



Crime Reduction & Community Safety Group

Tilley Awards 2007

Application form

Please ensure that you have read the guidance before completing this form. **By making an application to the awards, entrants are agreeing to abide by the conditions laid out in the guidance.** Please complete the following form in full, **within the stated word limit and ensuring the file size is no more than 1MB.** Failure to do so will result in your entry being rejected from the competition.

Completed application forms should **be e-mailed to tilleyawards07@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk**

All entries must be received by noon on **Friday 27th April 2007**. No entries will be accepted after this time/date. Any queries on the application process should be directed to Alex Blackwell on 0207 035 4811. Any queries regarding publicity of the awards should be directed to Chaz Akoshile on 0207 035 1589.

Section 1: Details of application

Title of the project: Operation TANGO

Name of force/agency/CDRP/**CSP**: Merseyside Police

Name of one contact person with position and/or rank (this should be one of the authors):

Inspector Paul SUTCLIFFE

Email address: paul.a.sutcliffe@merseyside.poilice.uk

Full postal address: Prescot Police Station, Derby Street, Prescot, Liverpool L34 3LG

Telephone number: 0151 777 6335 (07738647687)

Fax number: 0151 777 6399

If known please state in which Government Office area you are located e.g. Government Office North West, Government Office London etc:

Government Office North West

Name of endorsing senior representatives(s):

Name of organisation, position and/or rank of endorsing senior representatives(s):

Full address of endorsing senior representatives(s):

Please tick box to indicate that all organisations involved in the project have been notified of this entry (this is to prevent duplicate entries of the same project):



Section 2: Summary of application

In no more than 400 words please use this space to describe your project (see guidance for more information).

Operation TANGO was set up as a result of new legislation to tackle the uninsured / unlicensed drivers who use our roads. There were concerns from communities within Merseyside regarding uninsured, unroadworthy and unregistered vehicles involved in Anti Social Behaviour.

The operation formed part of the Forces Total Policing Strategy, declaring total war on crime and total care for victims.

The aim of the Project was to set up a dedicated team to utilize the new legislation and the objectives were to: -

Test the process's required to deal with seizures under the new act.

Reduce the propensity for incidents of Anti Social Behaviour connected to vehicles

Reduce the number of RTCs involving uninsured, unroadworthy vehicles.

Maximise the benefits to the public in terms of prevention, detection, crime reduction and public safety that the legislation brings.

Normalise the procedure learnt during the operation into the mainstream of roads policing under the banner of "Denying Criminals Use of the Roads".

The Traffic department, supported by officers from the Force Areas, formed the uniform enforcement arm of the TANGO unit, while detectives and a Field Intelligence Officer provide a pool of experience to tackle vehicle related crime and anti social behaviour. The team was dedicated, determined and were to carry out TANGO Operations twice a week at different locations across Merseyside. The criminals would not know when or where the unit was to set up next.

The enforcement arm was to use ANPR (automatic number plate technology) and MDTs (mobile data Terminals) within their vehicle to assist in identifying offending vehicles. We used our own systems, the local Authorities and Fire Service to provide data highlighting hot spot areas for anti social behaviour involving vehicles.

The full operational procedures continued to evolve throughout the year as experience grew. There are now numerous different tactics utilized and 11 other Police Forces are looking to Merseyside Police as an example of best practice.

To evaluate the Project data was taken from 2005 and compared against 2006, the results being.

Vehicles seized **10,326**

Arrests **2,568** (across the spectrum)

Killed and Serious Injury collisions 'hit and Run' **down 20%**

Hit and run collisions **down 13%**

Stolen vehicles involved in collisions **down 35%**

Vehicles nuisance/inappropriate use **down 69%**

Abandoned vehicles **down 43%**

Abandoned car fires **down 25%**

The message was clear "IF YOU ARE DRIVING AROUND MERSEYSIDE, NO INSURANCE MEANS NO CAR"

Section 3: Description of project

Describe the project in no more than 4000 words (see guidance for more information *in particular Section 7 - judging criteria*).



Objectives of the Operation

The Operation was set up to utilize the SOCPA legislation that became law on 07/07/2005. Its launch being 01/08/05. The infrastructure, in the Force, to deal with seizures came online by 03/01/2006 and Tango targeted operations began on 09/01/06 including the software to enable analysis of disposals. The objectives were: -

- Test the processes required to deal effectively with seizures under SOCAP.
- Reduced the number of uninsured and untaxed vehicles.
- Reduce the propensity for incidents of Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) connected to vehicles
- Reduce the number of Road Traffic Collision (RTCs) involving uninsured, unroadworthy vehicles.
- Maximise the benefits to the public in terms of prevention, detection, crime reduction and public safety that the legislation brings.
- Normalise the procedure learnt during the operation into the mainstream of roads policing under the banner of “Denying Criminals Use of the Roads”.

There were concerns from the community regarding uninsured, unroadworthy and unregistered vehicles being involved in ASB. Vehicles were left abandoned causing annoyance and a danger to the public and children, vehicles were set on fire, ‘razzed’ around the area and involved in RTCs often with the offenders being unable to be identified. Therefore the success criteria would be the number of vehicles seized, a reduction in the number of vehicles involved in fail to stop collisions, burnt out, abandoned, or being involved in ASB.

