

LEAVE MORE SPACE FOR TRUCKS

2006 Herman
Goldstein Award
for Excellence in
Problem-Oriented
Policing

Washington State Patrol
Commercial Vehicle Division
Ticketing Aggressive Cars and Trucks (TACT)

DON'T GET A TICKET

A message from the Washington Traffic Safety Commission



CHRISTINE O. GREGOIRE
Governor



JOHN R. BATISTE
Chief

STATE OF WASHINGTON
WASHINGTON STATE PATROL

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June 27, 2006

Mr. Rob Guerette
Goldstein Award Coordinator
School of Policy and Management
University Park, PCA 366B
Florida International University
11200 SW 8th St
Miami FL 33199

Dear Mr. Guerette:

It is with great pleasure that I submit the Washington State Patrol's "Ticketing Aggressive Cars and Trucks (TACT)" project for consideration for the 2006 Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing.

As outlined in the submission instructions, our project is submitted in electronic (PDF) format as an e-mail attachment.

By this letter, I attest to the project's methodology and verify that the project results are accurate and directly attributable to the project.

In addition to nominating this project for award consideration, I ask that it also be considered for panel presentation at the 2006 POP Conference.

If you have any questions about the TACT project, please contact Captain Coral L. Estes, commander of our Commercial Vehicle Division, at (360) 753-0350.

Sincerely,

CHIEF JOHN R. BATISTE

JRB:tlu

cc: Trooper James K. Correll, Commercial Vehicle Division
Captain Coral L. Estes, Commercial Vehicle Division
Lieutenant Michael L. Turcott, Field Operations Bureau
Assistant Chief Brian A. Ursino, Field Operations Bureau

Project Summary

Ticketing Aggressive Cars and Trucks (TACT)



Scanning

The Washington State Patrol (WSP) Commercial Vehicle Division (CVD) recognized an ongoing problem and growing public concern regarding commercial vehicle collisions. This was a high-profile problem, resulting in extensive property damage, injuries and fatalities, and traffic congestion.

Analysis

73% of commercial vehicle collisions also involve passenger cars, and in the majority of these collisions the cars are at fault. The most common violations include speed, following too closely, improper lane change, failure to yield, and aggressive or negligent driving.

In 2003, the WSP experimented on a limited basis with using a commercial truck as an observation point for enforcement purposes, with a trooper nearby in a patrol car to apprehend violators. Ticketing Aggressive Cars and Trucks (TACT) built upon the success of the original program by adding extensive media participation, outside agency involvement, highway signage, and detailed pre and post event data analysis. Two enforcement and two control corridors on I-5 were identified. A pre-event violation survey provided baseline data.

Response

Media saturation began two weeks before the enforcement blitz, using radio, television and print. The first enforcement phase ran from July 11-22, 2005, followed by another violation survey. Media saturation resumed two weeks before the second enforcement phase, September 19-30, 2005.

Like the initial project in 2003, TACT involves a trooper riding as an observer in a commercial truck. Another trooper is nearby in an unmarked, non-traditional patrol car. Both troopers observe violations around the truck, and radio ahead to officers in marked vehicles who make the enforcement contact. TACT involves officers from city and county departments, in addition to state troopers.

During the two enforcement blitzes, officers made 4,998 enforcement contacts, issuing 3,520 citations and 1,478 written warnings.

Assessment

Collisions in enforcement corridors decreased by 27%, observed violations decreased by 47%, and 9% of drivers surveyed reported improved driving behavior. Results in control corridors were virtually unchanged.

Project Summary Description

★ Scanning ★

Enforcement Officers within the Commercial Vehicle Division (CVD) of the Washington State Patrol (WSP) recognized an ongoing problem with collisions involving commercial trucks and passenger cars. These collisions tended to be quite spectacular, with the potential for extensive property damage, loss of life, roadway blockage, and drawing extensive media attention.



These factors made the issue a priority for the Washington State Patrol (WSP). While the public generally assumes that the commercial truck driver is to blame for these collisions, a preliminary review of crash data shows that the passenger car driver is at fault in 75% of car vs. truck collisions. CVD personnel attacked the problem by using the WSP Problem Oriented Public Safety (POPS) philosophy, which is built upon the tenets of partnerships and problem-solving using the SARA model.

