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REMOTE NOT IN TRAFFIC SURVEILLANCE HYPERThERMIA INVESTIGATION

CASE NUMBER - IN09038
LOCATION - LOUISIANA
VEHICLE - 2009 DODGE RAM 1500 CREW CAB
INCIDENT DATE - June 2009

Submitted:

May 11, 2010



Contract Number: DTNH22-07-C-00044

Prepared for:

U.S. Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
National Center for Statistics and Analysis
Washington, D.C. 20590-0003

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The incident investigation process is an inexact science which requires that physical evidence such as skid marks, vehicular damage measurements, and occupant contact points be coupled with the investigator's expert knowledge and experience of vehicle dynamics and occupant kinematics in order to determine the pre-incident, incident, and post-incident movements of involved vehicles and occupants.

Because each Incident is a unique sequence of events, generalized conclusions cannot be made concerning the crashworthiness performance of the involved vehicle(s) or their safety systems.

Technical Report Documentation Page

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15. <i>Supplementary Notes</i> Remote Not in Transport Hyperthermia Investigation involving a 2009 Dodge Ram 1500 Crew Cab pickup and a 5-month-old male child who had been left unattended in the vehicle.					
16. <i>Abstract</i> This report covers a remote investigation of a Not In Traffic Surveillance Hyperthermia incident that involved a 2009 Dodge Ram 1500 Crew Cab pickup truck. The focus of this case was the circumstances surrounding the death of a 5-month-old, male child who had been left unattended in the vehicle. The incident occurred in Louisiana, in June 2009, in the parking lot of a single-story branch bank office building, and happened between the hours of 0530 and 1530. The driver (mother) of the vehicle normally drops off her infant on her way to work at a residential daycare facility. The mother forgot to drop off her infant and preceded to work with the child still seated in a rear-facing child safety seat (CSS) in the second row of the vehicle. After work the driver went to her vehicle and did not notice that the child was still inside the vehicle in the rear-facing CSS. The driver drove to the daycare facility, arriving at approximately 1530 hours and went inside to pickup her child. At this time, the child was still seated and secured in the CSS. A neighbor removed the child from the car in the CSS and placed the child and seat on the porch where paramedics found and examined the child. The child was unconscious, unresponsive, and extremely hot. The infant was pronounced dead at 1545 hours in the CSS on the porch.					
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This incident was brought to our attention by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration on June 17, 2009 through an online news article. This investigation was assigned on November 11, 2009. This incident involved a 2009 Dodge Ram 1500 Crew Cab pickup truck and a 5-month-old male child who had been left unattended in the vehicle. The incident occurred in June 2009, between the hours of 0530 and 1530, in Louisiana and was investigated by the city police department. The focus of this investigation was the circumstances surrounding the death of a child who had been left unattended in the vehicle. The police completed two reports. The first was entitled an "Initial Report" and the second was prepared by the Criminal Investigations Division and was presumably a final report. Neither of these reports were submitted to the state. The District Attorney's office also completed a report on the death of the child. Because the Dodge was not available, a remote investigation was conducted based on all available information. This report is based on the two police reports cited above and the report of the district attorney. Furthermore, this report is based on police on-scene vehicle photographs obtained from the investigating police agency, and the evaluation of the evidence.

INCIDENT CIRCUMSTANCES

Incident Environment: The incident occurred in the parking lot of a single-story branch bank office building located in the northwest quadrant of the intersection of a state highway and a city street in the downtown area of a city. The building and parking areas occupied the majority of the block along the state route with the building located adjacent to the state route. Customer parking areas were located east and west of main building.

A drive-through route was located northward of the building and parking areas. The entrance to the drive-through was from the city street. The drive-through route made a 90 degree left turn toward where an ATM was located with the drive-through's exit onto the state route. An additional parking area (probably for employees) was located north of the drive-through route and west of the drive-through canopy (**Figure 1**). The driver (and mother of the child) of the Dodge parked during the day in the employee parking area while she went to work in the bank. The specific parking location and heading of the Dodge while parked are unknown. On this particular day the light condition was daylight, the atmospheric condition was clear, and the pavement of the parking lot was dry. The site of the incident was urban commercial. The **INCIDENT DIAGRAM** is on page 5.



