reckless driving, and 84% of the remaining drunken drivers were convicted. Over 90% of all sentences consisted of fines. The average amount of fine for all violations was \$24.98; fines for convictions with one violation (80%) averaged \$22.48 and, with two violations averaged \$35.56.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

None; descriptive statistics only.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

None available.