



**CONCLUDED
PROBLEM REPORT
PS-1**

Problem ID : 61

Reporting Division : NORTH

District:

Neighbourhood : PROVINCE-WIDE PROBLEM

Address :

Reg	Rank	Last Name	First Name
903	CST	VOGT	L

Key Description : SUSPENDED DRIVERS

Problem Description:

There are roughly 1.9 million licensed drivers in Alberta. Motor Vehicle statistics show that at any given time, upwards of 76,000 of these licenses are under some form of legal suspension or disqualification. Over 18,000 of those suspended drivers list an Edmonton address.

The number of these suspended drivers who choose to ignore their suspended status and continue to drive cannot be measured. It is only through informed observation on the part of working police officers that the proportion is considered "high". Without any overt plan to target suspended drivers and only "hit and miss" enforcement arising out of routine contact with motorists, the Edmonton Police Service laid 789 isolated charges in 1993 and 1021 in 1994.

It was decided by Cst. Vogt that a more direct targeting program would be in order.

Problem solving strategies and results :

The initial response was a very traditional enforcement program. To provide around the clock coverage, members from different platoons were identified to devote full time attention to known suspended drivers. Lists of newly suspended drivers were obtained from both the Court (Criminal Code suspensions) and the Motor Vehicles Branch (demerit or default of judgement disqualifications) and assembled at Calder/Kensington Community Station. This information was disseminated to team members and turf officers of the home addresses. Individuals were then targeted on that basis.

A media campaign was launched on two fronts. A wider appeal advised that a targeting effort was underway cautioning those individuals that were driving unlawfully, and urging anyone with knowledge of a dissenting disqualified driver to contact police. Information received in this manner was added to the list for the team. A lesser campaign involving the local print media was launched in NE Edmonton. Here, the names of newly suspended drivers with local addresses were actually published.

The foregoing initiatives proved to be quite labor intensive and time consuming. Results were being realized and charges were resulting but targeting individuals from lists was inefficient. Reports from the public were shown to be more reliable but still not cost effective. In the mean time, some interesting statistics were beginning to emerge. Fully 70% of the drivers charged with suspended driving were also driving uninsured. This really underscored the need to target these individuals as they were demonstrating contempt for all aspects of responsible vehicle operation. Also, an informal check with the police vehicle seizure lot revealed that of 116 vehicles impounded under the suspended driver program (Alberta law allows for the 30 day seizure of any motor vehicle being operated by a disqualified driver), 81 (69%) had been operated by the registered owner.

It was further noted that the computer inquiries needed to identify suspended drivers were quite cumbersome. Motor vehicle registry information was independent from drivers license information, which was independent suspension information, etc. Even though the various licensing bureaus operated out of the same building, their computers and records did not interface. Consultation with the various departments concluded that wholesale changes to correct this situation would not be forthcoming.

By a stroke of good fortune, it was learned that while the computer systems themselves were independent, they did share the same systems analyst. This person proved to be a very accommodating individual that equally recognized the

need to simplify the process by providing more information.

Previously, when an Alberta license plate was queried for registered owner information, simply vehicle description and registered owner name and address would be available. As of 95July01, this information has been expanded to include the physical description of the registered owner (taken from drivers license), and the current status of the license. While it still becomes necessary to investigate further as to the type of suspension, a single computer query by license plate instantly provides ample information to initiate a traffic stop.

Cst. Vogt has demonstrated how a straight forward enforcement program can expand to have continent wide ramifications for anyone querying identifying likely suspended drivers and has been credited with locating stolen autos before they were reported. -