Figure 1: Northward view of branch bank's parking areas; arrow indicates parking area where child occupant was left in child seat and died; parking area was north and west of drive-through canopy which was located on northern side of bank

Pre-Incident: According to the various reports, the driver normally drops off her two children (3-year-old, female and 5-month-old, male) on her way to work at a residential daycare facility. The normal workday routine was disrupted because the 3-year-old was staying at home with a relative. The mother placed the infant in its child safety seat (CSS) in the second seating row of her vehicle and headed for work. The specific seat position of the infant was not specified.

Inexplicably¹, the mother forgot to drop off her 5-month-old and preceded to work with the infant still seated in a rear-facing CSS. The driver exited the vehicle after parking in her normal parking space at work without noticing that the child was still seated in the CSS. According to the investigation, her workday was somewhat hectic, and she never had occasion to access her vehicle during the day. Nothing alerted her that she had forgotten her unattended child in the vehicle.

Incident: After work, at approximately 1500 hours, the driver entered the vehicle, still never noticing that the child was still inside, and drove to the daycare facility. She arrived at approximately 1530 hours and went inside to pick up her child (**Figure 2**). The operator of the facility told her that she had never dropped off her child. According to the reports, the driver realized that the child had remained in the vehicle. The driver and members of the daycare facility rushed to her vehicle (**Figure 3**). The driver opened the left rear door and located her child still seated and secured in the child safety seat in the second row of the Dodge (**Figure 4**). The mother fainted and fell onto the driveway.

Post-Incident: The police were notified by 911 at 1536 hours and responded to the scene. A neighbor who had heard screaming removed the infant from the car in the CSS and placed him and the CSS on the porch. Paramedics found and examined the child and noted that the infant was unconscious, unresponsive, and extremely hot. A paramedic ran a portable electrocardiogram (ECG) on the child, and the infant was pronounced dead at 1545 hours on the porch.

At 1638 hours a deputy coroner took a rectal core temperature of 42.06 °C (107.7 °F) with a mercury thermometer. At 1645 hours the child and seat were removed from the scene. According to the District Attorney's report, the temperature that day reached in excess of 32.2 °C (90 °F).



Figure 2: Vicinity of home daycare facility where infant occupant was discovered inside Dodge pickup



Figure 3: On-scene police photo of Dodge in driveway of daycare facility where infant was discovered in second row seat



Figure 4: On-scene police photo of left side of Dodge in driveway of daycare facility; infant was found within CSS in second row seat of vehicle

¹ This is the term used by the District Attorneys office. The police department interviewed the father and mother (driver) of the infant, but a transcript of that interview was not provided.

Weather data for the incident date were obtained and are presented in the table below.

Time	Temperature		Dew Point		Relative Humidity	Pressure mmHg	Heat Index	
	°C	°F	°C	°F			°C	°F
0453	23.3	74	21.1	70	87	29.86	24	75
0553	23.9	75	21.7	71	87	29.87	25	76
0653	26.1	79	21.7	71	77	29.88	28	82
0753	27.8	82	21.7	71	69	29.89	30	86
0853	29.4	85	20.6	69	59	29.88	32	89
0953	31.7	89	20.0	68	50	29.89	34	93
1053	32.2	90	19.4	67	47	29.87	34	93
1153	32.2	90	19.4	67	47	29.86	34	93
1253	32.8	91	20.0	68	47	29.85	35	95
1353	32.8	91	18.9	66	44	29.85	34	94
1453	32.8	91	18.9	66	44	29.85	34	94
1553	32.2	90	19.4	67	47	29.83	34	93

CASE VEHICLE

The 2009 Dodge Ram 1500 rear wheel drive, 6-passenger, 4-door, crew cab, regular bed pickup truck (VIN: 1D3HB13T38S-----) equipped with a 5.7-liter, V-8 engine and a 5-speed automatic transmission. The Dodge was equipped with 4-wheel, anti-lock brakes with electronic brake force distribution and braking assist, traction control, and electronic stability control, and this vehicle’s frontal air bags are certified by the manufacturer to be compliant to the Advanced Air Bag portion of Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) No. 208. The vehicle was equipped with height adjustable seat belts, height adjustable head restraints for at least all outboard positions, Lower Anchors and Tethers for Children (LATCH) system features, a tire pressure monitoring system, and power-adjustable pedals. The vehicle was equipped with tinted windows (Figure 5), and all windows were closed that day.

