

Guide to Obscure Crash Situations & FAQs

PennDOT Crash Unit

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The purpose of this guide is to document uncommon situations and frequently asked questions to assist the investigating agencies complete the crash report as accurately as possible.

To include additional items in this guide, please provide the question to RA-PDLEAHELP@pa.gov.

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What's the difference between a Reportable and Non-Reportable crash?

A reportable crash can be defined in Section 3746(A) of the Pennsylvania Motor Vehicle Code. A reportable crash is one in which an injury or a fatality occurs or if at least one of the vehicles involved requires towing from the scene. The crash itself occurred on a roadway open to the public by right or custom and includes a motor vehicle in transport.

Additionally, any crash that arose from an intentional act would not be reportable. However, if someone outside of the intended act is hurt, it would then be reportable.

Is a vehicle fire a reportable crash?

According to ANSI D.16, a vehicle fire occurring on the roadway is considered a reportable crash.

- * If flames are witnessed by the driver or a witness while the car is still on the roadway, the crash is reportable.
- * If the vehicle is smoking while on the roadway but is pulled off the roadway into a parking lot or driveway and then catches fire, the crash is not reportable.

What is a Fatal Crash?

A fatal crash is defined as a crash in which one or more of the involved persons died within 30 days of the crash and the fatality(ies) is/are attributable to the crash. If the coroner rules the cause of death to be of natural causes this would statistically not be classified as a fatal crash.

What is a harmful event?

A damaging action that occurs within a crash (e.g., hitting a tree, hitting a deer, hitting a pedestrian, hitting another vehicle, etc.) and often results in personal injury or property damage.

How do I report a crash with a trailer parked on the side of the roadway, with no motor vehicle attached?

This is a 1-unit crash. The harmful event for Unit 1 (motor vehicle) is "09=Collision With Other Non-Fixed Object" (trailer).

If a vehicle being towed is rear-ended by another unit, is this a 2-unit or 3-unit crash?

This is a 2-unit crash. The vehicle being towed is a trailing vehicle attached to Unit 2 and would not be considered as part of the unit count.

NOTE: This is an extremely common error. If the towed unit is the only vehicle that is damaged to the point that it needs to be towed away, it does not justify being a reportable crash. Since it is already being towed and not included in the vehicle count, the fact that it was towed away does not figure into determining reportability in the crash. If none of the other units require towing or there are no reported injuries, the crash would be non-reportable.

How do I code an overturned motorcycle?

If there is no other harmful event for that vehicle, use 58 (Other Non-Collision) as the only harmful event.

If there are other harmful events (i.e., strike a utility pole) do not code for the overturned event.

How do I record a pedestrian on a crash report?

A pedestrian is coded as a non-motorist. On the AA 500 1 page, every pedestrian involved in the crash would be counted in the No. of Units Field. Leave the driver's license number(s), driver state(s), class(es), and owner/driver(s) blank. Driver Presence should be entered as UNKNOWN.

The AA 500 2 page has some significant changes to it when you are coding a pedestrian involved in the crash.

- In the "Type Unit" field, all pedestrians will be coded as "Non-Motorist".
- In the "Non-Motorist Type" field, you will select "Pedestrian".
- The last section on this screen involves everything the pedestrian is doing at the time of the crash.

See Example Below:

Direction of Travel North	Movement 98 = Other	Position 30 = Roadway (Travel Lanes)
At Intersection No	In Crosswalk 0 = No	Traffic Control Device 01 = None
Powered 03 = Electric	Lighting No	Reflectors/Reflective Wear No
Initial Impact Point 06=6 O'clock	Distraction 99 = Unknown	

How do I code an unborn child as a fatality?

Per ANSI D.16, an unborn child is considered part of a pregnant woman rather than a separate individual. Therefore, they are not included in the coding.

How do I code a car parked on a car dealer's lot?

Vehicles for sale on a dealer's lot are not coded as units. Therefore, they would not be included in the unit count on the AA 500 1 page. Use the Harmful Event of "09-Collision with Other Non-Fixed Object" for vehicles that are struck and damaged in the crash.

If a registered/owned vehicle is involved in the crash while it is parked on the dealer's lot, the registered vehicle would be coded as a Legally Parked Vehicle and would be included in the vehicle count.

When entering data in CRS, why am I receiving an error that the number of people or number of people injured does not agree?

This involves 3 different pages within the crash report that will cross reference against each other to make sure the data is correct. If you receive this error, you will want to check the following:

- The AA 500 1 Page: Number of People field and Number of Injured field.
- The AA 500 2 Page: Number of People in Unit.
- The AA 500 3 Page: Injury Severity Field.

What is a construction vehicle?

