



NHTSA Traffic Records Team Inaugurates the Traffic Safety Information Systems Newsletter



With the growing emphasis upon traffic safety information at the national and state levels, and in anticipation of the passage of a Reauthorization Bill that will provide incentives for major improvements to federal, state, and local safety data systems, the NHTSA Traffic Records Team has established this newsletter as a tool in their expanding outreach and coordination efforts.

The Traffic Safety Information Systems Newsletter will be published at the Traffic Records Team web site (<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/perform/Default.htm>), and will be distributed electronically to the traffic safety data community. The goal is to distribute a new issue at least quarterly, with the expectation that when there are significant news items relating to traffic safety information systems, federal legislation, or any other pertinent information, there will be additional issues.

The newsletter will contain information on activities at USDOT, and in particular NHTSA, that may be of interest to the traffic safety data community. We also hope to highlight noteworthy safety data improvement projects at the state or local level. The newsletter will also attempt to cover developments in the various standards efforts that may affect state and local safety data systems.

Inside This Issue:

- Multidisciplinary Integrated Project Team (IPT) Report Released
- U.S. DOT Traffic Records Coordinating Committee



Inside Upcoming Issues:

- General Accounting Office (GAO) Review of Safety Data Improvement Project Administration Released
- Planning Begins for 2005 Traffic Records Forum
- Status of Reauthorization Bill – What does it mean to the safety data community
- Details of Section 412 – State Safety Data Improvement Program
- New On-Line Training for Safety Data Professionals
- Search for Outstanding Safety Data Improvement Projects

*The **Traffic Safety Information Systems Newsletter** is published by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, National Center for Statistics and Analysis, Traffic Records Team, as a resource for the traffic safety data community. The newsletter is published at least quarterly at the NHTSA Traffic Records web site and is also distributed electronically to those that subscribe on line at www.nhtsa-tsis.net/newsletter. Contributions to the newsletter or comments on its content should be sent to newsletter@nhtsa-tsis.net, but must contain contact information for the submitter: name, postal and email address, in order to be considered for publication.*

NHTSA Initiatives to Address Improving Traffic Safety Data Report Released

In July of 2004 the final report *Initiatives to Address Improving Traffic Safety Data* was released by the Multidisciplinary Integrated Project Team (IPT) that was formed to address traffic safety data issues within NHTSA. This report, more commonly known as the Data IPT Report, can be found at http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/Crash/crashstatistics/TrafficSafetyData_IPT_Report.htm. Its purpose is to provide a road map for the improvement of traffic safety data systems at both the federal and state levels.

The Multidisciplinary Integrated Project Team (IPT) was formed in September 2003 with representatives from NHTSA headquarters and the Regions, the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA). Over a period of about nine months, this group met and discussed the current strengths and weaknesses of the federal and state safety data systems and possible initiatives that could address the weaknesses. Within the report, one will find specific suggestions for actions to be taken within the following areas.

A. Coordination and Leadership

The recommendations in this section are aimed at strengthening the coordination and leadership needed to improve traffic records. TRCCs will function at the State and federal levels to overcome organizational obstacles and ensure effective use of available resources. The TRCC at the federal level, the U.S.DOT Highway Safety TRCC, must lead by example and demonstrate to the States the benefits of a coordinated approach. The federal and State TRCCs must exert strong leadership to market the importance of the role of better data in improving highway safety, ensure funding for this important task, and emphasize the benefits of using existing technologies.

B. Data Quality and Availability

These recommendations are aimed at improving the quality and completeness of federal data, improving, as resources permit, the quantity and timeliness of federal data, and filling the data gaps in early warning reporting, citation tracking, non-traffic deaths, off roadway traffic deaths and exact location data. Existing initiatives, already funded, are recommended for continuation to fill in some of these gaps. State level traffic safety databases—including the amount and accuracy of data captured—continue to need to be enhanced and the data quality improved in order to meet data users' needs.

