

FATAL ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION GUIDELINES

The subsequent guidelines were developed to assist the Area Accident Investigation Engineers when making fatal crash investigations. The guidelines are intended to establish a uniform method and report for these types of safety investigations.

1. Receive Notice of Fatal Crash – The most common notice is the Fatal Slip sent to the area office from the Traffic Safety Systems Management Unit. Other notices can include newspapers or phone calls.
2. Log the Date the Fatal Notice was Received – The Accident Investigation Engineer has 30 days in which to investigate the fatal crash.
3. Input Fatal into Database – This not only allows the fatal to be quickly referenced in the future but also provides the Accident Investigation Engineer with a worksheet to use when completing the field investigation.
4. Review Fatal Notice to Determine Need for Field Investigation – Some fatal crashes may not require a field investigation. In this case, update database and file. Otherwise, continue below.
5. Obtain Crash Report and Other Helpful Information – A location map and an investigation worksheet from the database file are mostly likely.
6. Make Field Investigation – Make field notes, take pictures, draw sketch if diagram on crash report is inadequate and record any other necessary information.
7. Record GPS Location – The Traffic Safety Systems Management Unit has provided the Area staff with hand held GPS receivers to record the longitude and latitude of fatal crash locations. The information will be used to create maps showing fatal crash locations.
8. Office Investigation – Pull crashes and check file for recent or proposed improvements, if necessary.
9. Make Recommendations and Contact Proper Personnel – Inform Division personnel and necessary others of your recommendations and indicate source of funding for recommendations (Division, Spot Safety, High-Hazard Elimination, etc.). Record this action in the file.
10. Update Database with Final Action and File – Record completion dates of your recommendations or why they were not completed. Update database and file.

JFP:smc