Off the Road:
Best Practices to Reducing Suspended & Revoked Drivers – Sneak Preview
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Commissioner, Georgia Department of Driver Services
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Best Practices to Reducing Suspended and Revoked Drivers

AAMVA Spring Workshop & Law Institute Atlanta, GA
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Brian Ursino
AAMVA Director of Law Enforcement
Suspended & Revoked Working Group
“Best Practices Guide to Reducing Suspended Drivers”

- Funded by NHTSA
- Developed by the Suspended & Revoked Working Group

- A Best Practices Guide to Reducing Suspended Drivers Session (based on a pre-published draft) was held in August 2012 at the Annual International Conference in Charlotte, NC;
- Webinar conducted November 14, 2012;
Best Practices to Reducing Suspended and Revoked Drivers

Working Group History and Survey Results

Sheila Prior
Region III & IV Director, Member Support
In the Beginning . . .

• The Suspended & Revoked Working group formed in 2009 under a NHTSA Grant
• Law enforcement community concerns
  – growing number of non-highway safety violations
  – arrest / ticketing requirements detract from highway safety
• Premise was to eliminate non-highway safety suspensions
• Efforts
  – engage professional research team
  – solicit experiences from members
  – biggest challenge was finding proven alternatives
Survey #1

- Distributed in July, 2010
- Are you under statutory or regulatory mandate to suspend or revoke the driving privilege of individuals non-traffic violation(s)?
  - 45 yes
  - 3 no
- If yes, please list all non-moving violations for which your jurisdiction takes suspension or revocation action.
  - 1 to 74 reasons provided
- Realized after reviewing results that we should have asked for information on non-highway safety violations vs. non-moving violations
Survey #2

- Reformatted initial survey responses and added additional information request
  - highway safety related offense
  - suspension length
  - # of suspensions imposed / violation
- Charted suspensions by type, compiled
  - 60 categories of non-highway safety related suspensions
    - some common, e.g., 20+ suspend for fuel piracy, 30+ suspend for minor in possession of alcohol
    - some only one in North America, e.g., filling a dirt bike from a gas pump in Baltimore, tow truck driver graft
Best Practices to Reducing Suspended and Revoked Drivers

Rob Mikell, Commissioner
Georgia Department of Driver Services
Chair, Suspended & Revoked Working Group
The Best Practice Guide recommends that legislatures repeal laws requiring the suspension of driving privileges for non-highway safety related violations. Adoption of these recommendations would reduce the burden on DMVs, Law Enforcement & Courts.

The Best Practice Guide includes:
- the research behind the recommendation
- a model legislation template for jurisdictions to use to craft their own legislation
The Guide contains the following sections:

• Executive Summary
• 1.0 Introduction
• 2.0 Research Overview
• 3.0 Impact to Criminal Justice System
• 4.0 Impact to Motor Vehicle Agencies
• 5.0 Alternatives to Driver License Suspension
• 6.0 Appendices
  o A: Sample Legislation
  o B: Full Research Report
  o C: Jurisdiction Survey Results
1.0 Introduction
When license suspension were first instituted, there were three primary goals for suspending driving privileges
  o to remove dangerous drivers from the road
  o to change driver behavior
  o to punish unsafe drivers

The Problem
Every year, state legislatures pass additional laws requiring suspensions as a mechanism to gain compliance with non-highway safety (or social non-conformance) reasons, i.e., bounced checks, fuel theft, graffiti, truancy, etc. Now nearly 4 of every 10 suspended drivers are suspended for non-driving reasons!

Research revealed that suspensions for non-driving reasons rose from 29% to 39% of total suspensions in just 4 years [2002 – 2006]
2.0 Research Overview

• Research indicates drivers suspended for driver behavior are involved in crashes *3X more frequently* than drivers suspended for non-driving reasons, and *6X more frequently* than drivers who have never been suspended.

• If policy makers agree there should be a direct nexus between license suspensions and traffic safety, then licenses should be suspended only for driving related reasons.

• Moreover, the common belief that a license suspension provides sustainable motivation for individuals to comply with court ordered or legislated mandates to avoid suspension is not supported by empirical evidence.
3.0 Impact to Criminal Justice

To Law Enforcement
• The Washington State Patrol spends approximately 79,000 personnel hours annually in arrest, impound and adjudication of suspended driver cases on drivers suspended for non-driving reasons.

To Prosecutors and Courts
• Traffic offenses represent the largest number of charges prosecuted in many state and local courts and dockets are clogged. Adding cases for driving while suspended for a non-driving reason simply adds to that overwhelming burden.
4.0 Impact to Motor Vehicle Agencies

- Each time a law is passed requiring suspension action, DMV business units must develop business rules and processes; IT staff perform a variety of functions to move the new code to production.
- Other impacts include those to:
  - training costs for field, call center and central office staff
  - forms revision, increased postage, and other similar costs
- Numerous bodies of research show that driver license suspension is not the universal remedy that legislators and others often believe it to be.
- Most importantly, if not for the high percentage of non-driving related suspensions, DMVs could focus on their core business of highway safety.
5.0 Alternatives to Suspension

• There is no silver bullet or panacea to gaining social conformance among the population that run afoul of the many laws of the states, counties and municipalities

• This section does provide examples found throughout the country of programs that may be replicated and may provide an alternative in those cases where legislatures refuse to repeal non-driving suspension laws without having an alternative
6.0 Appendices

• A: Sample Legislation ~ Developed by legislative subcommittee of the Working Group that was chaired by a representative from the National District Attorneys Association

• B: Full Research Report based on suspension data provided from eight states (two from each AAMVA Region)

• C: Full Jurisdiction Survey Results outlining various non-driving license suspension reasons

Thank You!

Rob Mikell, Chair, Suspended & Revoked Working Group

AAMVA Staff Liaisons to the Suspended & Revoked Working Group:
- Sheila Prior, Regional Director, Regions III & IV
- Brian Ursino, Director of Law Enforcement
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Up Next:
3:00 pm – 4:30 pm

Driver Services Town Hall –
Grand Ballroom A – 4th Floor

Law Enforcement Town Hall –
Grand Ballroom B – 4th Floor

Vehicle Services Town Hall –
Grand Ballroom C/D/E – 4th Floor