



**To:** Neighbourhoods and City Development

**From:** Adrian Davis

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**Subject:** Essential Evidence on a page: No. 99 Intelligence-led traffic policing: Motoring Offences and Other Offences

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Top line: Most motorists are not criminals but most criminal are motorists. Intelligence-led policing following up traffic violations can be a cost-effective means of addressing other criminal activities.

There is research evidence about the links between offending both on and off the roads, crash involvement and compliance with the law. This itself links to 'intelligence-led policing'<sup>1</sup> whereby the adage that "a great and common sin in policing is for one officer to have in his or her pocket the answer to another officer's problem" can be effectively acted on. The first report to explore the link between different types of traffic offending and other offences was reported on a small sample undertaken in Huddersfield.<sup>2</sup> The study took two key premises as its starting point: that the people who are the most committed criminals are also the most versatile and that it must be an action rather than a condition that awakens police interest. The study took place between July and September 1998 and compared cars illegally parked in disabled parking spaces with cars legally parked close by.

Four key findings emerged from the comparison study were that:

- 20% of those cars parked illegally would occasion immediate police interest compared to 2% parked legally;
- 10% of those illegally parked were currently in an illegal condition compared to 1% parked legally;
- 50% of cars illegally parked had a traffic violation history compared to 11% parked legally
- 1 in 3 cars parked illegally were connected to other offences ranging between unpaid tickets, drugs, assault, vehicle crime, theft and burglary.

Following on from this it is recognised that serious traffic offenders are not "specialist" offenders but also likely to be involved in more mainstream criminal activity. There is a clear link between offence history and being at fault in a road crash. This includes road users who were found to have committed a drugs-related general offence or a drink and/or drug driving offence. Driving behaviour is linked to other behaviours and is part of a complex system linked to other social and attitudinal factors.<sup>3</sup> Following on from this is the high level of traffic offences committed by HGV and LGV drivers. Levels of offending among people driving for work were higher than expected, suggesting that there is scope for reducing these via employers targeted programmes.

An example of traffic-related intelligence-led policing was Operation Radar in 2008, focused on the A23 and concentrating on mobile phone, seat belt and speeding offences. During 14 days 17 arrests were made and 939 endorsable fixed penalty notices were issued. In addition, 28 vehicles were found to be without MoT or tax and 45 vehicles were seized. 41 drivers were found to be driving not in accordance with their licences and 12 were arrested in connection with other offences.

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<sup>1</sup> A business model and an information-organizing process that allows police agencies to better understand their crime problems and take a measure of the resources available to be able to decide on an enforcement tactic or prevention strategy best designed to control crime.

<sup>2</sup> Chenery S, Henshaw C, Pease K, 1999 *Illegal Parking in Disabled Bays: A Means of Offender Targeting*, Home Office, London.

<sup>3</sup> Dodson E, Hill J, 2010 *Linking Offence Histories to Accidents Using OTS Data*, VSRC, Loughborough.