C. Electronic Technologies and Methods

These recommendations are aimed at encouraging States to move from paper-laden, labor-intensive traffic records processes to electronic capture and processing. States are also encouraged to recognize and take advantage of electronic data to advance real-time decision-making, reduce the burden of data collection, improve data quality, facilitate transfer, merging and sharing, and make data available sooner.

D. Uniform and Integrated Data

These recommendations are aimed at encouraging more uniformity in the data elements, e.g. the Model Minimum Uniform Crash Criteria (MMUCC) data element names, definitions, and attributes at the State level and uniform EDR data at the federal level. In addition, linkage of State data systems is encouraged to improve and expand their usefulness.

E. Facilitated Data Use

These recommendations are aimed at facilitating data access and use. In addition, they emphasize the importance of training courses and tools so that people can use the data easily and effectively.

Members of the traffic safety data community - data collectors, managers and users, are encouraged to study the Multidisciplinary Integrated Project Team (IPT) Report. The initiatives within this report are likely to shape the direction for traffic safety data at the federal and state level for the next decade.

U.S. DOT Traffic Records Coordinating Committee

One of the key recommendations of the Multidisciplinary Integrated Project Team (IPT) Report was the formation of a federal level Traffic Records Coordinating Committee. As a result, the U.S. DOT TRCC was formed in October 2004 and has met three times since its conception. Represented agencies include the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Office of the Secretary of Transportation (OST), Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS), Research and Innovative Technologies Administration (RITA), and the Research and Special Programs Administration (RSPA).

Membership Includes:

Joe Carra (Chairperson)	
Terry Shelton (FMCSA)	Suzanne Stack (OST)
Nancy DiModica (OST)	Michael Halladay (FHWA)
Greg Piland (FHWA)	Demetra Collia (BTS)
Bob Proferes (ICOR)	Ron DiGregio (RSPA)
Dennis Utter (NHTSA)	Jackie Schraf (NHTSA)
Don McNamara (NHTSA Region)	

Current activities include the development of:

- U.S. DOT TRCC Charter
- U.S. DOT TRCC Policy Statement
- U.S. DOT Strategic Plan
- Federal Traffic Records Funding Sources Document
- U.S. DOT TRCC website

U.S. DOT TRCC Charter

The U.S. DOT TRCC Members are currently working on the development of a Charter that includes the mission, goal, authority and duties and responsibilities of the U.S. DOT TRCC. The mission and goal statements have been completed and we are continuing to work on completion of the Charter.

Mission

Provide strong coordinated Federal leadership to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of traffic safety data collection and analysis and the resources needed to support it.

The TRCC will support data improvements at all levels of government that minimizes duplication, improves uniformity, advances electronic data collection, and facilitates data access and use.



Goal Statement

Ensure that complete, accurate and timely traffic safety data are collected, analyzed and made available for decision-making at the national, state and local levels to reduce crashes, deaths and injuries on our nation's highways.

U.S. DOT TRCC Policy Statement

The U.S. DOT recognizes that timely, accurate, complete, uniform, integrated and accessible traffic safety data are fundamental to successful traffic safety programs. Data are essential to problem identification and priority setting, operational management and evaluation, and measurement of results.

U.S. DOT TRCC Strategic Plan

Will develop:

- A strategic plan focused on the recommendations for improvements from the Multidisciplinary Integrated Project Team (IPT).
- A document of Federal Traffic Records Funding Sources
- Will host a website containing information related to the U.S. DOT TRCC and traffic records systems improvements.

U.S. DOT TRCC Future Activities

- What are our expectations for State traffic records systems?
- What form should these expectations be?
- Identify State Best Practices and work together to market those practices
- Identify and market the importance of well established and working State Traffic Records Coordinating Committees

Extra Bits.....

**Have you heard? Ten states have traffic records assessments already scheduled!
When was your state's last assessment?**

Is your agency doing something to improve traffic safety or traffic safety data? If so, we would like to hear about it! We are always looking for exemplary data improvement programs to post on the Traffic Records Team website.