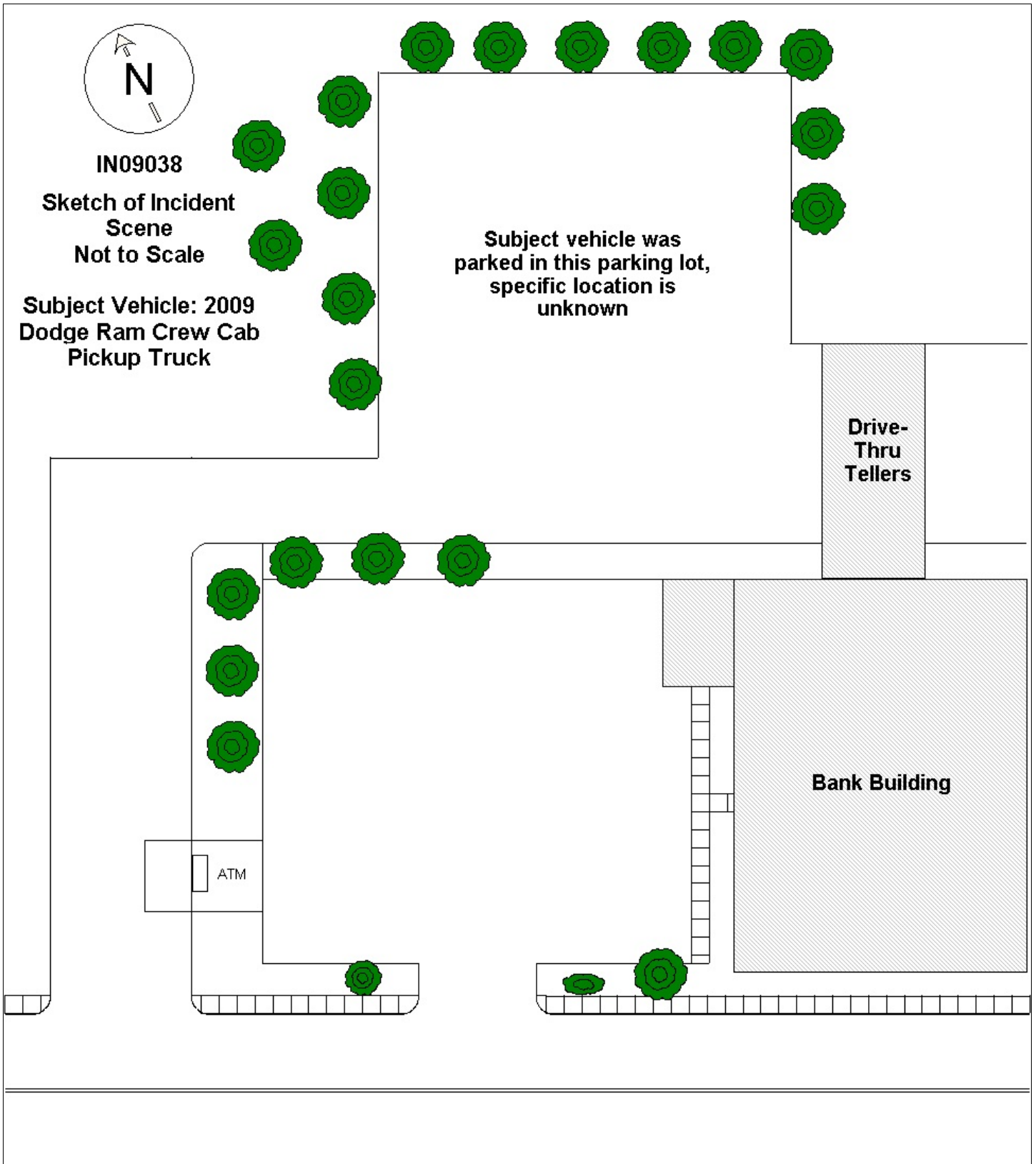


Figure 5: On-scene police photo of right side of Dodge parked in driveway of daycare facility

