



UNIVERSITY TRANSPORTATION CENTER RESEARCH BRIEF

PROJECT TITLE: Streamlining the Crash Reporting Process in the Pacific Northwest

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INSTITUTION: MULTI-INSTITUTION PROJECT

ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE: JANUARY 2018

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Background

There are over five million traffic crashes reported annually in the United States [NHTSA] and the documentation process for every single crash begins at the scene of the incident with information gathered

by a member of the law enforcement community or by the private citizens. This information is subsequently transmitted to a local and state agency for data entry, processing, and aggregation. Given the volume of incidents and the multiple handoffs between different parties, the likelihood for transmission error and interpretation deviation necessitate a cradle-to-grave examination of this reporting process. Furthermore, each state has developed its own independent tracking system, rendering data comparisons across state boundaries to be inconsistent. These collective issues justify the need to examine crash reporting and to identify a process where data entry is streamlined to best meet the needs of all system users that include, but are not limited to: law enforcement, local and state agency data analysts, national and state agency safety offices, and researchers and academicians who must rely on good data to draw conclusions and recommend purposeful safety improvements.

Research Project

The objectives for this project include the development of a cradle-to-grave crash reporting process in the Pacific Northwest that maximizes usability, accuracy, and accessibility for incident responders, local and state agencies, and citizens and academicians. This includes determining where the introduction of errors occurs in each state's reporting process and the root causes of those errors.

