Reducing Suspended Drivers

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Presenter: Julie Knittle
WA Department of Licensing
Overview

- Suspending driving privileges used for decades to address poor driving behavior
- Impact on reducing crashes
- Social non-conformance (non-highway) violations
- Strain on resources
- AAMVA working group formed with best practice recommendations
• Recommendation: Repeal state laws for non-highway safety related violations

• Resulting in reduction of 39% suspended drivers clogging the system
• Failure to pay for a ticket has resulted in suspension in Washington
• If a suspended person drives anyway, they’re arrested/cited for Driving with a License Suspended (DWLS 3rd)
• AAMVA’s Best Practice advocates suspending only for violations that pose a risk to the public
Why Focus on Highway Safety?

- Data shows they are the greatest threat to the public
- Non-suspended drivers have a collision rate of 3.1%
- Highway safety rate is 18.9%--a 6 fold increase
AAMVA took the total of 8 state’s violations and codified them by the AAMVA Code Dictionary (ACD)

Washington’s approach was similar using Moving and Non-Moving violations including SNC

There are a few Non-Moving violations in Washington that AAMVA termed Highway safety
Moving Violations *mostly* equal Highway Safety

- Washington Non-Moving Violations
- AAMVA Highway Safety Violations
• Implemented legislation in 2012 (E2SSB 6284) limiting suspensions for failure to appear/pay (FTA) for *moving violations only*

• Nearly identical to the Best Practice Recommendation

• Washington has only 5 SNC violations that we still suspend for:
  ✓ Minor in Possession
  ✓ Leaving child in running vehicle
  ✓ Non-payment of child support
  ✓ Fuel theft
  ✓ Fraudulent license
What is defined as non-moving violation?

1. Parking Violations

2. Equipment Violations (illegal, improper, defective, or missing vehicle equipment)

3. Paperwork Violations (relating to insurance, registration, licensing, licensing and inspections)
Overview of Washington Drivers

- 418,000 Suspensions/revocations/cancellations a year
- 5.3 million drivers
• Studying 8 states, AAMVA determined that about 2/3 of their violations fit the Highway Safety definition
• Washington’s split was similar
• Washington is essentially only suspending for FTAs of Moving Violations
• 5 non-moving/SNC violations—which make up about 18% of FTA’s
Washington Overview

- Washington drivers suspended for highway safety reasons are more likely to:
  - Drive while suspended
  - Receive violations following suspension

![Graph showing percentages of Washington drivers driving while suspended following suspension.](image)

![Graph showing percentages of Washington drivers committed a violation after suspension.](image)
• 18 months since implementation

• Changes with most impact:
  1. Illegal, missing, improper or defective equipment
  2. No registration and no insurance
Washington FTA Reductions

- Upon implementation, the number of suspensions immediately dropped
- Over 12,000 FTA per month were eliminated
- A decrease of about 50%

**Number of FTA Suspensions**

Jan 2011 - Apr 2015
Washington DWLS 3rd Violations

- Law is not retro-active—all the previous suspensions remain until they pay their fines
- We’re beginning to see some decline
- Current reduction is 656 DWLS 3rd per month
- A 24% reduction in DWLS 3rd

Convictions for DWLS 3rd Violations

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WA DWLS 3rd Filings

- Not all DWLS 3rd filings with the court become convictions on the drive record
- Many are resolved, dismissed, or reduced
Net Monthly Results

12,000 Suspensions Not Imposed

656 Fewer DWLS 3rd Arrests

So what does that mean?
The WSP estimates that 9 hours of Trooper time is used to arrest, book, jail, complete paperwork, submit reports, and appear in court for a DWLS 3rd case.

The average reduction post E2SSB 6284 in DWLS 3rd arrests is 656 per month as of April 2015.

9 hours x 656 monthly arrests x 12 months = 70,848 annual law enforcement hours not spent processing DWLS 3rd cases under the new law.

This frees up the WSP to pursue true Highway Safety issues that pose a real threat to public safety.
More Outcomes...

- DOL staff are not processing 12,000 suspensions per month in the records unit.
- For the first time in many years they have no backlog.
- The courts are freed up from over 650 mandatory court appearances/prosecution for DWLS 3rd violators.
- The FTAs for non-moving have been moved to collections agencies.
More Outcomes...

- Department of Licensing has had a reduction in reinstatement fees but an increase in occupational restricted license fees
- Postage reduced due to fewer FTA suspension notices being mailed ($17k annually)
- Projected revenue loss to local government offset by workload decreases
Challenges

- Predicting court filings and convictions
- Jail/bed reductions
- Quantifying local government workload decreases – redirected efforts rather than reduction in staff
- ODL applications fell short of estimates by 5%
Questions?