

# The DISPATCH

PennDOT Crash Newsletter - News you can use!

## What's New?

### Crash Data Standard Implementation

On the evening of Thursday, June 11, 2026, PennDOT implemented a new crash data standard which resulted in a few changes to fields within the Crash Reporting System. Investigators who use the crash system website will notice changes immediately. Those who use recognized software to submit crashes will not notice any changes until your new software is installed.

So, what is changing?

- GPS coordinates will now be accepted as **degrees, minutes and seconds** as before but can also be entered using **decimal degree** format
- Unknown Driver and Unknown Vehicle can be selected as a checkbox on the Unit page
- Alcohol test results will now be 3 digits
- Cargo Body Type on the commercial page will now be for the power unit only
  - a. Data entered prior to 6/11/26 will be converted as follows:
    - i. Crash cases that listed a cargo body type for a trailer will now show a cargo body type of “No Cargo Body”
    - ii. The Trailing Unit Type will now show the type of trailer based on what was in the cargo body type field
- Trailing Unit Type – The new values for Trailing Unit Type are:
  - a. Towing Passenger Vehicle
  - b. Towing Truck
  - c. Towing Utility Trailer
  - d. Camper
  - e. Box or Van Enclosed Trailer
  - f. Flatbed or Platform Trailer
  - g. Grain, Chip, or Gravel Trailer
  - h. Dump Trailer
  - i. Tank Trailer
  - j. Mixer Trailer
  - k. Intermodal Container Chassis or Trailer
  - l. Logging Trailer
  - m. Pole Trailer
  - n. Auto Transporter
  - o. House Trailer
  - p. Boat Trailer
  - q. Live Animal Trailer
  - r. Other (explain in narrative)
  - s. Unknown
- Weather – “Fog/Smog/Smoke” has been split into:
  - a. Fog or Mist
  - b. Smog or Smoke
- Driver or Non-Motorist Physical Condition – “Seizure” has been added
- Vehicle Color – “Gray” has been added
- Grade and Alignment – “Non-Travelway” has been added
- Travel Direction – “Parked” and “Non-Travelway” have been added
- Vehicle Movement – “Changing Lanes”, “Merging”, and “Lane Splitting” have been added
- Driver Actions – “Road Rage”, “Overloading”, “Improper Towing/Pushing”, and “Failure to use proper vehicle lights” have been added
- Non-Motorist TCD – “Other” has been added
- Non-Motorist Movement – “Incident Responder Working”, “Working (non-incident responder)” and “Disabled Vehicle Related” have been added
- Special Usage – eBike classifications have been added for non-motorists
- Owner Driver – USPS and other carriers, military, and rental cars and trucks have been added

Attached please find the newly updated Pub 153.

**Pub 153 (6-26)**

## Working Together



### The Value of Accurate Crash Reporting

Accurate crash reporting is essential to improving roadway safety across Pennsylvania. Every crash report submitted by law enforcement through PennDOT’s crash system becomes part of the statewide database used to identify trends, analyze crash causes, and prioritize safety improvements.

