



# DODGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Dale J Schmidt Sheriff Chad Enright Chief Deputy

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **OPERATING WITHOUT A VALID DRIVER'S LICENSE POLICY CHANGE**

The Dodge County Sheriff has changed the sheriff's office policy to be more aggressive in cracking down on drivers who do not have a valid driver's license. In Wisconsin, we have seen more and more drivers who continue to drive time after time even after they have been caught over and over again. This is often caused by the way our system processes the violation of Operating without a Valid Driver's License (OWL). In Wisconsin, if you commit a violation of OWL, it is simply an ordinance violation with only a forfeiture assessed. However, if you commit a 2<sup>nd</sup> or subsequent offense within 3 years, it becomes a traffic crime with penalties that can include jail time.

Unfortunately, once the first violation is processed through the courts, the driving status is changed from "No Valid License Issued" to "No License Issued Status=Suspended". As a result, many law enforcement officers and agencies are issuing subsequent citations for Operating while Suspended (OWS) which never escalates to becoming a crime. As a result, some individuals continue to violate the law, continue to receive citations, fail to pay those citations, and seldom ever strive to obtain their license to operate legally after completing the proper training, education, and testing to operate safely on our highways.

Effective immediately, the Dodge County Sheriff's Office will no longer be issuing citations for OWS in these cases, but we will be issuing the OWL citation and will be asking the District Attorney's Office to prosecute the multiple offense crimes in hopes of gaining compliance.

Just recently we have had two individuals who are chronic offenders as examples of this very issue. The first person is Damien Hose, age 21 of rural Beaver Dam, who was arrested by the Dodge County Sheriff's Office for his 3<sup>rd</sup> OWL (2<sup>nd</sup> within 3 years). He also has 14 prior OWS violations and numerous incidents of failure to pay forfeiture. He was booked into the jail on this traffic crime.

The second offender is Trayvin Yarrington, age 20 of Columbus, who was issued a citation for his 3<sup>rd</sup> OWL (1<sup>st</sup> within 3 years). He also had 24 prior OWS violations and numerous incidents of failure to pay forfeiture.

All persons are innocent until proven guilty in court and all this information is available publicly as part of Wisconsin's Circuit Court Records.

Dodge County Citizens make complaints to law enforcement every day regarding drivers who are operating a vehicle outside of the law and it is our job to take action to bring these violators back into compliance with the law. All citizens over the age of 16 have the opportunity to pursue a driver's license legally and it is not safe or fair to law-abiding citizens that others choose to circumvent and blatantly show disrespect for the laws that have been put in place by our legislative processes. The Dodge County Sheriff's Office will hold these individuals accountable whenever possible, and all criminal traffic will result in the driver being arrested and booked into the Dodge County Jail for processing.

Attached to this press release are photos of Damien Hose and Trayvin Yarrington. If you see these individuals or others who are driving without a valid license driving in Dodge County, please report it to law enforcement. You can do so by calling our non-emergency number 920-386-3726 or by submitting an incident report on our Dodge County Sheriff's Office App which you can download on your Google or Apple Stores.

Questions may be directed to Sheriff Dale J. Schmidt

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