



## POLICE ACCIDENT REPORTS

**Data Description** The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) obtains police accident reports (PARs) from state Departments of Transportation. A PAR is completed by police officers at a motor vehicle traffic crash scene and contains information describing pre-crash characteristics, crash phase elements and crash outcomes. The data may be answered by the officer using evidence found at the scene and by interviewing participants and witnesses. Information may vary by state because each state has different data collection and reporting standards. The dataset captures motor vehicle collisions involving police vehicles and other first responders including collisions in intersections, when using lights and sirens, involving pursuit or high speeds. For injury research, the dataset is one of the only datasets that provide information regarding environmental & roadway conditions as well as vehicle and driver factors.

In Illinois, crashes reported by police must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- A fatality associated with the crash that occurs within 30 after the date of the crash,
- An injury associated with the crash, or
- Starting on January 1, 2009, when all drivers involved in a crash are insured, the amount of damage to the property of any one person is \$1,500 or greater. If any driver does not have insurance, the reporting threshold remains at \$500.

**Limitations** Research has shown that police underestimate severity of injury when no blood is observed at the scene and overestimate injury severity when blood is present. Only collisions that are reported are captured. For general collisions, research shows that most fatal injuries are captured, but 0-20% of hospitalized non-fatal injuries and 20-50% non-hospitalized non-fatal injuries are missed. Up to 50% of property damage only collisions are missed. Also roadway collisions and injuries that are unlikely to involve police are disproportionately missed: bike crashes and crashes occurring off motorways.

**Variables** The common file structure organizes information contained on the state PARs into three files:

- Crash file: contains general crash characteristics describing the environmental and roadway conditions at the time of the crash.
- Vehicle file: contains information describing the vehicles involved in the crash. This file also includes some driver characteristics.
- Person file: contains information describing the characteristics of the drivers, passengers, pedestrians, pedalcyclists and other non-motorists involved in the crash.

### **Case Definition for Identifying Civilian Injuries Caused by Law Enforcement**

Where variable Vehicle Use (VEHU) or Special\_Vehicle2 ="06" (police vehicle)

Other emergency responder vehicles

Where variable Vehicle Use (VEHU) or Special\_Vehicle2 ="04" (ambulance vehicle)

Where variable Vehicle Use (VEHU) or Special\_Vehicle2 ="05" (fire vehicle)