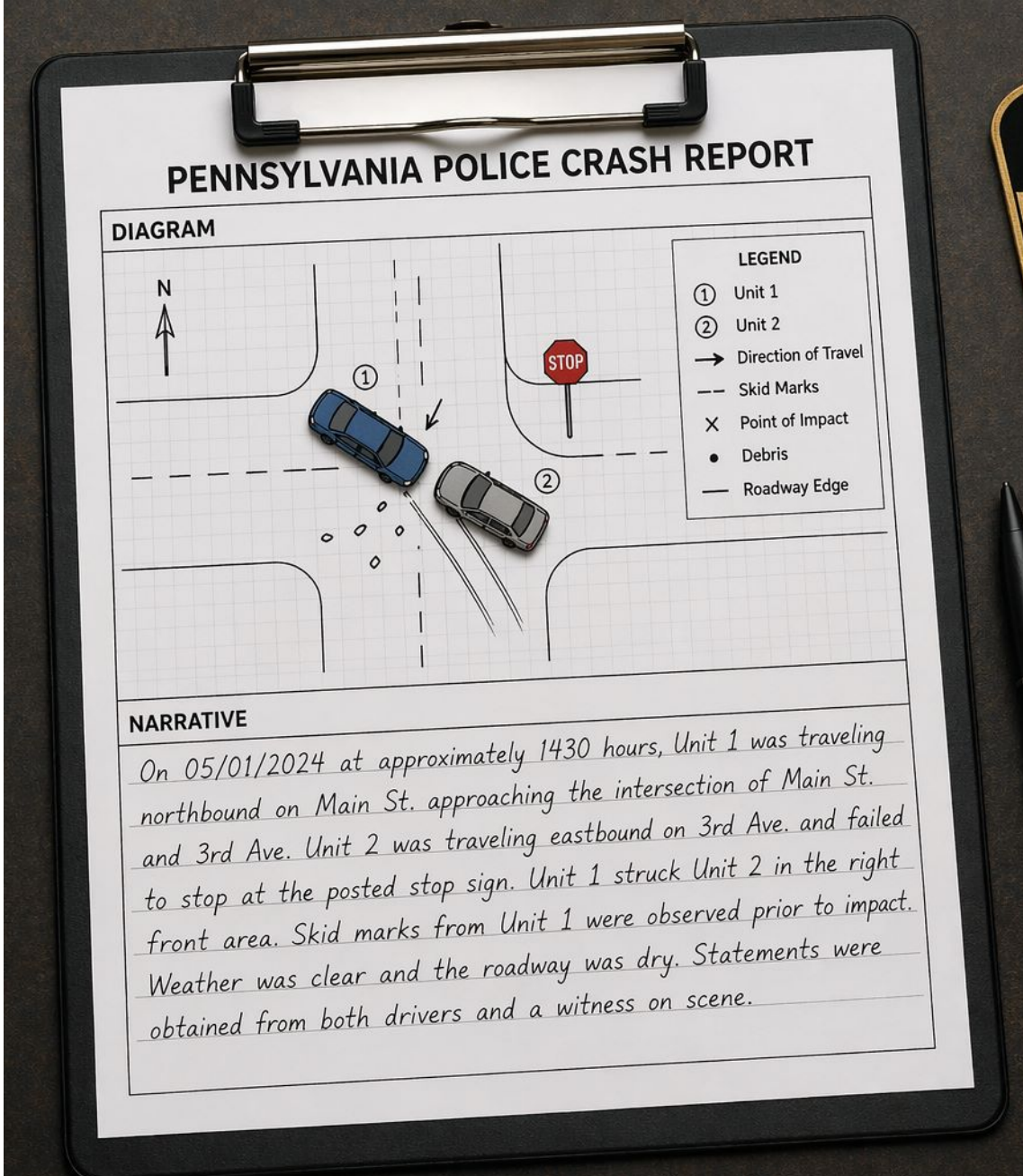
When reports contain precise and complete information—such as correct location data, roadway information, driver factors, and diagrams—they allow safety analysts to accurately identify high-crash locations, roadway risk factors, and driver behavior trends. This data directly supports engineering improvements, targeted enforcement efforts, and statewide safety programs.

Even small reporting errors can affect crash analysis. Incorrect roadway coding, missing contributing factors, or inaccurate location information may place crashes on the wrong roadway segment or intersection. Over time, these inaccuracies can make it harder to identify real crash patterns and safety issues.

Officers play a critical role in ensuring the quality of Pennsylvania’s crash data. Information collected at the scene—such as GPS coordinates, vehicle positions, roadway conditions, and driver actions—often cannot be recreated later. Capturing these details accurately helps ensure that each crash report reflects what actually occurred.

High-quality crash reports allow PennDOT and its safety partners to make data-driven decisions that lead to safer roads throughout the Commonwealth. Every accurate report contributes to a clearer picture of roadway safety in Pennsylvania.

We appreciate the time and care your agencies put into accurate crash reporting. Meticulous records, thorough reports, and regular communication help ensure Pennsylvania’s crash data is complete and reliable.



### Importance of Diagram & Narrative

In Pennsylvania, the diagram and narrative are two of the most critical components of the Police Crash Report. Together, they tell the complete story of the crash: what happened, how it happened, and why it happened.

The diagram is a visual representation of the scene. It illustrates the position of vehicles, roadways, traffic control devices, skid marks, debris, and other physical evidence. A well-documented diagram allows the analyst reviewing the report to quickly understand the sequence of events. Accuracy and detail are essential. Even small omissions or unclear markings can lead to confusion or misinterpretation.

The narrative explains the details behind the diagram. While the diagram shows what happened, the narrative explains it. This portion of the report provides the context that a diagram alone cannot capture. It includes the sequence of events, contributing factors, statements from drivers and witnesses, weather and road conditions, and the officer’s observations. A thorough narrative connects the dots for the analyst reviewing the report. It clarifies how the crash occurred, explains any unusual circumstances, and documents key details that may not be able to be visually represented. Being clear and concise ensures the report is easily understandable.

The diagram and narrative work hand in hand. The diagram provides the visual framework, while the narrative adds the detail and context behind it. When both are complete, accurate, and consistent, they create a clear and reliable crash report that can be reviewed and understood without confusion. Taking the time to ensure both sections are thorough and aligned is key to producing a report that is both comprehensive and credible.

## Understanding Crash Terms



### Crossovers on Divided Highways in Pennsylvania

In Pennsylvania, crossovers on divided highways are generally only for emergency vehicles when they need to move from one side of the highway to the other, and they are governed by the state’s traffic laws.

