

Uniform Guidelines *for* State Highway Safety Programs



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Highway Safety Program Guideline No. 18

MOTOR VEHICLE CRASH INVESTIGATION AND INCIDENT REPORTING

Each State should have a highway safety program for the investigation and reporting of motor vehicle crashes and incidents, and the associated deaths, injuries and reportable property damage that occur within the State.

- I. A uniform, comprehensive crash investigation and incident reporting program would provide for gathering information -- who, what, when, where, why, and how – on all motor vehicle crashes and incidents, and the associated deaths, injuries, and property damage within the State and entering the information into the traffic records system for use in planning, evaluating, and furthering highway safety program goals.
- II. For the purpose of this guideline, the definitions adhere to D16.1-2007, the Manual on Classification of Motor Vehicle Traffic Accidents, ANSI D16.1-2007 (<http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/07D16.pdf>).
- III. A model crash investigation and incident reporting program would be structured as follows:
 - A. Administration
 1. There should be a State agency having primary responsibility for the collection, storing, processing, administration and supervision of crash investigation and incident reporting information and for providing this information upon request to other user agencies.
 2. At all levels of government, there should be adequate staffing (not necessarily limited to law enforcement officers) with the knowledge, skills and ability to conduct crash investigations and incident reporting and to process the collected information.
 3. Procedures should be established to assure coordination, cooperation, and exchange of information among local, State, and Federal agencies having responsibility for the investigation of motor vehicle crashes and incidents, and processing of collected data.
 4. Each State should establish procedures for entering crash investigation and incident information into the statewide traffic records system (established pursuant to Highway Safety Program Guideline No. 10. Traffic Records), and for assuring uniformity and compatibility of this data with the requirements of the system, including at a minimum:

- a. Use of uniform definitions and classifications as denoted in the Model Minimum Uniform Crash Criteria Guideline (<http://www.mmucc.us/>).
- b. A guideline format for input of data into the statewide traffic records system.

B. Crash Investigation and Incident Reporting

Each State should establish procedures that require the reporting of motor vehicle crashes and incidents to the responsible State agency within a reasonable time after the occurrence.

C. Driver Reports

1. In motor vehicle crashes involving only property damage, and where the motor vehicle can be safely driven away from the scene, the drivers of the motor vehicles involved should be required to submit a written report consistent with State reporting requirements, to the responsible State agency. A motor vehicle should be considered capable of being safely driven if it does not require towing and can be operated under its own power, in its customary manner, without further damage or hazard to itself, other traffic elements, or the roadway. Each report so submitted should include, at a minimum, the following information relating to the crash:
 - a. Location
 - b. Date
 - c. Time
 - d. Identification of drivers
 - e. Identification of the owner
 - f. Identification of pedestrians, passengers, or pedal-cyclists
 - g. Identification of the motor vehicles
 - h. Direction of travel of each motor vehicle involved
 - i. Other property involved
 - j. Environmental conditions existing at the time of the crash
 - k. A narrative description of the events and circumstances leading up to the time of the crash and immediately after the crash
2. In all other motor vehicle crashes or incidents, the drivers of the motor vehicles involved should be required to immediately notify and report the motor vehicle crash or incident to the nearest law enforcement agency of the jurisdiction in which the motor vehicle crash or incident occurred. This includes, but is not limited to, motor vehicle crashes or incidents involving: (1) fatal or nonfatal personal injury or (2) damage to the extent that any motor vehicle involved cannot be driven under its own power and therefore requires towing.