

Trends in First-Time Licence Disqualifications in Saskatchewan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As a follow-up to a recent Ontario study titled *Trends in First-Time One-Year Licence Suspensions in Ontario: 1993-2001*¹, MADD Canada (in partnership with Transport Canada) funded a study examining trends in Criminal Code (CCC) driving disqualifications in Saskatchewan. Over the years, the Province has implemented a number of sanctions directed against drinking and driving, seeking to encourage safe driving through a series of incentives and remedial measures.

The most notable changes occurred on August 1, 1996. Statutory licence disqualifications were lengthened. Most notably, drivers were required to participate in a remedial measures program (addiction screening) where they were subsequently referred to either the Driving Without Impairment (DWI) education course or the recovery program, depending on whether they were identified as having an chemical dependency or not.

For this study, Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI) provided Synectics Transportation Consultants Inc. (Synectics) with a comprehensive data set that allowed them to examine trends in disqualifications and driver response to legislated changes in driver relicensing requirements. The data set contains detailed driving histories for all first-time CCC offenders (referred to as **first offenders**) with relicensing eligibility dates on or after January 1, 1993 or before January 1, 2006.

Approximately 72 percent of the first offenders relicensed. The last known information on another 27 percent of the first offenders is that they remain unlicensed. The remainder were deceased or have left the province.

Legislation that was introduced on August 1, 1996 was used as the basis for assessing changes in the yearly proportion of first offenders not relicensing within one week and one year of eligibility. This legislation would have affected first offenders with full privilege eligibility dates starting in the following year (1997).

First offenders with eligibility dates in the post-1997 period are less likely to have relicensed within one week or one year, compared to first offenders with eligibility dates in the pre-1997 period. The reason for the change was attributed to the legislation changes that occurred on August 1, 1996, including the remedial measures requirement.

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¹ Suggett, J; and Malone, B. (2004) *Trends in First Time One-Year Licence Suspensions in Ontario: 1993-2001*

Reasons why a first offender required more time to relicense were investigated. Some first offenders either reoffended (under the Criminal Code) or were convicted of another driving offence² (demonstrating that they are still driving), did not complete addiction screening program requirements, did not pay a fine, or had an unauthorized personal identification code. These first offenders were all more likely to require more than one year beyond their eligibility date for relicensing, if at all. First offenders following through with the addiction screening program and subsequently being referred to the DWI course were more likely to relicense within a year of their eligibility date, while their counterparts in the recovery program were more likely to require longer than a year.

The results of the study were compared to the results of the earlier Ontario study. Comparison of relicensing in the periods before and after the introduction of remedial measures programs indicate that while there is a greater likelihood of first offenders requiring additional time for reinstatement in both provinces in the after period, the difference is less pronounced in Saskatchewan. It appears that the introduction of a remedial measures program had less impact on first offender relicensing delays in Saskatchewan as compared to Ontario.

The above is supported by a comparison of non-participation rates in the remedial measures programs in both provinces. In Saskatchewan, 27 percent of first time offenders referred to addiction screening did not follow through by attending their initial session. Research in Ontario suggests a non-participation rate of 55 percent. Differences in the two provinces that may explain the different non-participation rates are shown in **Exhibit E-1**. Possible reasons for the difference in participation are incentives built into program requirements in Saskatchewan, their straightforwardness, lower insurance costs associated with relicensing, and the higher likelihood of being charged of an alcohol related offence in Saskatchewan compared to Ontario. Finally, in Saskatchewan, driver licensing and the public automobile insurance program are both administered by SGI.

² Under *The Highway Traffic Act*.

Exhibit E-1 Comparison of Ontario and Saskatchewan¹

Item	Ontario	Saskatchewan
Incentives to complete remedial measures	No incentives provided	Early reinstatement to restricted, provisional licence or ignition interlock
Program fees	\$450 for Back on Track	\$150 for DWI course only
Program requirements	Education or treatment requirement and follow-up interview six months later ²	Education or treatment requirement only
Insurance costs upon relicensing	Typically several thousand dollars per year	One-time Safe Driver Recognition penalty of \$500
Charge rates for alcohol related offences³	Approximately 200 per 100,000 population (16 years and older)	Approximately 600 per 100,000 population (16 years and older)
Integration of driver licensing and automobile insurance	Administered by Ontario Ministry of Transportation and private insurers	Both administered by SGI
Notes:		
1 In the period after the introduction of the remedial measures program in each province.		
2 Follow-up interview requirement introduced in 2001.		
3 Based on Juristat data, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey, 2002 data		

Recommendations made to SGI include:

- A follow-up letter to first offenders six months into their licence disqualification period reminding them of general program requirements and identifying any additional requirements specific to the offender; and
- For first offenders showing no evidence of attending the initial addiction screening session, contact by telephone to remind them of the program requirements.

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