The DISPATCH

PennDOT Crash Newsletter - News you can use!

What's New?

Open-Book Knowledge Skills Quiz *Coming Soon*

In October 2023, a survey was launched to all police agencies across Pennsylvania to gage interest in an open-book knowledge skills quiz. Since much interest was garnered, we are working to make the quiz available on PennDOT's website under Travel in PA > Safety > Police Crash Reporting Tools. This quiz will be updated regularly so as to remain current, and is intended to be used for new hires, refreshers, or however your agency sees fit. It is essentially just another tool to be utilized to benefit officers and assist agencies with the training process. Once the quiz is available for accessibility, a formal message will be sent out with a link to the location. For questions, comments, or suggestions, contact us here.

Working Together

Reporting Crash Locations

For crash reporting purposes, a vehicle's final resting place is not the proper placement for the crash's coded location. Crash locations are to be placed at the site of the first unstable event. An unstable event is a situation not under human control. It originates when control is lost and terminates when control is regained or when all persons and property are at rest.

Examples of unstable events:

- Unit #1 loses control and strikes Unit #2, then crosses the median, and strikes Unit #3. This is one unstable event, and it will be reported as a three-vehicle crash because Unit #1 did not regain control before striking Unit #3. The crash's coded location would be where Unit #1 initially lost control of their vehicle.
- Part of a load falls from Unit #1, and it strikes Unit #2 following close behind. This is one unstable event, and the resultant crash would involve 2 vehicles. The crash's coded location would be where the load portion fell from Unit #1 and struck Unit #2.

Reporting Commerical Vehicles - AA 500 C Page

If one of the units is a commercial vehicle, all fields in the Commercial Vehicle Information Section (Block 23 in CRS) must be completed for that unit. (*This is part of a federal requirement.*)

The term commercial vehicle, for crash reporting purposes includes: all vehicles 10,001 pounds or more and used for business/commercial purposes; all vehicles 26,000 pounds or more; all vehicles "placarded" with hazardous materials, regardless of vehicle type; all vehicles designed to transport 16 or more passengers, including the driver; school buses; fire trucks are commercial vehicles regardless of their weight.

Carrier Name - The motor carrier may or may not be the registered owner of the vehicle. Make sure the information entered is for the correct party.

GVWR - Gross Vehicle Weight Rating.

Type of Carrier - The type of commercial carrier for this commercial vehicle.

Permitted - Leave blank if the load is not oversize.

Special Sizing - For oversized loads, a list of up to four oversize categories.

USDOT # - The unique number assigned to the commercial vehicle by the US Department of Transportation.

PUC # - The unique number assigned to the vehicle by the Pennsylvania Utilities Commission.

Cargo Body Type - This description is used to identify the body types of vehicles or commercial truck trailers.

Vehicle Configuration - Tractor/Semi-trailer information entered on the Unit page must correspond with what is entered on the Commercial Page.

Hazardous Materials - One-digit number that indicates the class of hazardous material being carried.

Commercial vehicles **do not** include an implement of husbandry, or a motor home or recreational trailer operated solely for personal use, or motorized construction equipment including, but not limited to, motor scrapers, backhoes, motor graders, compactors, excavators, tractors, trenchers, and bulldozers.

Understanding Crash Terms

Commercial Vehicle Cargo Body Types

Cargo Body Type is used to identify the body of commercial vehicles or commercial truck trailers. **For crashes involving a semi without a trailer, this field would be "not applicable."

Van/Enclosed Box - An enclosed cargo area fixed to the frame which uses doors for side/rear access which can be secured.

Grain/Chips/Gravel - Cargo body type used for hauling grain, crushed stone, and gravel using hoppers to hold the material and chutes or piping to install / remove the cargo.

Intermodal Container Chassis - These are used for carrying various sizes of shipping containers and use corner locks to secure their load.

Log/Pole Trailer - Trailers or trucks whose cargo areas are used for hauling timber.

Vehicle Towing Another Vehicle - Tow truck hauling another vehicle whose wheels are engaging the roadway using the vehicle's onboard equipment or a tow dolly. Please note: This does not include flatbed tow trucks with a vehicle on its bed, or a truck hauling a trailer with a vehicle loaded on it.

Cargo Tank - Cargo area designed to carry liquids (tar, fuels, milk, liquid fertilizers, etc.)

Flat Bed - Cargo area that is open and flat for multi-purpose cargo hauling.