To identify where the problems were local Authorities and the Fire Service were consulted to highlight where vehicles were being abandoned and where vehicles were being set on fire. Through own Force systems and forums with the communities, areas that had high levels of ASB involving vehicle were mapped out and as expected they were seen to coincide with the areas that had been identified by the local Authorities and Fire Service.

Definition of The Problem

DVLA estimated 2 million unlicensed and uninsured vehicles in the UK and that their drivers are more likely to leave the scene of a collision because they don’t want to be caught without insurance. At the start of 2006, Nationally, Merseyside had one of the highest recorded number of uninsured / untaxed vehicles in the country. It was noted that the MIB (motor industry bureau) compensates the victims of road collisions caused by uninsured and untraced motorists; handling almost 50,000 claims against uninsured and untraced motorists yearly.

From our own data the number of Hit and run collisions had remained constant over the previous two years however when the new legislation started the number of nuisance, inappropriate use and abandoned vehicles began to decrease. Therefore we had benchmarks within our own data to measure the success of the operation.

Wirral and Liverpool city parking services had in excess of 150 unpaid tickets, with a number of these being repeat offenders. Clearly parking fines did not come under the objectives of TANGO however the reciprocal arrangement gave us a database access to ticket respondents who live in the South of England and claim (correctly) they have never visited the city. This is a first class indicator of ringed vehicles, which then enabled these ringed vehicles to be identified, placed on ANPR databases, and subsequently stopped and dealt with.

Response to the Problem

SOCAP is clear, wide-ranging and capable of underpinning roads policing far beyond the Insurance documentary requirement it is based on.

Where a situation covered by section 165 of the R.T.A 1988 arises. (Requirement to produce documentation) and the

officer suspects either the correct licence or certificate of insurance may not exist the vehicle can be seized immediately. 95% of the seizures occur under "No Insurance" when the officer relies on the MIDAS (Motor Industries database which was now accessed via PNC and our own Force system) to show "Not Held". It follows with few exceptions, that MIDAS forms the necessary "suspicion". This means that the provision of and confidence in, the MIDAS database is fundamental to the operation.

January 2006

A team of dedicated officers was set up to deal with the vehicles that had been seized and a Force response (Laser Team) would go onto the streets and enforce the legislation. After the 'hot spots' had been identified, through research, this team went out twice a week into neighbourhoods, linking in with the area officers, and carried out a TANGO operation. The importance of this was soon recognized in that the small team with their expert knowledge began to educate the area officers in SOCAP and tactics that could be deployed to enforce the law.

Initially an attempt to use the legislation proactively with ANPR was put in place in that the Laser team had 8 Jaguar motor vehicles fitted with ANPR. Downloads from the database had been tested in other Forces using ANPR with mixed results. Merseyside was not a selected test force though efforts were made to extract the entire L postcode from the national database in the hope that it would load as a local database on the BOF (back office facility) that the ANPR checked against.

30 day Assessment

Due to technical problems and constraints on the ANPR equipment the use of MIDAS was limited at best, with few exceptions, all seizures were initially made without the Midas element of the ANPR technology. The other elements of ANPR particularly the extract file did (and still does) give valuable trigger indications i.e. no Tax; previous seizure etc so all was not entirely lost.

It was soon recognized that the sheer amount of seizures meant that ANPR and the process's to deal with the volume vehicles would need to be very robust where they work and swiftly adjusted where they fell short.

The tactic was to go into an area and flood it with these ANPR officers and pick off the vehicles, but as we became more sophisticated in our approach, this led to having vehicle check points where vehicles would have to travel through and the Laser team went into the surrounding area for vehicles that were avoiding the check point.

March 2006

BOF was upgraded and the vehicles were converted from communicating via GSM or LAN into GRPS communication thus enabling live database updates. As the BCU officers had now seen and been educated by the Laser team it was agreed to increase the vehicle ANPR fleet so that the BCUs would have ANPR capability and not have to wait to run a TANGO Operation; and in essence became BCU mini Laser Teams. Although the central Laser team continued with the twice-weekly TANGO operations in order to bolster the BCUs capability on these days.

Aware of the invaluable MIDAS database that could assist officers in identifying target vehicles the Force commenced a roll out program and funding, to fit all operational vehicles with MDTs (Mobile Data Terminal). The MDTs would allow all operational officers to have access to the PNC in their vehicle highlighting any vehicles with no insurance. When this became available it identified a problem, with training for operational officers in PNC, and the Force quickly re-examined the PNC training and produced a reduced training package specifically aimed at use within the vehicle. The new package was accredited and reduced the training time from 24 hours to 8 hours thus quickly giving operational officers access.

May 2006

Now the Force was running roadside checkpoints it became easier to involve other agencies into the TANGO operations. At a typical roadside check there would be a vehicle carrying out ANPR checks along side spotting officers and any vehicle of interest was guided into a compound for further checks. The concept of the compound was in fact a solution to the long delays experienced waiting for AADL recovery. Besides police officers the compound would include officers from trading standards, VOSA (checking the roadworthiness), customs and excise (checking that the vehicle fuel was legal), works and pensions / immigration / court services checking occupants in the vehicles and many more. As the operations continued there was an open invitation for any official agency to provide staff at the compounds and due to their success on every occasion there are now a myriad of different agencies checking the vehicles/occupants. There was Joint Force Operations that took place on the Strategic road network between Force boundaries specifically to target the traveling criminals

August 2006

With the continued success the Force turned its attention to the fix site ANPR network that had been set up under Counter Terrorism funding, as the vast majority of the work carried out so far in removing uninsured, unroadworthy and unregistered vehicles had been undertaken utilizing mobile police vehicles or temporary road check points.