The second row passenger of the Dodge [5-month-old, male; 70 centimeters and 9 kilograms (27.6 inches, 19.8 pounds)] was restrained in a Graco rear-facing CSS which had been secured by the vehicle's lap-and-shoulder, safety belt system.

SECOND ROW PASSENGER INJURIES

The infant passenger was pronounced dead at the daycare facility at 1545 hours in the CSS on the porch. An autopsy conducted the following morning indicated that the child died of hyperthermia with numerous petechial hemorrhages noted to the child's visceral and parietal pleura, thymus gland, and epicardium.





1. Case Number

IDENTIFICATION

2. Date of Crash ____ / ____ / ____

3. Time of Crash _____

Code reported military time of crash.

NOTE: Midnight = 2400
Unknown = 9999

AMBIENT CONDITIONS

4. Light Conditions

- Daylight
- Dark
- Dark but lighted
- Dawn
- Dusk
- Unknown

5. Atmospheric Conditions
(Select all that apply)

- Clear-No adverse conditions
- Cloudy
- Rain
- Snow
- Fog, Smog, Smoke
- Sleet, Hail (freezing rain or drizzle)
- Blowing Snow
- Severe Crosswinds
- Blowing Sand, Soil, Dirt
- Other (specify):
- Unknown

6. Temperature

- Below 0 degrees Celsius (Below 32 F)
- 1-10 degrees Celsius (33-50 F)
- >10-24 degrees Celsius (51-75 F)
- Over 24 degrees Celsius (Over 75 F)
- Unknown

SCENE INFORMATION

7. Type of area in which crash occurred
(Select all that apply)

- Single family residential
- Row houses/townhouses
- Multi family housing
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Rural
- Unknown

8. Driver exterior sightline obstructions
(Select all that apply)

- None
- Other vehicles
- Building
- Trees
- Shrubby
- Other (specify) _____
- Utility poles
- Signs
- Glare
- Unknown
- No driver present

9. Crash location

- Driveway
- Parking Lot
- Sidewalk
- Alley
- Intersection of driveway and sidewalk
- Road / street
- Roadside / shoulder
- Other (specify) _____
- Unknown

10. Non motorist sightline obstructions
(Select all that apply)

- None
- Other vehicles
- Building
- Trees
- Shrubby
- Utility poles
- Signs
- Glare
- Other (specify) _____
- Unknown

11. Grade at parked position _____ +/- %

12. Estimated distance from parked position to impact

_____ m

13. Estimated speed at impact _____ +/- kmph

14. Grade at impact _____ +/- %

15. Estimated distance from impact to vehicle final rest

_____ m

Unknown = 999 Reference Items 11,12, 13, 14, 15



VEHICLE FORM

1. Case Number _____

VEHICLE IDENTIFICATION

2. VIN _____

3. Model Year _____

4. Vehicle Make (specify): _____

5. Vehicle Model (specify): _____

GLAZING

Location	Presence (check)	Status (select)	Clarity (select)	Tint (check)	Glazing Obstructions (specify if present)
Windshield		Fixed / Closed / Open / Partially Open / Unknown	Clear / Hazy / Very Dirty / Unknown		
LF		Fixed / Closed / Open / Partially Open	Clear / Hazy / Very Dirty		
RF		Fixed / Closed / Open / Partially Open	Clear / Hazy / Very Dirty		
2 nd Left		Fixed / Closed / Open / Partially Open	Clear / Hazy / Very Dirty		
2 nd Right		Fixed / Closed / Open / Partially Open	Clear / Hazy / Very Dirty		
3 rd Left		Fixed / Closed / Open / Partially Open	Clear / Hazy / Very Dirty		
3 rd Right		Fixed / Closed / Open / Partially Open	Clear / Hazy / Very Dirty		
Backlight		Fixed / Closed / Open / Partially Open	Clear / Hazy / Very Dirty		
Left Backlight		Fixed / Closed / Open / Partially Open	Clear / Hazy / Very Dirty		
Right Backlight		Fixed / Closed / Open / Partially Open	Clear / Hazy / Very Dirty		
Roof		Fixed / Closed / Open / Partially Open	Clear / Hazy / Very Dirty		
Other (specify)		Fixed / Closed / Open / Partially Open	Clear / Hazy / Very Dirty		

