

PREFACE

The California State Transportation Agency is the lead agency for traffic safety in the State of California. It oversees the activities of the Office of Traffic Safety, Department of California Highway Patrol (CHP), California Department of Transportation, and California Department of Motor Vehicles.

The CHP has prepared the 2020 Annual Report of Fatal and Injury Motor Vehicle Traffic Crashes. This report was completed based on motor vehicle traffic crash reports received from all reporting law enforcement agencies, allied agencies, and from CHP Area offices.

The Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System (SWITRS) processes all reported fatal and injury crashes that occurred on California's state highways and all other roadways, excluding private property.

The SWITRS, a 48-year-old system, was reengineered beginning with 2002 data to take advantage of the advances made in computer technology. Additionally, changes were made to the definition of some data elements and corresponding logic processes to reflect current industry practices. Due to these changes in the program and the processing of traffic crash reports, portions of the current data are not directly comparable to data from years prior to 2002.

There is an error margin of 2 percent due to transit time from all reporting law enforcement agencies of their traffic crash reports and/or incomplete traffic crash reports received from respective agencies.

As previously reported, the Traffic Crash Report form was revised in July 2003. A change was made to the entry method for vehicle type. Following this revision, a significant number of reports have been submitted without data in the vehicle type field or with an incorrect code. Due to this error, the number of "Not Stated" vehicle types have greatly increased. As a result, the data in tables, such as "truck-involved crashes" or "motorcycle-involved crashes" that use vehicle type, may be under reported.

In 2017, the CHP completed revisions to the CHP 555, Traffic Crash Report. Minor changes to the CHP 555, Page 3, Injured/Witness/Passengers, included changing the injury status boxes. The injury status boxes previously read "Severe Injury," "Other Visible Injury," and "Complaint of Pain." The injury status boxes have been updated to read "Suspected Serious Injury," "Suspected Minor Injury," and "Possible Injury." These updated injury definitions meet specific requirements established by the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 23 - Highways, 1300.11(c), which requires states to be in compliance with the Model Minimum Uniform Crash Criteria (MMUCC) Guideline 5th Edition "Suspected Serious Injury" attribute by April 15, 2019. The MMUCC is a minimum, standardized data set for describing motor vehicle crashes and the vehicles, persons, and environment involved.

Definitions:

Suspected Serious Injury—A suspected serious injury is any injury other than fatal which results in one or more of the following:

- Severe laceration resulting in exposure of underlying tissues/muscle/organs or resulting in significant blood loss.
- Broken or distorted extremity (arm or leg).
- Crush injuries.
- Suspected skull, chest, or abdominal injury other than bruises or minor lacerations.
- Significant burns (2nd and 3rd degree burns over 10 percent or more of the body).
- Unconsciousness when taken from the crash scene.
- Paralysis or spinal injury.

Suspected Minor Injury—A suspected minor injury is any injury that is evident at the scene of the crash other than fatal or suspected serious injuries. Examples include: lump on the head, abrasions, bruises, and/or minor lacerations (cuts on the skin surface with minimal bleeding and no exposure of deeper tissue/muscle).

Possible Injury—A possible injury is any injury reported or claimed which is not a fatal, suspected serious, or suspected minor injury. Examples include: momentary loss of consciousness, claim of injury, limping, or complaint of pain or nausea. Possible injuries are those which are reported by the person or are indicated by the person's behavior, but no wounds or injuries are readily evident.

Property Damage Only (PDO) crashes are found in Sections 1, 7, and 8 of this publication. Property Damage Only crashes are indicators of the volume of traffic crashes and are not exact statistics. This is because some agencies report only partial numbers of their PDO crashes, or none at all.

This report is prepared in accordance with the California Vehicle Code Section 2408. The cooperation received from all reporting traffic law enforcement agencies is greatly appreciated.

This report can also be viewed on the CHP Internet web site at <http://www.chp.ca.gov> by clicking on "Programs & Services," scrolling down to the subheading "Services/Information," selecting "SWITRS (Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System [Standard Reports])," and selecting the "2020 Annual Report California".