TITLE: Estimating the Exposure and Fatal Crash Rates of Suspended/Revoked and Unlicensed Drivers in California

DATE: 1997

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REPORT NUMBER: Unnumbered (NRN88)

NTIS NUMBER: None

FUNDING SOURCE: Departmental Budget

PROJECT OBTECTIVE:

To derive estimates of the exposure (amount of driving) and crash rates of suspended/revoked and unlicensed drivers, using fatal crash data obtained from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's fatal accident reporting system (FARS) database, and utilizing induced exposure methodology.

SUMMARY:

There have been a number of studies conducted during the past three decades which show that most suspended / revoked drivers violate their license action and continue to drive during their period of disqualification. Although license suspension is known to reduce crash risk, traffic safety researchers also suspect that S/R drivers are still overinvolved in traffic crashes, but this is difficult to demonstrate because of the lack of good data on their prevalence among all road users. This paper applies the quasi-induced exposure method to fatal crash data obtained from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Fatal Accident Reporting System, to generate exposure and crash rate estimates for S/R drivers in California. The results show that suspended/revoked drivers are innocent victims in 8.8% of all two-vehicle fatal crashes in California (where only one of the drivers was cited by law enforcement for being at fault in the crash), and that unlicensed drivers are innocent victims in 3.3% of such crashes. Using these exposure figures, it was found that, compared to validly licensed drivers, suspended/revoked drivers are overinvolved in fatal crashes by a factor of 3.7:1, and unlicensed drivers by 4.9:1. These findings provide support for efforts to better control suspended/revoked and unlicensed drivers. The paper also discusses limitations to using quasi-induced exposure to estimate the numbers of such drivers on California roads, and concludes that it is not suited to this task.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

This study does not contain specific recommendations, but rather lends support to current efforts which target suspended/revoked and unlicensed drivers.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

This paper was published in the January 1997 issue of *Accident Analysis and Prevention,* 29(1), 17-24.