



Enhancing Drug-Impaired Driving Data Across Canada: Motor Vehicle Division Data



The Issue

Every year, thousands of people living in Canada drive after using drugs other than alcohol, posing significant risks to themselves and other road users (Brown et al., 2015, 2021; Statistics Canada, 2021). Motor vehicle divisions (MVDs) are responsible for tracking driving infractions like these, maintaining driver records (e.g., driver characteristics, driving sanctions or convictions) and providing a centralized place (by province or territory) for storing driver data. Since MVDs are not directly involved in collecting DID data, they rely on other agencies for this information. Not all MVDs in Canada receive the same data when DID incidents occur in their jurisdiction. Because MVD data are collated from multiple sources, they are not typically analyzed or reported when examining DID.

The Significance of the Data

MVDs store the collective driving history (within a specified period) of all licensed drivers in their province or territory. They receive data from various agencies when DID incidents occur (e.g., law enforcement, courts). Important insights and a more holistic picture of drivers can be provided when that data is combined with MVDs' driver record data (i.e., age, sex, medical conditions). This could be especially important when considering drivers who may be at risk of DID and the most effective and appropriate measures to deter future DID (e.g., administrative sanctions, criminal sanctions). Despite the importance of these data, not all MVDs promptly receive data from other agencies or report on the data. These data could be key for policy makers, decision makers and road safety practitioners working to prevent DID across Canada.

Recommended Indicators

Five data indicators are recommended to enhance and standardize DID driver records analyzed and reported by MVDs across Canada. These were developed by and in consultation with DID experts across Canada.

The table describes the five indicators. Since this data is not consistently made available to all MVDs across Canada, all proposed indicators are new. Some may need a high degree of investment and resources to achieve.



Data source	Indicator
New ^a	<p>Driver demographics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number and percentage of drivers with DID records across sex (or gender where possible)• Number and percentage of drivers with DID records across standardized age groups^b <p>Administrative sanctions^c issued to drivers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of DID administrative sanctions issued out of the total number of licensed drivers by jurisdiction <p>DID criminal convictions reported for drivers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of DID convictions recorded out of the total number of licensed drivers by jurisdiction <p>Recidivism:^d DID administrative sanctions among drivers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of drivers issued any administrative sanctions two or more times out of all drivers issued sanctions by jurisdiction• Number of drivers issued DID administrative sanctions two or more times out of all drivers issued DID sanctions by jurisdiction• Number of drivers issued alcohol administrative sanctions two or more times out of all drivers issued alcohol sanctions by jurisdictions <p>Recidivism: DID criminal convictions among drivers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of drivers issued any impaired-driving criminal convictions two or more times out of all drivers issued convictions by jurisdiction• Number of drivers issued DID criminal convictions two or more times out of all drivers issued DID convictions by jurisdiction• Number of drivers issued alcohol criminal convictions two or more times out of all drivers issued alcohol convictions by jurisdiction

^aNew indicators include nonexistent or not widely used indicators (e.g., some agencies may track some of these data).

^bRecommend standardization be based on the Canadian Council of Motor Transportation Administrators age groups (i.e., 16–19, 20–24, 25–34, 35–44, 45–54, 55–64, and 65 years and older).

^cSanctions are specific to provincial or territorial jurisdictions and often include licence suspensions, fines and vehicle impoundment. Law enforcement can apply these sanctions in different combinations with or without laying criminal charges.

^dRecidivism rates are the extent to which an individual repeats the same crime.

These indicators are part of a broader set of 34 national DID indicators for various agencies recommended by an expert Drug-Impaired Driving Indicators Advisory Committee, chaired by the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction. For a complete list of the recommended indicators, see the full report, [Measuring the Impact of Drug-Impaired Driving: Recommendations for National Indicators](#). Also included in the report are suggestions for agencies to address potential challenges in implementing the recommendations (e.g., standardizing data, data sharing, financial costs) and more detailed information about the Advisory Committee.

Top considerations for implementation:

- Sometimes data provided to MVDs by other agencies lack necessary details. As such, the committee recommends that MVDs begin reporting DID data at a high level and focus on overall data, such as the number of sanctions issued in broad categories (e.g., suspensions, fines, vehicle impoundment), rather than try to focus on specific analyses.



- Driver record data reflect jurisdictional differences in responding to DID, such as fine amounts, types of administrative sanctions, application of sanctions or charges and conviction rates. This means that caution must be used when comparing MVD data across provinces and territories.
- It can take time for MVDs to receive data from other agencies, leaving the data somewhat outdated. Because motor vehicle divisions receive their DID data from other sources, they can be delayed by an investigation or court case. These can take more than a year and are generally longer than typical annual data collection periods. To address challenges with delays and timing of driver record data, different time frames or approaches should be considered for monitoring changes for some of the recommended indicators.

For a full discussion of these and other considerations for implementation, see the [full report](#).

References

- Brown, S. W., Vanlaar, W. G. M., & Robertson, R. D. (2015). *Alcohol and drug-crash problem in Canada: 2011 report*. Ottawa, Ont.: Canadian Council of Motor Transport Administrators. https://www.ccmata.ca/web/default/files/PDF/2011_Alcohol_and_Drug_Crash_Problem_Report_Eng.pdf
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- Statistics Canada. (2021). Table 35-10-0177-01 *Incident-based crime statistics, by detailed violations, Canada, provinces, territories and Census Metropolitan Areas*. Ottawa, Ont.: Author. <https://doi.org/10.25318/3510017701-eng>

