

FARS is NHTSA's and FHWA's only data system that codes police pursuit related data. Because there is no uniform variable across all states, the NASS General Estimates System (GES), which codes only data collected on PARs cannot collect this information.

During 1994, FARS conducted a special study to determine if police pursuit-related crashes were being reported on state police crash reporting forms. A national news clipping service was engaged to collect news stories where police pursuit was reported in a fatal crash. Preliminary results indicate that for 26 percent of the news clips reviewed, information identifying that a police pursuit was involved was not included on the PAR. Accordingly, we solicit input on the following questions:

6. How does your State currently define a police pursuit? Is information related to police pursuits collected on your PAR? If yes, what is the nature of that information?

7. Is information collected when a police pursuit may have been a contributing factor to the crash or was terminated immediately prior to the crash?

8. What would be an appropriate definition of police pursuit and police pursuit-related crashes? What type of variable would be necessary to capture this information on a PAR?

9. Would information on police pursuit-related crashes be more appropriately collected under a special study? What types of special studies would be most useful? Please be specific.

10. Identify any impediments to obtaining and collecting accurate data on police pursuit-related crashes. How can these impediments be eliminated?

Work Zones

Work zone safety is a national priority for DOT. FHWA has developed a National Work Zone Safety Program and recently held a national conference to discuss this issue. Since 1981, FARS has identified work zone-related crashes in the Accident Level section. In 1995, GES added a similar variable. Both systems distinguish between motorist and nonmotorist fatalities and injuries. However, if information distinguishing highway construction projects from utility company projects or construction workers from nonworkers is needed, both systems can do so only if the information is readily available on the PAR. Recent research on work zone safety has included the testing and recommendation of various types of work zone equipment, barriers, signs, pavement markings, and worker practices. However, more detailed crash

statistics are needed to better understand the cause and characteristics of work zone crashes. Preliminary investigations have indicated that work zone crashes may be understated due to the lack of a standard definition and the practice of recording (on PARs) these types of crashes as part of other variables, such as "Road Defects." Consequently, we invite comments on the following issues:

11. How does your state currently define a work zone? Is any information on work zone related crashes collected on any of your state PARs?

12. Does this definition discriminate between highway construction and utility company operations? If so, how is this information used?

13. Does this definition discriminate between construction workers and nonworkers involved in the crash? If so, how is this information used?

14. DOT is considering developing a standard definition for work zone crashes and recommending that states include this as a separate variable on PARs. What would be an appropriate definition of a work zone and a work zone-related crash? What type of variable would be necessary to capture this information on a PAR?

15. Would information on work zone related crashes be more appropriately collected by means of a special study? What types of special studies would be most useful? Please be specific.

School Buses

Currently all states collect data on school bus and school bus related crashes. Consequently, the information can be collected and coded by both FARS and GES. Although there does not appear to be a need to collect any additional data at this time or to propose any changes to the existing national data collection systems, some in the safety community believe these crashes to be underreported.

16. Do commenters believe these crashes are underreported? If so, do you believe changes in collecting school bus data should be made to address this? What specific changes do you recommend?

17. If commenters agree that collection of additional data at this time is not necessary, please state this and include your reasons.

Speeding

Many states currently collect some data on speed, usually as a contributing cause of crashes. One of the difficulties in using current data is that speed can be a contributing factor in a number of ways, e.g., exceeding the posted speed limit or driving too fast for conditions.

In addition, the recording of speed as a contributing cause presents some difficulties. Police officers might report speeding as a contributing cause when the crash cause is not clear. On the other hand, a police officer might suspect that speed was a contributing cause but not have enough evidence to issue a citation and consequently, be reluctant to indicate speed as a contributing factor. NHTSA and FHWA also recognize that a research study may be more appropriate to collect the type of information required to fully understand the impacts of speed. We are considering periodic studies of the speed/crash relationship where detailed data would be collected. However, there is still a need for continuous collection of the number and types of speed-related crashes by states and by DOT through its FARS, GES and CDS to provide the problem identification data needed for program development. Therefore, we solicit responses to the following questions:

18. How does your state define a speed-related crash? Do PARs contain a variable to collect this information?

19. What would be an appropriate definition of a speed-related crash? What type of variable would be necessary to capture this information on a PAR?

20. Would information on speed-related crashes be more appropriately collected under a special study? What types of special studies would be most useful? Please be specific.

Commercial Vehicle Related Crashes

Currently DOT, through FHWA's Office of Motor Carriers, collects crash data on commercial vehicles involved in interstate and intrastate commerce (as long as the crash meets the National Governors' Association [NGA] reportable accident criteria). Uniform data elements have been defined and recommended, and all states collect some of the elements. These data elements will be reviewed in 1997, and may be updated to accommodate changes in vehicle and highway travel. With these data and those collected on truck-involved crashes by FARS and GES, NHTSA and FHWA currently plan no major changes in these data collection systems, but solicit comments on this determination and on the following additional issues:

21. Do commenters agree that there is currently no need for any major changes in these data collection systems? If not, please include a rationale.

22. The definition of "longer commercial vehicle" (LCV) is not standard. Should a standard definition be established? If so, by what method?