



Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office

NEWS RELEASE

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Sheriff Releases 2-Year Report on Analysis of Wrong-way Drivers

Milwaukee, WI – Sheriff David A. Clarke Jr. directed an analysis of an emerging problem on the freeway system involving wrong-way drivers. The purpose of the study was to identify strategies to reduce the frequency of wrong-way drivers, thereby saving lives and reducing property damage.

Statistical Summary/Analysis

The Sheriff's Office Law Enforcement Analytics Division (LEAD) compiled data beginning in 2012, after the Patrol Division identified problematic on and off ramps. The majority of the incidents involved drunken drivers, 75% of those stopped in 2012, and 93% in 2013.

There were 34 confirmed reports of wrong-way drivers in 2012, and 43 in 2013. The highest frequency of wrong-way driving occurred on downtown Milwaukee off ramps, between 10:00 p.m. and 2:00 a.m. on Saturdays and Sundays. Most wrong-way drivers travelled in lane 1, the high speed lane, which probably occurs because they believe they are in the slow traffic lane.

Deputies photographed high risk locations at night and in daylight. An analysis of the entrance and exit ramps revealed that many parallel each other, and most have minimal signage or markings to distinguish the entrance and exit ramps.

Recommendations in the report include:

- Adding constant-flashing "Wrong Way" signs
- Lowering the height of "Do Not Enter" and "Wrong Way" signs and mounting them on the same post on both sides of the ramp
- Installing trailblazing lines ('elephant tracks') and/or reflective markers that channel direction of travel
- Placing median barriers to separate those exit and entrance ramps that are parallel to each other

The Sheriff's Office will continue to work with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and traffic engineering experts and monitor incidents as changes are made.

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