

MINOR'S RESTRICTED DRIVER'S LICENSE ANALYSIS

Becky T. Davies

**Safety Division
Texas Transportation Institute
Texas A&M University System**

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DISCLAIMER

The conclusions and opinions expressed in this document are those of the author, and do not necessarily represent those of the State of Texas, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) or any political subdivision of the State or Federal government.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

All states have legislation establishing a minimum age for licensing drivers. Texas law sets the minimum age of licensure at 18, although early licensure may be permitted under certain conditions (Texas Department of Public Safety, 1993-1994). Early licensure requires the applicant to meet either of two conditions: (1) an applicant may be licensed at age 16 following successful completion of both the classroom and on-road phases of an approved driver education course; or (2) an applicant may qualify for a Minor's Restricted Driver's License (MRDL: commonly referred to as a "hardship" license). Additionally, instruction ("learner's") permits may be issued to persons 15 years of age or older, but younger than 18 years of age, who have satisfactorily completed the classroom phase of an approved driver education course.

MRDL Laws. Prior to May 1983, the MRDL provision permitted issuance of a driver's license to 15-18 year-olds without driver education provided that failure to issue the license would "cause economic hardship on the family of the applicant," or "be detrimental to the general welfare of the applicant or his or her family" (Texas Department of Public Safety, 1982-83, pp. 343-344). In performance of its licensing function, the Department of Public Safety was authorized to make decisions regarding the issuance of MRDLs. However, adequate investigation of applicant qualifications was not carried out, and the wording of the law was vague enough to permit 15-18 year-olds to obtain a hardship license if the parents could establish a need for the license.

Traffic safety professionals became alarmed of probable misuse of the licensing privilege as the number of hardship licenses granted each year increased from less than 24,000 per year

in 1979 to more than 72,000 per year in 1982 (Texas Department of Public Safety, 1983). The huge increase in hardship licenses was cause for alarm, primarily because this group of young license holders were not required to complete driver education. Concern was also heightened when highly publicized accidents involved this early licensure group. In May 1983, the Legislature passed Senate Bill 89 which changed the conditions for qualifying for the MRDL. The new law included the following changes:

1. the "general welfare" clause was removed;
2. "economic hardship" was changed to "unusual economic hardship;"
3. successful completion of driver education was required;
4. persons 14 years of age could enter the classroom phase of driver education with DPS approval; and
5. a temporary 60-day "emergency" license could be granted without driver education. The temporary license could be renewed for additional 60-day periods as long as the emergency continued.

Young Driver Research. Young drivers are vastly overrepresented in motor vehicle crashes and injuries, whether the measure of exposure is based on population, number of licensed drivers, or miles driven (Jonah, 1986). Age has been clearly established as a factor in accident rates, and sixteen year-olds have by far the highest fatal crash rates--higher than for any other age group (Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, 1984). Indeed, in the United States, motor vehicle injuries are the leading cause of death for young people between the ages of 15 and 24 (U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1979). It is not until around age 25 that driver performance appears to plateau, and mileage crash rates remain relatively low

until they again increase with the infirmities accompanying old age. Authorities (e.g., Brown & Groeger, 1988; Farrow, 1987; Jonah, 1986) have variously attributed the driving problems of young drivers to a number of factors: (1) driving inexperience and lack of adequate driving skills; (2) excessive driving during high risk hours (especially nighttime); (3) risk-taking behavior; (4) consumption of alcohol; and (5) poor driving judgment due to lack of decision-making skills.

The extant literature on young drivers reflects the controversy in attempting to address the problem of the optimum minimum age for licensure of minors. Researchers maintain that a considerable amount of driving experience is necessary following licensure for young drivers to develop dependable driving know-how, skills, and judgment. However, current research indicates both the overinvolvement of young drivers in accidents and violations and the apparent lack of effectiveness of driver education in preparing young persons for the driving task.

Study Scope and Objectives

In October 1993, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) contracted with Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) to study the experience trend in MRDL issuances since the law change in May 1983. One objective of the study was to document the issuance of MRDLs during the last ten years, and to analyze MRDL drivers' accident/violation records compared with non-MRDL drivers. A second objective was to survey Texas DPS driver licensing agencies with regard to current procedures and practices involved in the MRDL process.

Chapter Two

METHODOLOGY

Ten-Year Trend in Issuance of MRDLs

Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) provided the information regarding the number of MRDLs and 60-day emergency licenses issued per year since 1982-1983. The MRDL law change became effective in May 1983, thus the 1983-84 figures reflect the initial effects of this legislation on the number of licenses issued (see Table 1). The information provided in the Table was taken directly from a summary prepared each year by DPS for their own in-house purposes.

Driver Records

Driver records for licensees born between 1975 and 1978 were requested from DPS, and a follow-up letter was sent by TxDOT confirming the request. The date the computer tape was generated (March 16) served as the designated cut-off date. Thus, driver records were retrieved for persons born between March 16, 1975 and March 16, 1978. By using these dates, the driving histories of 15- and 16-year-old drivers were obtained.

The DPS driver record files are maintained for purposes of storing a sequential listing of traffic citations and accidents. Information from these records is used to determine driver status, identify and locate persons, evaluate eligibility for insurance, and substantiate court cases. Figure 1 presents a representative driver record retrieved from these files. Several of the fundamental elements contained in each record are presented in the key in the lower portion of

the box. The dates indicated on the record may be used to establish important information on each driver. For example, by subtracting "a" from "c", one can determine the age at which the driver first obtained a license. Similarly, subtraction of "c" from "b" can be used to determine which licenses were issued for 60-day emergency purposes only. The limitations placed on using these records for purposes of this study are addressed below.

PAGE	1	02/14/94	2	802
name	address	PAMPA	790650000 TX	
a 01/31/77	00126601 CLEAR	CLASS C	01/31/95 b	09/21/92 c
APPROVED AUTOMOBILE DRIVER EDUCATION COURSE COMPLETED d				
L I V I S E R V I C E				
T3-2				
COMPLETED DRIVERS ED PGM				
THIS TYPE RECORD WILL NOT REFLECT COMPLETION OF A DRIVING SAFETY COURSE.				
07/07/93 CHANGED LANE WHEN UNSAFE		PAMPA		
07/12/93 SPEEDING		PAMPA		
10/09/93 ACCIDENT NON-INJURY		PAMPA		
END 3 YEAR RECORD				
a	Date of Birth			
b	License Expiration Date			
c	Date of First License			
d	Driver Education Completed			

Figure 1. Representative driver record (upper portion of figure). The key for important elements of the driver record is presented in the lower portion of the figure.

The DPS driver records are dynamic files maintained primarily for purposes of producing hard-copy "snap-shots" of a person's driving history for clients such as automobile insurance agencies. There are a number of drawbacks to using this type of record for a study such as this one. First, the date at which a person first obtains a license is maintained throughout the driver's history, and there is no indication of the "type" of license (e.g., MRDL, learner's permit) issued during each period of time for which the license is issued or renewed. Also, this

type of record does not indicate the date at which driver education was completed. Therefore, there is no reliable way to distinguish MRDLs and learner's permits from other licenses issued. For example, the licensee whose record is presented in Figure 2 could have held either an MRDL (with driver education) or a learner's permit (without driver education) when first licensed at the age of 15.

PAGE 1	02/14/94	2	802
name	address	EMORY	754400000 TX
11/01/77 00142897 CLEAR	CLASS C	11/01/94	12/09/92
APPROVED AUTOMOBILE DRIVER EDUCATION COURSE COMPLETED			
L I V I S E R V I C E			
T3-2			
COMPLETED DRIVERS ED PGM			
THIS TYPE RECORD WILL NOT REFLECT COMPLETION OF A DRIVING SAFETY COURSE.			
RECORD CONTAINS NO REPORTED CONVICTION OR ACCIDENT INVOLVEMENT IN LAST 3 YEARS			

Figure 2. Driving record for a driver first licensed at age 15.

For this study, the driver records for persons less than 16 years of age on the date the computer tape was generated were extracted for further analysis. That is, the birth date subtracted from the license application date was less than 5,840 days. This group of young licensees was further subdivided into those with and without driver education. Realistically, however, it cannot be assumed that those persons with driver education who were under 16 years of age at first license were necessarily holding an MRDL.

Using this driver record file, it was also possible to distinguish 60-day emergency licenses currently held (i.e., valid at the time the computer tape was generated). Thus, the

driving histories of persons holding 60-day licenses were grouped separately for further evaluation.

The driver records were received on four 9-track tapes which were read into a .MAS file using Overland Corp's DEPOT program and a scrip program file. The .MAS files were then combined to produce the TTI004B.MAS master file. Program DATEGETX was run on the master file to produce a list of all unique descriptors found in the citations/accidents portion of the records (see Appendix C). The data obtained from the driver records were then analyzed using PROC FREQ of SAS Version 6.08.