TIRE DATA

6. Vehicle Manufacturer Recommended Tire Size _____

7. LF Tire Size _____

9. RF Tire Size _____

8. LR Tire Size _____

10. RR Tire Size _____

Seats / Head Restraint Data

Seat Position	Seat Type (Select from below)	Head Restraint (Check if available)	Head Restraint Adjustment (select)	NOTES:
Front Left			Full Down / Mid / Full Up	
Front Middle			Full Down / Mid / Full Up	
Front Right			Full Down / Mid / Full Up	
2 nd Left			Full Down / Mid / Full Up	
2 nd Middle			Full Down / Mid / Full Up	
2 nd Right			Full Down / Mid / Full Up	
3 rd Left			Full Down / Mid / Full Up	
3 rd Middle			Full Down / Mid / Full Up	
3 rd Right			Full Down / Mid / Full Up	

Seat Type codes:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| 0 = No seat or seat folded down | 8 = Pedestal (i.e. column supported) |
| 1 = Bucket | 9 = Box mounted (i.e. van type) |
| 2 = Bucket w/ folding back | 10= Other seat type (specify) |
| 3 = Bench | 99= Unknown seat type |
| 4 = Bench with folding back cushions | |
| 5 = Bench w/ folding back | |
| 6 = Split bench w/ separate back cushions | |
| 7 = Split bench w/ separate folding back | |

VEHICLE MEASUREMENTS

Clearance Heights	Measurements (all from ground, and in centimeters)	NOTES
Beltline		
Top of trunk/tailgate		
Bottom of bumper		
Trailer hitch (if applicable)		
Undercarriage		
Sway bar		
Axle		
Differential		
Other (specify):		
Sensor Height (if equipped)		
Camera Height (if equipped)		



1. Case Number

PARKING AID PRESENCE

2. Type of backing/parking aid present

- OEM camera
- OEM ultrasonic/radar sensor
- OEM combination camera-ultrasonic/radar sensor
- OEM Fresnel lens
- OEM interior mirrors
- Aftermarket camera
- Aftermarket ultrasonic/radar sensor
- Aftermarket combination camera-ultrasonic radar sensor
- Aftermarket Fresnel lens
- Aftermarket interior mirrors
- Other (specify): _____

CAMERA INFORMATION

Specify field of view measurements on diagram

3. System make/model

4. Video monitor type

- None present
- LCD (color)
- CRT (black & white)
- Unknown

5. Video display size _____ cm
(Diagonal)

6. Camera location

- None present
- Bumper
- License plate
- Tailgate/Hatch/Trunk
- Other (specify): _____

7. Video image quality under scene lighting conditions

- None present
- Good
- Average
- Poor (specify): _____
- Unknown

8. Was the camera functioning properly

- None present
- Yes
- No, poor image quality due to glare
- No, poor image quality due to atmospheric conditions
- No, camera turned off
- No, camera inoperable
- Unknown

ULTRASONIC/RADAR SENSOR

Specify object detection range on diagram

9. System make/model

10. Auditory warning illumination

- No sensor present
- Yes
- No
- Unknown

11. Number of sensors _____

12. Sensor locations
(Select all that apply)

- No sensor present
- Left bumper
- Center bumper
- Right bumper
- License plate area
- Tailgate/Hatch/Trunk

13. Was warning system functioning properly

- No sensor present
- Yes, system alerted driver
- No, system did not alert driver
- No, system turned off
- No, system inoperable
- Unknown