★ Analysis ★

Previous Projects – In 2003, the CVD instituted the “Step Up and Ride” program in King County. This program was intended to address the commercial vehicle vs. passenger vehicle collision problem. Step Up and Ride involved placing a trooper in a commercial motor vehicle to observe violations. The observing trooper radioed ahead to other area troopers in patrol vehicles who would take appropriate enforcement action. This project, while successful on a limited scale, did not include a significant amount of education outside of the media attention gained during the period of operation. In addition, there were no other law enforcement agencies or other WSP divisions involved.

The nationwide “Click It or Ticket” seat belt program uses heavy media blitzes accompanied by extensive enforcement to educate the public. Although not specifically related to commercial vehicle collisions, Click It or Ticket served as a model for the TACT project in terms of public education and media strategy.

In 2004, Captain Coral Estes, CVD Commander, approached the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) and the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) and requested grant funding to expand the Step Up and Ride program. The FMCSA and NHTSA responded with \$600,000 in funding for the WSP to develop a pilot project to reduce commercial and passenger vehicle accidents. The resulting TACT project incorporates the operational procedures of the Step Up and Ride program with the public education and media strategy utilized in the very successful Click It or Ticket campaign.

Baseline Data Collection – Several forms of baseline data were collected:

- Four geographic areas were selected and designated as control or enforcement corridors. Specific corridor locations provide an opportunity to measure, analyze, and compare collision rates, public awareness, and driver behavior.
- Analysis of collision reports to determine frequency and severity of commercial vehicle collisions in all four geographic corridors.
- Washington State Department of Transportation (DOT) traffic counters provided statistics on following distances, speeds, and vehicle types.
- Driver surveys established baseline knowledge and awareness on topics such as passing distances, stopping distances, and safety messages.
- Video-recording of driver behavior occurred in each corridor. Video-recordings of driver behavior were made before and after enforcement and education blitzes to document noticeable changes in drivers' behavior.

★ Response ★

Project Operation – Intensive media outreach began two weeks prior to and continued through each enforcement blitz. This included paid radio spots, TV interviews, and reporter ride-alongs with troopers in the truck and on WSP aircraft.



Each corridor conducted daily briefings to orient officers and troopers working the project. Briefings included a project overview, description of enforcement goals, and contact strategies. During violator contacts, tickets were the preferred enforcement, with written warnings as an option. In order to track project results, no verbal warnings were given. This provided written documentation of the gender, age, and city of residence of each violator. On each traffic stop, the violator received a brochure and a brief overview of the

TACT project from the officer. A debriefing at the end of the day allowed officers to make copies of all tickets and warnings for later study of violator demographics. It was also an opportunity to provide anecdotal stories and share successes and challenges.

Enforcement phases occurred July 11-22 and September 19-30, 2005, on heavily traveled Interstate 5 in Whatcom, Skagit, Pierce, and Thurston Counties. The Washington Trucking Association (WTA) committed at least one tractor-trailer combination in both corridors

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every day of the project. Enforcement consisted of marked WSP trooper vehicles, unmarked Aggressive Driving Apprehension Team (ADAT) trooper vehicles, WSP aircraft, and local law enforcement (city police and county sheriff's officers). Law enforcement efforts focused on speed, unsafe lane changes, following too closely, negligent and reckless driving, and left-lane violations committed by commercial vehicles.

Several enforcement strategies were in place during the enforcement phase. The commercial truck made a continuous loop within the corridor with a trooper in the cab and an unmarked ADAT vehicle nearby. The observing and patrol officers relayed violator information to local and WSP units ahead in marked cars. While the troopers and truckers worked the road, WSP Aviation worked the opposite side of the freeway with local and WSP officers in marked cars stopping violators. During periods when officers patrolling in marked vehicles were not working with the truck or Aviation units, they stayed busy conducting radar speed enforcement until the truck came through the area again. This practice maximized efficiency and minimized downtime.

Response Alternatives – Careful consideration was given to several alternative options for the project. For various reasons, the team deemed these as inappropriate response options. Rejected alternatives include:

- Graphic impact photographs—option eliminated because photos were too disturbing for public viewing and did not reinforce positive driving qualities.
- Negligent driving monetary penalty (\$538) posted on highway signs—option eliminated due to potential confusion when lesser infractions such as unsafe lane change or following distance are cited.
- Use of the Seattle/King County area as TACT corridor—even though this area was the home to the original Step Up and Ride program, this option was eliminated because of extreme traffic congestion and narrow roadway shoulders as a significant safety risk.