Survey of DPS Driver Licensing Offices

A master list of mailing addresses for the driver licensing offices was obtained from DPS, and the survey questionnaire was distributed to the 185 DPS driver licensing offices across Texas. The survey instrument (see Appendix B) reflected the comments and suggestions of the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). The quantitative data collected were analyzed using PROC FREQ of SAS Version 6.08. The questionnaire was designed to collect primarily anecdotal comments concerning the MRDL licensing policies, application process, appeals process, and suggested changes in licensing minors. Comments were grouped and the information was condensed for ease in reporting results. The responses received to question 11 requesting suggested changes in hardship licensing are included as Appendix D.

Chapter Three**RESULTS****Ten-Year Trend in Issuance of MRDLs**

Table 1 below presents the number of MRDLs and 60-day licenses issued per year since 1982-83. After the law changed in 1983, the number of MRDLs approved dropped drastically from 43,350 in 1982-83 to 2,475 in 1983-84. In contrast, the number of 60-day "emergency" licenses issued rose from 657 to 4,249 during those same years. Apparently, as the new law made it more difficult to obtain an MRDL, a number of potential applicants resorted to acquiring the 60-day emergency license instead.

**Table 1. TEN-YEAR TREND IN ISSUANCE OF
MINOR'S RESTRICTED DRIVER'S LICENSES**

YEAR	MRDLs APPROVED	60-DAY LICENSES
1992-1993	3,379	5,594
1991-1992	3,039	6,316
1990-1991	2,860	6,913
1989-1990	2,415	7,084
1988-1989	2,766	7,486
1987-1988	2,552	9,164
1986-1987	2,674	9,617
1985-1986	5,886	8,116
1984-1985	3,415	7,741
1983-1984	2,475	4,249
1982-1983	43,350	657

Driver Records

Driver records were obtained for 276,793 young drivers holding licenses as of the date the computer tape was generated (March 16, 1994). Of these, 192,099 records were for persons under the age of 16 at the time of first licensure. Ninety-three percent of these drivers (178,712) had completed driver education, and the remaining 13,387 drivers (7 percent) had not completed both the classroom and on-road driver education. Figure 3 below presents a graphic depiction of the breakdown of the numbers for each group of drivers. The accidents/citations received (hereafter "citations") by each group are also presented. Due to the limitations pointed out above, no determination could be made of the types of licenses (e.g., MRDLs, learner's permit) held by these drivers at the time the citations were received.

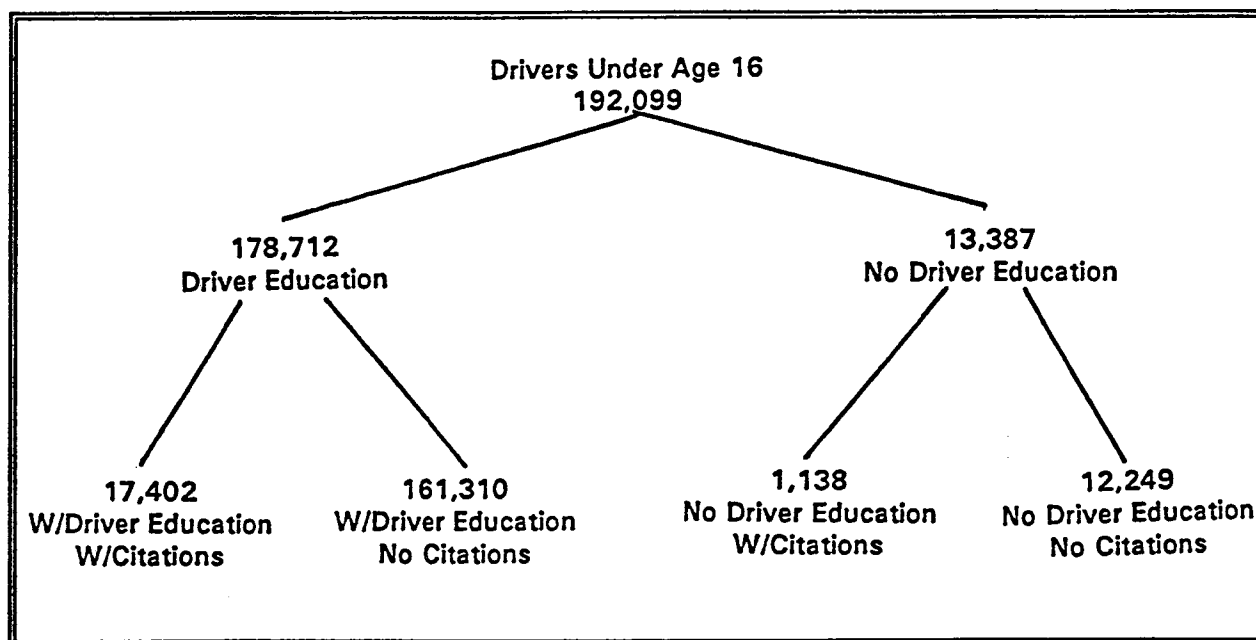


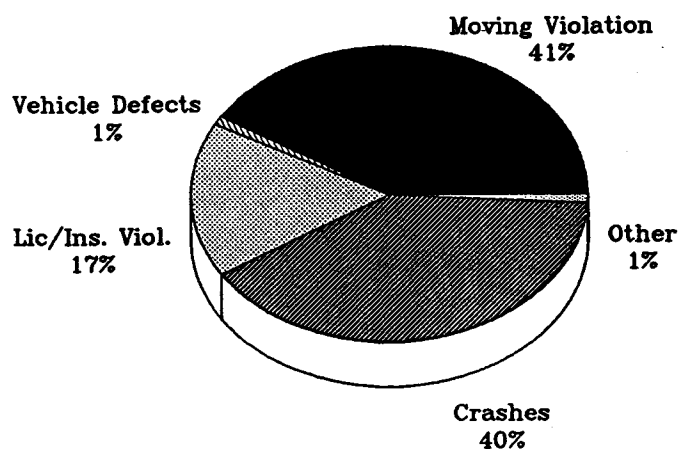
Figure 3. Groups of drivers under age 16 for which records were obtained.

The types of citations recorded in these files were categorized as follows: crashes; moving violations other than crashes; vehicle defects; license/insurance violations; and other. Appendix C contains a master list of the descriptors used by officers to record all citations reported in these files.

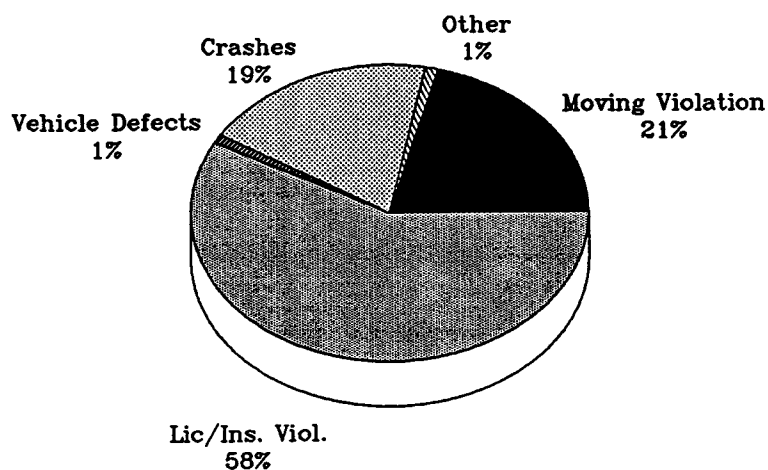
Figure 4 presents the citation categories for drivers who had completed driver education and those for whom driver education had not been completed. The proportions of crashes and moving violations were about equally divided, 40 percent and 41 percent, respectively. Because of the manner in which the driver history files are maintained, no further conclusions can be drawn from these data. It is likely that the persons included in this group had more driving exposure, thus they were more likely to have received a citation or been involved in a crash. Evaluation of these data by virtue of whether or not the driver had completed driver education in no way serves as an indictment of driver education as harmful to young drivers. Further discussion of this point is presented in the conclusions section of this report.

Figure 4 also presents the citation/accident categories for drivers who had not completed driver education at the time the computer tape was generated. These drivers also had about an equal proportion of crashes and moving violations (19 percent and 21 percent, respectively). However, the proportion of license/insurance violations (58 percent) was considerably higher than that received by the driver education group (17 percent). Within this category of violations, the majority of the citations were issued for offenses such as driving without a license, and violation of driver license restrictions. The violations recorded for these young licensees also included a large number of license cancellations, due to either incomplete driver education or authorization withdrawn.

TYPES OF CITATIONS RECEIVED



Driver Education Completed



Incomplete Driver Education

Figure 4. Types of citations received by drivers under age 16 at first licensure.

Of the group for which driver education had not been completed, 107 of the drivers were 60-day licensees. Only 13 of the 60-day licensees (12 percent) had received citations, and no further analyses were conducted on the citations received by that group.

Survey Results

Completed survey questionnaires were returned by representatives from 93 of the 185 Texas DPS driver licensing offices to which surveys were sent, for a response rate of 50 percent. Approximately 45 percent of the respondents indicated that their offices are located in primarily rural areas, and 7 percent reported their location as primarily urban. Forty-eight percent of the offices reported from areas which included both rural and urban sites.

In response to the question concerning the application screening process, 98 percent of the licensing officials maintained that both the applicant and parent(s) are screened upon application for an MRDL. The number of applications received each year by the licensing offices responding to the survey ranged from 1 to 620, and the number of hardship licenses granted each year ranged from 0 to 570.

Question 5 of the survey directed participants to indicate the frequency with which each type of hardship was presented by applicants. Presentation of "economic hardship" as the basis for needing an MRDL was reported as a frequent occurrence by 90 percent of the officials, whereas only 1 percent of them reported a "death-related emergency" as a frequently occurring hardship. Sixty percent of the respondents maintained that application for an MRDL on the basis of a "family illness/disability" was an occasional occurrence, and "enrollment in a

vocational education program" was reported as only seldomly encountered by 43 percent of the licensing officials.

In response to the question "Are you satisfied with the current application process (e.g., paperwork, scheduling, decision-making)?", 52 percent of the respondents contended that they are satisfied with the current process. These officials reported that the application process is effective, and that scheduling does not present a problem. The respondents also indicated that the paperwork is not excessive, but is detailed enough to investigate the applicant properly. The DPS officials also maintained that the guidelines are easy to follow, and that decision-making is less of a problem than it used to be. Some respondents maintained that the application process allows the examiner to properly screen the applicant and parent(s) as well as the application, thus making sure that the restriction fits the need. One person pointed out that, within the current system, it is always an option to get a second opinion from another licensing official if the decision whether or not to grant the license is not clear cut.

Of those licensing agents expressing dissatisfaction with the current system, several were concerned that there is too much opportunity for different interpretations of the requirements for licensure. There was considerable concern expressed that the term "economic hardship" is too vague, and lent itself to all manner of interpretation (i.e., the term needs to be more specifically detailed in the application and guidelines). Some of the officials complained that the law is not uniformly applied, and that the requirements for an MRDL are often interpreted differently, depending upon whether one is a supervisor or a license examiner. Others reported that they had observed differences between licensing offices as to interpretation of the guidelines. One person complained that the guidelines are not specific enough to help the officer make a clear

decision, thus the decisions made by the same examiner are often inconsistent with one another. The lack of uniformity in the documentation required to prove hardship was mentioned by several respondents, and some of them pointed out that there are too many loopholes in the guidelines. The adoption of a more strict set of requirements to which both DPS and the applicants could uniformly adhere was recommended by several of the licensing officials.

A few of the respondents thought that the application (and the application process) is too simple, and needed revision. One official claimed that the conditions accepted as evidence of hardship are too broad or vague. Several of the respondents expressed concern that too much responsibility for decision-making is placed on the license examiner. The licensing officials complained that the application form needs updating and revision, as well as more specific instructions. It was suggested that the application form should be accompanied by a brochure outlining all the requirements, and providing a clear explanation of the related laws. It was proposed that this brochure contain specific information concerning the terms "marriage" and "vocational school," as well as the penalties for making false statements upon applying for an MRDL.

A few of those persons responding to the survey thought that more time and effort should be directed toward investigating the applicant's claims of hardship. They complained that there is not enough time to adequately evaluate the applicant's needs, and that verification of information is very difficult, since the towns are often located some distance away. Complaints were also voiced that the driver license offices are understaffed, and thus it is not feasible to go out and investigate the real circumstances under which the applicant may want the license. Two of the respondents proposed a minimum one-week waiting period following application for the

license, during which further investigation of hardship claims could be conducted. One person proposed that license application should be made in the county of residence; thus, if an appeal is necessary, it would be in the county of residence also.

In voicing their concerns about the application process, a few of the respondents again suggested that stricter requirements are needed. Several license examiners expressed difficulties specifically with the parents, claiming that the parents fail to realize that the MRDL is issued for hardships, not for the sake of convenience. Others feel that the parents deliberately lie so that the child can qualify for a license. Some of the respondents pointed out that it appears to be who you know, rather than the circumstances of the hardship, that counts when applying for the MRDL. They contend that, if the applicant is rejected by the license examiner, then he goes to the Judge, who overrules the decision because he knows the person or wants to appease a future voter. One person noted a "snowball effect", whereby if one license is granted, everyone who knows the licensee then applies and thinks a license should be granted to them as well. One of the license examiners claimed that people call up and inquire about the requirements for the various hardships, and then lie and make their own circumstances fit into that category in order to qualify for a license.

In response to the question, "What are the typical reasons you send the applicant to a Judge for appeal?", the most frequently occurring response was simply that the applicant did not meet the requirements for an MRDL. Several of the respondents pointed out that the applicants actually want the license for reasons other than a hardship, such as driving to and from school, and participation in extracurricular activities. Thus, they apply for reasons of convenience, rather than hardship. One instance was cited in which the applicant claimed that he needed the

license "in case an emergency comes up," and one licensing official observed that the applicants often do not qualify for MRDL, but they are able to obtain the license anyway.

A number of the respondents took the question very literally and replied that they do not send the applicants to a Judge for appeal (i.e., it is the applicant's choice whether or not to appeal). Several of the officials pointed out that they are required by the Department to inform denied applicants of the right to appeal, and advise them of the appeal process. A few of those DPS officials who responded to this question proclaimed that the applicants appeal the decision before a Judge simply because they do not like the decision made by the official. They claim that the applicants present their cases before the Judge in the hopes that the MRDL will be approved for whatever reason they offer, regardless of the requirements. Several of the responses indicated that the applicants know that the Judge will grant the license (anyway).

Some of the officials maintained that the restricted license is desired more by the parents, so that they can be relieved of the obligation to drive their children everywhere. One licensing official pointed out that applicants often feel that their cases are special, and thus not covered by the existing requirements. Another person pointed out that most applications are frivolous and the applicants often realize this, and that is the reason they choose not to appeal. A few of the respondents claimed that only a very small percentage of the applications they receive actually go through the appeal process, and one person claimed that he had never seen anyone appeal the DPS's decision.

In response to the question "Are you satisfied with the current appeals process?" 52 percent responded favorably, whereas 48 percent indicated that they are not satisfied with the current process. A majority of the respondents feel that the Judge and politics play too big a

part in the issuance of the MRDL. They complained that, since Judges are elected officials, they base their decisions on politics and friendships. Some of the officials complained that the Judge always overrules DPS, and that the appeals process is purely political. They argue that, in smaller communities, the Judges typically know the families of the applicants and their decisions may be swayed by this familiarity, such that the MRDL requirements are overlooked. One person suggested that "money talks" when it comes to appeals being granted.

In contrast, a small number of the officials replied that they have few appeals, and that the Judge typically honors their decisions. They claim that the Judge and the applicant both realize when the application is denied for good reason, and do not want to go through the time and expense of an appeal. A few of them reported that the working relationship between the Judge and the DPS licensing official plays a big part in whether or not the Judge honors the official's decision.

Several of the respondents protested that DPS is not given a chance to testify in court when an appeal is presented. They complained that DPS is not called upon to defend its decision at the time of appeal, and that this amounts to the Judge telling DPS how to run its business. Another respondent complained that DPS's version of the story and the requirements outlined in the law are not even taken into consideration during an appeal. One person said that, because DPS is not represented in court, the parents are left to explain to the Judge why the child needs the license, and the Judge then grants it regardless of whether or not the conditions of hardship have actually been met. Another person suggested that the DPS supervisors force them to honor the court decision in order not to "rock the boat," even though the law has not been strictly followed.

A number of the DPS officials responding to the survey suggested that all appeals are granted anyway, regardless of the laws. Some of them reiterated the complaint that often there is not even a hardship involved, just a busy parent who wants the child to have the license. One person complained that the County Judge always overrules DPS, and thus all appeals are approved, regardless of the need. Several of the DPS officials reported that the applicants often go to the Judge before applying to DPS and get a court order for the license to be issued even though the requirements are not met.

The licensing officials also expressed their frustration concerning the appeals process, protesting that the process is too long and involves too much paperwork. Some of the respondents reported that their counties do not handle the appeals process by the guidelines, and that the Judges often do not even know the laws for issuing restricted licenses. The Judges, they claim, either do not know the laws or they elect to ignore them and issue the license anyway. Several of them exclaimed that we might as well issue licenses to all 15-year-olds as it would save paperwork and time. They feel that some parents would say anything just to get a license for their 15 year-old child, so why not just let everyone have a license at that age?

Question 10 asked for opinions regarding the appropriateness of the number of hardship licenses that are granted, the age at which the MRDLs are granted, and the ease or difficulty with which such a license can be obtained. Fifty-eight percent of the licensing officials feel that too many hardship licenses are issued, and sixty-one percent believe that it is too easy to obtain an MRDL. Only 4 percent of the DPS officials who responded to the survey feel that a hardship license is too difficult to obtain. The responses were about equally distributed between "about right" and "too few" with respect to the number of applicants turned down, and virtually none

of the officials feel that "too many" applicants are turned down. Similarly, the opinions with respect to the age at which hardship licenses are issued were divided evenly between the "too young" and "about right" responses.

