

Two Massachusetts men charged with heroin trafficking after texting while driving

On Thursday, the Troop-A Community Action Team was out in force in the City of Lawrence and netted a large quantity of heroin in two arrests.

At about 3:45 p.m., Trooper Brendan Cain of the Troop A Community Action Team stopped a 2011 Ford Edge for motor vehicle violations and defective equipment on Woodland Street in Lawrence. Trooper Cain determined that the operator, MANUEL MOREL-RODRIGUEZ, 26, of Lawrence, was unlicensed and placed him under arrest.

Further investigation led to the discovery of approximately 130 grams of a substance believed to be heroin/fentanyl and approximately 12 grams of a substance believed to be cocaine secreted inside the vehicle.

RODRIGUEZ was charged with the following offenses:

1. Trafficking in over 100 grams of a Class A substance
2. Possession with intent to distribute a Class B substance
3. Texting while driving
4. Marked lanes violation
5. Defective equipment (cracked windshield)

RODRIGUEZ was held on \$100,000 cash bail and transported to Middleton HOC pending his arraignment in Lawrence District Court on Monday.

At about 7:30 p.m., Trooper David Lucas, also of the Troop-A Community Action Team, stopped a 2005 Ford Escape on Lawrence Street in Lawrence for a motor vehicle violation and defective vehicle equipment. Trooper Lucas determined the operator had a forged driver's license. Further investigation revealed

approximately 500 grams of a substance believed to be heroin secreted in the vehicle.

The operator, CARLOS VALDEZ-SANTIAGO, 46, of Dorchester, was placed under arrest and charged with the following offenses:

1. Trafficking in over 200 grams of a Class A substance
2. Forging a RMV document
3. Number plate violation
4. Texting while driving

VALDEZ-SANTIAGO was held on \$100,000 cash bail pending his arraignment in Lawrence District Court on Monday.