The DISPATCH

PennDOT Crash Newsletter - News you can use!

What's New?

Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS)

FARS was conceived, designed, and developed by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to support the Administration's policies regarding motor vehicle and highway safety standards. Fatal crash data has been collected under FARS since 1975.

NHTSA funds a cooperative agreement with an agency in each state government for the purpose of data acquisition for FARS. In the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the agency responsible for gathering, compiling, and reporting this data is the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation.

The data collected is from Pennsylvania's own source documents which include the Police Accident Report (PAR), Coroner and Toxicology Reports, Emergency Medical Service Reports (EMS), Roadway Management System (RMS), and the Pennsylvania's Vehicle and Driver files. The data submitted to NHTSA does not include any personal identifiers, thus any data kept in the FARS files conforms to any Privacy Act Laws.

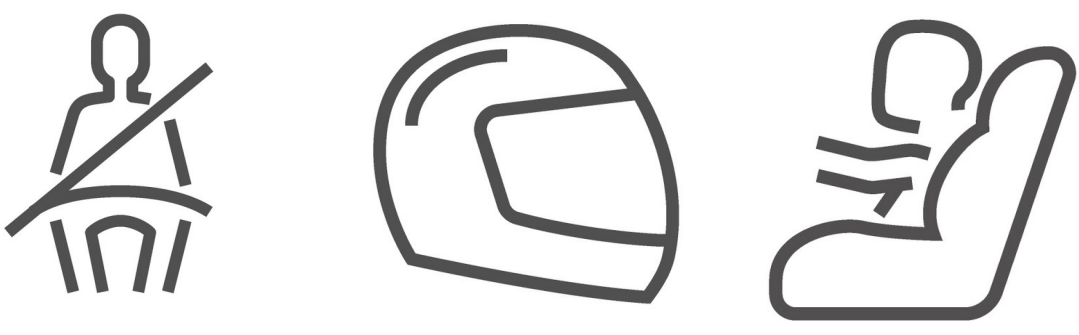
The objective is to collect, analyze, and store data under the FARS and CRSS programs. In general, the data collection efforts will provide comprehensive motor vehicle crash information that permits Pennsylvania and designated NHTSA-support contractors to perform in-depth analysis used for highway safety planning and programming functions. The data gathered is also used by Pennsylvania to apply for and receive highway safety grants. This program assists states both technically and financially.

Some highway safety initiatives that have been funded by these grants are:

- Community Traffic Safety Project
- Municipal Police Traffic Services Enforcement Program
- DUI Courts Program
- Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor
- Judicial Outreach Liaison (JOL) Program
- Statewide DUI Program Coordination
- Statewide Traffic Records Program Support
- Statewide Law Enforcement Liaison Program

*Additional grant opportunities may be offered throughout the year based on funding availability and approval by PennDOT and NHTSA. Please see more details regarding the Municipal Police Traffic Services Enforcement Program in the *For Your Information* section below.

Working Together



Vehicle Restraints

State and Federal highway safety officials make recommendations for vehicle, driver, passenger and non-motorist safety based on data from police crash reports. Getting complete and accurate data on injuries sustained in motor vehicle crashes and safety equipment used such as seat belts, motorcycle helmets, child safety seats is vital.

A study of safety equipment usage in Pennsylvania has shown that safety equipment data for known motor vehicle occupants is lacking. Investigators are able to get demographic data but are neglecting to collect seat belt usage in about 7% of all known vehicle occupants. Ideally, we should collect this data for EVERY known vehicle occupant.

Many police agencies provide restraint data more than 99% of the time (EXCELLENT) and a few collect that data less than 50% of the time.

ALSO -- It is important to accurately collect injury data for every person involved in the crash based on the Federal "KABCO" standard. Please refer to your Police Officers Crash Report Manual (PennDOT Publication 153) to familiarize yourself with the definitions of each injury severity level.

Crash Report Diagram & Narrative

The crash report diagram is a sketch of the crash scene, showing the roadway(s) involved (including intersections, curves, etc.), the location of the unit(s) at the time of collision, and if the reporting officer deems necessary, the position of the unit(s) upon arrival. If arriving at the scene after the unit(s) have been removed, recreate the crash scene to the best of your ability using statements from witnesses and any physical evidence available.

The crash report narrative is a description of the crash events and should contain as much information or explanation as needed to clarify the entire chain of events and any specifics not easily understood in the coding and/or diagram.

Although there is no PennDOT requirement to repeat anything in the narrative section that has already been covered in the codes or diagram sections, it is important to note that the entirety of the information provided on the report must be clear and harmonious throughout in order to have the most accurate data.

