

# **TRAFFIC SAFETY VIOLATIONS DISPOSITION ANALYSIS**

**University of Minnesota Mandated Report**  
**[2023 Minn. Laws Chap. 68 Art. 4 Sec. 109](#)**

**July 1, 2024**

Per the requirements set forth in Minnesota Statute 3.197, the cost to prepare this report was \$866.

# Traffic Safety Violations Disposition Analysis

June 28, 2024

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## **ABSTRACT**

This research and behavioral analysis will investigate, to the extent possible, the demographic, social, and economic trends in citations given and contested, as well as in judgments for speeding, impairment, distraction, and seatbelt violations.

In pursuing this work, the research team will seek to compare rates of citations given, contested, and judgment outcomes in the following ways, given the available data:

- Overall (statewide)
- Legally (Felonies vs. Misdemeanors, etc. plus accounting for diversion programs)
- Geographically (rural vs. suburban vs urban)
- By income
- By race
- By gender
- By age

The research will also note data shortcomings and make recommendations and justifications for improving data collection.

The team will also note how well enforcement appears to match up with the intent of the law. We will note instances of disconnect where the way the law is written and/or enforced may be leading to sub-optimal outcomes, and will make recommendations for possible changes.

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## BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVE

In May of 2023, the Minnesota Legislature asked the Center for Transportation Studies (CTS) at the University of Minnesota to conduct an evaluation of the disposition in recent years of citations for speeding, impairment, distraction, and seatbelt violations.

Based on this directive, the research team will determine how extensive, complete, and accessible data is regarding the number of citations contested and adjudicated for speeding, impairment, distraction, and seatbelt violations in Minnesota, as well as analyze any differences and disparities in these outcomes by seriousness of the crime, geographic location, income, race, gender, and age (as the data allows).

This work will hopefully lead to safer travel for Minnesota citizens through: a) consistent and equitable enforcement of speeding, impairment, distraction, and seatbelt laws and b) examining potential disparities in how speeding, impairment, distraction, and seatbelt laws are enforced and adjudicated.

## SCOPE

The Center for Transportation Studies team will provide all project management, research, analysis, and report writing services to evaluate traffic safety violation dispositions as noted in this workplan and in Minnesota statute.

Tasks in this project will be conducted based on direction and funding provided by the Minnesota Legislature to the Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) at the Minnesota Department of Public Safety. The project team will evaluate rates of citations issued compared to rates of citations contested in court (and the outcomes of the cases), amounts of fines imposed compared to counts and amounts of fines payments, and related changes in patterns of traffic enforcement from 2017 to 2022. The project team will also submit both an interim and final report on the work.

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## TASK #1

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### Task Name

Discussion of Current Law

### Task Description

This task will discuss the different types of violations to be studied (speeding, impairment, distraction, and seatbelt), noting the degree of the violation (administrative violation, petty misdemeanor, misdemeanor, felony etc.) and whether any diversion or exceptions exist.

This task will also include a discussion of the theoretical implications of the degree of the violation, the presence of any diversion programs or other exceptions, and other aspects that might have an impact on whether a violation is contested, as well as on deterring or encouraging the noted behaviors.

# Traffic Safety Violations Disposition Analysis

June 28, 2024

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## TASK #2

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### **Task Name**

Data Assessment

### **Task Description**

This task will catalogue the data available regarding each violation, whether information about the violations is public, what types of information (race, gender income, etc.) is collected, where it resides / can be collected from (e.g., state database, county court records etc.), whether it is aggregated or needs to be assembled, and noting any costs for obtaining and/or aggregating the data.

The result of this task will be an assessment of whether collection and analysis of data from the entire state is feasible, or if samples need to be drawn, along with recommendations for data collection methods. This task will also note types of data that are not available or could be improved.

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## TASK #3

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### **Task Name**

Interim Report

### **Task Description**

This report will cover tasks 1 and 2, summarizing the nature of the violations to be studied and the available data. The report is expected to identify the draft research methodology to be used by the study, identify opportunities, and indicate potential limitations of the study based on the availability of data and scope of the study.

