



mainroads
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Policy and Guidelines for Crash Investigations

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1	1979	Operational Guideline 41 developed	All
2	May 2000	Operational Guideline 41 modified	All
3	18 June 2007	Policy and Guidelines developed	All
4	17 May 2013	Policy and Application Guidelines updated	All
5	01 Nov 2014	Clauses modified	3.2.1; 5.1; 5.2; 6.2
6	31 May 2018	Reformatted document and reviewed investigation requirements	All
7	25 July 2019	Clauses modified	3.1; 3.2.2
8	19 November 2020	All references to Senior Road Safety Investigator updated to Road Safety Engineering Manager	All
9	17 May 2023	Paragraph 5 of this clause has been modified to include the text "Except where required by law"	5.1

1 POLICY STATEMENT

Main Roads Western Australia is committed to its aspiration “To provide world class outcomes for the customer through a safe, reliable, and sustainable road-based transport system” by targeting four areas of focus, one of which is ‘Safety’ which aims to “Provide improved safety outcomes for all users of the transport network” as set out in our “Keeping WA Moving” strategic plan.

To assist Main Roads to concentrate on its ‘Safety’ area of focus, a strategic approach has been developed for the delivery of crash investigations. This is a vital investigation process for determining if the road environment may have contributed to the causation or severity of fatal crashes and incorporates Safe System principles embedded within the process. This is to be achieved by focusing the crash investigation process on considering safe speeds and by providing forgiving roads and roadsides. This is to be delivered through a crash investigation process that accepts people will always make mistakes and by considering the known limits to crash forces the human body can tolerate with the aim to reduce the reoccurrence of fatal crashes.

To achieve this Main Roads require that:

- Fatal crash investigations shall be conducted on the State and local road network in accordance with the requirements of this policy.

2 PRELIMINARY

2.1 Definitions

Unless otherwise indicated in the text of this Guideline:

AS means Australian Standard.

Preliminary Investigation means the initial investigation conducted by the crash investigation team referencing the details provided in the Police 1-18 (first attendance report).

Crash Location Report means a document prepared for or by Main Roads for the purpose of assessing a crash location.

Audit Team Trainee means an individual that has successfully completed a recognised Road Safety Audit training course within 5 years who accompanies the Audit Team to gain experience of the road safety audit process.

Road Safety Audit means a formal, systematic, assessment of the potential road safety risks associated with a new road project or road improvement project conducted by an independent qualified audit team. The assessment considers all road users and suggests measures to eliminate or mitigate those risks.

Local road means any road under the control of Local Government.

Main Roads means Main Roads Western Australia.

Public road means any road either under the control of Main Roads, Local Government, or any other road accessible by the public (e.g. DEC roads but excludes private roads).

State road means a highway or main road under the control of Main Roads Western Australia and includes national highways.

TRIM means the records and electronic document management system used by Main Roads.

2.2 Background

Crash investigations are complementary to Road Safety Audits in the identification of road environment factors as a contribution to the causation and/or severity of crashes on the public road network in Western Australia. Unlike Road Safety Audits, crash investigations are a reactive process triggered by an incident. The combination of Road Safety Audits and Crash Location Reports provide Asset Managers with powerful mechanisms to identify weak links in the road network and to reduce the risk of trauma and crashes on the road network.

The objective of the crash investigation is to identify any road environment safety issues that could represent unnecessary and/or unreasonable hazards to road users. The investigation incorporates analysis of the road crashes recorded at the location to determine crash rates, trends, and crash types. The report analyses crash types at a location against the network average and recommends remedial measures to reduce the recurrence or severity of the predominant crash types.

The objectives of a Crash Location Report are to:

- Review the existing road against current standards and recommend remedial action to reduce the probability of an incident occurring and the potential severity to an acceptable level of risk;
- Report on the conclusions drawn and make recommendations to minimise or eliminate hazards;
- Analyse the characteristics of recorded road crashes at the location;
- Establish common factors for crash groupings;
- Analyse and determine the trends (if any) in the crash pattern and the possible cause;
- Determine whether the road crash that resulted in fatal injury was a predominant crash type; and
- Evaluate the site in terms of interaction of the road user with the surroundings to identify potential impediments and conflicts.

To ensure that the maximum emphasis is placed on engineering and safe system treatments, every investigation team must be led by a suitably qualified and experienced Crash Investigator.

2.3 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to detail Main Roads requirements for responding and reporting on a fatal crash.

Main Roads primary objective of these guidelines is to improve the safety of the road network to an acceptable level by reducing the road environment contribution to fatal crashes.

3 APPLICATION

3.1 Applicable routes

This Guideline applies to all public roads in Western Australia.

3.2 Scope of application

Crash Investigations shall be undertaken in a staged approach:

- Preliminary Investigation
- Crash Location Report

3.2.1 Preliminary Investigation

A Preliminary Investigation shall be undertaken at all fatal crash locations on the Public Road network.