Understanding Crash Terms





Unique Vehicle Type Designations

Bicycle

Type Unit: Non-motorized

Vehicle Type: Bicycle

Special Usage: Not Applicable

A bicycle, also called a cycle or bike, is a human-powered, pedal-driven, single-track vehicle, having two wheels attached to a frame, one behind the other. Bicycles are not considered Motor Vehicles in Transport. In order to have a reportable crash involving a bicycle there must be at least one Motor Vehicle in Transport involved. If a bicycle strikes a parked car the crash is classified as non-reportable.

Gas Powered Pedalcycle

Type Unit: Motor Vehicle in Transport

Vehicle Type: Motorcycle

Special Usage: Moped or Motorized Bicycle

A Gas Powered Pedalcycle, is a bicycle equipped with a gas-powered motor that may be activated to assist with or replace pedaling.

ATVs

Type Unit: Motor Vehicle in Transport

Vehicle Type: ATV

Special Usage: Not Applicable

All-terrain vehicle (ATV), also known as a quad, three-wheeler, four-track, four-wheeler, or quadricycle, is a vehicle that travels on low-pressure tires, with a seat that is straddled by the operator, along with handlebars for steering control. Although ATVs are registered with the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), they are not, by PennDOT's definition, a registered vehicle.

Train

Type Unit: Train

Vehicle Type: Train

Special Usage: Not Applicable

Trains are not considered Motor Vehicles in Transport. In order to have a reportable crash involving a train there must be at least one Motor Vehicle in Transport involved. If a train strikes a pedestrian and there are no motor vehicles in transport involved the crash is classified as non-reportable.

Trolley

Trolley on tracks

Type Unit: Train

Vehicle Type: Trolley

Special Usage: Not Applicable

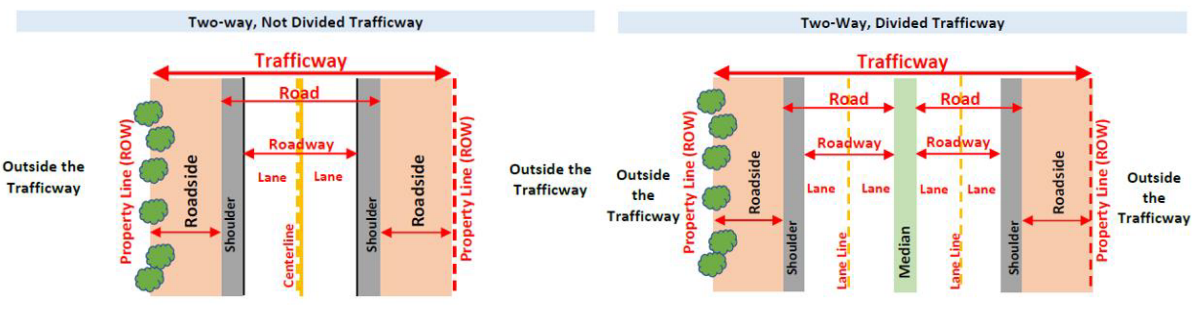
Trolley on wheels

Type Unit: Motor Vehicle in Transport

Vehicle Type: Trolley

Special Usage: Not Applicable

There are two types of trolleys. The difference between the two is one trolley is on a set of tracks powered by electricity from the track or overhead wires. The other type of trolley is trackless and operates on its own set of tires. A trolley on tracks is coded like a train, whereas it must involve a motor vehicle in transport to be reportable. A crash by itself, with a pedestrian, or with a non-motorized unit such as a bicycle would be classified as non-reportable. A trolley on wheels is considered a Motor Vehicle in Transport. If the crash meets all the other rules of reportability such as injury or towing it will be reportable.



Relation to Roadway Clarification

Relation to Roadway identifies where the first harmful event occurred with respect to the roadway. In a town/city setting, the curb is generally considered the property line.

1 = On Travel Lanes - The travel lanes are the part of a trafficway designed, improved, and ordinarily used for motor vehicle travel.

2 = Shoulder (also includes Berm) - The Shoulder is the part of a trafficway contiguous with the roadway for emergency use and accommodation of stopped vehicles.

3 = Median - Medians are defined as the area of a divided trafficway between parallel roads separating the roadways for traffic in opposite directions. Medians may be depressed, raised or flush and do not include shoulders or separators.

4 = Roadside - Roadside refers to a location off the roadway, but inside the right-of-way. It is the outermost part of the trafficway, which lay between the outer property line or other barrier and the edge of the first road encountered in the trafficway.