Late in the month Op Blazer was established as an extra tactic, this was the monitoring of fix site ANPR by dedicated police officers on average 16 hours every day, with at least one double-crewed vehicle in each relevant BCU to respond to the hits from these sites.

At this time the Force added a further tactic with TANGO Operations and included them in Big Wing Operations. As the Force now had 49 vehicles fitted with ANPR, Force TANGO operations ran every month where the Force deployed all assets on one day in a joint operation. The BCUs along with their partners would identify hot stops for

the ASB of vehicles and the use of vehicles criminally in the area. The Force would then carry out Tango operations in each BCU on the day in question.

December 2006

All operational vehicles were now fitted with MDTs and there were over 50 ANPR vehicles (including marked/unmarked vehicles, vans, performance/standard vehicles and the Force helicopter) making this part of mainstream policing and having the ability to use numerous different tactics.

The Force was now seen, Nationally, as good practice in using ANPR tactics to target illegal and criminal use of vehicles on the roads and as such sent 18 of the Forces ANPR vehicles and Laser team to assist in the murder enquiry of five females in Suffolk. In the first weekend of the deployment Suffolk the team seized 48 vehicles and providing invaluable information to the enquiry.

There has been huge public support for the operation, which is informed by calls to Crimestoppers. Local people are fed up of those who flout the law and officers are able to target hotspot areas and act positively on any information given on the anti social and criminal use of vehicles.

Marketing



The concept of the compound was born out of a solution to the long delays experienced waiting for AADL recovery, although at the commencement new contracts had been draw up for garages to remove the seized vehicles, due to the numbers involved it was impossible for the garages to keep up the pace on specific spot light days. As vehicles stood waiting for collection it became apparent that this was an ideal marketing opportunity and officers would remove seized vehicles from the locale and parade them at one location in a car showroom manner. This reduced the numbers of officers having to stand by seized vehicle and each vehicle was adorned with the marketing stickers indicating NO insurance and by the end of a busy operation more than 30 vehicles would be on full public view at key sites showing why they were seized. These operations produced numerous persons photographing the site from the press to members of the public. The interest and positive feedback from these locations has been such that a PCSO is employed solely to deal with passing public questions and it shows a 99% approval of the police action. Operationally the public holds TANGO in high regard it is seen as only being directed at people with illegal, unroadworthy and unregistered vehicles. (The come phrase used is "I have to spend money ensuring my vehicle is legal other should too")

When particularly high value vehicles are seized and due to be returned to finance houses, these are displayed at HQ. A month long loan is arranged for each vehicle at no cost and the vehicles can then be displayed with the adorning paintwork which is removable and costs less the £175 each. The public reaction has been enormous with photographs appearing across the country and on the internet. Some cell phone photographs have spread across every school in Merseyside and beyond.

Also to highlight the possible results of having no insurance a flatbed lorry with three cubed (crushed) vehicles with accompanying advertising was put on display at key locations. The metal movement was arranged by professionals at a cost of £400 and the lorry was loaned free of charge by a local businessman supportive of the operation.

Collection of Vehicles

Forms MVD 1/2 are issued as a receipt and release mechanism for seized vehicles. The release "Stamp" required was restricted to 6 stations throughout the force whilst enquiry officers learnt the process. Due to the complexity of trade policies these were restricted to one station staffed by the Tango team. Merseyside had a preponderance of bogus "car traders" who insure with major companies purely to drive unaccountable vehicles. One policy provided insured status for entire extended families and crime gangs as "temporary employees" of the bogus trader.

It was clear that the MVD concept, already in place, was not understood and various ad- hoc "requirements" were being added to the process on a station-by-station basis. Legal advice was sought and a flow chart quickly distributed. This re-focused the release process away from Insurance/License issues (which are easily met by criminals) and set squarely on the issue of "ownership". The vehicle was property and any person wanting to claim the vehicle had to prove that they were the owner.

It is the difficulties in even discussing ownership with police officers that has led to hundreds of unregistered "owners" simply abandoning their cars for disposal. Equally, those who are now forced to accept ownership face prosecution for all offences disclosed in the period of ownership, which they themselves must prove to an officer's satisfaction. In terms of level 2/3 criminal targets the prospect of admitting ownership of extremely expensive cars is clearly an anathema to them.

The aspect of accountability by ownership is by far the most important element of the operations success, which was not even thought about as an objective.

Disposal of Vehicles

Returned

Vehicles are either returned to the owners (on proof of ownership, insurance and documentation).

Destroyed

If not claimed after 14 days and worth <£2,500 then the vehicle is crushed and disposed of.

Auctions

If the vehicle is valued >£2,500 then British Car Auctions are used, who have disposed of 73 vehicles to date in 2006 with a residual figure of approximately £180,000 resulting. This is held in a standard (though separate) MPA account overseen by OSU Roads policing. There are presently further vehicle awaiting sale.

Finance Houses

One to one working practice were built with the major finance houses which resulted in the return of >£2m worth of vehicles with many more in the pipeline. This has been most effective against the Force's major crime targets. In discussions with the finance houses the team noted that full continuous insurance was an absolute requirement to all vehicle-financing schemes, thus where target vehicles where likely to be returned to owners contact with the finance company usually resulted in an outright seizure.

