

**REPORT OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF STATE POLICE**

**Interim Report:
Increased Enforcement
on Interstate 81**

**TO THE GOVERNOR AND
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA**



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**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
RICHMOND
2005**



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

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December 1, 2005

TO: The Honorable Mark R. Warner, Governor of Virginia

The Honorable John H. Chichester
Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee

The Honorable Vincent F. Callahan, Jr.
Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee

Pursuant to Item 457 B.2. of Chapter 951 of the 2005 Virginia Acts of Assembly, I am respectfully submitting herewith, a *Report on Increased Enforcement on Interstate 81*. The interim report is a compilation of the Department's enforcement efforts during the period July 1, 2005, through October 30, 2005.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "W. S. Flaherty".

Superintendent

WSF/

Enclosure

Increased Enforcement on Interstate 81

Preface

Pursuant to Item 457 B.2. of Chapter 951 of the 2005 Virginia Acts of Assembly, I am respectfully submitting herewith, a *Report on Increased Enforcement on Interstate 81*. This interim report is a compilation of the Department's overtime enforcement efforts during the period July 1, 2005, through October 30, 2005.

History

Construction of Interstate 81 began in 1957. Initially small sections between cities and towns were opened to the public. It was not until 1987 the entire interstate was opened in Virginia from West Virginia to Tennessee. Interstate 81 spans 325 miles of Virginia and runs north and south along the spine of the Appalachian Mountains.

The roadway was originally constructed as a four lane, divided, limited-access highway. Population growth along the corridor has taxed the limits of these lanes. In 2003, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration launched an I-81 Corridor Improvement Study. This study, when completed, will identify deficiencies along the interstate and consider opportunities for improvement. This study includes consideration for separate lanes for truck traffic, creating a pilot toll project, and constructing additional traffic lanes.

The Interstate 81 corridor has experienced significant population growth; not just in Virginia, but also in West Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New York. Because Interstate 81 travels north and south, it is often used as an alternative to heavily congested Interstate 95.

This population explosion has resulted in an increase in demands for goods and services. The result has been a surge in passenger vehicle traffic along Interstate 81 as well as significant growth in commercial motor vehicle traffic. Over the years since the interstate was constructed, use of Interstate 81 has grown multiplicatively.

This increase in traffic has ultimately led to more congestion, more traffic crashes, and a significant increase in citizen complaints of poor driving behavior.

Purpose

In response to the increase in traffic-related problems on Interstate 81 in Virginia, the Virginia General Assembly allocated \$110,000 in funds to be used to compensate Virginia State Troopers for working in an overtime status along the Interstate 81 corridor. The funds were approved as part of the 2005-2006 budget, with the monies to be spent between July 1, 2005, and June 30, 2006.

The purpose of these funds is to compensate Virginia State Police Troopers for working outside their normal work hours on Interstate 81, strictly enforcing the motor vehicle code in an effort to reduce complaints and motor vehicle crashes. The reason troopers will be paid overtime to work outside their normal work schedule is to prevent any negative impact upon the already taxed current level of State Police patrols on Interstate 81 or other highways in the Commonwealth.

Analysis

Once funding was allocated, State Police managers met to discuss how to most effectively utilize the monies. This panel of lieutenants considered traffic volume; large events along the Interstate 81 corridor, such as college football games and racing events; and crash data demographics (See Appendix A) to establish enforcement methodologies.

The panel dubbed the project "Operation Cruise Control." The philosophy behind the name was simple, if people would use their vehicle's cruise control function as they travel along Virginia's roadways they would be less likely to speed, drive aggressively, follow too closely, etc.

When setting the dates for these projects, the panel decided the four divisions that have Interstate 81 responsibilities would participate in each project. Troopers would saturate the entire 325-mile stretch of Interstate 81 from West Virginia to Tennessee on the selected Operation Cruise Control dates.

The four affected State Police divisions are defined as follows:

- Division II Frederick, Shenandoah, and Rockingham Counties.
- Division III Augusta County
- Division VI Rockbridge, Botetourt, Roanoke, and Montgomery Counties
- Division IV Pulaski, Wythe, Smyth, and Washington Counties

Additionally, the panel included Safety Division personnel in establishing the dates of enforcement. Crash data and citizen complaints supported the need for motor carrier trained personnel to participate in this project. The motor carrier trained personnel are better equipped and have extensive additional training designed to target commercial motor vehicle violations. The Virginia State Police Safety Division encompasses the entire state.