5 = Outside Trafficway - An area not meant for crash where the first harmful event was outside the property line boundaries of a trafficway.

6 = In Parking Lane - Parking Lane refers to a strip of road located on the roadway, or next to the roadway, on which parking is permitted. This includes curbside and edge-of roadway parking (for example, legal residential parking, city street parking, etc.).

7 = Gore - The Gore area is the acceleration and deceleration lanes of the highway and end of ramps, including the crash barrier.

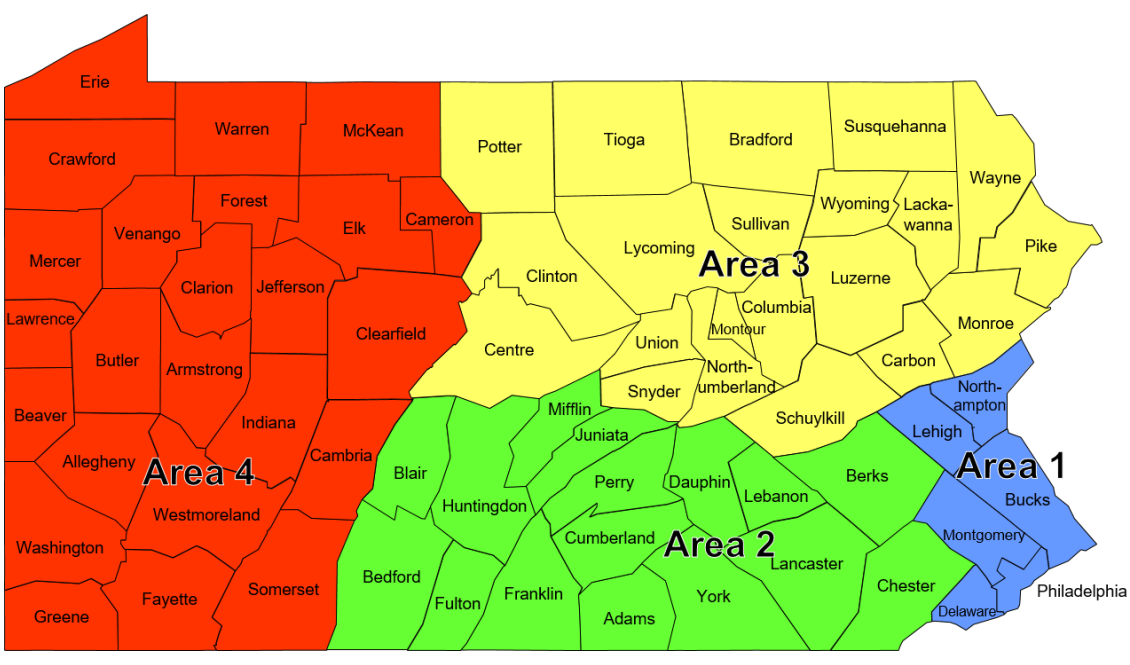
9 = Unknown - Location Unknown refers to a location off the roadway, but its relationship to the right-of-way is not known.

Challenge your knowledge!

QUIZ: Vehicle Position

In the Spring and Summer, the PennDOT Highway Safety Office will be accepting grant applications for various Safety Programs. One of our larger grant programs is for Police Traffic Services (PTS). Over 700 municipal police departments will have the ability to conduct High Visibility Traffic Enforcement through their regional PTS grant. The extra enforcement will specifically focus on impaired driving, aggressive driving, increasing seatbelt usage, and reducing pedestrian crashes. We are also in the process of accepting applications for Community Traffic Safety Program (CTSP) grants. The CTSP grants focus on educating the public through various interactive programs at schools and local community events. Every county in Pennsylvania is covered by a CTSP grant and they are looking to strengthen relationships with all members of the larger Highway Safety Community. For information on PennDOT's various Highway Safety grant programs, please contact Troy Love (trlove@pa.gov).

Traffic Records Program Administrator Area Map (TRPA)



Area 1: James Moriarty (215-292-0433) jmoriarty@hsnetwork.org

Area 2: Gordon Beck (215-219-8575) gbeck@hsnetwork.org

Area 3: Rick Leymeister (570-516-7881) rleymeister@hsnetwork.org

Area 4: Michael Ragan (412-327-9488) mragan@hsnetwork.org

Now that you've made it to the end of the newsletter, how would you rate its content?

Not helpful at all 0 1 2 3 4 Very helpful

For questions or concerns, email us at ra-pdleahelp@pa.gov.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION