



Draft Recommendations for Transparent and Independent Road Accident Investigation

Operations

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Introduction



- SafetyNet Recommendations
- Current situation
- Examples of EU road accident investigations
- Collecting data to develop accident countermeasures in Australia
- Consultation questions
 - System of investigation
 - Which accidents to investigate

Operational Recommendations

for Transparent and Independent Road Accident Investigations

Recommendation
Number

10-12	Immediate notification
13	On-scene investigation & recording of volatile evidence
14	Safety-focused, separate from judicial enquiry
15-16	Investigations carried out according to published manual
17	Data collected should build a complete picture
18-19	Appropriate legal status for investigators
20	Disclosure of purpose of investigation to those involved



Current Situation

- In EU 27, Police collect data on accidents
- Supplemented by specialist investigations
- Specialist investigations focus on fatal and serious injury accidents

How do the current procedures compare to the SafetyNet recommendations?



Similarities

- Notification is (usually) immediate
- Investigations begin on-scene, when volatile evidence (such as road or weather conditions) is still intact
- Investigators have unrestricted access to evidence, witnesses, scene etc



Differences

- Investigation aimed at establishing whether an offence has been committed
 - for example if dangerous or drink-driving is suspected
- The police are law enforcers, obliged to serve the judiciary system.
- A different type of data is collected
 - Less information on underlying causes.
 - Less focus on collecting data to inform the development of countermeasures

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Investigation Manuals

- Very few countries have a published manual for road accident investigation
- Road Death Investigation Manual (RDIM) – UK
 - Fatal accidents, based on procedures for homicide investigations
 - Emphasis on evidence collection for judicial enquiry
- VALT Method - Finnish Motor Insurers' Centre
 - Procedures for: scene investigations, accident reconstruction, reports, recommendations
- These are most commonly used for FATAL accidents



Examples of road accident investigation in the European Union

- GIDAS
 - German In-depth Accident Study
- OTS
 - On The Spot study (UK)
- EDA
 - An in-depth accident investigation study (France)
- VALT
 - Finnish Motor Insurers' Centre – in-depth investigations
- SRA in-depth study
 - Swedish Road Administration



Comparisons

	Area of Investigation	Notification	Scene Attendance	Accidents Investigated
GIDAS (Germany)	Regional	Immediate	In 20mins	Injury
OTS (UK)	Regional	Immediate	In 20mins	All
EDA (France)	Regional	Immediate	ASAP	Injury
VALT (Finland)	National	Immediate	ASAP	Fatal Plus others
SRA in-depth (Sweden)	National	ASAP	1-5 days	Fatal



Enhanced Crash Investigation Victoria State, Australia

- Collection of detailed accident data
- Accidents in Victoria involving Motor vehicle drivers/riders hospitalised overnight as a result of injuries
- Exclusions: fatal accidents, those involving buses, trains, trams or a ridden horse.
- Accident site visited within two weeks of crash occurrence
- Data collected to identify human, vehicle and environmental causal factors
- Disseminate to road safety stakeholders leading to road safety solutions

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Issues to address

- Which system of investigation should be used?
 - On scene/Retrospective
- Which accidents should be investigated?
 - Should accident investigations represent the national picture?
 - Severity
 - Road-user type
 - Geographical/Sample

Which system of investigation should be used?

- On Scene
 - Record volatile information: weather conditions, accident traces, vehicle resting positions
 - Immediate access to involved persons' and witness' accounts
 - Expensive
 - Geographical limitations
- Retrospective
 - Only option if notification is not immediate or circumstances change (e.g. Fatal = die within 30 days)
 - Allows a wider investigation area
 - Some volatile information may be lost

Which accidents should be investigated?

Should accident investigations represent the national picture?

- Other transport modes:
 - Obligation to investigate all fatal/serious accidents
- Too many road accidents to make this a realistic goal for most European countries
- Choices need to be made about which accidents to investigate
- Should these be guided by national statistics?

Which accidents should be investigated?

Severity Focused

- Fatal
 - Reduce fatalities by studying fatal accidents
 - Outcomes dependent upon road user characteristics
 - Can be viewed as a consequence of a serious accident
 - Limits the amount of available information
- Serious
 - Life altering or life threatening injuries are undesirable
- Slight
 - Much more common therefore easier to spot accident trends
- Damage only accidents?

Which accidents should be investigated?

Road User Focused

- Children
 - European/national targets to reduce child casualties
- Vulnerable Road Users
 - Pedestrians, Pedal cycle riders, Motorcycle/moped riders
 - More at risk of sustaining serious/fatal injuries
- Public service users
 - Buses, coaches
 - Potential for large number of casualties

Which accidents should be investigated?

Geographical/Sample Focused

- National – Investigations take place anywhere in country
 - E.g. All fatal accidents
 - Requires multiple teams
- Regional – Investigations take place in a limited number of regions/locations
 - all accidents/ specific categories occurring in region(s)
- Road Type
 - Motorway, rural, urban
 - Target specific road type(s) or region(s) where road types represent country as a whole

Consultation Questions

- Which system of investigation should be used?
 - On scene/Retrospective
- Which accidents should be investigated?
 - Should accident investigations represent the national picture?
 - Severity
 - Road-user type
 - Geographical/Sample
- Any other comments on Operational recommendations