In defense of their opinions, the majority of the respondents again expressed concerns that too many of the applications are frivolous, and that it is difficult to investigate the hardship claims well enough to determine if the MRDL is warranted. Several of the officials confirmed their impressions that "hardship" licenses are obtained for extracurricular activities. They feel that the term "hardship" is abused by families who want the child to have a license simply because it is more convenient. One of the respondents reiterated the point that potential applicants find out what is required to get a restricted license and then "make themselves fit" the requirements to qualify for the license. Another person pointed out that, because policy does not allow them to ask questions concerning the economic situation of the family, it is impossible to know whether there is truly an economic need for obtaining a restricted license. The respondents also complained that there is too much gray area involved in considering what might be an unusual economic hardship to the applicant and his family, and thus there is a great deal of inconsistency among the various DPS licensing agencies when it comes to granting this type of license.

A number of the responses involved complaints that the system just does not work, and that individuals who have legitimate reasons for obtaining an MRDL are often turned away while other unqualified persons are successful because they know how to get around the system. They claim that misinterpretations of the guidelines are often the source of more generous opinions concerning who truly has a hardship and who does not. Several of the officials expressed the

concern that, because the guidelines are not strictly followed, young people can quit school, get pregnant, etc.. and obtain an MRDL. This, they argue, would appear to reward young people for not staying in school.

More than one-third of the comments received expressed the concern that 15 year-olds are too young to drive, and that their inexperience and immaturity are the sources of accidents and citations. Some argued for more readily available inexpensive driver education, whereas others argued that driver education is not effective. The young person's lack of understanding of the responsibility of driving was also mentioned as a major concern. Citing the high fatality rate of younger drivers, several other comments reflected the concern that these young people are not experienced enough to handle emergencies and should not be allowed unrestricted driving on roads shared with other drivers.

A small number of the comments reflected satisfaction with the current level of hardship licensing. The ability of 15 year-olds to help out with farm duties in rural areas was one of the benefits mentioned, and a few of the DPS agents commended the system for being better now than it had been prior to the 1983 law change. However, some of these same persons commented that we should do away with MRDL all together. Again, the inequities brought about under the current system appear to be the primary source of frustration for the licensing officials.

The final question on the survey asked the DPS licensing officials to indicate their suggestions for changes in the licensing of young drivers. The overwhelming majority of the comments that were received dealt with driver education. It was suggested that driver education should be mandatory (even for an MRDL), and that driver education should be more affordable

to all students. They also argued that the young persons who complete driver education should be tested by the DPS (rather than driver education instructors, as is currently the practice). Suggestions were also made concerning stricter guidelines for issuing driver licenses, especially with respect to the MRDL. A number of the respondents proclaimed that the MRDL should be eliminated, and several suggested that the minimum age of licensure should be raised to 16 without exception. Some of the responses proposed the adoption of a provisional licensing system for minors. A few recommendations were offered regarding the types of restrictions that should be placed on the provisional licensee (e.g., the time of day when driving should be allowed). A listing of the comments and suggestions received in response to question 11 are contained in Appendix C.

Chapter Four

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary of Findings

The 1983 legislation changed the Texas MRDL law from one of the most lenient to one of the strictest in the country. As demonstrated in the findings of this study, there is no doubt that the tougher laws enforced by this legislation reduced the number of MRDLs issued each year. One side-effect of this legislation which might not have been anticipated was the drastic increase in the number of 60-day licenses granted in the years that followed.

Unfortunately, evaluation of the effects of this legislation upon the accident/violation records of MRDL drivers and 60-day licensees compared with drivers holding full licenses cannot be accomplished using the DPS driver history files as they are presently maintained. As noted above, these files were not intended for use in a study such as this. The date at which driver education was completed does not appear on the record, thus it is impossible to determine the type of license held by the driver when a citation was received. These limitations preclude drawing any firm conclusions about the driving records of our young licensees.

However, if one considers the total number of citations received by drivers less than 16 years of age (regardless of driver education and license status), it may be noted that fewer than 10 percent of these drivers had received citations at the time that this study was conducted. The significance of this number in comparison to drivers of other ages awaits future study. Accordingly, the validity of the perceptions of DPS licensing officials with regard to the safety of young drivers might also be questioned.

Moreover, as Burg (1970) pointed out, driving record information becomes more reliable as the period of time over which it is accumulated increases. The drivers whose records were used for purposes of this study by definition had driving histories ranging in length from 1 day to 1 year. Thus, the short duration of the driving history used in these analyses should be kept in mind when making further inferences concerning overall driving ability.

In response to the survey conducted as part of this study, a majority of the driver licensing officials reported that they feel that too many hardship licenses are granted, and that it is too easy to obtain an MRDL. A large number of them also believe that the age at which this license may be obtained is too young, and that too few applicants are turned down. The DPS officials also expressed their concern that 15 year-olds are too inexperienced and immature to accept the responsibility of driving. Several of the respondents feel that the minimum age of licensure should be 16, and that the MRDL should be eliminated. A provisional licensing system with certain restrictions placed on the novice driver was suggested by several of the DPS licensing agents.

Recommendations for Future Study

According to the "young driver paradox" proposed by Jonah (1986), young novice drivers must spend time behind the wheel in order to gain experience, but in doing so, they increase their chances of being involved in an accident because of their inferior driving skills. Because of the high crash rates of young drivers, it has been argued that driver licensure should not occur until at least age 18 (Robertson & Zador, 1978; Robertson, 1980). Alternatively, a graduated licensing system might lower the age level at which driving first begins. Lowering the age at

which driver education begins does not necessarily mean lowering the age at which young drivers begin to drive on their own. Within a conservative graduated licensing system, the underlying rationale would remain (i.e., that young beginning drivers should not be allowed to drive on their own until they have had extensive driving practice with supervision).

A graduated licensing system represents an attempt to ensure that when they do begin driving on their own, beginning drivers have already acquired a considerable amount of supervised practice. Presumably, these young drivers would have progressed further through the learning curve for acquiring appropriate driving skills (Waller, 1986). In this way, novice drivers could be eased into the driving environment through more controlled exposure to progressively more difficult driving experiences. By progressing through a series of licensing levels, novice drivers would be required to demonstrate responsible driving behavior prior to gaining full licensure. Of course, this does not mean that our young drivers will not have crashes or that they will not take risks. However, as Waller (1986) pointed out, it would likely have a major impact on the rate at which these incidents do occur.

The appropriateness of a graduated licensing system for Texas' young drivers must await future study. Ideally, such a study could be effectively undertaken only if the driver records files were altered to include additional information. One study which might be conducted with the existing driver history files, however, would be a further examination of the nature of crashes involving young drivers. By cross-referencing the dates and cities in which crashes occurred with TTI's LANSER accident data base, additional information might be obtained with respect to variables such as the time of day young drivers are most often involved in accidents.

With the existing driver history files, it would also be possible to determine how long from date of first licensure to the time of first accident or violation. Comparison of these files with the driver records and accident files of a group of older drivers would likely yield important information about the types of restrictions that could be placed on our young drivers early in their driving careers to lessen their chances of being involved in an accident.

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APPENDIX A
SAMPLE MINOR'S RESTRICTED
DRIVER'S LICENSE APPLICATION

**TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
MINOR'S RESTRICTED DRIVER'S LICENSE APPLICATION**

MINOR'S FULL NAME _____ BIRTHDAY _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ TX. ZIP CODE _____

MARITAL STATUS _____ PHONE NUMBER _____ DAY PHONE NUMBER _____

READ: The Department may issue a license to any person who satisfies requirements when the Department finds that (1) the failure or refusal to issue such license to any such person will work an unusual economic hardship on the family of the applicant for the license, (2) the license should be granted to the applicant because of the sickness or illness of members of the family of the applicant, or (3) a license should be granted to the applicant because he is regularly enrolled in a vocational education program and requires a driver's license to pursue the program.