Partnership Accountability Links – Participation in the TACT program required specific deliverables from each participating agency and group. Noted below is a brief outline of accountability per agency or group.

Washington Traffic Safety Commission

- Provided media exposure by way of radio spots, public safety announcements, brochures, and traffic sign layouts.
- Coordinated a media blitz two weeks prior to and during the enforcement emphasis.
- Designed highway signs to be in place at the beginning of enforcement emphasis (signs to remain in place at project conclusion).
- Conducted knowledge and awareness surveys at project start and conclusion.
- Analyzed road data at project start and conclusion.
- Analyzed video-recorded driver behavior provided by the WSP.
- Analyzed collision data at project start and conclusion.

Washington State Patrol

- Provided Step Up and Ride expertise and training to other agencies.
- Assisted with corridor selection based on collision history and officer/public safety considerations.
- Video-recorded driver behavior and critiqued driving before, during, and after each of the two enforcement blitz periods, followed by additional video-recording 30 days after final enforcement blitz.
- Provided Aviation support.
- Provided the majority of officer staffing during enforcement blitzes.
- Coordinated enforcement efforts of both corridors.
- Provided media interviews and commercial vehicle ride-alongs.

Washington State Department of Transportation

- Assisted with corridor selection with consideration to planned construction projects and signage.
- Provided baseline vehicle type, speed, and following distance traffic counter data.
- Installed project road signs.
- Provided injury and fatal collision data involving commercial motor vehicles.



Additional Project Partners – Each additional project partner was responsible to provide staffing resources during enforcement blitzes or to provide support for project administration.

- Washington Trucking Association
- Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
- Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration
- Federal Highway Administration
- Bellingham Police
- Lakewood Police
- Tumwater Police
- Lacey Police
- Whatcom County Sheriff
- Skagit County Sheriff
- Pierce County Sheriff

Media – The media was a major participant in the TACT project. The primary responsibility for this category was public education. The media reported on project objectives, safety criteria, and violation penalties. Methods of information distribution varied as noted below.

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The TACT story appeared in six local Seattle newspapers as well as *Transporter*, *AAA Washington*, and *Overdrive* magazines. Project information aired 22 times on seven major television stations. Public service announcements played 6,133 times in the Seattle, Bellingham, and Olympia markets.

| TIMELINE | |
|-----------------|---|
| June 30 | Baseline Violation Video and Knowledge Awareness Survey |
| June 30-July 5 | Media Blitz |
| July 11-22 | Enforcement Phase I |
| July 25 | Violation Video Survey |
| September 5-16 | Media Blitz |
| September 8 | Violation Video Survey |
| September 19-30 | Enforcement Phase II |
| October 3 | Violation Video and Knowledge Awareness Survey |
| October 30 | Final Video Survey |

Enforcement Outputs – During two enforcement periods, the following enforcement and education occurred:

- 4,998 Enforcement Contacts
- 3,520 Citations Issued
- 1,478 Warnings Issued
- 10,000 TACT Brochures Distributed

Challenges – The TACT team encountered the following challenges:

- **Observation Vehicle Logistics**
 - Identifying participating carriers.
 - Coordinating schedules between carrier, truck driver, and CVD troopers/enforcement officers.
- **DOT Traffic Counters**
 - Programming counters to separate vehicle types and classifications (motorcycle, passenger cars, small trucks, large trucks, motor homes).
 - Installing vehicle counters in all TACT corridors (not all locations had previous installations).
 - Limiting availability of DOT data (archives occur once every 24-hour cycle).
- **Communications**
 - No common radio frequency between all law enforcement agencies (WSP/county/city).
 - Handheld portable radio had limited range (maximum communication range between observation vehicle and enforcement vehicles restricted certain operations).

★ Assessment ★

NHTSA released the TACT project data after it was presented to Congress the first week of May 2006.

Collision data during the two enforcement blitzes showed a significant reduction in the number of commercial vehicle vs. passenger vehicle collisions between the enforcement and control corridors.