Department policy limits the number of hours an employee may work during a workday. Because of this, the panel decided upon 8-hour enforcement periods. This would allow our personnel the ability to extend their normal 8-hour shifts and work 16 hours in a single day without violating State Police policy, or the trooper could work on his/her regularly scheduled day off.

The dates and times were established as follows:

Date	Time
August 27, 2005	3 PM – 11 PM
September 18, 2005	6 PM – 2 AM
September 24, 2005	8 AM – 4 PM
October 8, 2005	8 AM – 4 PM
November 5, 2005	8 AM – 4 PM
November 19, 2005	7 AM – 3 PM
December 9, 2005	6 PM – 2 AM
January 12, 2006	2 PM – 10 PM
February 14, 2006	1 PM – 9 PM
March 1, 2006	10 AM – 6 PM
April 23, 2006	3 PM – 11 PM
May 14, 2006	12 PM – 8 PM
June 9, 2006	5 AM – 1 PM
June 15, 2006	3 PM – 11 PM

Enforcement Methodology

After analyzing crash data, the panel created a plan of action designed to effectively target the types of driving behavior that lead to crashes and citizen complaints. Emphasis would be placed on aggressive drivers, reckless drivers, speeding, unsafe lane change, following too closely, and driving under the influence.

Crash statistics across all the Interstate 81 counties indicate commercial motor vehicles show statistically significant involvement in traffic crashes. The Safety Division troopers have enhanced training in both the *Code of Virginia* and Federal Motor Carrier Regulations. This training permits these specialty troopers to conduct advanced commercial motor vehicle inspections of the operating systems of commercial vehicles, such as the brakes, lighting, etc. The motor carrier troopers have the authority to take commercial motor vehicles and their drivers out of service when a serious safety issue presents itself. The panel felt the motor carrier troopers would be a great asset to the Operation Cruise Control project as their capabilities are invaluable.

The panel also decided both marked, unmarked, covert, and slick-top vehicles would be used for the project. Marked vehicles stand as a deterrent to motorists. When used on patrol, these cars are readily recognized by the motoring public; their mere presence makes citizens pay attention to their driving behavior and operate their vehicles in a safe, courteous and orderly manner.

The covert vehicles are not marked with State Police decals, license plates, or any other obvious police paraphernalia. The antennas are kept to a minimum and often the car

itself is a vehicle that is not traditionally known as a police car; e.g., Dodge Intrepid, and Chevrolet Impala. In our experience, these vehicles have been extremely successful as a traffic enforcement tool. Because they are not readily recognized as a police vehicle, other drivers will often speed past them and drive recklessly around them. The troopers who drive these vehicles report the ease of pacing vehicles at high rates of speed and identifying reckless driving behavior without being detected.

The Chevrolet Camaros and slick top enforcement cars will also be used. Although these cars are marked with traditional State Police decals, their blue emergency lights are contained within the front and rear windows of the vehicles. The motoring public is oblivious to these enforcement vehicles because the cars do not fit the public's police car paradigm. The Camaros and slick tops are great for pacing, identifying vehicles following too closely and improper passing as well as other violations.

Our unmarked cars are beginning to look less like police vehicles due to new antenna placement. Although some drivers easily recognize these vehicles and refrain from violating the law while around these cars, some drivers do not immediately differentiate these cars and pass them at significant speeds.

The Department is well armed with speed detection devices. Each vehicle assigned to Operation Cruise Control is equipped with standard RADAR or the new LIDAR, which is a laser speed detection device. Furthermore, some of the police cars have RADAR detector detectors. RADAR detector detectors send a signal to the trooper indicating when a vehicle is equipped with a RADAR detector.

Aerial speed enforcement via VASCAR will also be used to identify vehicles traveling in excess of the posted speed limit. Aerial speed enforcement has proven to be an effective tool because few people look to the sky for law enforcement speed detection.