APPLICANT IS APPLYING FOR A RESTRICTED LICENSE BECAUSE OF:

() 1. An unusual economic hardship

() 2. A death-related emergency: Name of Deceased _____

Date of Death _____ Relationship to Deceased _____

() 3. Sickness or Illness or Disability of Family Members (PHYSICIAN'S STATEMENT REQUIRED)

Name of Family Member _____ Relationship _____

Family Physician _____ Phone Number _____

() 4. Enrollment in a Vocational Education Program (CERTIFICATION FROM SCHOOL REQUIRED)

Name of School _____ Phone Number _____

Address _____

Classes Start _____ Classes End _____ Days of Week: MON TUES WED THUR FRI OTHER

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Does applicant have a license or permit: NO () YES () If yes, license number: _____

Has applicant ever applied for a Minor's Restricted License: NO () YES ()

Has applicant completed an approved driver education course: NO () YES ()

Classroom (), Behind the Wheel (), or Both ()

Employment-Father: Firm: _____ Address _____

Hours: _____ Phone Number: _____

Employment-Mother: Firm: _____ Address: _____

Hours: _____ Phone Number: _____

Other Members in Household:

Name _____ License # _____ Relationship _____

Name _____ License # _____ Relationship _____

Name _____ License # _____ Relationship _____

APPENDIX B

**SAMPLE SURVEY INSTRUMENT OF "HARDSHIP" (MINOR'S
RESTRICTED) DRIVER LICENSING**

SURVEY OF "HARDSHIP" (MINOR'S RESTRICTED) DRIVER LICENSING

Name of County Where DPS Office is Located _____

Title of Person Filling out the Survey _____

Population of the County _____

Approximate Number of Licensed Drivers in your County _____

1. Is your county primarily: ☐ rural ☐ urban ☐ both rural & urban

2. Is there a screening of the:

Applicant	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Parent(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Both applicant and parent(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

3. How many "hardship" applications does your office receive each year? _____

4. How many "hardship" licenses does your office grant each year? _____

5. How frequently is each type of hardship presented by applicants?

	Frequently	Occasionally	Seldom	Never
Economic Hardship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family illness/disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Death-related emergency	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vocational Education Program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. Are you satisfied with the current application process (e.g., paperwork, scheduling, decision-making)?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Please explain _____

7. Approximately how many applicants are sent to a judge for appeal each year? _____

8. What are the typical reasons you send the applicant to a judge for appeal?

9. Are you satisfied with the current appeals process (e.g., paperwork, scheduling, decision-making)?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please explain _____

10. Please give your opinion on each of the following as it applies to the issuance of "hardship" licenses under the current law:

The number of hardship licenses issued is: ☐ too many ☐ too few ☐ about right

Obtaining a hardship license is: ☐ too difficult ☐ too easy ☐ about right

The number of applicants turned down is: ☐ too many ☐ too few ☐ about right

The age of hardship licensing is: ☐ too old ☐ too young ☐ about right

Please explain _____

11. What changes would you like to see in the licensing of young drivers?

Thank you for your time and cooperation in completing this survey!!!

If you have any questions regarding the survey, please contact:

**Becky Davies, Research Associate
Texas Transportation Institute
Texas A&M University System
College Station, TX 77843-3135**

**(409) 845-2736
(409) 845-6107 FAX**

APPENDIX C
LISTING OF CITATION/ACCIDENT DESCRIPTORS

TICKET LIST

Alphabetical By Action

Code	Action	Number
31	, "ACCIDENT INCAPACITATING INJURY	" , 518
9	, "ACCIDENT POSSIBLE INJURY	" , 3315
14	, "ACCIDENT	" , 283
178	, "ACCIDENT FATAL	" , 25
11	, "ACCIDENT NON-INCAPACITATING EVIDENT INJURY	" , 1615
3	, "ACCIDENT NON-INJURY	" , 6387
27	, "CANCEL LIFTED-COMPLIED	" , 547
26	, "CANCELLED-INCOMPLETE DRIVER EDUCATION	" , 535
45	, "CANCELLED-AUTHORIZATION WITHDRAWN	" , 679
23	, "CARRY PASSENGER WITHOUT HELMET	" , 13
21	, "CHANGED LANE WHEN UNSAFE	" , 146
237	, "CONTEST RACING ON PUBLIC TRAFFICWAY	" , 1
122	, "CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE ACT OFFENSE	" , 8
234	, "CRIMINAL NEGLIGENT HOMICIDE	" , 1
105	, "CROSSING PHYSICAL BARRIER	" , 12
147	, "CUT CORNER LEFT TURN	" , 16
158	, "CUT ACROSS DRIVEWAY TO MAKE TURN	" , 42
159	, "CUT IN AFTER PASSING	" , 3
195	, "DEFECTIVE TURN SIGNAL LAMPS	" , 3
64	, "DEFECTIVE TAIL LAMPS	" , 113
200	, "DEFECTIVE BRAKES	" , 7
24	, "DEFECTIVE HEAD LAMPS	" , 87
51	, "DEFECTIVE STOP LAMPS	" , 43
215	, "DID NOT USE DESIGNATED LANE OR DIRECTION	" , 2
155	, "DISPLAY DL/ID ISS TO ANOTHER SEC32(A) (3)	" , 2
144	, "DISREGARD FLASHING RED SIGNAL	" , 12
190	, "DISREGARD WARN SIGN AT CONSTRUCTION	" , 6
148	, "DISREGARD NO LANE CHANGE SIGN	" , 1
112	, "DISREGARD RR CROSSING GATE OR FLAGMAN	" , 7
68	, "DISREGARD OFFICIAL TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICE	" , 44
218	, "DISREGARD POLICE OFFICER	" , 5
177	, "DISREGARD TURN MARKS AT INTERSECTION	" , 4
59	, "DISREGARDED NO PASSING ZONE	" , 74
150	, "DRIVE WHILE LICENSE SUSPENDED-SR	" , 3
201	, "DRIVE WHILE LICENSE SUSPENDED	" , 1
132	, "DRIVING TOO FAST FOR CONDITIONS	" , 2
179	, "DRIVING ON WRONG SIDE OF ROAD	" , 1
181	, "DRIVING WHILE INTOXICATED	" , 4
205	, "DRIVING WHILE INTOXICATED - PROBATED	" , 9
170	, "DRIVING WRONG WAY ON ONE-WAY STREET	" , 1
113	, "DRIVING WHILE INTOXICATED SEC 24(A-1) (1)	" , 39
183	, "DROVE ONTO CONTROL ACCESS HWY WHERE PROHIB	" , 6
83	, "DROVE THROUGH SAFETY ZONE	" , 1
66	, "DROVE CENTER LANE-NOT PASS/NOT TURNING LEFT	" , 12
78	, "DROVE ON WRONG SIDE OF DIVIDED HIGHWAY	" , 6
53	, "DROVE WRONG WAY ON ONE-WAY ROADWAY	" , 65
2	, "DROVE WITHOUT LIGHTS WHEN REQUIRED	" , 163
228	, "DROVE TO LEFT OF ROTARY TRAFFIC ISLAND	" , 2
241	, "DROVE WRONG WAY IN DESIGNATED LANE	" , 1
211	, "DROVE ON SIDEWALK	" , 2
71	, "DRUG OFFENSE SEC. 24B	" , 1
243	, "ENDANGER PERSONS/PROP WHILE OPERATE MV	" , 1
166	, "EQUIPMENT REGULATION CONDITION	" , 5
6	, "EXCESSIVE ACCELERATION	" , 249

60	, "EXPIRED OPERATOR LICENSE	", 119
128	, "FAIL TO OBEY TRAFFIC SIGN/CNTRL DEVICE	", 13
69	, "FAIL TO YIELD AT STOP INTERSECTION	", 211
149	, "FAIL TO STOP AT DESIGNATED POINT--STOP SIGN	", 12
41	, "FAIL TO YIELD WHILE TURNING LEFT	", 110
176	, "FAIL TO STOP/REMAIN STOPPED FOR SCHOOL BUS	", 21
33	, "FAIL TO CONTROL SPEED	", 494
154	, "FAIL TO DIM HEADLIGHTS-FOLLOWING	", 9
226	, "FAIL TO STOP FOR APPROACHING TRAIN	", 1
255	, "FAIL TO STOP PROPER PLACE-FLASH RED SIGNAL	", 1
191	, "FAIL TO YIELD AT YIELD INTERSECTION	", 27
256	, "FAIL TO STOP AT DESIGNATED POINT-YIELD SIGN	", 1
38	, "FAIL TO DIM HEADLIGHTS-MEETING	", 39
204	, "FAIL TO STOP-EMERGING FROM ALLEY OR BLDG	", 12
54	, "FAIL TO DISPLAY DL	", 171
208	, "FAIL TO MAINTAIN REQD LIABILITY INS	", 8
247	, "FAIL TO STOP AT PROPER PLACE-TRAFFIC LIGHT	", 1
120	, "FAIL SIGNAL REQUIRED DISTANCE BEFORE TURN	", 10
119	, "FAILED TO SIGNAL TURN	", 73
35	, "FAILED TO YIELD RIGHT OF WAY	", 260
139	, "FAILED TO YIELD TURNING RIGHT ON RED SIGNAL	", 2
160	, "FAILED TO GIVE ONE-HALF OF ROADWAY	", 16
22	, "FAILED TO DRIVE IN SINGLE LANE	", 86
114	, "FAILED TO SIGNAL FOR STOP	", 2
222	, "FAILURE TO STOP AND RENDER AID	", 3
230	, "FAILURE TO KEEP IN PROPER LANE	", 1
232	, "FALSE STATEMENT DL/ID APPL SEC32 (A) (6)	", 1
224	, "FALSE SWEARING-DL APPLICATION	", 2
36	, "FOLLOWING TOO CLOSELY	", 171
192	, "FTYROW YIELD/STOP/ENTER FROM PVT DRIVE	", 4
202	, "FYROW TO EMERGENCY VEHICLE	", 10
188	, "FYROW TO PEDESTRIAN IN CROSSWALK-NO SIGNALS	", 7
253	, "FYROW ON GREEN SIGNAL	", 1
133	, "FYROW AT OPEN INTERSECTION	", 20
244	, "FYROW TO PEDESTRIAN AT SIGNAL INTERSECTION	", 3
39	, "FYROW LEAVING PRIVATE DR, 101	
46	, "ILLEGAL BACKING	", 88
141	, "ILLEGAL PASS ON RIGHT	", 14
182	, "IMPEDING TRAFFIC	", 23
101	, "IMPROPER TURN OR STOP SIGNAL	", 20
165	, "IMPROPER LANE CHANGING	", 1
231	, "IMPROPER LANE CONDITION	", 1
37	, "IMPROPER BACKING	", 3
30	, "IMPROPER TURN	", 99
81	, "IMPROPER PASSING	", 55
196	, "LEAVING SCENE BEFORE POLICE ARRIVE	", 1
8	, "LEAVING SCENE OF ACCIDENT	", 27
210	, "LIC OTHER JURISDICTION	", 1
62	, "LICENSED IN IA	", 4
63	, "LICENSED IN WI	", 28
65	, "LICENSED IN FL	", 65
58	, "LICENSED IN MO	", 26
153	, "LICENSED IN NJ	", 8
61	, "LICENSED IN VA	", 18
56	, "LICENSED IN IN	", 38
214	, "LICENSED IN SD	", 2
217	, "LICENSED IN DE	", 1
212	, "LICENSED IN NE	", 3
143	, "LICENSED IN VT	", 2
99	, "LICENSED IN LA	", 36
67	, "LICENSED IN NM	", 56
48	, "LICENSED IN UT	", 13
32	, "LICENSED IN KS	", 49
171	, "LICENSED IN AZ	", 9
180	, "LICENSED IN MD	", 7
198	, "LICENSED IN CT	", 3
13	, "LICENSED IN OK	", 155