- 27% collision decrease in Enforcement Corridors
- 0% collision decrease in Control Corridors

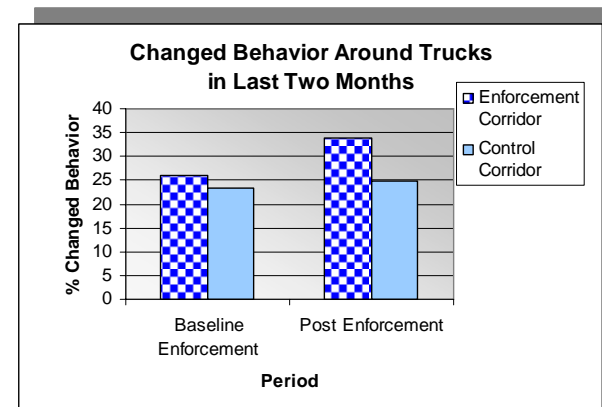
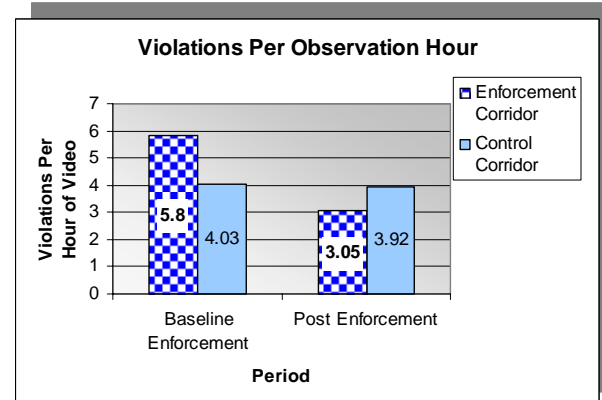
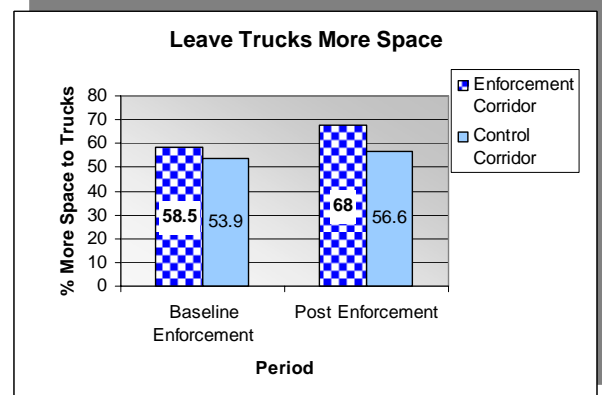
Post-enforcement violation video surveys and data show a significant increase in the amount of space around commercial trucks by nearby passenger vehicles when measured against pre-blitz data.

The number of violations per hour as rated during video observation significantly decreased in the enforcement corridor. The control corridor displayed no significant change in the number of violations.

Drivers self-reported a greater change in behavior around commercial vehicles in the enforcement corridor. Video observations confirmed this behavior testimony.

Institutionalization – The TACT program was successfully incorporated into the WSP Commercial Vehicle Division. The original TACT project implemented on I-5 has expanded statewide. District 8 (Bremerton) wanted to reduce commercial vehicle collisions in rural Grays Harbor County. Personnel in District 8 conducted a “mini-TACT” emphasis which ran for three days. Their emphasis also involved ADAT, CVD personnel, local law enforcement, and the local media. The District 8 effort expects to receive results comparable to the I-5 region results. Additional districts also plan “mini-TACT” projects in their regions.

Conclusion – The POPS philosophy guides the strategy of WSP problem-solving efforts. The TACT project is just the most recent example of successful WSP POPS projects. The combination of partnerships and problem-solving using the SARA model is an effective way to reduce commercial and passenger vehicle collisions.



Ticketing Aggressive Cars and Trucks (TACT)



★ Agency and Officer Information ★

The TACT project was implemented at the line-officer level, with supervisor coordination and management support as high as the Office of the Chief. All commissioned officers receive POPS training during the Trooper Basic Training Class. Supervisors and mid-level managers



receive refresher training upon promotion. Incentives are in place for officers to engage in problem-solving. The POPS philosophy has been firmly fixed in the culture of the WSP for a number of years. POPS is part of cadet basic training, the job performance appraisal process, and the promotional process. Officers are encouraged to submit their projects to the annual POPS Forum for recognition as a WSP Exemplary Project. The winner receives a \$200 cash award, a plaque, and a trip to the annual Problem-Oriented Policing Conference. Runners-up also are recognized. Personnel have access to

prior years' Exemplary Projects as examples. This project received \$600,000 in NHTSA funding, which was used for public service announcements, printed material, and enforcement overtime.

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