Finance

The vast increase in seizures has profound financial implications. £57 is payable from Police accounts for each destruction. £105 plus £12 per day is payable by owners reclaiming vehicles (average storage is 4 days). With auctioned cars the police act as owners when releasing them (£105+14 days storage).

Seized vehicles for Police use

The Force has retained a number of vehicles as decoy cars for the purpose of luring thieves to steal satellite systems or other items placed in the decoy vehicle. This has proved successful and involves a variety of vehicles most within the 'write off' zone. This current ad-hoc system has found to be workable and sustainable as once a decoy vehicle is know to the criminal fraternity then it is simple scrapped or sold as planned and another seized vehicle used.

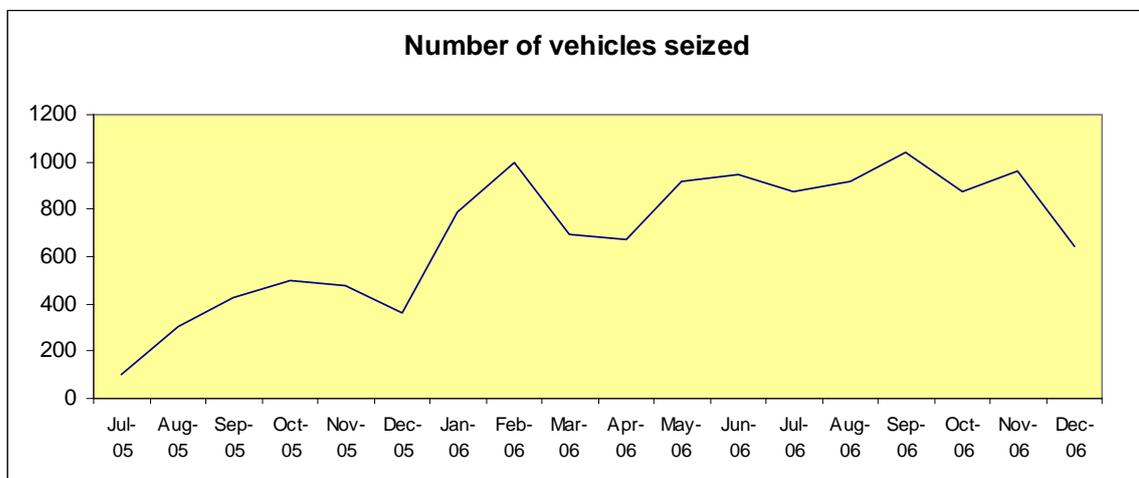
There have been requests to procure the drivable vehicles and use them as unmarked vehicles. The advantages are that once the criminal fraternity became 'aware' of the vehicle it could be exchanged for another seized vehicle. This has proved to be time consuming and problematic although the use of seized vehicles is of benefit no workable protocols or systems are in place as to ownership, financing, insurance and the role of vehicle fleet in the process. The Force is still attempting to address this issue.

Evaluation

Seizures

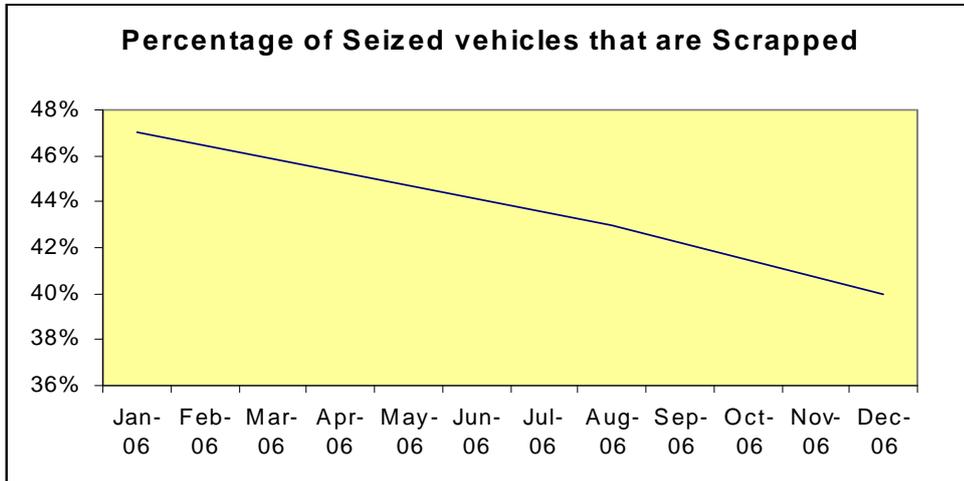
Operation TANGO seized 10,326 vehicles in 2006.

There is an increase from an initial average of 100 vehicles per week to about 200. Although there is a dip in December 2006 (due to the Suffolk deployment) this is now back up to the same levels every month.



End of life and age related issues

The relative age of vehicles being seized is an important factor when considering reductions in ASB. The older the vehicle the more likely it will be involved in fail to stop collisions, being burnt out, abandoned, or involved in ASB. The percentage of disposed seized vehicles that will be scrapped is almost a linear downward trend, initially older vehicles were being seized at high rates and there has come a point where this is reducing, therefore the vehicles left on the road are newer and worth more money. Once seized the newer vehicles have a financial benefit for the owner to claim the vehicle back paying for both insurance and removal fees. More importantly it indicates the proportion of older vehicles being seized is reducing as they are targeted during operations and this has resulted in a reduction of ASB involving vehicles. There is now clear evidence that this is having a profound effect on offences connected with vehicles of this age. End of life issues have always been a major factor in ASB since disposal fees outran the worth of old vehicles to the metal trade.