A Preliminary Investigation may be conducted at a serious crash location on the State Road network at the discretion of the Main Roads Road Safety Engineering Manager or as deemed necessary by the Western Australia Police, Executive Director Planning and Technical Services or the State Coroner.

3.2.2 Crash Location Report

A Crash Location Report shall be completed for all fatal crashes where the Preliminary Investigation determined that road environmental factors may have contributed to the causation and/or severity of the crash or involves a person employed by Main Roads.

A Crash Location Report may be completed for any fatal crash location on the Public Road Network or serious crash location on the State Road network or where there are identified crash patterns over a set time period. This shall be at the discretion of the Main Roads Road Safety Engineering Manager or as deemed necessary by the Western Australia Police, Executive Director Planning and Technical Services or the State Coroner.

Investigations are not undertaken where it is determined by the State Coroner that:

- The crash is related to a suicide/murder attempt, whether or not persons other than the person committing suicide/murder are killed as a result of the event; or
- The crash occurred owing to the driver of a vehicle losing consciousness due to medical reasons or dying prior to the crash occurring (i.e. heart failure, stroke etc.), whether or not persons other than the person who caused the crash are killed as a result of the event.

A Crash Location Report as described in this policy requires the provision to Main Roads of the Police 1-18 report. Where a fatal crash occurs within a road section that is likely to change over time, such as within a section of roadworks or a special event site, the Asset Manager shall implement procedures to document the condition of the road environment in the vicinity of the crash site at the earliest possible opportunity (desirably within 24 hours of the crash). Although the fatal crash will be investigated through the mainstream processes described in this policy, the need for immediate documentation of the condition of such sites cannot be underestimated.

4 CRASH INVESTIGATORS

4.1 Team requirements

4.1.1 Preliminary Investigation Team Leader

A Preliminary Investigation Team Leader must be conversant with Main Roads *Crash Site Investigation Work Instruction and Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS)* and *Preliminary Crash Site Investigation Form Completion Procedure* and should be an *IPWEA / Main Roads WA Audit Team Trainee* and be working towards accreditation as an *IPWEA / Main Roads WA Road Safety Auditor*. Each Main Roads Regional office shall have at least one nominated Preliminary Investigation Leader.

4.1.2 Preliminary Investigation Team Members

A Preliminary Investigation Team Member must be conversant with Main Roads *Crash Site Investigation Work Instruction and Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS)* and *Preliminary Crash Site Investigation Form Completion Procedure* and desirably be an *IPWEA / Main Roads WA Audit Team Trainee* and be working towards accreditation as an *IPWEA / Main Roads WA Road Safety Auditor*.

The list of current *Audit Team Trainees* and *Accredited Road Safety Auditors* can be found on the Road Safety Audit Portal website. www.road-safety-audit-wa.org

4.1.3 Crash Location Report Team Leader

A Crash Location Report Team Leader shall be an *IPWEA / Main Roads WA Accredited Senior Road Safety Auditor* and have successfully completed recognised Road Safety Engineering training. The crash investigation team shall have a minimum of two members.

4.1.4 Crash Location Report Team Members

A Crash Location Report Team Member shall be an *IPWEA / Main Roads WA Audit Team Trainee* and be working towards accreditation as an *IPWEA / Main Roads WA Road Safety Auditor*.

The list of current *Audit Team Trainees*, *Accredited Road Safety Auditors* and *Senior Road Safety Auditors* can be found on the Road Safety Audit Portal website. www.road-safety-audit-wa.org

4.2 Consultants

A suitably qualified consultant may be used to assist in the preparation of Crash Location Reports, either as a team leader or as a team member.

4.3 Conflict of interest

Team Leaders/Members shall excuse themselves from participation in the crash investigation if:

- They have had any involvement in planning, design, construction or maintenance activities for road infrastructure at the crash site;
- They are knowingly related to or acquainted with any person directly involved in the crash (either deceased, injured or non-injured persons); or
- They perceive any possibility of duress or coercion by their employer or employer's staff in relation to the investigation.

Persons may still participate as an observer unless they are acquainted with any person directly involved in the crash.

5 INVESTIGATION TYPES

5.1 Preliminary Investigation

The Preliminary Investigation shall be completed using the Main Roads standard Preliminary Crash Investigation form referring to the *Crash Investigation Form Completion Procedure*.

The Preliminary Investigation shall be carried out as soon as practicable after receipt of the Police 1-18 (first attendance report).

Completed forms including all photographs (digital) are to be registered on the relevant TRIM file and a copy sent by TRIM workflow to the Main Roads Road Safety Engineering Manager.

It is the responsibility of the Main Roads Road Safety Engineering Manager to determine whether a Crash Location Report is required based on the information obtained at the Preliminary Investigation.

Except where required by law, under no circumstances can the completed Preliminary Crash Investigation form be made available to any external agencies by the Preliminary Investigation Team Leader or Members if it is determined by the Main Roads Road Safety Engineering Manager that a Crash Location Report is required to be undertaken. (Refer to Section 6.2 Distribution).