197	, "LICENSED IN WA	",	19
169	, "LICENSED IN ME	",	2
250	, "LICENSED IN CA	",	1
238	, "LICENSED IN ID	",	2
246	, "LICENSED IN HI	",	1
162	, "LICENSED IN AK	",	5
163	, "LICENSED IN PA	",	14
44	, "LICENSED IN MS	",	15
47	, "LICENSED IN CO	",	73
55	, "LICENSED IN NC	",	6
145	, "LICENSED IN AL	",	12
94	, "LICENSED IN IL	",	39
108	, "LICENSED IN OH	",	14
127	, "LICENSED IN AR	",	32
110	, "LICENSED IN SC	",	27
111	, "LICENSED IN MA	",	2
117	, "LICENSED IN MN	",	7
87	, "LICENSED IN TN	",	20
86	, "LICENSED IN MI	",	22
103	, "LICENSED IN NV	",	14
88	, "LICENSED IN WY	",	10
100	, "LICENSED IN OR	",	20
80	, "LICENSED IN KY	",	10
97	, "LICENSED IN GA	",	52
130	, "LICENSED IN NY	",	9
124	, "MADE U-TURN ON CURVE OR HILL	",	6
142	, "MAKE IMPROPER TURN	",	2
131	, "MORE THAN ONE DL IN POSSESSION - CMV	",	1
79	, "NEGLIGENT COLLISION	",	52
95	, "NO MOTORCYCLE ENDORSEMENT	",	43
164	, "NO STOP LAMPS	",	18
5	, "NO MOTOR VEHICLE LIABILITY INS.	",	876
4	, "NO DRIVERS LICENSE	",	926
219	, "NO COMMERCIAL DRIVER LICENSE	",	2
240	, "NO CHAUFFEURS LICENSE	",	1
85	, "NO TAIL LAMPS	",	19
239	, "NO COMMERCIAL OPERATOR LICENSE	",	1
118	, "NO TURN SIGNAL LAMPS WHEN REQUIRED	",	24
235	, "OBSTRUCTED VIEW THRU WINDSHIELD NOT PASS/LD	",	2
251	, "OBSTRUCTING TRAFFIC	",	1
252	, "OPERATE CONTRARY TO COND SPECIFIED ON DL	",	2
28	, "OPERATE AT ERRATIC CHANGING SPEEDS	",	1
220	, "OPERATE WITH EXPIRED REGISTRATION	",	1
207	, "OPERATE VEHICLE WHERE PROHIBITED	",	7
72	, "OPERATE MV WITHOUT APPROPRIATE DL	",	16
52	, "OPERATE MOTORCYCLE W/O APPROVED HEADGEAR	",	68
229	, "PARKED ON BRIDGE OR IN TUNNEL	",	1
126	, "PARKING ON ROADWAY	",	21
42	, "PASSED--INSUFFICIENT CLEARANCE	",	11
115	, "PASSENGER/LOAD OBSTRUCTING VIEW OF DRIVER	",	6
236	, "PASSING WHERE PROHIBITED	",	1
225	, "PROHIBITED MTR VEH ON CONTROL ACCESS HWY	",	6
91	, "RACING	",	94
17	, "RAN RED LIGHT	",	596
12	, "RAN STOP SIGN	",	1052
193	, "RECKLESS-CARELESS-NEGLIGENT CONDITION	",	3
106	, "RECKLESS DRIVING	",	10
185	, "REGISTRATION/TITLE CONDITION	",	2
15	, "REPORTED DECEASED	",	130
213	, "RESTRICTION VIOLATION - CMV	",	1
157	, "RIGHT OF WAY CONDITION	",	10
233	, "SIGNAL INTENT CONDITION	",	1
242	, "SIGNS/CONTROL DEVICE CONDITION	",	1
161	, "SLOWER VEHICLE FAILED TO KEEP TO RIGHT	",	1
254	, "SPEED IN EXCESS OF POSTED MAXIMUM	CMV",	1
209	, "SPEED UNDER MINIMUM	",	1
20	, "SPEED IN EXCESS OF POSTED MAXIMUM	",	162

29	, "SPEED 15 MPH OR MORE OVER POSTED LIMIT	", 399
227	, "SPEEDING CONDITION	", 1
1	, "SPEEDING	", 7142
93	, "SURR OTHER JURISDICTION	", 13
96	, "SURRENDERED AL LICENSE	", 68
92	, "SURRENDERED IN LICENSE	", 40
90	, "SURRENDERED HI LICENSE	", 19
84	, "SURRENDERED NC LICENSE	", 63
89	, "SURRENDERED WA LICENSE	", 36
102	, "SURRENDERED SC LICENSE	", 35
104	, "SURRENDERED AK LICENSE	", 34
121	, "SURRENDERED MS LICENSE	", 50
223	, "SURRENDERED ME LICENSE	", 5
116	, "SURRENDERED MN LICENSE	", 24
194	, "SURRENDERED OH LICENSE	", 31
107	, "SURRENDERED NE LICENSE	", 40
82	, "SURRENDERED GA LICENSE	", 75
77	, "SURRENDERED AR LICENSE	", 64
19	, "SURRENDERED KS LICENSE	", 104
34	, "SURRENDERED TN LICENSE	", 51
18	, "SURRENDERED NM LICENSE	", 169
10	, "SURRENDERED CA LICENSE	", 239
257	, "SURRENDERED VT LICENSE	", 2
43	, "SURRENDERED FL LICENSE	", 120
49	, "SURRENDERED WI LICENSE	", 22
74	, "SURRENDERED LA LICENSE	", 151
76	, "SURRENDERED IL LICENSE	", 96
73	, "SURRENDERED ID LICENSE	", 12
70	, "SURRENDERED CO LICENSE	", 79
57	, "SURRENDERED OK LICENSE	", 169
123	, "SURRENDERED MI LICENSE	", 54
109	, "SURRENDERED AZ LICENSE	", 32
167	, "SURRENDERED MT LICENSE	", 9
175	, "SURRENDERED OR LICENSE	", 16
152	, "SURRENDERED VA LICENSE	", 73
151	, "SURRENDERED SD LICENSE	", 8
206	, "SURRENDERED ND LICENSE	", 7
221	, "SURRENDERED DE LICENSE	", 4
173	, "SURRENDERED MA LICENSE	", 11
172	, "SURRENDERED MD LICENSE	", 21
168	, "SURRENDERED NH LICENSE	", 5
146	, "SURRENDERED NY LICENSE	", 33
140	, "SURRENDERED MO LICENSE	", 50
135	, "SURRENDERED KY LICENSE	", 9
189	, "SURRENDERED NV LICENSE	", 15
125	, "SURRENDERED IA LICENSE	", 59
174	, "SURRENDERED NJ LICENSE	", 16
216	, "SURRENDERED CT LICENSE	", 4
136	, "SURRENDERED PA LICENSE	", 14
137	, "SURRENDERED UT LICENSE	", 10
184	, "SURRENDERED WY LICENSE	", 20
186	, "SURRENDERED WV LICENSE	", 4
248	, "TURN CONDITION	", 1
187	, "TURNED RIGHT FROM WRONG LANE	", 7
75	, "TURNED WHEN UNSAFE	", 25
134	, "TURNED RIGHT TOO WIDE	", 7
138	, "TURNED LEFT FROM WRONG LANE	", 29
203	, "TURNED ACROSS DIVIDING SECTION	", 7
245	, "UNLAWFUL DISPLAY/POSS DL/ID SEC32 (A) (1)	", 2
25	, "UNSAFE SPEED	", 253
249	, "UNSAFE OPERATION OF VEHICLE	", 2
16	, "UNSAFE START FROM PARKED	", 28
7	, "VIOLATE DL RESTRICTION	", 1315
156	, "VIOLATE DL RESTRICTION-OCCUPATION LICENSE	", 7
199	, "VIOLATION OF RESTRICTION CONDITION	", 3
50	, "VOLUNTARY SURRENDER	", 114
98	, "WRONG SIDE OF ROAD--NO PASSING ZONE	", 10