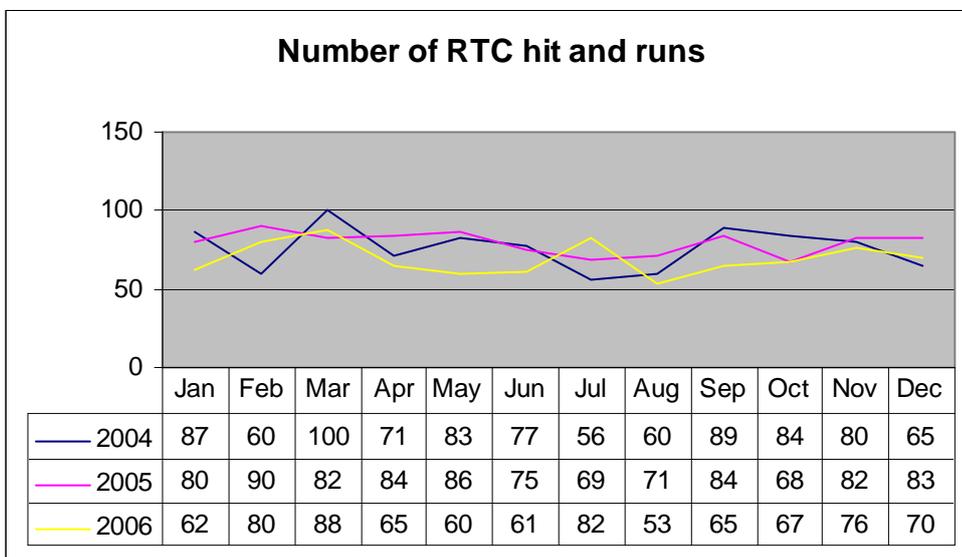
At the beginning of 2006 47% of vehicles seized were being scrapped and by the end of 2006 this had decreased to 40% and hence less of a burden financially on the Force with each scrapped vehicle costing the Force £57. By the end of 2006 59% are returned to owners or finance companies and hence the owner paying all costs for the vehicles removal and storage. (Over £2m worth of vehicles have been returned to finance companies) 73 vehicles have so far been sold at auction raising over £180,000. (Although legally it is problematic using the money immediately) with the figures involved Operation Tango could become almost self sufficient with the money it is generating.

Fail To stop RTCs

Linking in to the number of older vehicles that have been seized and the targeting of no insurance all of the below graphs show the reduction in the number of hit and run and stolen vehicles involved in RTC. You are now less likely to be involved in a RTC where the driver of a vehicle makes off from the scene

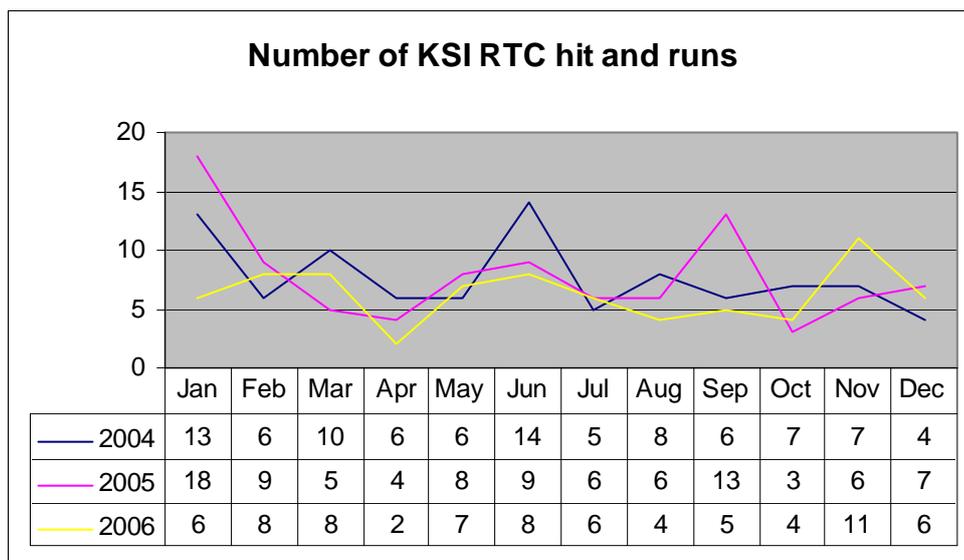
Number of RTC hit and runs

2005 had a slight increase from 2004 but were very similar in overall figures. In comparison when Op Tango ran through 2006 the difference was a **13% reduction**.



