Draft Recommendations for Transparent and Independent Road Accident Investigation

Operations

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Rachel Elliman, Vehicle Safety Research Centre, UK

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http://www.erso.eu
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

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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

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<tr>
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<th>Area of Investigation</th>
<th>Notification</th>
<th>Scene Attendance</th>
<th>Accidents Investigated</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>GIDAS (Germany)</strong></td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td>In 20mins</td>
<td>Injury</td>
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<td><strong>OTS (UK)</strong></td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
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<td>All</td>
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<td>Regional</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td>ASAP</td>
<td>Injury</td>
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<td><strong>VALT (Finland)</strong></td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td>ASAP</td>
<td>Fatal Plus others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SRA in-depth (Sweden)</strong></td>
<td>National</td>
<td>ASAP</td>
<td>1-5 days</td>
<td>Fatal</td>
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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
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• Any other comments on Operational recommendations