129 , "WRONG SIDE OF ROAD

", 63

APPENDIX D
LISTING OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS' SUGGESTED CHANGES
IN LICENSING YOUNG DRIVERS

11. What changes would you like to see in hardship licensing?

- Pick an age, any age. At this age one is eligible for a driver license. Eliminate the MRDL. This puts everyone on the same level playing field and there are no exceptions. Just a comment: We see several applicants who want DL because they work at a real job. They do not have an economic emergency, they just want to work. I would like in these cases to be able to issue MRDL, but obviously we can't. On the other hand we get applicants who work for their family owned business and this is just a shame. Bottom line: Do away with hardship licenses, as per statement above, make it a level playing field.
- The age requirement should be raised to at least 16. I feel the young drivers just completing Driver's Ed. should be required to take an on road skills test.
- Some driver's training is needed prior to licensing any minor.
- I do not believe that we need a hardship driver license for the reason mentioned above. I live in a rural area where most children learn to drive early. I doubt that this is true in a lot of places. Minimum age should be 16 with drivers education. Driver education instructor should certify that he has passed the classroom part and the written test. At that time we will issue a learners permit. The instructor will then drive the applicant the required hours or more if needed by the applicant. In some cases where the instructor is not comfortable with the students driving he may request that we give a driving test. There may be only a small difference in the accident rate of those drivers with and without drivers ed., but it is a benefit to have drivers ed. Driver education has become a way for schools to make money--\$100 to \$250 for the driving part. There are lower income families that cannot afford this, and more than you might think wait until they are 18 to get their driver license. There should be a reasonable cap on what the schools may charge, probably around \$50. I believe those minors driving until the age of 18, who have two moving violations should loose their DL for at least 30 days automatically. I stated on the front that a hardship license is not needed. I should qualify that somewhat..there is one segment of the population that should be able to get a driver license. Those young married, not in school and employed, maintaining own home, children, etc. These have quite enough problems, without adding to them.
- Very few licenses are issued to 15 year olds. Most applicants use the MRDL process to obtain a license to circumvent the attendance requirements (TEA Form) or to avoid paying the \$175 cost of drivers education. Solutions: 1. Require applicants for MRDL to provide proof of enrollment and attendance like other provisional drivers. 2. Reduce the cost of drivers education to a more affordable amount.

- Abolish the hardship law. It doesn't work. The majority of the people who apply for MRDL are people who don't want to be responsible for their children. Most parents think this is a license to let the oldest child drive because they're too tired after work to take them anywhere.
- Abolish MRDL's. Pick an age, 16, 17 or 18. At this age, one is eligible for a DL, no exceptions. Continue Driver's Ed., but not make it a requirement for DL at earlier age. Benefits for Driver's Ed would be to develop more skill, be a safer driver, and qualify for discount on insurance rates.
- Minimum age should be 16, and require the Texas Education Agency to have some sort of program to educate the kind of applicants that need this type of license.
- At least some kind of training (D.E.).
- I would like to see minimum age established for permits and licenses. For example, age 15 for acquiring an Instruction Permit and age 16 for a provisional DL (no MRDL's). If the student passed approved classroom and behind-the-wheel Driver Ed. courses, DPS would waive the written and driving exams. If no Driver Education course was taken, the young driver would be required to demonstrate proficiency by successfully passing the DPS written and road skills tests.
- Waive written test upon completion of phase I. Driver's Ed. (under 18). Form #DiC-74 (Voluntarily Surrender of License) should be revised to include other options such as: Parent(s) surrendering child license due to increase of insurance. When provisional license is surrendered and applicant returns back to the office for re-issuance of his/her license, it would be very helpful to the technicians if the history would state reason: Voluntary surrender or Withdrawal of Authorization and date of surrender to determine if re-examination of applicant is necessary.
- I feel all new drivers (never before licensed) should have to pass a driving test administered by the DPS. The current system means you buy your license through Driver's Ed. I don't think we have seen the ramifications resulting from this decision to waive the driving test.
- Palestine High School currently does not have a Driver's Ed. class. I would like to see Driver's Ed more available and also more affordable.
- The minimum age without driver education should be 16.
- More extensive road requirements, road tests by qualified personnel instead of Drivers Ed. coaches. Coaches want to "produce" as do driving schools. The private sector has more invested in passing people than DPS. Too many are passed that should not have been "turned loose."

- Trying to develop a program to license young (minor) drivers who cannot afford the high cost of driver education. I feel with a program like this we might see a decrease in MRDL applications because all minors would have the same opportunity to obtain a license with the benefit of having some education in handling a vehicle.
- Do away with MRDL. Pick an age, any age, one may get DL at that time. No exceptions. Keep driver's Ed and students may get instruction permit and nothing else, also receive insurance discount.
- Have more stringent testing.
- More documentation, strict guidelines, at least 16 - a true hardship.
- More strict uniform policies.
- Since 16 yr. olds are not required to take a driving test, I feel that there should be more hours of classroom and behind the wheel driving. With proper amount of classroom, age 15, restriction B only. No hardships. Save a lot of time, paperwork, and hassle.
- Do away with minor restricted licenses. Let everyone 16 or older be able to get a license with or without driver's Ed. Ones with driver's ed., leave as is. Ones without driver's ed. will have to take a driving test also.
- I believe that we should lower the age to 15 for a Driver's license if they complete Driver's Ed. and are still in school. If a hardship is needed then let a County Judge make that decision and be responsible for what happens. The classroom part of Driver's Ed. should be free in school and the price for actual driving should be regulated where it's affordable for more than just the rich.
- I believe they should be given a driving test. It should not be left up to a DE Instructor to determine if a child is capable of driving safely.
- I think the minor restricted license should be eliminated. Let every 16 year old get her or his license with or without driver's Ed. If 16 year old has driver's Ed., they can do without the driving test as it is now. If a 16 year old does not have driver's Ed., then they have to take a driving test. The only difference is with Driver's Ed., they have cheaper insurance.
- I feel that the laws need to be strengthened as far as what we require as proof of the hardship such as for economical, we should be able to request a financial statement. Sickness in family. We should be able to ask whether the people are too ill to drive etc. I also feel we should not give the applicants info over the phone. They need to come in and get the information in person.

- The applicants need to have more behind the wheel experience. Also it would be nice if there was a course they could take, at least 2 hours long before they receive their license. Also I feel age 15 is too young to be driving.
- I feel the age limit should be raised to 16. If the state feels you need to be 16 to drive by yourself with driver education then certainly you need to be without it. Also, it would eliminate all of those who have driver education but are not yet 16 and have new cars and simply cannot wait to drive. Also, if applying under economics, there should be a limit on their parent's income. Personally, I feel that a person needs to complete driver education and drive at 16 or wait until they are 18 to receive a license. There are not enough justifiable "Hardships" for them to continue to be issued.
- Most Drivers Ed. classes seem to have copies of all the tests - so require 15 years of age and Drivers Ed. Certificate hours and let them purchase a drivers license.
- Change minimum age for license from 15 to 16. Also as stated earlier, have guidelines that are equal in any office in the state. I believe that many of the minors are approved for a convenience license rather than a hardship license.
- MRDL issued only in extreme hardship cases. Parents are wanting to apply for a MRDL for applicants as young as 13 or 14. This is way too young.
- Completely dismiss MRDL's. If applicant has had Driver's Education, let them drive from 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. Then at age 16, unrestricted.
- One thing I would like to see changed is that every applicant be required to take driver's education after having the hardship for one year. At present an applicant can get a hardship at 15 and maintain this license for two to three years or turn 18 if their condition still exists without taking driver's education.
- I believe we have a good system at the present.
- A more precise definition of the hardship law. Consistent criteria for education so that a decision made in Harlingen is the same as one made in Amarillo. Appeals process must include DPS presentation and the ability to step outside of what the law allows should not be granted to County Judges.
- Do not allow young drivers a license to drive past midnight and in most cases not past 10:00 p.m. Restrict license to areas - such as Erath County only or restrict as to destination (to school and home or to work and home).
- Should not be allowed to get any type of license until 16 years of age. Driver's education should not be a prerequisite, because not all people can afford the fees.

