

State of California  
Department of Motor Vehicles

Cross-Boundary Collaboration

DMV Streamlines Blood Lab Accessibility – New Process Efficiently Removes  
Unsafe Drivers from California Streets

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Veronica Bowie

Branch Chief, Driver Safety Branch, Legal Affairs Division

[Veronica.Bowie@dmv.ca.gov](mailto:Veronica.Bowie@dmv.ca.gov)

## **Executive Summary:**

In October 2023, the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) worked with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LACSD) to implement a solution the DMV developed to remedy a lengthy backlog of blood samples needed for hearings for drivers arrested for Driving Under the Influence (DUI). The new process circumvented needless obstacles to efficient operations by establishing trust and communication between the two organizations.

Persons arrested for DUI must submit to a breath or blood test to determine their blood alcohol content at the time they were driving. The DMV must show individuals' blood alcohol levels are .08% or higher to suspend their driving privilege. Breath test results calculate immediately, but blood tests must be sent to a lab under LACSD authority for testing.

In July 2023, the LACSD had a backlog of 973 blood samples that needed to be analyzed for DMV Admin Per Se (APS) hearings. LACSD told Driver Safety (DS) delays could range from four to six months, due to a shortage of toxicology analysts and inefficient tracking and communication systems.

The DMV worked with LACSD to streamline the communications process by designating two to three technicians in Driver Safety offices to be points of contact for LACSD. DS collaborated with LACSD to implement a request process that eliminated calls, emails, and faxes between both agencies. This process was replaced with a SharePoint and portal to gain access to LACSD database to search/retrieve toxicology results/reports. The new process gave real-time tracking, communication, and improved case visibility.

DS worked internally with the Information Security Division and Information Security Office to establish compliance with security rules. The backlog was resolved by November 2023.

## **IDEA**

The fundamental problem was that test results of DUI suspects, who elected for blood tests, could not be processed in time to meet legal requirements, resulting in their driving privileges remaining in place and their cases being dropped. Since this inefficiency allowed unsafe drivers to remain on California's roads and highways, it was a matter of public safety to find a solution. Since LA County is the most populous county in California, it was the ideal place to begin implementation of the solution.

Case dismissals due to timing constraints threatened to undermine public trust in both the legal system and the DMV's administrative authority. With more than 400 new items arriving each month and only 525 being processed - mostly prioritized by legal urgency - we needed a new approach to keep pace and catch up.

Instead of seeking additional staff or new software, which would take months or longer, we decided to work smarter. The DMV led a shift in how cases were tracked, how communication happened, and how work was prioritized. We streamlined requests, improved search tools, and built a live tracking system with LACSD so both agencies had visibility. It wasn't flashy, but it worked

By removing manual processes on both ends as well as the need to request and provide status updates, needless workloads were removed from both organizations and the test results were provided timely, so they were usable as evidence in court which allowed the DMV to penalize and remove the driving privileges of drunk drivers where they previously were able to escape accountability.

The partnership between the DMV and LACSD is the first of its kind and replaced the time- and labor-intensive manual process of faxing requests and results between the two agencies. Emailing the information was done sporadically and, in some cases, there were security concerns that this method of information transmission outweighed the benefits of doing so.

Through leveraging SharePoint technology and establishing clear procedures and trust between the two organizations, both benefited from the new efficiency, which saves time and is more secure than email.

Across the country, law enforcement, labs, and DMVs face the same backlog and coordination struggles. This initiative touches on shared pain points: strained resources, fragmented systems, and delayed justice. It also speaks directly to NASCIO priorities like digital services, enterprise optimization, and data-informed governance.

This solution has been adopted at other county law enforcement agencies, including San Bernadino, which is the second most populous county in California and is expected to be adopted by District Attorney offices and Kaiser hospitals throughout the state. This type of solution can also be emulated by DMV's out-of-state peers and their respective law enforcement agencies.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

After identifying the bottlenecks, the DMV began holding monthly check-ins with the LASD Assistant Lab Director. These meetings gave the department a chance to flag urgent cases and explore immediate solutions. From those conversations, teams

mapped out a simple but effective plan: designate a primary and backup technician per office to serve as the sole point of contact; limit requests to once a week per office; and track all case statuses on a shared spreadsheet updated in real time.

The project brought together frontline DMV Driver Safety technicians, LASD lab personnel, DMV IT and executive staff. By clearly defining roles and giving everyone access to the same information, consistency and accountability was created and embraced. Technicians were trained to navigate LASD's new report portal and worked together with lab supervisors to cut the confusion.

Both IT teams built the shared site and established the permissions, as well as measures to prevent the improper use of Personally Identifiable Information (PII).

Liaisons between Driver Safety and LACSD lab established representatives responsible for each organization's tasks in the partnership and based on these conversations, specific Driver Safety representatives were given access to the SharePoint.

A major success of this partnership is the low up-front time and resource cost of setting up the SharePoint site that was done without additional funds or hiring more staff. Perhaps the most onerous step of the process was making sure the process to protect PII was sufficient. Once that process was finalized, time and cost savings began immediately. Within six months, the extensive backlog was processed, and the data transfer step of the procedure was no longer a factor in the DMV's ability to bring cases against DUI suspects.

## **IMPACT**

Within just six months, the impact was clear. The backlog shrank from 973 cases in July to just 340 by November. By December, it was completely cleared. DMV administrative hearings could now move forward on time, and DMV had what it needed to impose suspensions and protect the public.

- July 2023: 403 new cases received, 458 completed
- November 2023: backlog reduced by 633 cases
- December 2023: zero cases pending

Efficiency gains were just as dramatic. Communication became more focused, reducing unnecessary follow-ups. The real-time SharePoint tracker made everyone's job easier and replaced outdated methods like fax and disjointed email threads.

Now, this is no longer a pilot; it's standard practice. The SharePoint system is still in existence today, and the DMV is actively exploring partnerships with other counties using the same model. This project is a prime example of how meaningful results don't

always require more money or people—just commitment, cooperation, and a willingness to rethink how we work together.

Public safety, fair process, and government accountability all benefited from this initiative. And best of all, it showed that with the right focus and teamwork, even long-standing challenges can be overcome. That's why this project deserves recognition—not just for what it fixed, but for what it proved is possible.

The following graph shows (in teal) Admin Per Se Dismissals in the relevant timeframe.



