Driving While Impaired Arrest Process Improvement – electronic solutions

Ward Vanlaar, Ph.D.

Workshop: Implementation & Use of E-Warrant Systems in Impaired Driving

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Background

> Enforcement can be very efficient countermeasure.

> DWI arrests can be onerous and time-consuming.

  » Study based on data from 2,731 law enforcement officers found that making a DWI arrest had become so onerous that it was often frustrating, discouraging, and even intimidating to some officers.

> New technologies, automation, and streamlined processes can improve efficiency and effectiveness of DWI law enforcement:

  » Electronic citation technology;
  » Electronic driver history checks;
  » Vehicle identification systems.
Objectives

> Identify law enforcement agencies that have significantly improved their DWI arrest procedure. Describe resulting cost/time savings. Specifically:

» Determine which strategies law enforcement are using to reduce the cost/time of processing a DWI arrest;
» Identify which agencies have made improvements;
» Gather data to describe and quantify cost/time savings due to these improvements;
» Capture experiences of agencies who undertook these improvements; and,
» Prepare a report (Roadmap) that other agencies can use to adopt these strategies.
Identifying sites

> Six agencies were selected for further follow-up.
> Aspects that were considered to select agencies:
  » Type and size of agency (State, county, municipal, etc.);
  » Urban versus rural;
  » Type of strategy (electronic citation, other automation systems);
  » Training opportunities available or not.
> Data collected by telephone/email and two site visits (MN and UT) in 2015.
Results

> Conference calls:
  » Austin Police Department DWI Enforcement Unit;
  » Fresno Police Department eCitation;
  » Louisiana Highway Safety Commission LADRIVING;
  » Washington State Police Mobile Impaired Driving Unit.

> Site visits:
  » Minnesota Department of Public Safety eCharging;
  » Utah Prosecution Council eWarrant and TOXE.

> Two types of solutions: automation and training/use of dedicated personnel.
Minnesota eCharging

> eCharging is an electronic citation system designed to simplify DWI arrests through automation of several steps.

  » Utilizes new technologies such as biometric signature pads for law enforcement to legally sign documents electronically and allowing for electronic transfer of information.

  » Previously, officers spent 1-3 hours completing forms and records staff took 20 minutes to enter information.

  » Officers can now complete arrest forms in 9 minutes and records staff can enter information in 4 minutes.
Minnesota eCharging

Benefits of eCharging include:

» An automated process that can determine, on a case-by-case basis, which sanctions are applicable;
» Functionality that enables officers to accurately calculate the number of prior DWI offences;
» Built-in validations that eliminate errors (√ versus X);
» Electronic submissions to DVS that can result in immediate driver’s license revocations;
» Improved tracking of DWI events from the beginning to disposition of cases; and,
» Integrated information sharing with toxicology labs.

24-hour support line is available to officers who have questions about DWI arrest process.
Utah eWarrant

> This electronic system helps an officer obtain a warrant from a judge so that blood samples can be taken from suspects.

> Features of eWarrant include:

» Auto-population options that reduce data inputting redundancies;

» A narrative ‘probable cause box’ that enables officers to provide a descriptive analysis; and,

» A real-time status field that notifies officers on whether their requests for a warrant has been reviewed by a judge.
Utah eWarrant

> A judge reviews a warrant and either approves or rejects it. The judge can also comment upon specific concerns regarding the request.

> On-call judges usually respond within 5-10 minutes of a request.

> If there is no response within 15 minutes of the request, officers are instructed to contact the judge.
Utah TOXE

> This program teaches officers how to properly prepare, package and send blood/urine samples to the Utah Forensic Toxicology Lab.

> Funded by National Association of Prosecutor Coordinators (NAPC), the course includes:

  » A video on how to prepare sample evidence kits;
  » A lecture on DWI laws regarding blood draws; and,
  » A copy of video, kit components, markers, and contact information for attendees.

> Previously, 18-23% of samples sent by officers to lab were rejected. Internal reviews show the rejection rate has fallen to 3.8%.
Recommendations from agencies

Synopsis of recommendations include:

» Determine if there is available funding (e.g., federal);

» Seek early acceptance from frontline officers and use their input to create a sense of ownership;

» Encourage officers’ feedback since it may improve solution’s delivery and reduce barriers to its use;

» Communicate with all stakeholders through each stage;

» Accept that some agencies may not take part;

» Work with Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutors who can provide information on legislative requirements;

» Implement the solution incrementally to manage workload and to avoid overwhelming the users;
Recommendations from agencies

Synopsis of recommendations:

» Select one local agency as a pilot location before introducing it elsewhere;

» Use senior or retired officers in the pilot program and for subsequent communications;

» Explain the solution’s capabilities and limitations in order to manage expectations;

» Consult with other agencies to see what steps they took and what lessons they learned; and,

» Standardize electronic arrest forms and integrate them with breath test and toxicology reports.

» A detailed Roadmap was created to guide implementation.
Key steps of the roadmap

> Preparation and planning:
  » Define problem, objective, goals, and secure funding;
  » Conduct external audit and identify stakeholders.

> Consultation with stakeholders:
  » Appoint chairperson, contact stakeholders;
  » Arrange first meeting, maintain communications.

> Describing problem and identifying solution:
  » Describe problem, identify potential solutions;
  » Calculate cost, staffing, timing estimates.

> Implementation of solution:
  » Develop and conduct pilot program, report findings;
  » Train program users, implement solution agency-wide.

> Program evaluation:
  » Design evaluation plan, collect data on user experiences;
  » Monitor cost/time savings, make changes if needed.
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