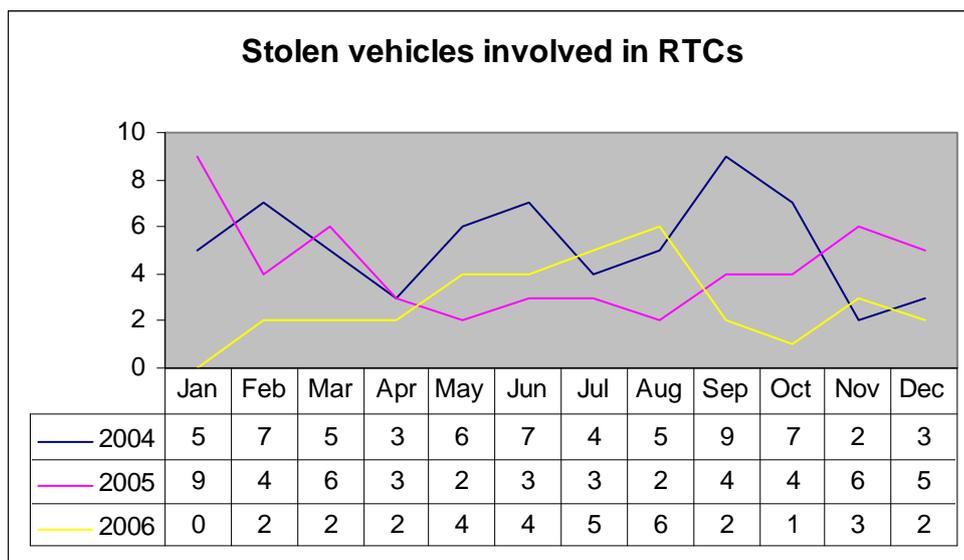
Number of Killed and Seriously Injured (KSI) RTC hit and runs

2005 had an increase of only 2 from 2004. In comparison when Op Tango ran through 2006 the difference was dramatic a **20% reduction**.



Number of Stolen vehicles involved in RTC

2005 had a slight decrease from 2004 but it was nowhere near as great a reduction as after Op Tango ran through 2006, the difference was dramatic, a **35% reduction**.

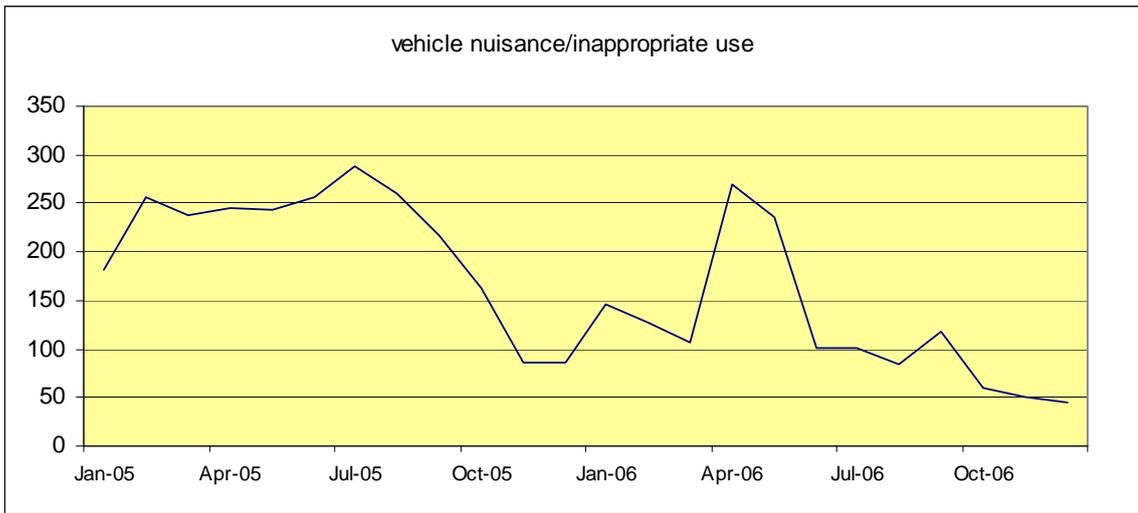


ASB with Vehicles

ASB with vehicles has reduced since the legislation became available. The destruction of so many end of life vehicles will continue to reduce the propensity for abandonment and misuse. Looking at the Force Command and Control System (C+C) the number of incidents resulted as vehicle nuisance/inappropriate use and the abandoned vehicles have been compared between 2005 and 2006