14. Did driver react to warning

- No sensor present
- Yes
- No
- Unknown

15. Did driver report common false warnings

- No sensor present
- Yes
- No
- Unknown



DRIVER FORM

1. Case Number

DRIVER PROFILE

2. Driver's Age

99 = Unknown

3. Driver's Sex

- Male
- Female
- Unknown

4. Driver's Height

999 = Unknown

_____ cm

5. Driver's Weight

999 = Unknown

_____ kg

6. Driver eyewear worn

(Select all that apply)

- None
- Eyeglasses
- Sunglasses
- Contacts
- Unknown

7. Driver vision deficiency condition

(Select all that apply)

- None
- Near sighted
- Far sighted
- Astigmatism
- Other (specify): _____
- Unknown

8. Non motorist's relationship to driver

- No relationship
- Child
- Grandchild
- Sibling
- Neighbor
- Friend
- Other (specify): _____
- Unknown

DRIVER ACTIONS

9. Driver approach to vehicle for entry

- From left front
- From left
- From left rear
- From right rear
- From right front
- Circled vehicle
- Return trip (backing into driveway/lot)
- Other (specify): _____
- N/A
- Unknown

10. Driver entry interruption
(Select all that apply)

- Direct trip from building to vehicle
- Loaded items into vehicle
- Spoke with family
- Spoke with neighbors
- Spoke with contacted nonmotorist
- Return trip (backing into driveway/lot)
- Other (specify): _____
- N/A
- Unknown

11. Purpose of backing

- Leaving parking space in parking lot
- Backing onto roadway from driveway
- Entering parking space in parking lot
- Backing into driveway from roadway
- Other (specify): _____
- N/A
- Unknown

12. Where was driver going

Description:

13. Driver in a hurry

- Yes N/A
- No Unknown
- Unknown

14. How did driver check behind (rear area of vehicle) after vehicle entry

(Select all that apply)

- Did not look
- Checked mirrors
- Turned right and looked back
- Turned left and looked back
- Viewed Camera
- Listened for auditory/visual warning from system
- Other (specify): _____
- N/A Unknown

15. Estimated time between vehicle entry and start of backing

- 0-10 Seconds Over 60 Seconds
- 11-30 Seconds N/A
- 31-60 Seconds Unknown

16. What direction was the driver looking during backing maneuver
(Select all that apply)
- Straight ahead
 - Right
 - Left
 - Rearward
 - At object inside the car
 - At mirrors
 - Other (specify): _____
 - N/A
 - Unknown
17. Was the driver distracted during back up maneuver
(Select all that apply)
- No non-driving activities
 - External**
 - Looking at other vehicles
 - Looking at other non motorist
 - Looking at intended turn destination
 - External focus, not specified
 - Other external focus (specify): _____
 - Internal**
 - Looking at other occupant
 - Talking to passenger
 - Dialing phone
 - Talking on phone
 - Listening to radio/cd/portable playback device
 - Adjusting radio/cd player
 - Adjusting climate controls
 - Using a device/controls integral to vehicle (specify): _____
 - Reading/adjusting navigation system
 - Eating or drinking
 - Smoking related
 - Retrieving fallen object (specify): _____
 - Internal focus, not specified
 - Focused on other internal object (specify): _____
 - N/A
 - Unknown
18. Driver avoidance actions prior to impact
(Select all that apply)
- None
 - Braking
 - Steering left
 - Steering right
 - Accelerating
 - Other (specify): _____
 - N/A
 - Unknown
19. Did driver see struck non motorist prior to impact
(Select all that apply)
- No, never saw non motorist
 - Saw non motorist prior to entering vehicle
 - Saw non motorist after entering vehicle
 - Other (specify): _____
 - N/A
 - Unknown
20. Est time between start of backing and impact
- <2 or = 1 second
 - 2-5 seconds
 - 6-10 seconds
 - > 10 seconds
 - N/A
 - Unknown
21. Driver interior sightline obstructions
(Select all that apply)
- Pillar
 - Headrest
 - Cargo
 - Other occupant
 - Other (specify) _____
 - Unknown
 - None
22. Recent experience driving this vehicle
- More than 10 times the last three months
 - 6-10 times the last three months
 - 2-5 times the last three months
 - Less than 2 times the last three months
 - First time driving this vehicle
 - N/A
 - Unknown
23. Frequency of driving in this parking lot/driveway
- Daily
 - Weekly
 - Several times a month
 - Monthly
 - Rarely
 - First time in lot/driveway
 - N/A
 - Unknown
24. Driver Impairment
(Select all that apply)
- No drugs or alcohol present
 - Alcohol present (specify BAC): _____
 - Drugs present (specify): _____
 - Unknown
25. Source of alcohol/drug results
- Police reported
 - Medical record
 - Other (specify) _____
 - Not Tested
 - Unknown if tested



