

From the Office of the Sheriff:

Chapter 343.22 outlines the requirements for holders of driver's licenses or identification cards should you have a change of address or name. The law requires those who have a change of address or a new name to make application or notify the Department of Transportation (DOT) within 10 days. This requirement can be easily satisfied by going to the local DOT station and receiving a new license or ID card or send notification to the DOT. Violations of this chapter carry a citation that cost \$150.00. Why do we strictly enforce this statute and what challenges does it create?

Very often we are required to make notifications to families of loved ones killed in traffic crashes. This may be a crash that occurs here in Dodge County or those anywhere in the country. The name and address on a license is what we feel is the most reliable source of information.

So imagine that you are a parent of a couple of teenage children. It's Saturday night and they are out with friends. It's now 2:00 a.m., you hear a bang at your door, the door bell is ringing and the dog is barking. You think to yourself, who in the world could that be at this time of night? You get up, still half asleep, look out your window and you see a police car and a deputy or two at your door.

Your heart is racing, you are in a panic as you open the door and are greeted by a solemn deputy who asked if your name is .....? You reply no and tell them your name. They then ask if you know .....and you respond no. They ask how long you have lived there. You tell them you moved in just a few months ago. The deputy then tells you they are looking for the parents of someone whom was killed in a traffic crash and your address was one the victim's driver's license. They apologize for waking you up and startling you and leave.

This scenario occurs more often than you can imagine. The importance of having current identification, proper address, and a current photo is very important. We do not want to wake innocent people up and putting a scare of a lifetime into them. We do attempt to verify the address through our own records management system but often the last known address we have is the same old one that is on your driver's license.

Death notifications are never easy. In Dodge County we pride ourselves on providing more than just a notification. Often the team that does the notification will include any of several of the following - a deputy or I, the Medical Examiner's Office, and our Chaplain. We want to make sure we have the answers to your questions when we make those notifications. We also help the family make contact with other family members. We stay with you until you are surrounded by other loved ones. We never do this over the phone. Chaplain Bauer has driven hours to make personal notification, driving as far as the Mauston area. He even takes the time to attend many of the funerals. His volunteer spirit and commitment to families in need is unprecedented.

Should we not be able to make notification personally, we work with the law enforcement agencies in the area and they make the notifications on our behalf. We have given such notices for many people killed out of the area and out-of-state. We also provide one contact for the family for future questions of information.

Please help us and ensure we do not abruptly awaken and scare others. Keep your address on your DL and ID card current. Also, I know that the DOT does not measure your height or weight when you get

your DL, but that information is also very important to us and can assist in identification. Be honest.  
Thanks for listening [tnehs@co.dodge.wi.us](mailto:tnehs@co.dodge.wi.us)