



2023 Winter Issue

The DISPATCH

PennDOT Crash Newsletter - News you can use!

What's New?

Distracted Driving Continuing Education

Anything that takes attention away from driving can be a distraction with potentially fatal results. Distracted driving is a major cause for why crashes and deaths occur but unfortunately, crash data does not accurately reflect this. Crash data is important to receiving grant funding for safety projects planned to address this issue. We understand it is difficult for police to gather facts after the crash occurs, this is why we are trying to find tools to help provide best practices.

The National Sherriff's Association (NSA) is also working to support law enforcement officers with the training and tools necessary to reduce the number of crashes caused by distracted drivers.

Click on the pictures below for more information.



Trainings and Tools



Laws and Data

Working Together



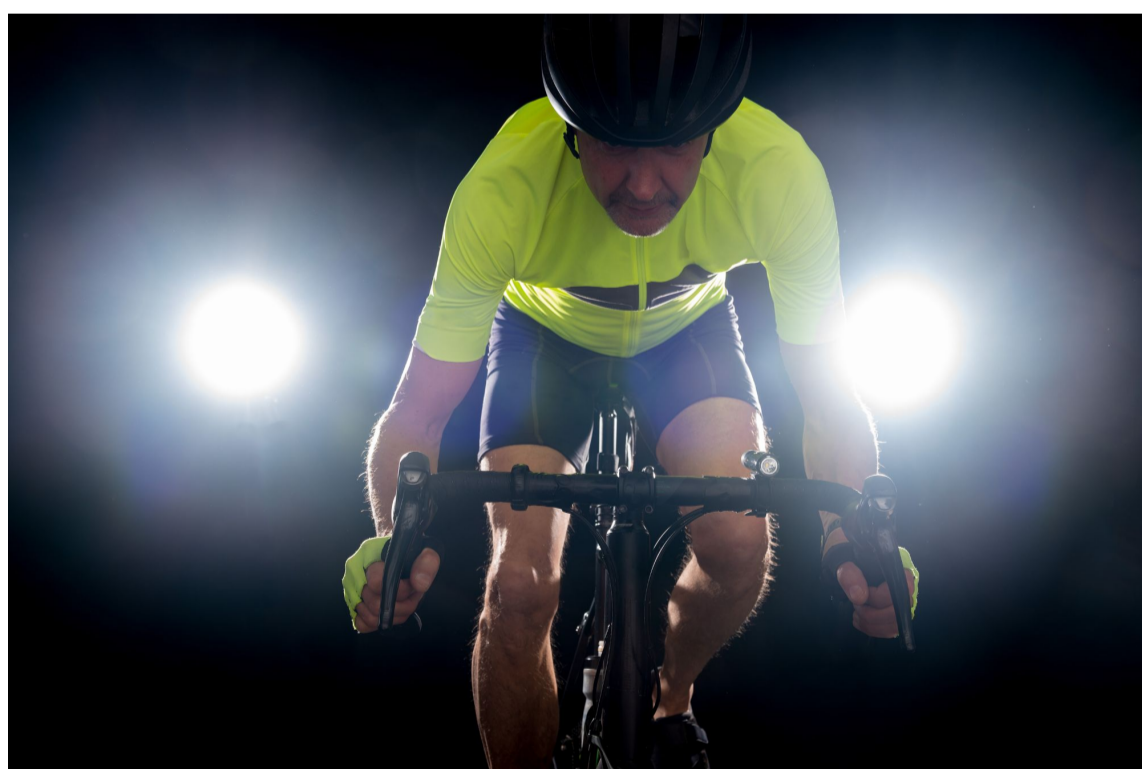
First Unstabilized Event vs. Location of Final Rest

An unstabilized event is an event not under human control. It begins when control is lost (first unstabilized event) and ends when control is regained or when all persons and property are at rest (location of final rest).

Considering most law enforcement officers arrive to a crash several minutes afterwards, determining the first unstabilized event may be difficult. With officers relying heavily on witnesses, physical evidence and other forms of verification, this information can be easily skewed.

Accurately determining the first unstabilized event is imperative to correctly locating crashes and needs to be done consistently among all 13,000 police agencies who are reporting crashes across the state. The accurate collection of this information is important when analyzing the traffic conflict data, which in turn will help determine potentially dangerous areas.

For example, if unit 1 side swipes unit 2 100-feet prior to an intersection and then careens into unit 3 making a left in the middle of said intersection, this is a midblock crash despite the fact that most of the damage occurred within the intersection.



Vulnerable Road Users (VRUs)

Vulnerable road users (VRUs) are road users not in a car, bus or truck, generally considered to include pedestrians, motorcycle riders, cyclists, children 7-years and under, the elderly and users of mobility devices.