Non Motorist Form

1. Case Number

NON-MOTORIST PROFILE

2. Non-motorist's Age _____ Months
_____ Years
99 = Unknown

3. Non-motorist's Sex
 Male
 Female
 Unknown

4. Non-motorist's Height _____ cm
999 = Unknown

5. Non-motorist's Weight _____ kg
999 = Unknown

6. Medical outcome
 Not injured
 ER only
 Hospitalized 1-4 days
 Hospitalized 5 days or more
 Treatment later
 Fatal
 Unknown

7. Source of most severe injury
 Bumper
 Tire
 Undercarriage
 Other Specify: _____
 Ground
 N/A
 Unknown

8. Non-motorist impairment
(Select all that apply)
 No drugs or alcohol present
 Positive for alcohol (specify BAC): _____
 Positive for drugs (specify): _____
 Unknown

9. Source of alcohol/drug results
 Police reported
 Medical Report
 Other (specify) _____
 Not Tested
 Unknown if tested

NON-MOTORIST ACTIONS

10. Non-motorist attitude
 Standing
 Bending at waist
 Sitting
 Crouching
 Kneeling
 On skates/skateboard
 On bike/scooter
 Other (specify) _____
 Unknown

11. Non-motorist motion
 Not moving
 Walking slowly
 Walking rapidly
 Running or jogging
 Skipping/Hopping/Jumping
 Falling/Stumbling/Rising
 On skates/skateboard
 On bike/scooter
 Other (specify): _____
 Unknown

12. Non-motorist approach relative to rear of vehicle
 Stationary
 From left
 From right
 From behind
 Other (specify): _____
 Unknown

13. Non-motorist first avoidance action
 No avoidance actions
 Stopped
 Accelerated pace
 Ran away (along vehicle path)
 Jumped
 Turned away from vehicle
 Turned toward vehicle and braced
 Dove or fell away from vehicle
 Other (specify): _____
 Unknown

14. Non-motorist primary focus of attention
 Striking vehicle
 Play object
 Person
 Surrounding traffic
 Animal
 Handheld electronic (phone, MP3 player, etc.)
 Other Object (specify) _____
 Unknown

15. Were any other Non-motorists present?
(Select all that apply)
 Alone
 One adult present
 One other child present
 Multiple adults present
 Multiple children present
 Unknown

NON MOTORIST CLOTHING

NOTES:

- Specify Color, Fabric and Texture/Weight for outermost layer only
- Indicate "NONE" if applicable
- Available codes:

	<u>Colors</u>		<u>Fabrics</u>		<u>Textures</u>		<u>Weights</u>
Black	Charcoal gray		Natural		Soft		Heavy
Lt gray/silver	Brown		Synthetic		Slick		Medium
Gold/tan	Purple		Blend		Coarse		Light
Dark blue	Light blue						
Dark green	Light green						
Maroon	Red						
Orange	Yellow						
White	Other (specify)						

	Clothing	Color	Fabric	Texture	Weight
H E A D W E A R	Hat				
	Helmet				
	Hood				
	Other (specify): _____				
U P P E R B O D Y	Short Sleeve				
	Long Sleeve				
	Light Jacket				
	Heavy Jacket				
	Other (Specify): _____				
L O W E R B O D Y	Shorts				
	Pants				
	Shoes				
	Other (specify): _____				