Dump - Cargo type used for hauling a load & dumping their load. This type includes trucks & trailers.
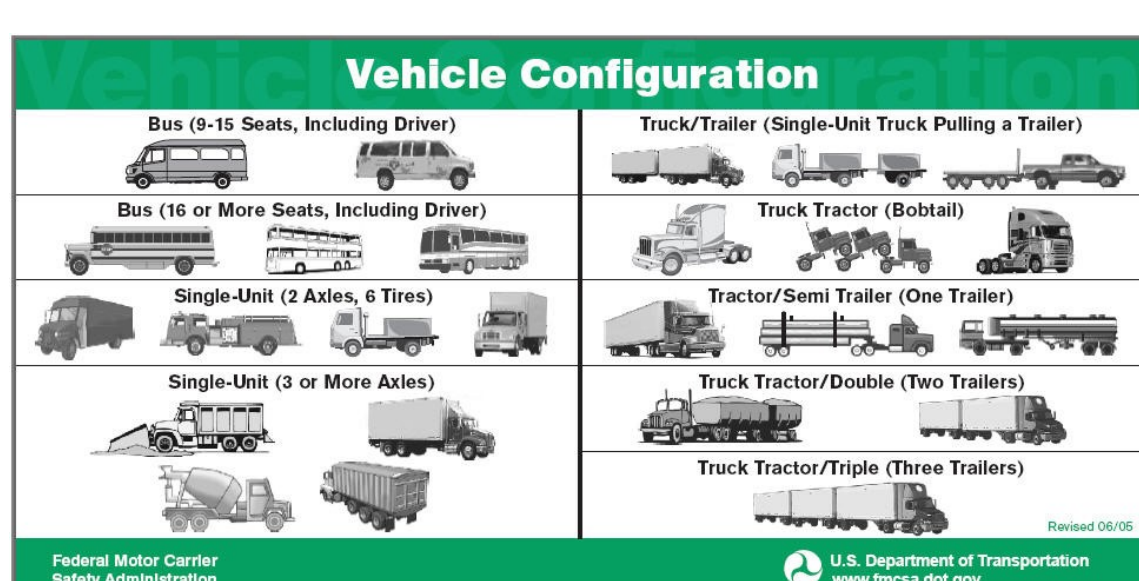
Concrete Mixer - Cargo type used for mixing concrete & hauling concrete.

Auto Transport - Truck or trailer system designed to carry 3 or more vehicles simultaneously.

Garbage/Refuse - Truck or trailer used exclusively to haul trash.

Bus - School, passenger, transit, other.

Other - Used to describe what other descriptors cannot.

Commercial Vehicle Configurations

Vehicle Configuration is used to identify the vehicle's cargo configuration or function.

- Passenger Car with hazmat placard displayed
- Light Truck (Van, mini-van, panel, pick-up, SUV) with hazmat placard displayed
- Single Unit Truck (2 axles, 6 tires)
- Single Unit Truck (3 or more axles)
- Single Unit Truck (unknown number of axles)
- Truck/Trailer
- Truck Tractor (Bobtail)
- Medium Heavy Truck (Cannot Classify)
- Minibus
- School Bus
- Transit Bus
- Motorcoach
- Other Bus
- Other - Used to describe what other descriptors cannot

Challenge your knowledge!

QUIZ: Ramps

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Traffic Records Program Administrator Area Map (TRPA)
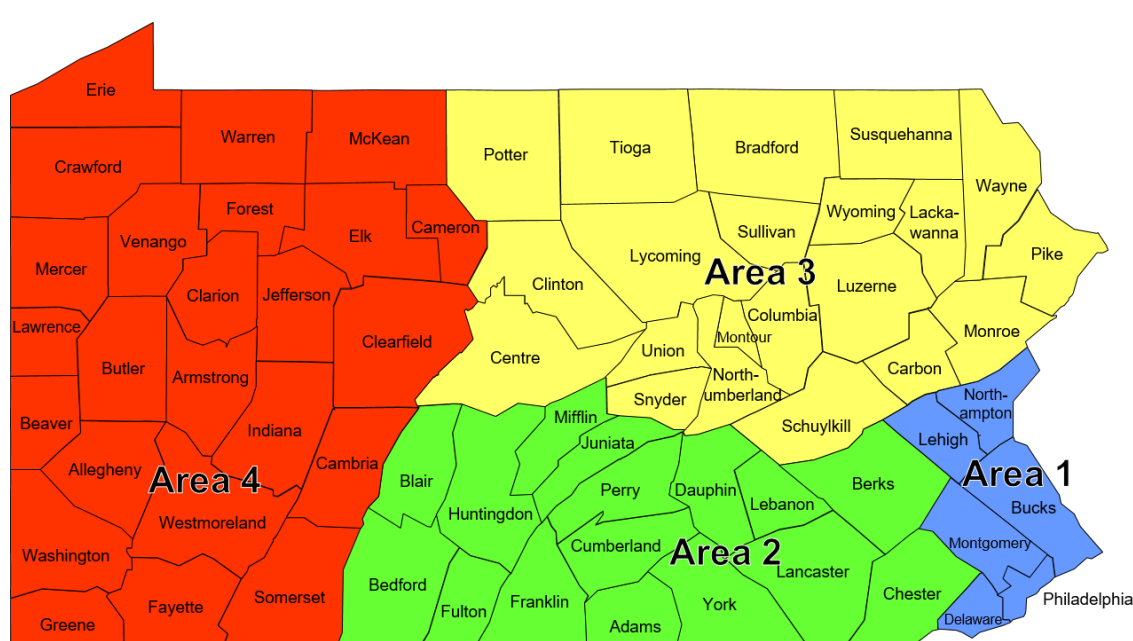
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Newsletter Archives

To access past issues of The Dispatch please visit our website.

Now that you've made it to the end of the newsletter, how would you rate its content?

Not helpful at all   0   1   2   3   4   Very helpful

For questions or concerns, email us at ra-pdleahelp@pa.gov.