

Administrator's Letter

Through our partnership in the Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program (MCSAP), the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) shares a safety goal with the States to reduce the number and severity of crashes involving large trucks and buses on our Nation's highways. To meet our common goal, it is essential that uniform, complete, accurate and timely information be collected and reported to FMCSA on these crashes. Based on FMCSA analysis of crash data in our files, the States appear to be using varying criteria to report crash information. In order to assure that there is common basis for the data the States provide, I would like to clarify which crashes should be reported to FMCSA.

Since 1992, States have been uploading truck and bus crash data to FMCSA through SAFETYNET. The reporting criteria and the data items were developed by the National Governors' Association (NGA) and endorsed by the National Association of Governors' Highway Safety Representatives, the Traffic Records Committee of the National Safety Council, the Transportation Research Board and the Federal Highway Administration. The data items are commonly referred to as the "NGA Data Elements." In 1999, FMCSA made some slight modifications to the truck and bus definitions. We are proposing no changes, just clarifications, at this time.

Enclosure 1 provides the criteria the States should use in selecting truck and bus crashes to report to FMCSA. Enclosure 2 is a listing of frequently asked questions that may aid in the decision of which crashes to report. Enclosure 3 provides the procedures for entering crashes without carrier identification into SAFETYNET.

We recognize that the collection and reporting of crash data is a statewide responsibility involving more than just the State MCSAP agency. We are committed to working with you to inform the other highway safety officials in your State, including the traffic records department, statewide law enforcement personnel, and SAFETYNET staff, of the importance of this information and what needs to be collected and reported. We also are committed to working with you to identify potential funding sources and to assist with your training needs to improve data quality.

We hope this information is useful to you.

Sincerely yours,

Annette M. Sandberg

Enclosures (3)