



PRESS RELEASE



“COURT STING OPERATION” TARGETING DRIVERS OPERATING A VEHICLE WITHOUT A LICENSE OR A SUSPENDED/REVOKED LICENSE

DATE/TIME: November 7th, 2007

INCIDENT: Victorville Traffic Safety Program

LOCATION: City of Victorville

VICTORVILLE –The Victorville Police Department’s Traffic Enforcement deputies conducted another sting operation on Wednesday, November 7th, 2007. The operation began at about 2:00 pm and concluded at about 5:00 pm. The traffic enforcement deputies sat inside the courtroom and observed courtroom testimony and the judge ordering defendant’s not to drive on their suspended license. Deputies followed the defendants out of the courtroom and if the defendant drove a vehicle after being ordered not to drive, officers were waiting nearby to stop and arrest the driver. A total of four (4) persons were followed from the courtroom and observed to drive after being ordered not to drive by the judge. Eight persons followed the judge’s order and had someone else drive them from the court. One person stopped was told not to drive from the court by the judge and when a deputy stopped her she admitted to being told not to drive. This driver ignored the judge’s order and still got into a vehicle and drove away from the court without a license. **The vehicle being driven was impounded for 30 days! Impounded vehicles cost about \$2,000 to retrieve after the 30-day impound time period.**

This operation is part of an ongoing program as a result of citizen concerns about the driving habits and after a review traffic collision data in the City of Victorville. Deputies have plans to monitor the persons leaving the court without a license twice a month for the next two years. The program includes increased enforcement in selected locations and enhanced public awareness and education about traffic safety. The goal of the program is to educate drivers in the City of Victorville about traffic safety and reduce the number of traffic collisions due to unsafe driving. Vehicle’s operated by drivers who are repeat offenders with suspended/revoked or unlicensed drivers account for a significant amount of unsafe driving offenses according to a DMV study.

Suspended/revoked (S/R) and unlicensed drivers have long been a source of concern to traffic safety professionals. While it is known that license actions, such as suspension and revocation, do reduce the traffic risk posed by problem drivers, it is also known that most S/R drivers continue to drive and to pose an increased safety risk. In short, there is significant room to improve the effectiveness of license suspension and revocation. A recently published DMV study indicates that the vehicle impoundment and forfeiture laws are one means of improving the effectiveness of license suspension/revocation.

The California DMV study shows that vehicle impoundment is having a positive effect on traffic safety in California. Importantly, it appears even more effective for repeat offenders—those whose high-risk driving has traditionally been resistant to change—than for first offenders. The study’s findings provide strong support for the use of vehicle impoundment for suspended/revoked and unlicensed drivers. In addition, because most law enforcement agencies charge administrative fees at the time they release vehicles from impoundment, the use of vehicle impoundment is a cost-effective means to enhance traffic safety in California.