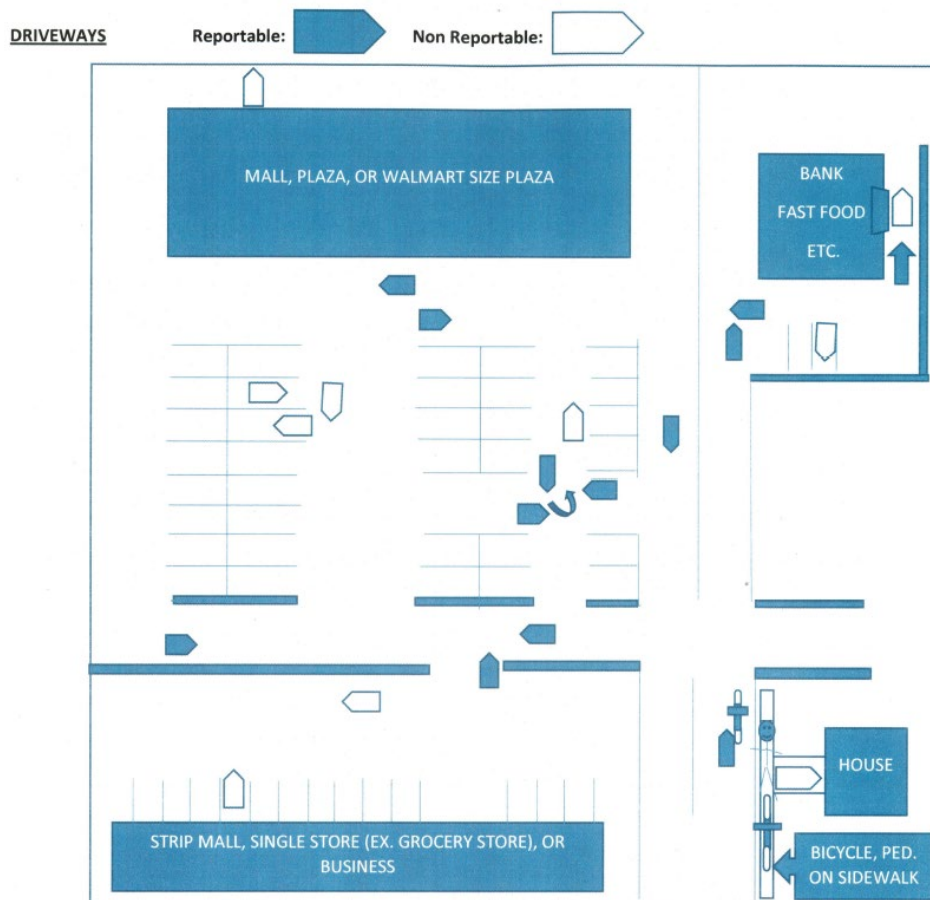
Construction Vehicles are not registered vehicles. For example: Backhoes, Loaders, Road Graders, etc. Dump trucks or cement mixers are not construction vehicles, they are trucks.

How do I report a parking lot crash?

Crashes that take place on private property are only reportable if they take place on a laned travelway intended for traffic entering or leaving the property. The lanes between parking spaces or the parking stall area would be considered non-reportable.

A reportable parking lot travelway crash would mostly get coded like any other road crash. The Special Location field should be coded as "Driveway/Parking Lot".

See diagram below for examples of reportable and non-reportable crashes.



When entering data in CRS, why am I receiving an error that the number of people or number injured does not agree?

In CRS, check the General Crash Data section to confirm that the number of people matches the total number involved in the crash. Check each Unit (AA-500-2) to confirm the block, Number of People in the Unit indicates the correct number of people in each Unit. Additionally, the number of people specified on page AA 500-3 should match what is entered elsewhere.

The number of injured persons in a crash is first entered as a total number in Block 2 on page 1 so whatever that number is, it must match the total number of people listed with injuries on page AA 500-3. UNKNOWN will not register as an injury. INJURED, UNK SEVERITY will register as an injury.

When something is put in motion by a vehicle and strikes another vehicle, or is struck by another vehicle, how is that coded?

Examples of this are: debris flying across traffic lanes, ice dislodged from the roof of a truck, cargo falls from a motor vehicle.

The vehicle that sets the debris in motion would be coded as striking the other unit (that struck/was struck by the debris). The vehicle that struck/was struck by the debris would have the harmful event of 51 (Struck by Thrown or Falling Object).

If an object that was set in motion becomes stabilized, the vehicle that put the object in motion is no longer part of the crash involving the object.

If a crash sets an object in motion that becomes stabilized and causes another crash, these are two separate crashes. The reportability for each crash should be determined individually.

How do I code a bus so a VIN error is not populated?

For school busses Vehicle Type should be "Bus", Special Usage should be "Pupil Transport".