Personal mobility devices including e-scooters and e-bikes are becoming increasingly popular. At busy roadway intersections across any particular time period there will be a large number of vehicle and VRU movements, including vehicles turning, pedestrians crossing the roadway, bicyclists crossing the roadway, etc.

As VRUs become more popular and fatalities are increasing, having data geared toward these users is critical to finding ways to reverse the bad trend.

The speed a vehicle is travelling at is a major factor in the seriousness of a crash involving VRUs. It is estimated there is a 10% probability of being killed if struck at 30 mph, but this rises to over 90% at 50 mph. In 2021, 16.75% of fatal crashes in Pennsylvania involved VRUs.

Ensuring VRU safety is an urgent issue as it is essential to allowing pedestrians, bicyclists, wheelchair users, and others the safe use of roadways. PennDOT's commitment to the vision of zero fatalities and serious injuries on Pennsylvania's roadways includes improving the safety of VRUs as an important component of that vision.

Understanding Crash Terms



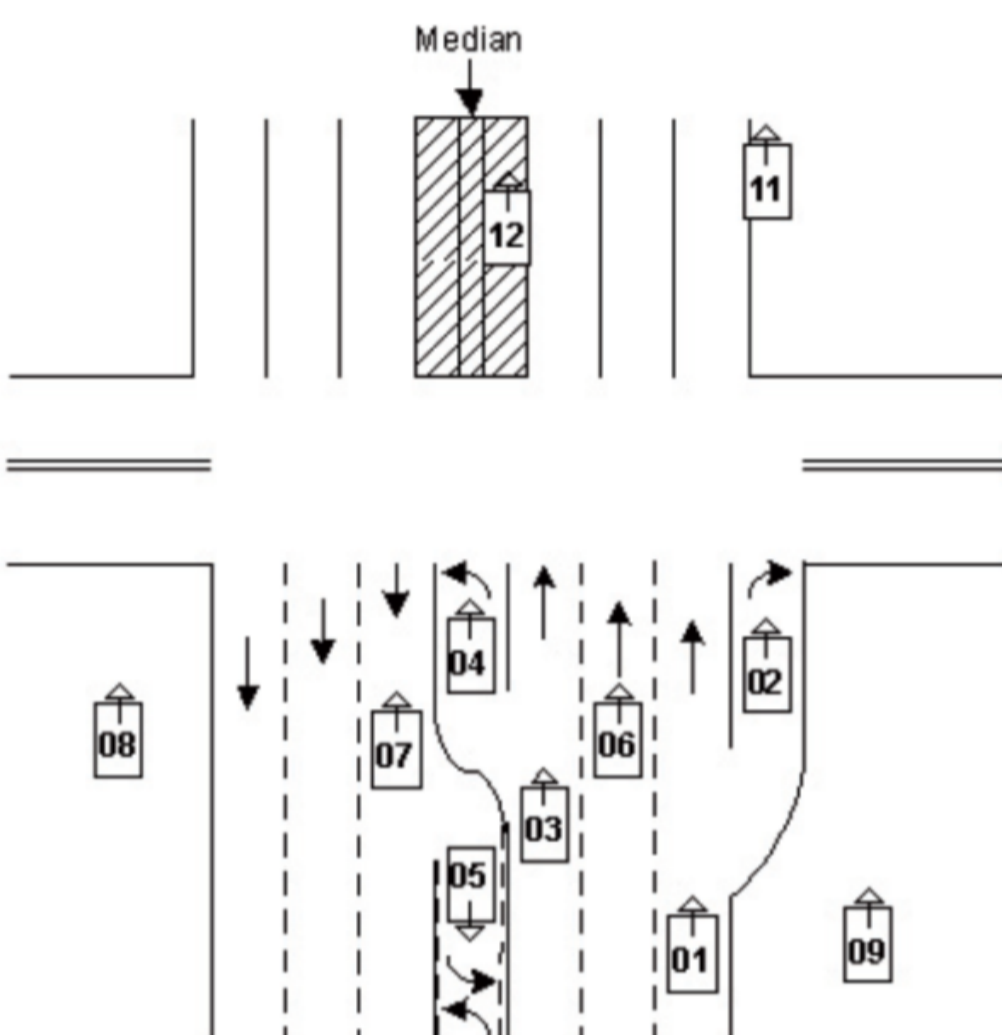
Secondary Crash Clarification

A secondary crash is a crash that occurs because of another crash. Many times, secondary crashes happen because a driver becomes distracted by the sight of another crash and takes his or her eyes off the road, causing a collision with another vehicle.

