

## SUPPORT PROCESSES

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The various processes that have been described will not occur without a set of processes to support them. Changes in the way these support processes are carried on must precede improvements elsewhere. The support processes include:

- Selection and Training of Licensing Personnel;
- Identification and Referral of Deficient Drivers by Enforcement Personnel;
- Physician Reporting; and
- Functioning of Medical Advisory Boards.

### SELECTION AND TRAINING OF LICENSING PERSONNEL

*Douglas K. Tobin*

As the transportation system ages, so does its component parts. The maturation of vehicles, roadways and humans creates unique concerns for highway safety professionals. Special efforts are commonly undertaken to repair deteriorated roadways and to design vehicles that better accommodate the highway transportation system. Periodically, the human factor may also require intervention and re-education to maintain the integrity and safety of the system.

#### Problem

The initial selection process for driver license personnel, in particular those charged with examination and counseling of driver license applicants, largely falls beyond the purview of driver license administrators. The choice of the appropriate individual may be governed by the rules of each State's civil service system or other system for State hiring. Where such positions are governed by selection based on years of service or other seniority provisions, choice of candidates can be even more limited.

Therefore, the major question facing driver license administrators is the training of the appropriate staff. Virtually all agencies have a training program for this staff whether on the job or a more formal program of classroom training. Furthermore, the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA) has established a Certified Driver Examiner (CDE) program to professionalize this job function in the United States and Canada. Thus, there exists a basic

platform from which to build a specific component, namely training for the examination and counseling of the older driver.

Licensing agencies will see this issue as broader than elderly drivers. Much if not all of the components in this program will also address issues raised by all drivers with special needs. Thus, the issue becomes less one of age and one more of condition. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) will require licensing agencies to make a much broader range of accommodations for all classes of individuals with physical and mental disabilities.

However, there exists as yet no national model elderly driver program for which a training program can be developed although there exists several State developed model older driver programs, Oregon's being the best known. AAMVA is currently working on a model screening and evaluation program as well as a national non-commercial test that States could adopt similar to the commercial driver tests.

#### Needs

1. *Development of an elderly/special needs driver program.* The most basic need is for a program or programs that can be applied by all jurisdictions in dealing with the many issues involving the elderly driver. In order to be successful, the program must meet the three E's test. The program must be effective in either improving the mobility of the elderly and/or provide for the safety of other road users. It must be efficient by building on what currently exists either programmatically or with respect to infrastructure. Lastly, and often most importantly, it has to be economical. Many excellent road safety programs have foundered on this rock before.

2. *Development of a screening and evaluation tool or tool set.* Any program developed to deal with the special needs of the elderly will need a screening component in order to allow the target of scarce resources.

3. *Development of a range of responses.* A successful screening program will tell examiners the capabilities of the elderly driver in front of them. There needs to be an array of options for the examiner to select from whether full licensure, limited licensing, specific training or connection with a social service agency for the aging. One of the options should be AAMVA's non-commercial driver skill test when it is completed.

## Actions

1. *Develop a strategic training plan.* Any training program in this area is not a one time venture. Besides, determining the "what" or subject matter, the "when" or time must also be considered. How often the iterative training cycle needs to be should not be based strictly on budgetary considerations. All jurisdictions have training plans for their driver licensing staffs. This training needs to be fitted into those plans.

2. *Focus on the customer service aspects of the older driver.* Many jurisdictions have been focusing much of their training on the needs of their customers. The same techniques should be applied to the special needs of the elderly driver. There is probably no good way to inform someone their driving days are over, but there are certainly many bad ways to do so. In order to improve the delivery of the options for the older driver, training should be focused on how a staff member handle that interaction with the driver and the driver's family.

3. *Develop partnerships.* A licensing agency should never assume that it and it alone deals with the older driver. Whatever screening tools are used will probably require training beyond that available from the agency staff. Several States use specialists from sources such as rehabilitation hospitals to train their staffs in areas dealing with drivers with special needs. This practice will no doubt expand in the future.

4. *Evaluate the training program as well as the older driver program.* Aside from the routine administrative evaluation of the training course itself, States need to evaluate the effectiveness of their staff's interaction with the elderly driver and the results from that interaction.

## IMPROVING THE ABILITY OF LAW ENFORCEMENT TO IDENTIFY AND REFER DEFICIENT DRIVERS

*Raymond D. Cotton*

Law enforcement has traditionally been assigned the critical role of removing deficient drivers from the roadways. As the population ages, special measures will be necessary to ensure the safety and mobility of older drivers. Current research identifies law enforcement as the single largest source for referring deficient drivers to licensing agencies. This should not seem that unusual because law enforcement personnel make thousands of driver contacts daily. During these contacts they are provided with a much greater opportunity to identify deficient driving behavior, as it occurs, than are other support functions.

## Problem

Even though law enforcement personnel routinely observe deficient driving behavior, they often are unable to recognize drivers with cognitive or physical disabilities who should be referred for re-examination. Furthermore, in instances when deficiencies are detected, many law enforcement officers are ill-equipped, trained, or unable to process the referral. The future challenge for law enforcement will be to better identify deficient drivers (this may include drivers with cognitive or physical disabilities) and establish procedures for referral of these drivers to the appropriate authorities for re-evaluation and/or re-examination.

One of the greatest challenges facing law enforcement, pertaining to the aging driver population, will be the detection of behavior that may be indicative of drivers using prescription drugs. The pervasive use of prescription drugs, and because the older population may have difficulty remembering when they've taken medications, may lead to more "drug impaired" drivers. The potentiating affect of multiple medications will further diminish the older driver's ability to perform driving tasks. Additionally, this population may share their medications with other drivers. Law enforcement should be prepared to curb the proliferation and abuse of these medications in their efforts to increase highway/public safety.

Most law enforcement agencies are balancing their resources between the war on crime and highway safety. Priorities are often established by community leaders and special interest groups. Unfortunately, highway safety (removing deficient drivers) does not always remain a priority for law enforcement when budgets are compromised. Although important, only a small portion of an officer's daily responsibilities can go to detecting and removing deficient drivers.

## Needs

There are at least five (5) needs that should be met before law enforcement can improve its ability to detect and refer deficient drivers:

- *Research* Law enforcement must assess today's "state of the practice" in terms of policies, procedures, training, etc. for detecting and referring deficient drivers for re-examination.

- *Respond* Law enforcement must establish a set of prioritized tasks with respect to developing policies,