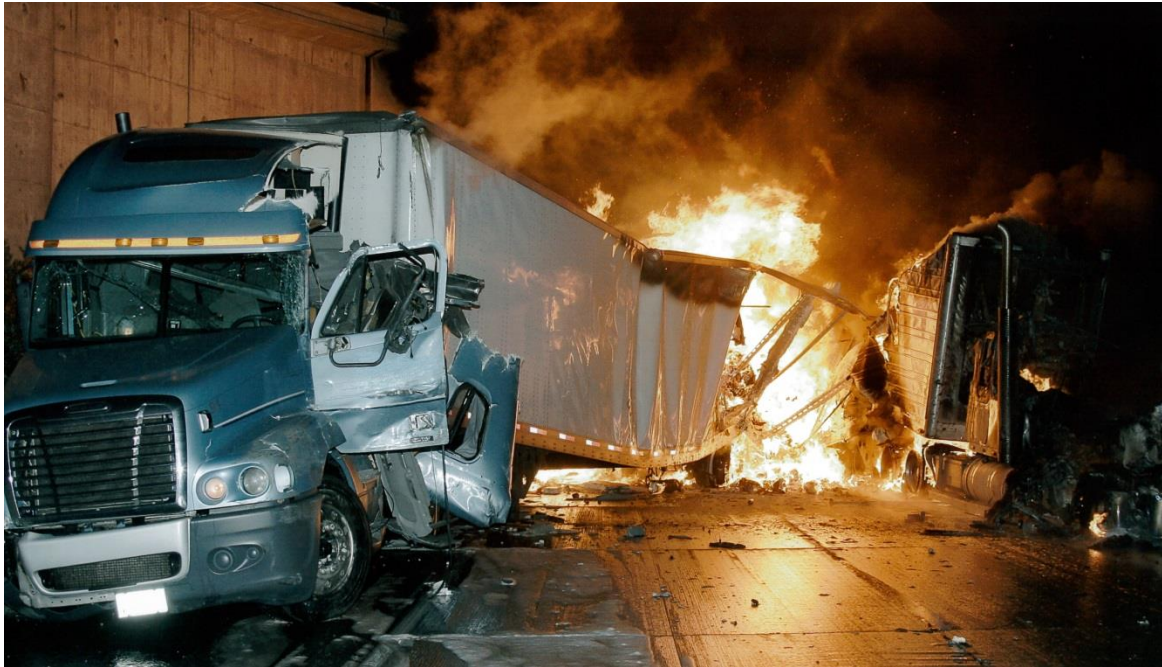




# CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL

HPM 110.5



# CRASH INVESTIGATION MANUAL





DEPARTMENT OF CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL

CRASH INVESTIGATION MANUAL

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CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL.

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## FOREWORD

The purpose of this manual is to provide policy, guidelines, procedures, and format specifications in the reporting responsibilities and documentation of crashes.

The objective of this manual is to standardize the statewide reporting and documentation of traffic and nontraffic crashes. The Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System (SWITRS) was implemented in 1972 to establish uniformity in the collection, reporting, and retrieval of traffic crash data. Section 20008 of the California Vehicle Code requires that all law enforcement agencies forward a copy of every traffic crash report involving injury or death to the California Highway Patrol (CHP). Although there is no legal requirement to submit property damage-only reports, agencies are encouraged to do so.

Crash documentation is the foundation for any effective traffic safety program. To attain a reduction in the frequency and severity of traffic crashes, it is important that the information exchanged among users be identical in definition and type of data. The statewide use of the standard CHP traffic crash report forms in accordance with the instructions in this manual will meet this requirement and provide meaningful data concerning each of the following subjects:

1. The magnitude of the overall traffic crash problem. This is accomplished through comparisons with other local, state, and national traffic safety statistics.
2. The identification of specific traffic safety problems. The collection of traffic crash data will help identify highway design, law enforcement, vehicle, and driver deficiencies. Corrective countermeasures may then be developed by traffic engineers, law enforcement agencies, driver improvement analysts, and educators.
3. The effectiveness of crash prevention efforts. The success or failure of crash prevention programs will be determined through evaluation of statistics gathered from traffic crash report forms.
4. The determination of negligence or fault. Information provided to the Department of Motor Vehicles' driver record file will aid analysts in the development of driver improvement programs by identifying problem or negligent drivers and determining the laws violated in connection with the traffic crashes.