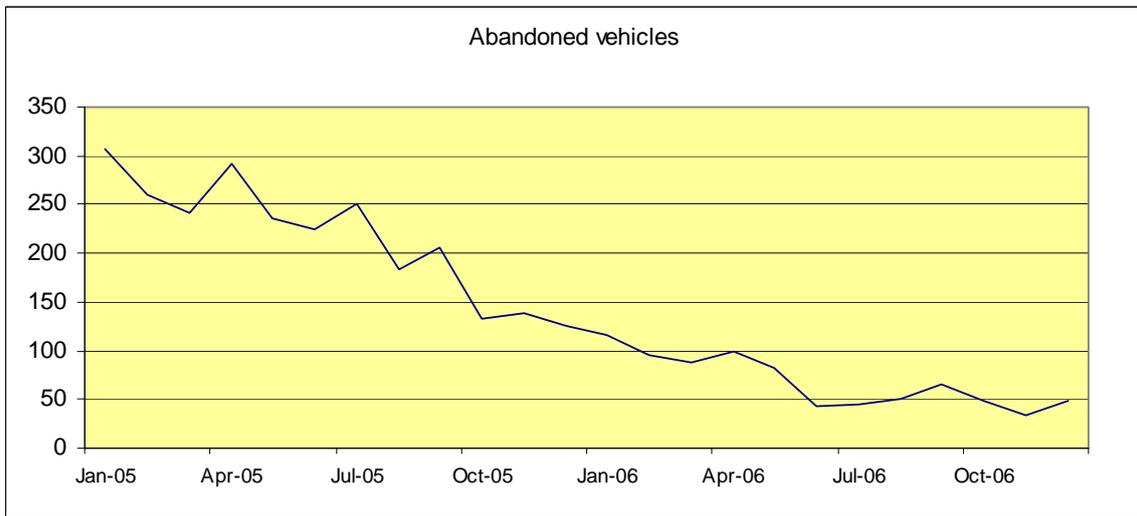
Vehicle nuisance / inappropriate use

2005 was running in a linear format until the introduction of the SOCAP (Aug 2005) and there can be seen a marked reduction. When Operation Tango began in 2006 there was an initial increase, this was due to officers requesting information regarding hot spots for vehicle nuisance and inappropriate use and this was advertised. Members of the community realized that the police would and could do something regarding the vehicles and hence there was an increase in reporting. The anomaly in April 2006 was when the recording codes were updated and changed on C+C causing confusion and errors by operators. Even with the April anomaly there was a massive **reduction of 69%**.



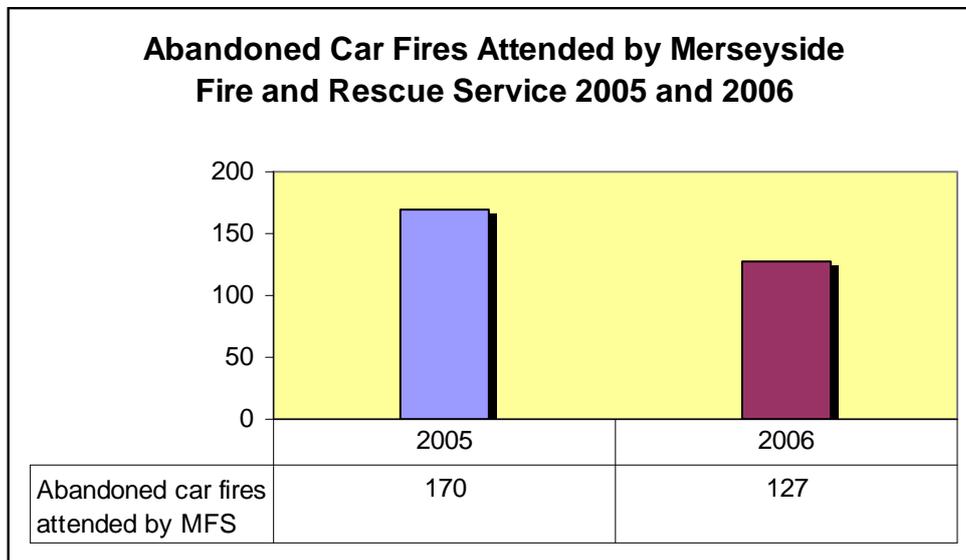
Abandoned Vehicles

Abandoned vehicles has been decreasing generally since 2005, comparing 2005 and 2006 there has still been a **43% reduction** after Operation Tango had run throughout 2006



Abandoned Car Fires-

Comparing the number of abandoned car fires that the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service attended from 2005 and 2006 shows a **25% reduction**.



Op Tango Effect on Crime

The net effect on criminality due to the operation will not be clear for some time as the product of destroying so many problem vehicles takes hold. Early indication is the high volume of seizures, which feature on the Force Intelligence System, and the extreme lengths offenders are going to release vehicles they own but cannot admit to. It is clear to the Operation it is this aspect of accountability by ownership which is causing far more problems to offenders than the insurance requirement.

In 2006 2,568 arrests across the full spectrum of offences were made during TANGO operations.

Linking in with both Wirral and Liverpool city parking services and ANPR technology by targeting offenders with in excess of 150 unpaid tickets. Numerous primary offenders have had their car seized with £10,000s in fines repaid. One long-term offender was trapped in Wallasey with a high class Mercedes bearing an entirely fictitious plate.

Insurance Industry

The Insurance Industry is the biggest financial winner from this operation. We are extremely unlikely to get access to accurate data due to competitive sensitivity however a reasonable grasp can be gleaned from the following known fact: -

DVLA figures indicate an extra 18,000 owners have taxed their vehicles in the period, an action that requires insurance specific to a vehicle. A low estimate within the Liverpool postcode for insurance cover would be £500. This is somewhat simplistic but reasonable equation would suggest the industry has taken an extra £ 9,000,000 in cover from Merseyside motorists.

Motor Traders

All traders were required to deal directly with the "Trade Policy Investigation Unit" of the Vehicle Crime Group. After advice from both CPS Re. Aid and abet and the insurance industry regarding the risk factor of covering such persons. 7 policies have been withdrawn totally and >40 other "traders" dealt with, now have their details lodged with Inland Revenue, Trading Standards and Rates office of each borough they operate in. Few traders now volunteer their policies to release vehicles and those that do regret bitterly the level of accountability that follows.

Conclusion

The message being put out by the Force is simple "this is not a soft option. At face value, taking uninsured drivers off the roads may appear mundane but it's having a real impact on crime and ASB. By targeting unlicensed vehicles, we're also targeting the criminality associated with them. The help and support of our partners and our communities is key to our success. We are determined to rid the roads of the hard-core element that flout the law. If your vehicle is not insured, we will remove it with or without the co-operation of the driver. If you don't come to collect it, it will be crushed."