Under 75 Pa. C.S. § 3311, when a highway is divided into two or more roadways by a physical barrier, space, or clearly marked section, all vehicles must stay on the right-hand roadway unless directed otherwise by traffic-control devices, police officers, or authorized personnel. The only exceptions are through officially established openings in the barrier or dividing section, or at designated crossovers or intersections.

These designated crossovers are typically authorized for emergency vehicles (police, fire, EMS, tow trucks, and other service vehicles) when they need to cross the barrier to reach an incident, assist a disabled vehicle, or perform other emergency duties. They are not generally available for regular traffic unless explicitly permitted by traffic-control devices or authorized personnel.

Pennsylvania law allows official traffic-control devices to be installed at crossovers or barrier openings to prohibit or regulate turns for safety reasons. These devices may be used to restrict access to emergency vehicles only when necessary for public safety.

Although highway crossovers may appear to offer a convenient shortcut, they exist to support emergency operations and roadway maintenance, not general travel. Limiting their use to authorized vehicles helps protect responders, reduce crash risks, and keep Pennsylvania’s highways operating safely and efficiently.

## QUIZ: Direction of Travel

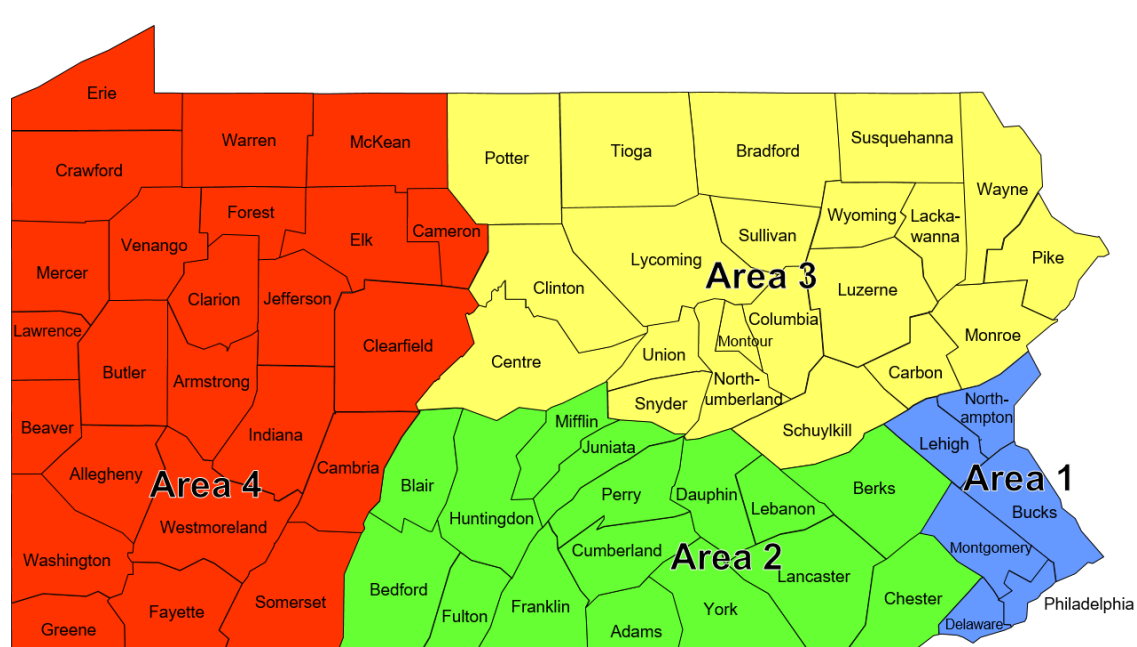
## FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Be sure to save the links below to your favorites for easy access!

- Current AA600 Form
- Police Crash Reporting Tools

### Traffic Records Program Administrator (TRPA) Map

The Regional TRPA Map indicates the Traffic Records Project Administrator who supports your area along with their contact information. The TRPAs serve as the liaison between PennDOT and the police agencies.



**Area 1:** Gordon Beck (215-219-8575) [gbeck@hsnetwork.org](mailto:gbeck@hsnetwork.org)

**Area 2:** Bob Wagner (610) 334-4158 [rwagner@hsnetwork.org](mailto:rwagner@hsnetwork.org)

**Area 3:** Rick Leymeister (570-516-7881) [rleymeister@hsnetwork.org](mailto:rleymeister@hsnetwork.org)

**Area 4:** Michael Ragan (412-327-9488) [mragan@hsnetwork.org](mailto:mragan@hsnetwork.org)



Now that you've made it to the end of the newsletter, how would you rate its content?

Not helpful at all   [0](#)   [1](#)   [2](#)   [3](#)   [4](#)   Very helpful

For questions or concerns, email us at [ra-pdleadhelp@pa.gov](mailto:ra-pdleadhelp@pa.gov).



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