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## TASK #4

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### **Task Name**

Data Collection and Analysis

### **Task Description**

Based upon the results of tasks 1 and 2, the research team will assemble the available data and organize it to show the number and percent of violations that are then contested in court, the judgements for each violation (guilt vs acquittal), and sentences for those found guilty. This data will then be broken down by geography, race, income and age, to the extent the data allows. Cross-tabulations will also be sought.

The data collected will also include crash data to contrast citation rates to crash rates over time to establish the trends in risky driving behaviors.

# Traffic Safety Violations Disposition Analysis

June 28, 2024

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## TASK #5

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### **Task Name**

Draft Final Report

### **Task Description**

This task will revise the reports from tasks 1 – 4 and assemble them into an overall draft final report that will cover background, legal issues, methodology, data collection, analysis, and findings. The document will use the CTS report template and meet CTS’s editorial guidelines and standards.

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## TASK #6

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### **Task Name**

Editorial Review and Publication of Final Report

### **Task Description**

This task will cover the preparation and publication of the final report, as well as any other publishable deliverables, as required by the legislature. Upon completion of task 5, the project team will send the report through final editorial review and post a fully accessible version of the final report on the CTS website.

# Traffic Safety Violations Disposition Analysis

June 28, 2024

## Task Deliverables:

Task:	Deliverable(s):
1. Discussion of Current Law	Summary document of current law and implications for study
2. Data Assessment	Summary document identifying available data and missing data
3. Interim Report	Interim Report
4. Data Collection and Analysis	Summary document detailing final methods and preliminary analysis findings
5. Draft Final Report	Draft technical report detailing research methods, analysis, findings, and recommendations
6. Editorial Review and Publication of Final Report	Final Report and Any Other Publishable - Deliverables

## Task Durations:

Month	1 (Jul 2024)	2	3	4	5	6 (Dec 2024)	7	8	9	10	11	12 (Jun 2025)	13	14	15	16	17	18 (Dec 2025)	
Task 1: 4 months	X	X	X	X															
Task 2: 5 months		X	X	X	X	X													
Task 3: 4 months			X	X	X	X													
Task 4: 10 months					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					
Task 5: 5 months												X	X	X	X	X			
Task 6: 2 months																	X	X	

## Estimated Task Completion Dates:

Task:	Estimated Completion Date:
1. Discussion of Current Law	October 31, 2024
2. Data Assessment	December 31, 2024
3. Interim Report	December 31, 2024
4. Data Collection and Analysis	August 31, 2025
5. Draft Final Report	October 31, 2025
6. Editorial Review and Publication of Final Report	December 31, 2025

# Traffic Safety Violations Disposition Analysis

June 28, 2024

## Budget by Category:

Categories	Description	Costs	Totals
<b>Salaries</b>			\$160,132
	Leadership & Management	\$6,781	
	Project Delivery & Coordination	\$146,095	
	Communications & Information	\$4,611	
	Contract Admin & Support	\$2,645	
	Undergraduate Students	\$0	
<b>Benefits</b>			\$79,416
	Leadership & Management	\$2,516	
	Project Delivery & Coordination	\$74,247	
	Communications & Information	\$1,711	
	Contract Admin & Support	\$942	
	Undergraduate Students	\$0	
<b>Professional Services</b>			
<b>Travel</b>			\$5,452
	Research Travel	\$3,452	
	Out of State Conference Travel	\$2,000	
<b>Non-Salary</b>			\$5,000
	Supplies	\$5,000	
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$250,000</b>

## Budget by Task:

Task:	Cost
1. Discussion of Current Law	\$21,846
2. Data Assessment	\$31,617
3. Interim Report	\$27,845
4. Data Collection and Analysis	\$80,625
5. Draft Final Report	\$59,853
6. Editorial Review and Publication of Final Report	\$28,214
7. <b>Total</b>	<b>\$250,000</b>