Results

As of the date of this report, only four Operation Cruise Control projects have been held. Thus far, sworn personnel have issued a total of 1,364 summonses, including 176 summonses for reckless driving and 781 summonses for speeding. They have made 5 felony arrests, 8 drug arrests, 22 misdemeanor arrests, and 6 driving under the influence arrests. A more comprehensive report of the results of these four projects is included in this report. (See Attachment B)

During these four projects, troopers have worked 815 hours and driven a total of 13,777 miles along the Interstate 81 corridor. (See Attachment C.)

Operation Cruise Control is still in its infancy. The Department has experienced great success with this project so far, and looks forward to continued success with all future projects.

2004 Interstate 81 Crash Data

Division II

		Severity of Crash			Causative Factor											Type of Vehicle						
County	Total # of Crashes	Property damage	Injury	Fatality	Excessive Speed	Exceeding Safe Speed	Passing Improperly	Right of Way	Follow too Close	Unsafe Turns	Driver Inattention	Avoiding Vehicle	Avoiding Animal	Alcohol Related	Other	Passenger Vehicle	Straight Truck	Tractor Trailer	Bus (Commercial)	Bus (School)	Motorcycles	Emergency Vehicle
Frederick	288	69% n=198	30% n=87	1% n=3	3% n=8	8.3% n=24	1.7% n=5	2.4% n=7	12% n=35	0% n=0	5.2% n=15	2% n=5	1% n=3	3.2% n=9	33% n=95	70.5% n=203	2.1% n=6	24% n=69	0% n=0	0% n=0	.7% n=2	.7% n=2
Shenandoah	253	66% n=166	33% n=84	1.2% n=3	12% n=30	15% n=38	2.8% n=7	2.4% n=6	7.1% n=18	.4% n=1	7.1% n=18	2% n=5	2% n=5	3.2% n=8	45.5% n=115	83% n=210	3.2% n=8	38% n=95	0% n=0	.4% n=1	.4% n=1	.8% n=2
Rockingham	112	63% n=71	37% n=41	0% n=0	12% n=13	3.6% n=4	5.4% n=6	0% n=0	15% n=17	.9% n=1	2.7% n=3	6% n=7	0% n=0	0% n=0	57% n=64	88% n=99	1.8% n=2	32% n=36	0% n=0	0% n=0	0% n=0	0% n=0

2004 Interstate 81 Crash Data

Division III

		Severity of Crash			Causative Factor											Type of Vehicle						
County	Total # of Crashes	Property damage	Injury	Fatality	Excessive Speed	Exceeding Safe Speed	Passing Improperly	Right of Way	Follow too Close	Unsafe Turns	Driver Inattention	Avoiding Vehicle	Avoiding Animal	Alcohol Related	Other	Passenger Vehicle	Straight Truck	Tractor Trailer	Bus (Commercial)	Bus (School)	Motorcycles	Emergency Vehicle
Augusta	258	64% n=166	35% n=91	4% n=1	4.3% n=11	7% n=18	6.2% n=16	.8% n=2	8.9% n=23	4% n=1	7.4% n=19	3.9% n=10	.4% n=1	5% n=13	50% n=130	83% n=213	2.7% n=7	26% n=66	4% n=1	0% n=0	1.5% n=4	.8% n=2