- I would like to see the appeal process changed from the County Judge to the Justice of the Peace. In this County we would have someone who would rule more with the DPS.
- Eliminate hardship licenses. Issue licenses to any fifteen year old who has completed Driver's Ed.
- 16 should be the minimum for any person to be able to drive without supervision such as a licensed driver in the front seat with them who is over the age of 18.
- I believe a person should be able to obtain a hardship at the age of 16 if that person has some type of driver education training.
- There needs to be more proof required for hardships. The 60 day hardships need to be harder to renew in 60 days. Stricter guidelines set forth on hours to drive and the requirements in general.
- If a license is denied by DPS I would like to see the decision stand. I don't deny hardly any hardships because of the Judge's stand. Everyone that has applied has received a license. If it goes to court the hardship will be approved with no restrictions; if I approve it at least the Dept. has some control over the restrictions for someone who doesn't qualify.
- I don't feel any type of hardship license is absolutely necessary. It's funny how once a child turns 15 yrs. old what used to be routine driving for the family is now a burden and there's no way the family can make it without this child driving. I feel as if 15 yrs. of age is too young to be driving - the maturity level is just not there. I truly believe the process should be a whole lot stricter almost to make the minor not want to apply unless it's an absolutely crucial matter. Fewer "hardships" for driving to school should be allowed. We should be able to do more investigation and put more time restrictions on so as to dissuade frivolous applications.
- At this time, I am unable to list any changes that would be helpful or a hindrance to the licensing of a young driver.
- Driver's Ed required or 18 as the law states, with no exceptions.
- At least some kind of training (D.E.).
- We should stop all hardship licensing. Make it a hard rule that you go to Driver's Ed. the normal way or wait till you're 18. We have too many accidents and citations with 15-17 year old drivers. These could possibly be handled by the County just like an occupational license.

- I would like to see the Educators take care of controlling whether a minor meets the education attendance requirement in this way. If at any time the minor does not meet the attendance requirement, the school should send a form in to DPS to have the license canceled. As it is now the minor must bring DPS a TEA attendance form each year to renew the license until they reach the age of 18. With my suggestion, they would only show us a TEA attendance form on their first trip to the office and would not have to be inconvenienced every year. Driver's education courses should be taught in every high school and should be free to the students, paid for by taxes. Drivers education should be mandatory, no exceptions. School attendance requirements should be mandatory also to get or keep the license. No exceptions.
- I would like to see Driver's education become part of the school curriculum so the need for hardships would be a lot less. Every child coming in to apply for a hardship feels we need to help him. It's sometimes hard to decide where to draw the line. It's hard for families to provide the fees for driver's ed. Other arrangements need to be made.
- The program and laws governing drivers licensing seems to be working well at this time.
- They should have to present an insurance card with their name included on it. If they do not own a car, they should be required to carry a non-owners insurance card- (this should apply to all who drive). All hardships should be good for only 60 days (rather than for one year if they take drivers ed.) They should have to present proof that the hardship still exists upon renewal of the hardship.
- Requirements of drivers to attend training before being licensed. The age changed from 15 to 16 or 17. Restricted driving for drivers under the age of 18. (Restricted hours and location). More investigation as to the nature of the hardship at application and renewal times.
- New tests that are not available to drivers ed. teachers. Driving one full year with a permit before driving alone. Automatic suspension with two tickets or violation of restriction.
- Establish more rules and guidelines for the issuance of the license.
- Reasons for granting license should be much narrower. Those who marry young or have children early chose to do that and shouldn't be given special privileges. I feel we make it too easy for those without drivers education between 15-18 yrs. of age to obtain a license. What's wrong with walking or riding bicycles? I used to do it.

- I would like to see hardship license eliminated completely or at least the responsibility of issuing or denying this type of license be taken away from the department. If a minor has a true need for driving and cannot comply with the responsibility of the State, then they should be made to go before a court and convince the judge of their need so a court order can be issued just like it is done now on appeals.
- The age requirement raised unless they can prove that it is definitely an emergency that they need a hardship license.
- No more driver education. Kids that can afford it, take it. Those that can't afford it are left out. They are all still eligible for hardship license with or without driver's Ed. I feel like at age 15 have a course that is taken by child and parent. To make them both aware of the consequences (such as defensive driving). Make it affordable--\$20-\$40. They would continue to take our written & driving test. Still leave the responsibility on the parent. With driver Ed. at 15 after course is completed remove restrictions. The minor would not have to wait until age 16. They drive and can apply for hardships anyway. I would like to see driver's Ed. affordable for all minors or even made part of the school curriculum.
- Have them all go through driver education classes. To be enrolled in High school. Have a court appointed guardian (not just anyone that they live with sign for them). Raise age limit to 16-17. If two licensed drivers in household, a hardship license could not be obtained. Two would be maximum number of drivers in household. If parent in household does not have license, the Dept. would be able to make the parent get a license instead of the applicant.
- I would like to see driver education as a requirement in our school system in the form of a semester course dedicated to teaching our kids how to drive instead of how to pass a test to get a driver license. Driving is the one thing that most of us do and I don't believe enough training is given to our children. Also, I don't believe anyone should be issued a driver license who is under the age of 16 for any reason.
- More testing to make sure applicant is a safe driver.
- If a child can get an instruction permit at 15, as long as he had driver's ed., classroom phase, why not legalize it at age 15 for all phases of driver's ed., (classroom driving).
- It would be better to make it mandatory that a driver's education course be completed before issuance of any hardship license and no 60-day permit issued. Hopefully, with driver's education these young applicants would become more knowledgeable, responsible, and skillful drivers.

- Possibly have a standard form employers to fill out for information needed in regards to working hours, schedule, etc.
- I would like to see Driver's Ed. become more easily available in terms of financing to low income students who could really benefit from having a license but are not able to finance it on their own. Also, I live in a small town and Driver's Ed is only offered once a year at the beginning of the school year. Some students come in to school after it has begun and cannot get into Driver's Ed. I would like to see it offered at least twice a year for those who come in late or are not able to begin the first session.
- I would like to see more documentation instead of taking the word that an applicant is married and has a child. I believe they should show a marriage certificate and a birth certificate. Without verification any person can claim any kind of hardship. About 80% of our hardship applications come from referrals, i.e., police officers and judges. Minors caught driving without a driver license. More thorough investigation of applicants.
- Upon completion of Classroom driver education and certification by instructor license should be issued but without testing by DPS. Closer compliance by Driver's ed. instructors to DPS guidelines and qualifications for certification of students.
- All applicants under 18 should have to take drivers ed., that's what the law says. For us to make exceptions is uncalled for. If there is a family illness; that person's license should be canceled immediately. The legislation passed a law requiring minors to stay enrolled in school, yet a hardship is a means of dropping out of school and still have a license.
- It would be better to make it mandatory that a driver's education course be completed before issuance of any hardship license and no 60 day permits issued. Hopefully, with driver's ed., these young applicants would become more knowledgeable.
- Mandatory driver education for any type of driver's license before the age of sixteen. Standardized renewal of hardship licenses regardless of whether minor has had driver education (birthday to birthday) or minor has not had driver education (60 days). Combined with this standardization should be necessity to reapply or reconfirm the necessity for the hardship license.
- Driver's Ed., should be required. Insurance should be required. If a restriction is violated it should be an automatic revocation-no probation. Stricter restrictions should be placed on them.

- A hardship cannot afford the financial burden of driver's education. Therefore, I feel the classroom phase of driver's ed. should be a required course for graduation just as English, Math and History. Issue a beginners license at 14 years of age, restricted to daytime only and licensed operator front seat age 18 or older. If this applicant has had no activity on his/her record at the age of 15 issue a full license. If he has a moving violation require a road test. If he/she has had 2 or more violations or an accident in which he/she was the contributing factor, require them to complete the laboratory portion of driver's education while serving a probation period of not less than 3 months. This would fulfill the request of our chief "Do not make it difficult to obtain a license but make it difficult to keep it if they violate the law."
- Do away with hardship license.
- I would like to see driver's ed. a curriculum in the high schools. The fee is too high and this causes too many to approach obtaining a hardship license. Many northern states offer driver's education in high school without charge. Also being consistent with employees who deny and approve would be favorable in presenting hardships.
- In my opinion, if one is applying for an MRDL (hardship), then they should either show us (before giving a road test) proof that they are covered on the insurance policy or we should contact the insurance company notifying them of a minor being licensed. Vocational Ag., should not even be considered. Students are not required to even raise an animal anymore, and those who have a family member (who they say cannot drive due to illness) should instantly have that person's license pulled-because they are saying they are not able to drive at that time.
- The law states that those under 18 years of age are to take driver's ed. Even though they are applying for a hardship, they should have to have driver's ed. to qualify for a hardship. They might say they can't afford driver's ed., but then, how can they afford insurance, if they can't afford driver's ed? Once again-we are rewarding 15 year olds for being sexually active, as well. If they are pregnant or have a child and they are a minor-we must issue a license to them. This is wrong!