Many circumstances lead to secondary crashes, such as:

- Vehicles stalled in the middle of a lane
- Drivers tailgating a vehicle, causing a pileup
- Debris from the primary crash littering the highway, including spilled cargo from trucks
- Sudden traffic stops

The most common type of secondary crash is a rear-end collision. For example, if you are waiting at a stop light and you are rear-ended by the driver behind you, then after all is settled another driver rear-ends the car that rear-ended you. The initial crash involving you was the primary crash, and the following crash is considered the secondary crash.



Vehicle Position

Vehicle position refers to the position the vehicle was traveling in immediately prior to the first unstabilized event.

There are 16 different vehicle position codes:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 01-Right Lane (Curb) | 02-Right Turn Lane |
| 03-Left Lane | 04-Left Turn Lane |
| 05-Two-Directional Center Turn Lane | 06-Other Forward Moving Lane |
| 07-Oncoming Traffic Lane | 08-Left of Trafficway |
| 09-Right of Trafficway | 10-HOV Lane |
| 11-Shoulder Right | 12-Shoulder Left |
| 13-One Lane Road | 14-Acceleration/Deceleration Lane |
| 98-Other | 99-Unknown |

The first most commonly misused code is 06-Other Forward Moving Lane. This code should only be used when there is a three-lane roadway (with no turning lanes) and the unit involved in the crash is utilizing the middle lane.

The second most commonly misused code is 07-Oncoming Traffic Lane. This code should only be used when the vehicle is established to be in the opposite lane of travel, whether intentionally or unintentionally, for a length of time. Crossing the center line while losing control or merely drifting across the center line, does not constitute driving in the oncoming lane.

The third most misused codes are 08-Left of Trafficway and 09-Right of Trafficway. These codes refer to vehicles entering the travelway from a private driveway, whether residential or business. It is the perspective of the unit on the main travelway when determining whether to use Left of Trafficway or Right of Trafficway.

An important thing to remember when determining the vehicle position is to ensure all travel lanes are open for motor vehicle traffic. If construction is occurring at the time of the crash, the lane that is closed is no longer classified as a travel lane.

QUIZ: Intersection vs. Midblock

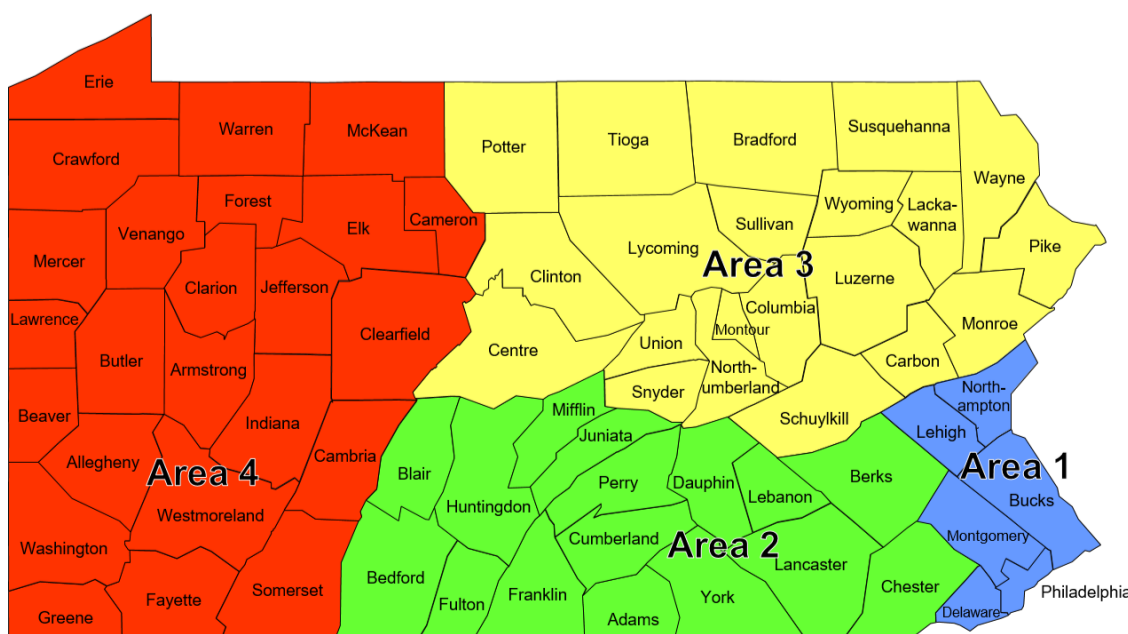
Intersection Related

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Current AA-600 Driver Accident Report form can be found [here](#).

Please destroy all paper forms in your possession and only print and share the form found at the above link.

Traffic Records Program Administrator Area Map (TRPA)



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

Not helpful at all Very helpful

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



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