Each quarter, SWITRS produces eight routine computer-generated reports reflecting tabulations and categorizations of traffic crash activity within respective jurisdictions.

The reports allow law enforcement and public works agencies to identify high-crash frequency-locations, crash-causing violations, types of crashes, types and ages of parties involved, and other information to assist in the analysis of traffic crashes.

Crash data is used by many agencies and individuals in addition to law enforcement and public works agencies. A partial list of users includes:

1. Department of Transportation
2. Department of Motor Vehicles
3. California Legislature
4. Courts
5. Private Citizens
6. Attorneys
7. Research Organizations
8. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
9. Safety Councils
10. Insurance Companies

Highway Patrol Manual 110.5, Crash Investigation Manual, provides instructions for completing CHP traffic crash report forms (CHP 555, Traffic Crash Report; CHP 556, Narrative/Supplemental; CHP 555D, Truck/Bus Crash Supplemental Report; CHP 555-03, Traffic Crash Report – Property Damage Only; and CHP 555E, School Bus Crash Supplemental Report), and is available to all law enforcement agencies. An additional resource, Highway Patrol Guide 40.60, SWITRS Users' Guide, is also available to assist in understanding the purpose and uses of SWITRS quarterly output reports. Information on how to order either the manual or the guide can be found in Chapter 10, Crash Report Processing and Forms, of this manual. For assistance in clarification or interpretation of items contained within this manual, contact:

California Highway Patrol  
Enforcement and Planning Division  
Collision Investigation Unit  
601 North 7th Street  
Sacramento, CA 95811  
(916) 843-3455

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

OPI: 060

HPM 110.5

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### HIGHWAY PATROL MANUAL 110.5, CRASH INVESTIGATION MANUAL

	<u>OPI</u>
CHAPTER 1	RESPONSIBILITIES AND POLICIES..... 060
CHAPTER 2	DEFINITIONS AND CLASSIFICATIONS OF CRASHES ..... 060
CHAPTER 3	INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE CHP 555, PAGE 1, TRAFFIC CRASH REPORT ..... 060
CHAPTER 4	INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE CHP 555, PAGE 2, TRAFFIC CRASH CODING ..... 060
CHAPTER 5	INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE CHP 555, PAGE 3, INJURED/WITNESS/PASSENGERS ..... 060
CHAPTER 6	INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE CHP 555, PAGE 4, FACTUAL DIAGRAM ..... 060
CHAPTER 7	INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE CHP 556, NARRATIVE/SUPPLEMENTAL ..... 060
CHAPTER 8	INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE CHP 555D, TRUCK/BUS CRASH SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT ..... 062
CHAPTER 9	INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE CHP 555-03, TRAFFIC CRASH REPORT – PROPERTY DAMAGE ONLY ..... 060
CHAPTER 10	CRASH REPORT PROCESSING AND FORMS..... 060
CHAPTER 11	CRASH INVESTIGATION REVIEW ..... 060
CHAPTER 12	TRAFFIC CONGESTION RELIEF ..... 060
CHAPTER 13	GUIDELINES FOR THE INVESTIGATION AND DOCUMENTATION OF SPECIFIC CRASHES ..... 060

CHAPTER 14	EXAMPLES OF COMPLETED TRAFFIC CRASH DOCUMENTATION.....	060
CHAPTER 15	INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE CHP 555E, SCHOOL BUS CRASH SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT .....	061