

Traffic Records Coordinating Committee Meeting Minutes
Tuesday February 17, 2009
In Room 418 Main DMV Building in Raleigh, NC

Present: Brian Mayhew, Janet Greene, Pam Guptill, John Stokes, Don Nail, Ethel Keen, Victoria Oakley, Chad Lohmeier, Dwayne Tharpe, Greg Ferrara, Bill Hunter, and Eric Rodgman.

9:01 am Eric Rodgman welcomed the members. Before going into the discussion of changes to the Police Crash Report Instruction Manual, John Stokes gave the members an update on Data Improvement front. John had just returned from a meeting in Maryland last week. NC is in good shape having qualified in two important areas. John estimated that NC would be competing with about 55 agencies who have qualified and that NC might expect to receive a minimum of about \$500K and perhaps \$738K, the same as last year.

John noted that NC will explore becoming a CODES state again. John mentioned that the recent email from Greg Mears was exciting because the plans for linkage should now be able to move forward.

John also asked all the members to please begin emailing him progress reports on current projects, plans for any new projects (use the concept form on the website), and be ready to help him put together the next strategic plan due on June 15, 2009. John would to get these no later than May 1, 2009.

Greg Ferrara asked about the GPS GIS improvements. Brian and Janet noted that these data will be collected for both citations and crashes. Brian made the point that these data variables need to be collected in a consistent manner. They said that a sub-committee should meet to discuss the issues associated with capturing these data. Janet mentioned that she had been in one meeting with the NC SHP with Eric Jackson. Both John and Brian asked to be included in those meetings.

Greg added that ITRE was capturing the x-y GIS coordinates for the Motor Carriers fuel tax citations.

Bill Hunter mentioned the NC crash data query website tool, and if John thought this could be counted as traffic records progress. John said "yes," and the possibility of adding an exit survey was posed. This might be a great way of seeing if the web site is helping users and what can be improved.

9:34 am Ethel Keen provided the members with updates on three on going projects within DMV. The Gap Analysis task had hired an external consultant to look at the problems associated with the different counts in the FARS, NC Crash, and the Motor Carrier databases. The report is being finished.

The second project was the maintenance update to the TraCS system. These updates have been implemented with improved performance and positive comments from the users.

The last project was the Safety Data Improvement Project which has addressed capturing the driver license class of the driver involved in a crash. Other changes involve the hazmat variables. These should be in effect by the end of February.

9:42 am Ethel then addressed the issue of changes to be made to the Police Crash report Instruction Manual. (see email attachments). This is a separate issue from the overall process to change the actual crash report form. That crash form process will take place late this year into next year. That will involve an external facilitator who will oversee focus groups around and across the state. There will be a discussion of a possible short form for PDO crashes.

Ethel noted that the SHP had 900 troopers trained in the use of TraCS. The number of electronic forms is staying steady even though the City of Charlotte recently stopped using TraCS.

Bill Hunter also raised the issue of a new TAD manual or other method for LE to code these data consistently. Should this be in the new Instruction Manual, on a web site, or what? These could be updated every few years to reflect the changing vehicle fleet. The old TAD manual has been scanned, but is

way out of date (last published in 1986). It may be the case that NC will use the MUCC variable for vehicle damage – new variable which meets the Federal recommendations. Brian added that NHTSA would like to see consistency on this variable across the US.

Another issue for the 349 manual raised by Bill Hunter pertains to images of fixed objects. Brian offered to help with digital pictures which could be permanently available via the web.

Bill Hunter also raised the problem of correctly capturing pedestrians and bicyclists – over the years, there has been a consistent problem with about 100-150 cases being mis-coded by either LE or data entry – not clear which. Bill suggested at least providing definitions of pedestrians and pedalcyclists where the terms are used in the manual. Victoria Oakley (DMV consultant) noted that the glossary should be referenced – see page 43. Brian raised an additional issue -- should we change the manual now or wait till the report form has been changed, and then do it only once.

10:10 am Brian noted that they, too, were aware of the problems with capturing pedestrians and bicyclists and the variable descriptions associated with them.

The CMV issue has a basic problem – the NC definition and the Federal definition are quite different – 10,000 lbs (Fed) versus 26,000 lbs (NC). Probably want to capture both – satisfy the Feds and can do NC analysis too.

Ethel oversees the instruction of the completion of the crash report by LE through the NC Community Colleges – there is even a “trainers manual” to help the trainers.

Bill Hunter added that if a new manual goes out – it should have an attached checklist of the key changes for every trainer and LE crash investigator.

Brian and Greg both noted that the length and width of CMV vehicle trailers needs to be cleaned up. Too many errors and too many missing cases are a problem.

10:16 am Brian noted that he would like to see better location info. It would be extremely helpful to know if a crash occurred on a bypass and/or on a truck route. Ethel noted that with the form change, the screen presentation and capture technique could be vastly improved.

The addition of a glossary with the road signs might help. At the bottom of the page, the word “Important” could be printed in large letters. Highlight any places that need extra attention.

10:33 am The issue of reportable vs non-reportable crashes should be addressed. For the CMVs, it was noted that the Feds had a visor attachment which had pictures key CMV vehicles – these could be added to the manual, too.

Another issue is the standard use of costs for vehicle and property damage -- \$300 for a replacement stop sign, \$5000 for a replacement of guard rail, etc. Brian’s shop has such information. This would help keep estimated costs consistent. Easier for the LE officer if he/she has a set of cost estimates to reference. This cost list could be sent to all LE agencies. Victoria asked if there was a standard mailing list of all these agencies.

10:40 am At the next meeting (on Tuesday April 21st), the NC TRCC would address the CODES issue for NC and the discussion of the linkage Greg Mears raised in his recent email. We will meet in CH.

Brian asked about getting packets of information about these two issues ready before the next meeting. John will get the group the latest info on CODES. An email will go out with the key urls and any MS Word / Adobe pdf documents before that meeting.

10:48 am Ethel noted that there is no backlog on entering the NC crash data. She noted they still have a few problems with agencies not sending in their reports and not sending them in promptly. Cherokee Indian Reservation LE, military bases, and a few municipalities.

11:00 Eric thanked everyone for coming on short notice and adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted – Co-chair Eric Rodgman.

Important upcoming tasks /dates / deadlines:

Eric will organize a mini-meeting on the linkage effort with Greg Mears – preparation for April 21st

Next Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday April 21, 2009 – in CH – more later on that.

John will contact the NC SHP – no one attended this meeting.

John Stokes wants all project update reports, any final reports, any new project descriptions to him by May 1, 2009 if possible.

For the minutes, prior assessments, and other NC TRCC information, please check out our

NC TRCC web site: <http://www.hsrc.unc.edu/nctrec/>

If you have additions, deletions, corrections, etc., please email them to eric_rodgman@unc.edu
Thx.