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This communication is intended for law enforcement and eCitation vendors who electronically file citations with the Court. Court Administrators, eCitation court staff, State Court Business System Coordinators and the Minnesota Court Payment Center (CPC) are also receiving a copy for informational purposes.

Purpose: To provide law enforcement and eCitation vendors with a list of common eCitation data submission issues and request additional officer training and/or enhanced eCitation programming as needed so they can be avoided.

Background: As the volume of eCitation submissions is steadily increasing, the Courts are seeing the following patterns that result in increasing system confusion and re-work:

1. "Bad" data is included in defendant/party record data fields (i.e. "RECORD DISSEMINATION" or DOB and DL #s mixed in with party names). We are told this may be the result of out of state DL searches. Because MNCIS is a "party based" system and accurate party record data is critical to ensure proper party matching and data integrity, please have officers check to ensure those data fields are "clean" before submitting the citation.
2. The DOB and/or DL # do not match the named defendant's record in DVS – sometimes it is a simple typo and other times that data matches a different person (i.e. spouse, sibling or child). Upon conviction, the Courts then receive an error report from DVS because DVS is unable to match the defendant data to a DVS record, or the conviction is applied to the wrong driver's record, and the Courts then have to correct the case data and re-submit the conviction.
3. The defendant named/identified on the defendant's copy of the citation does not match the defendant named/identified on the filed eCitation (same citation # but different defendants/incidents). This causes confusion when defendants search for their case by citation # or try to pay by phone or web. Possible scenarios:
 - a. Officer accidentally issues with incorrect defendant name, realizes mistake, and modifies the name before submitting it; or
 - b. Officer issues citation or warning to one defendant and prints and gives it to defendant, and then edits that same citation number for the next defendant.
4. Duplicate cases are filed for the same defendant/same incident but with different citation #s. Again, this causes confusion when defendants search for their case or try to pay by phone or web. If the duplicate issue is not discovered and resolved promptly, the defendant could suffer a fail to appear consequence on one case when in fact the other has already been paid/resolved. It also causes uncertainty as to which case is the correct one. Possible scenarios include:
 - a. Officer submits citation, has printing error, and then issues a handwritten citation with different citation # to defendant – both citations get filed with the Court;
 - b. Officer submits citation, modifies it in some way (adds officer notes, additional charge(s), different vehicle data, etc.) and then submits the same citation again but with a new citation #.
5. Multiple offenses from the same incident are charged out at the same time but filed on separate citations. If not discovered and resolved in time, the defendant is subjected to additional law library and surcharge fees contrary to the law. In addition, if the defendant pays/is convicted for the charge(s) from one citation, s/he can argue double jeopardy and the other charge(s), even if more serious, could be dismissed.

6. The charging level of offense is sometimes submitted incorrectly (i.e. M. S. 169.791, Subd. 2 for no proof of insurance is submitted as a petty misdemeanor instead of a misdemeanor). Because the level of offense impacts defendant rights, conviction data, and fail to appear processing, we encourage officers to utilize the recent enhancements to the Criminal Justice Statute Service to determine the correct charging level of offense. Many misdemeanor offenses can only become petty misdemeanors if certified downward by the prosecuting attorney after they are charged – these are now identified in the Statute Service. They should also keep in mind the petty misdemeanor enhancement provisions of Minn. Stat. 169.89, Subd. 1(1) (endangerment) and Subd. 1(2) (prior violations).

What this means to you:

Law enforcement and eCitation vendors should make every reasonable effort to avoid the described eCitation submission issues by providing officer training on:

1. Train/refresh officers on best practices/procedures to ensure defendant/party record data integrity;
2. Train/refresh officers on what to do if printer fails;
3. Train/refresh officers on how to correctly modify/amend/add charges to an eCitation; and
4. Explore eCitation technology solutions that will assist officers in avoiding the described issues, i.e. increasing the # of offenses that can be charged on each citation and updating code tables to reflect correct charging level of offense.

Thank you,

Robin Hoesley

CPC Citation Entry Supervisor
507-413-0310

Kris R. Wilkens, Court Operations Analyst
Court Services Division – Business Unit
State Court Administration
Minnesota Judicial Center
Suite # 105, 25 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd
Phone: (651) 284-0574