For mass transit busses Vehicle Type should be "Bus", Special Usage should be "non-applicable".

Note: If you have verified the VIN, Vehicle Type, and Special Usage are all correct, you may not be able to avoid the error.

What is the difference between a "Small Truck" and a "Large Truck"?

A **Small Truck** is any vehicle, including dual-wheel pickup trucks and trucks under 10,001 GVW, designed for carrying a load of property on or in the vehicle. Includes: pickup truck, sport utility vehicle, van, jeep, tow truck, etc.

A **Large Truck** is a single vehicle or tractor-trailer combination (>+10,001 lbs.) designed for carrying a heavy load of property on or in the vehicle. Includes: single-unit trucks (e.g., coal trucks), tractor-trailers, motor homes, etc.

How do I classify an e-bike?

Class 1, 2 and 3 e-bikes should be coded as a "Non-Motorist" with a non-motorist type of "bicycle" and Non-Motorist Power of "Electric". If a class 1, 2, or 3 e-bike is involved in a crash on a public roadway, and there are no motor vehicles in transit involved, the crash would be non-reportable.

Class 4 e-bikes should be coded as "Motor Vehicle in Transit" with a Vehicle Type of "Motorcycle". Include the brand and model in the narrative. If the e-bike does not have a VIN, please include the serial number. If a class 4 e-bike (with or without pedals) is involved in a crash, regardless of the presence of another motor vehicle, and results in an injury or enough damage that the e-bike is inoperable, then the crash would be reportable.

The class of an e-bike can typically be found on the frame near the cranks or head tube. This location is where manufacturers affix a permanent label with the class number, top assisted speed, and motor wattage, plus maker details.

What's the difference between a Hit-And-Run and Phantom Unit?

A hit-and-run is when a driver hits another vehicle, person, or piece of property and then flees the scene without stopping to provide their personal information.

How to code a hit and run:

- Unit Type = "Hit and Run Vehicle"
- Complete all driver data with unknowns and 9's.
- Enter whichever Harmful Event coincides with what the hit and run vehicle struck.
- Complete the Contributing Factor for the unit. (At least 1 contributing factor is required for a Hit and Run Vehicle.)
- Complete all remaining applicable fields.

A phantom vehicle is one that causes injury, death or damage without any physical contact. This can include pedestrians. There should be evidence or witness statements to corroborate a phantom vehicle.

How to code a phantom vehicle:

- Unit Type = "Phantom Vehicle"
- Do not include any of the Driver data since this unit had no harmful events in the crash.
- Enter "00 = No Harmful Event" as the only harmful event for this unit.
- Complete the Contributing Factor for the unit. (At least 1 contributing factor is required for a Phantom Unit.)
- Complete all remaining applicable fields.

What is a commercial vehicle?

A commercial vehicle is a motor vehicle designed or used to transport passengers or property and:

- Has a GVWR of $\geq 10,001$ pounds and used in commerce
- Has a GVWR of $\geq 10,001$ pounds and used on public highways
- Is designed to transport 16 or more passengers, including the driver
- Is a school bus **OR**
- Is transporting hazardous materials and is required to be placarded

Commercial vehicles do not include the following: implements of husbandry, motor homes or recreational trailers operated solely for personal use, or motorized construction equipment including, but not limited to, motor scrapers, backhoes, motor graders, compactors, excavators, tractors, trenchers, and bulldozers.

What is an “Autocycle”?

An Autocycle is a three-wheeled motorcycle that has a steering wheel and seating that does not require the operator to straddle or sit astride.

Autocycle examples include:

- Polaris (Slingshot) <http://www.polaris.com/en-us/slingshot>
- Toyota (I-Road) http://pressroom.toyota.com/album_display.cfm?album_id=955§ion_id=0
- Campagna (T-Rex and V13R) <https://campagnamotors.com/>

Toyota I-Road:



Campagna T-Rex and V13R



Is a crash reportable if a passenger intentionally exits a moving vehicle and is killed?

The crash is non-reportable due to deliberate intent. According to Pub 153, a crash is classified as deliberate intent if the cause of the event occurs when a person acts deliberately to cause the event or deliberately refrains from prudent acts, which would prevent occurrence of the event. This includes suicide, self-inflicted injury, homicide, injury, or damage purposely inflicted. Crashes that result from deliberate intent are not reportable.

Examples of deliberate intent include:

- Passenger deliberately exiting a moving vehicle.
- Bystander deliberately throwing objects at or firing into a moving vehicle.
- Driver deliberately driving into another vehicle, pedestrian, or fixed object, or driving off the roadway with
- blatant disregard for the safety of the action.
- Passenger interfering with the driver such as grabbing the steering wheel.