5.2 Crash Location Report

The Crash Location Report shall be completed by a suitably qualified person, using the Main Roads *Crash Location Report Proforma*, under the direction of the Main Roads Road Safety Engineering Manager. The Crash Location Report is dependent on the information outlined in the Police 1-18 report, five year crash history data and the Preliminary Investigation report.

Main Roads will supply the Team Leader with the following:

- Police 1-18 report;
- Preliminary Investigation Report;
- Access to crash data; and
- Any other relevant information.

The Team Leader shall arrange for an electronic copy of the completed Crash Location Report (including the Corrective Action Report) to be registered on the relevant TRIM file and a copy sent by TRIM workflow to the Main Roads Road Safety Engineering Manager for distribution.

6 APPROVAL

6.1 Endorsement

Crash Location Reports prepared by Main Roads shall be reviewed and endorsed by the Main Roads Road Safety Engineering Manager prior to distribution.

Independent Crash Location Reports commissioned by Main Roads should be reviewed by the Main Roads Road Safety Engineering Manager prior to distribution.

6.2 Distribution

6.2.1 Preliminary Investigation Report

6.2.1.1 All roads – No road environment issues

There may be instances where a Preliminary Investigation Report does not lead to the requirement of a final Crash Location Report due to no road environment issues being identified related to the fatal crash and/or crash history.

In these cases, the Main Roads Road Safety Engineering Manager shall arrange for the completed Preliminary Investigation Report to be registered on the relevant TRIM file and for an electronic copy of the report to be distributed to:

- Western Australia Police Major Crash Investigation Section; and
- The relevant local government responsible for the road in which the crash occurred.

6.2.1.2 State roads – Non-crash related road environment issues

There may be instances where a Crash Location Report is not required but road environment issues not related to the fatal crash and/or crash history may be identified that may need attention (e.g. road widths, missing or damaged signs, guide posts etc.).

In these cases, the Main Roads Road Safety Engineering Manager shall arrange for the completed Preliminary Investigation Report to be registered on the relevant TRIM file and for an electronic copy of the report to be distributed to:

- Regional Manager or the delegated representative in the relevant Regional Office responsible for asset management of the study area; and
- Western Australia Police Major Crash Investigation Section.

6.2.1.3 Local roads - Non-crash related road environment issues

There may be instances where a Crash Location Report is not required but road environment issues not related to the fatal crash and/or crash history may be identified that may need attention (e.g. road widths, missing or damaged signs, guide posts etc.).

In these cases, the Main Roads Road Safety Engineering Manager shall arrange for the completed Preliminary Investigation Report to be registered on the relevant TRIM file and for an electronic copy of the report to be distributed to:

- Western Australia Police Major Crash Investigation Section; and
- The relevant local government responsible for the road in which the crash occurred.

6.2.2 Crash Location Reports

6.2.2.1 State roads

The Main Roads Road Safety Engineering Manager shall arrange for the Crash Location Report (including the Corrective Action Report) to be registered on the relevant TRIM file and for an electronic copy to be distributed to:

- The State Coroner (fatal crashes only);
- Western Australia Police Major Crash Investigation Section; and
- Regional Manager or the delegated representative in the relevant Regional Office responsible for asset management of the study area.

6.2.2.2 Local Government/Other Agency roads

The Main Roads Road Safety Engineering Manager shall arrange for the Crash Location Report (including the Corrective Action Report) if requested by Police or the Coroner, to be registered on the relevant TRIM file and for an electronic copy to be distributed to:

- The State Coroner (fatal crashes only);
- Western Australia Police Major Crash Investigation Section; and
- The relevant local government responsible for the road in which the crash occurred.

6.3 Close out

6.3.1 State roads

The Regional Manager or delegated representative in the relevant Regional Office shall complete the Corrective Action Report within one calendar month and arrange for the completed report to be returned to the Main Roads Road Safety Engineering Manager to be registered on the relevant TRIM file.

The Regional Manager or delegated representative shall arrange:

- Maintenance of signs, pavement markings, pavement repairs or any other minor defects highlighted in the Corrective Action Report; and
- Documentation of proposed action for Capital Works as highlighted in the Corrective Action Report.

6.3.2 Court appearances

The Main Roads Road Safety Engineering Manager or Team Leader is responsible for the contents of the Crash Location Report but not the subsequent actions by the Regional Manager or the delegated representatives in the relevant Regional Office.

There may be instances where the Main Roads Road Safety Engineering Manager or Team Leader is requested to appear in court via:

- Subpoena,
- Summons, or
- Contact to be a witness by:
 - Police Officer (prosecuting or Coroner's Court),
 - Counsel Assisting (Coroner's Court),
 - State Solicitors Office (State Government agencies),
 - Lawyer acting for party to or interest in an action.

In all instances such requests shall be referred to the Manager Legal and Commercial Services Branch to determine the most appropriate representatives (refer to Delegation of Authority Clause 17.3).

END OF POLICY AND APPLICATION GUIDELINES