2004 Interstate 81 Crash Data

Division IV

County	Total # of Crashes	Severity of Crash			Causative Factor											Type of Vehicle						
		Property damage	Injury	Fatality	Excessive Speed	Exceeding Safe Speed	Passing Improperly	Right of Way	Follow too Close	Unsafe Turns	Driver Inattention	Avoiding Vehicle	Avoiding Animal	Alcohol Related	Other	Passenger Vehicle	Straight Truck	Tractor Trailer	Bus (Commercial)	Bus (School)	Motorcycles	Emergency Vehicle
Pulaski	98	64% n=63	35% n=34	1% n=1	7% n=7	26% n=26	3% n=3	1% n=1	8% n=8	0% n=0	7% n=7	3% n=3	1% n=1	2% n=2	34% n=34	88% n=88	1% n=1	36% n=36	0% n=0	0% n=0	0% n=0	0% n=0
Wythe	148	71% n=105	28% n=41	1.4% n=2	9.5% n=14	22% n=32	2% n=3	1.4% n=2	2.7% n=4	0% n=0	4.7% n=7	6.1% n=9	.7% n=1	1.4% n=2	50% n=73	73% n=108	3.4% n=5	36% n=53	.7% n=1	0% n=0	0% n=0	.7% n=1
Smyth	123	63% n=77	36% n=44	1.6% n=2	12% n=15	25% n=31	1.6% n=2	.8% n=1	4% n=5	0% n=0	5% n=6	1.6% n=2	2.4% n=3	4% n=5	29% n=36	75% n=92	5% n=6	21% n=26	0% n=0	0% n=0	1.6% n=2	.8% n=1
Washington	158	63% n=100	35% n=56	1.3% n=2	8.9% n=14	18% n=28	7% n=11	2.5% n=4	10% n=16	0% n=0	13% n=21	5.7% n=9	.6% n=1	1.9% n=3	41% n=64	100% n=162	2% n=3	27% n=42	1.3% n=2	0% n=0	1.3% n=2	n=

2004 Interstate 81 Crash Data

Division VI

		Severity of Crash			Causative Factor											Type of Vehicle						
County	Total # of Crashes	Property damage	Injury	Fatality	Excessive Speed	Exceeding Safe Speed	Passing Improperly	Right of Way	Follow too Close	Unsafe Turns	Driver Inattention	Avoiding Vehicle	Avoiding Animal	Alcohol Related	Other	Passenger Vehicle	Straight Truck	Tractor Trailer	Bus (Commercial)	Bus (School)	Motorcycles	Emergency Vehicle
Rockbridge	281	59% n=166	40% n=112	1.1% n=3	8.5% n=22	17% n=47	3.2% n=9	.7% n=2	12% n=35	.4% n=1	12% n=35	4.6% n=13	1.1% n=3	2.1% n=6	37% n=103	75% n=212	2.8% n=8	36% n=100	.4% n=1	0% n=0	.4% n=1	1.1% n=3
Botetourt	143	72% n=103	29% n=42	.7% n=1	9.7% n=14	15% n=21	1.3% n=2	2.1% n=3	8.4% n=12	2.8% n=4	11% n=16	3.5% n=5	.7% n=1	2.1% n=3	41% n=59	83% n=119	3.5% n=5	38% n=54	0% n=0	0% n=0	1.3% n=2	0% n=0
Roanoke	204	66% n=134	34% n=70	0% n=0	8.3% n=17	12% n=24	6.4% n=13	.5% n=1	25% n=51	.5% n=1	1.5% n=3	3% n=6	1% n=2	6.9% n=14	39% n=80	99% n=202	3.9% n=8	25% n=52	0% n=0	0% n=0	1.5% n=3	0 n=0
Montgomery	195	66% n=129	34% n=66	0% n=0	4% n=8	28% n=55	2.1% n=4	1.5% n=3	13% n=26	.5% n=1	4% n=8	8.7% n=17	2.6% n=5	4% n=8	41% n=79	88% n=171	2.6% n=5	37% n=72	1% n=2	.5% n=1	.5% n=1	.5% n=1

Operation Cruise Control Enforcement Results*

	Division II	Division III	Division IV	Division VI	Safety Division	Total
Felony Arrest	1	3		1		5
Drug Arrest			8			8
Misdemeanor	8	2	10	2		22
DUI	5		1			6
Reckless Driving	65	10	62	37	2	176
Speeding	246	96	256	142	41	781
Equipment	46	5	43	20	1	115
Seatbelt	25	7	17	4		53
Child Restraint	4		4			8
License Violation	24	5	18	9		56
Other	35	33	38	25	3	134
Total	459	161	457	240	47	1364

*These enforcement statistics reflect the results of (4) Operation Cruise Control projects held on August 27, 2005, September 18, 2005, September 24, 2005, and October 8, 2005.

**Operation Cruise Control
Mileage and Hours Worked**

	Division II	Division III	Division IV	Division VI	Safety Division	Total
Miles Driven	4,033	1,598	4,983	2,875	288	13,777
Hours Worked	242	106	283	160	24	815
Average Number of Personnel Assigned	8	3	9	5	1	