

*TSRP Talk:*

*Place of Last Drink Data – What to Know and How to Use It*

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Law enforcement has long asked drink history question of an OUI suspect. These questions often include when, what, and how much a person had to drink. But, what about “where?” Should we ask that question and can it help us?

Collecting place of last drink (“POLD”) data has been recommended to states by the National Transportation Safety Board since 2012.<sup>1</sup> The immediate effects of asking where the person had their last drink are obvious. Such information can help you, the investigating officer, determine the truthfulness and consistency of prior statements made by the suspect, lead to additional evidence (including security camera footage, receipts, and the like), and solidify timelines.

POLD data is about more than that, though. POLD data can be used to see trends in your community. Imagine if you begin collecting the data and quickly see that half of all OUIs in a town or other specific geographic area come from the same bar. Could such data help lead to a safety community? Of course, it could.

POLD data can allow community leaders (such as police chiefs, town selectmen, city councilors, city managers, and other officials) to take data-driven action in addressing any common threads. They could discuss the issues with any problem establishments, help implement over-service training, and even consider the data when it comes time to renew a liquor license.

In the end, if there is even a chance that asking “where” a last drink was obtained and entering that location in a department/troop-wide spreadsheet could help keep our communities safer, why not consider asking for that information? I hope that some of you will, and please consider sharing this article with your command staff. If anyone is interested in implementing a POLD data collection practice and would like more information or assistance, please reach out to me.

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<sup>1</sup> Nat’l Trans. Safety Board, *States Progress on Implementing Alcohol-Impaired Driving Recommendations*, <https://www.nts.gov/Advocacy/mwl/Pages/2022-impairment-recs-progress.aspx>.