Section 4: Endorsement by Senior Representative

Please insert letter from endorsing representative:

Operation Tango has proved to be one of the most successful and impactful operations ever carried out on Merseyside. It is difficult to recall when an operation has had such an ongoing influence in the behavior of the motoring public, with thousands of additional insurance policies taken out since the operation. Further startling evidence of the impact of the operation can be seen in comparing the data regarding abandoned vehicles, vehicle nuisance and vehicle fires.

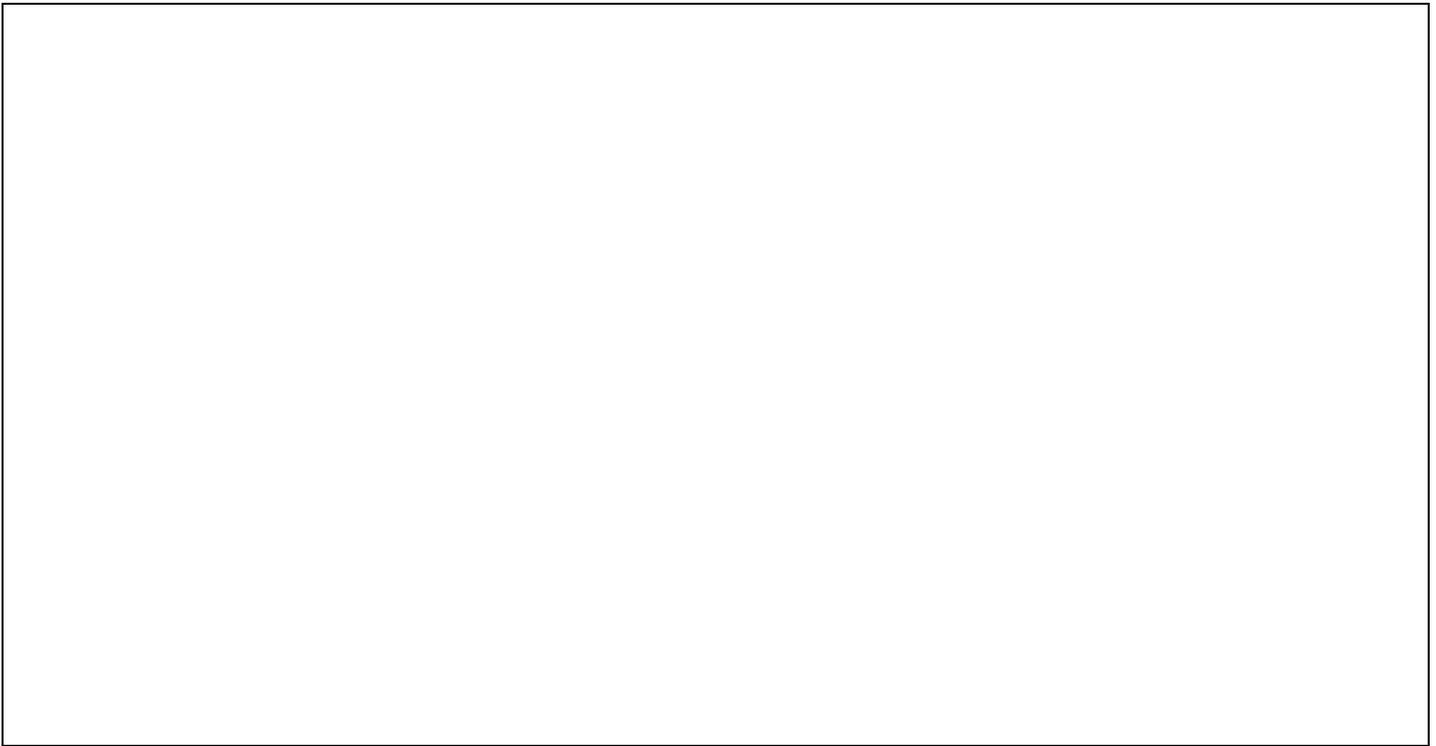
The operation has involved many various partners and agencies. The Motor Insurance Industry in particular have been a key partner as have the DVLA, Fire Service, rota garages and local authorities across Merseyside.

As the operation has progressed, many challenging and diverse problems have required solution. Much of this has been due to the behavior of offenders modifying to attempt to beat the system. The imagination and effectiveness of the officers and partners involved have enabled us to stay one step ahead.

It is important to highlight the effect that use of technology has had on the operation. All Merseyside Police vehicles are fitted with mobile data terminals, which allow PNC checks from the car. This is supported by 49 ANPR equipped vehicles, which have been responsible for over half of the seizures.

Operation Tango has been and continues to be a remarkable operation, fully deserving submission for this award.

Ian Pilling,
Superintendent – Crime Reduction.



Checklist for Applicants:

1. Have you read the process and application form guidance?
2. Have you completed all four sections of the application form in full including the endorsement from a senior representative?
3. Have you checked that your entry addresses all aspects of the judging criteria?
4. Have you advised all partner agencies that you are submitting an entry for your project?
5. Have you adhered to the formatting requirements within the guidance?
6. Have you checked whether there are any reasons why your project should **not** be publicised to other police forces, partner agencies and the general public?
7. Have you saved you application form as a PDF attachment and entitled your message 'Entry for Tilley Awards 2007' before emailing it?

Once you are satisfied that you have completed your application form in full please **email it to Tilleyawards07@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk**. Two hard copies must also be posted to Alex Blackwell at Home Office, Effective Practice, Support & Communications Team, 6th Floor, Peel Building (SE Quarter), 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF.