

## **Partners Announce Release of Audio Podcast Series: The Value of Police Crash Reports**

### *The MV104-A Drives Highway Safety*

FEBRUARY 1, 2012 - The New York State Association of Chiefs of Police, New York State Department of Transportation, New York State Department of Motor Vehicles and Governor's Traffic Safety Committee announce the release of a special audio podcast series about Police Crash Reports. The MV104A is among the most common reports used by police in New York State. But did you know how they influence engineering, roadway design, signal timing, and repairs? Listen to traffic safety engineers, planners and law enforcement experts from New York State discuss the value of the MV104A in highway safety.

### *Police Reports are Critical*

Commissioner Joan McDonald of the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) said, "Crash data is the foundation of our highway safety programs at NYSDOT. We understand that there are many competing tasks at a crash scene and truly appreciate the efforts by police to document what has occurred. The information captured on each report helps us address specific problem locations as well as identify trends in crash types or patterns. This is another great example of the State of New York working with our local government partners."

"After 23 years in law enforcement myself, I have to say I learned some new things through these audio podcasts. I urge veteran officers, as well as newer officers, to listen to this important series", said Chief Joseph Waldron (Mechanicville PD), President of the New York State Association of Chiefs of Police.

"I congratulate the New York State Association of Chiefs of Police on the development of these informative and important Crash Data podcasts," said Department of Motor Vehicles Commissioner and Chair of the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee Barbara J. Fiala. "This effort, which was made possible through the cooperation of several agencies, will help make police officers aware that the information they report from crash scenes help to establish patterns and provide critical information that will have a lasting impact on highway safety beyond any particular incident."

The newly released series of audio interviews contains twelve titles:

**The Value of Police Crash Reports** - The information captured on each report helps us address specific problem locations as well as identify trends in crash types or patterns." The NYSDOT traffic engineers, highway designers and planners also rely on accurate crash data to make highways safer. Accurate data determines the use of millions of tax dollars for improvements and mitigation efforts on our roads. *(Featuring: Sandra Misiewicz, Transportation Planner for the Capital District Transportation Committee, Albany, NY; Frank Pearson, Regional Traffic Engineer, New York State Department of Transportation, Long Island, NY; Todd Stauring, Civil Engineer in the Planning Group of New York State Department of Transportation, Hornell, NY; Michael McMullen, Office Manager of the Crash Records Center at the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles; Bill Leonard, Director of the Motor Carrier Compliance Bureau of the New York State Department of Transportation, Albany, NY)*

**Location, Location, Location!** - Reporting accurate crash locations is critical to identifying highway safety issues for a given location. These specific locations can then be analyzed by engineers, designers and planners to apply appropriate, site specific remediation. Federal Safety funding is available for identified problem sites. Learn more about the impact of a detailed Narrative; the effectiveness of Geo-coding; use of the Incident Location Tool (ILT ) in TRaCS; proper identification of Reference Markers and how Traffic Regulation is impacted by accurate identification of crash locations. *(Featuring: Frank Pearson, Regional Traffic Engineer, New York State Department of Transportation, Long Island, NY; Todd Stauring, Civil Engineer in the Planning Group of New York State Department of Transportation, Hornell, NY; Sgt. James Daily, New York State Police, Albany, NY; Andrew Sattinger, Transportation Analyst, New York State Department of Transportation, Albany, NY; Matthew Roe, Planning and Research Manager of New York City Department of Transportation, NYC)*

**Crash Reports and TRaCs** - The Incident Locator Tool is the mapping tool within TRaCS which provides the officer with GPS functionality to locate the crash on a map. Along with improvements to the locator tool, the new diagramming tool and its uses are described. In addition, improvements to the data transfer process and other features which will be helpful to officers are explained. *(Featuring: Sgt. James Daily, New York State Police, Albany, NY; Andrew Sattinger, NYS Dept. of Transportation, Albany, NY)*

**Left Turn or Right Angle Crash?** - Engineers describe the difference, and the importance of distinguishing a left turn crash from a right angle crash. *(Featuring: Todd Stauring, Civil Engineer in the Planning Group of New York State Department of Transportation, Hornell, NY; Frank Pearson, Regional Traffic Engineer, New York State Department of Transportation, Long Island, NY)*

**Commercial Vehicles and the MV104S** - Along with identifying problem areas on the highway, crash data is used, along with inspection data, to rate Commercial Trucks and Busses. Accurate, timely data from crash reports provides data on severity and frequency of crashes. This information may prompt any of 21 commercial vehicle interventions, whether it be compliance reviews, warning letters or civil penalties. The definition of a Commercial Motor Vehicle is also clarified along with a Motor Carrier. Qualifying accidents also require MV104S. *(Featuring: Bill Leonard, Director of the Motor Carrier Compliance Bureau of the New York State Department of Transportation, Albany, NY)*

**Pedestrian and Bicycle Crashes** - Vulnerable Road Users - pedestrians, bicyclists and motorcyclists - make up about three quarters of all traffic fatalities and a large portion of injuries and severe injuries in NYC. This podcast explains how remediation can only be implemented with the detail found in the MV104A on 'Pedestrian Action', 'Diagrams' and 'Narratives'. Sample remediation is given to illustrate the kind of information which is meaningful to planners and engineers in determining exactly where the problem lies. *(Featuring: Matthew Roe, Planning and Research Manager of New York City Department of Transportation)*

**Coding Your Crash Reports** - There are several boxes on the MV104A which require a numeric code from the investigating officer. These codes play a critical role to analysts and engineers. Danielle Besso describes how these codes influence her work in analyzing crash

locations. *(Featuring: Danielle Besso, Regional Safety Evaluation Engineer of New York State Department of Transportation, Binghamton, NY)*

**Public Property Damage** - Damage to guide rails, signs, culverts, barriers, utility poles, bridges is costly to the taxpayer and can also impact the safety of our roads. The Damage Recovery program at NYSDOT projects recovery costs for 2011 to exceed \$15M. And this is a fraction of potential recovery costs. The usefulness of property damage data entered in 'Collision Type' and 'Second Event' on the MV104A is explained. *(Featuring: Andrew Sattinger, Transportation Analyst, New York State Department of Transportation, Albany, NY)*

**Fatal Crashes** - The MV104D is filed together with the MV104A for fatal crashes. Data entered into these reports is collected in the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS). The NYSDMV disseminates FARS data to various entities to improve the safety of our vehicles and our roads. For example, auto manufacturers receive this data in order to improve the safety of automobiles. Learn how crash data contributed to the addition of safety devices on automobiles and trucks. FARS data is also used in performance measures, to evaluate how well we are doing in keeping our roads safe for the traveling public, nationwide. *(Featuring: Louise Cesare, Supervisor of the Fatality Analysis Reporting System at the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles, Albany, NY; Michael McMullen, Office Manager of the Crash Records Center at the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles)*

**Police-Involved Crashes; Driver Reviews** - Frequent at-fault crashes help the DMV identify drivers who are subject to an N-3 credit review. If crash reports indicate that the driver was not contributing to the crash, then it is not held against the driver. Similarly, when an officer is involved in a crash, the MV104L must be filed when responding to the scene of an accident, disaster, police call, and when pursuing suspected violators of the law. If the officer is not at fault, this crash will be excluded from the officers' external driver license abstract. *(Featuring: Michael McMullen, Office Manager of the Crash Records Center at the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles)*

**Duplicate Records** - When tickets and crash reports contain illegible or erroneous information, and when drivers provide multiple identities, constructing a single accurate record is problematic. Law enforcement can take certain steps to ensure the quality of information recorded on Uniform Traffic Tickets and MV104As. *(Featuring: Debbie Langevin, Director of Ticketing at the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles, Albany, NY)*

**Crash Data Creates Real Change** - Two examples of specific crash problem sites are discussed in detail. One location had been ranked the top pedestrian crash location in NYC for more than a few years. Details of the various methods used to determine all contributing factors of the problem are described. Using crash data in a mapped form, together with details on pedestrian action, road geometry and crosswalk visibility issues, planners were able to take corrective actions at the site and reduce pedestrian crashes by 80%. Another site on Interstate 88, near Horseheads, New York, had been identified as a Priority Investigation Location (PIL). Discussed are remediations applied after determining accidents were occurring on a curve and with problematic roadway geometry, together with information on time of day. *(Featuring: Matthew Roe, Planning and Research Manager of New York City Department of Transportation; Todd Stauring, Civil Engineer in the Planning Group of New York State Department of Transportation, Hornell, NY)*

John Grebert, Executive Director of the New York State Association of Chiefs of Police said, “Completing crash reports is a routine function for police, and the impact of these reports is far reaching. This series will help to reinforce the basics, as well as some unique and complex parts of crash reporting.” Grebert stressed the significance of police crash reports, adding, “It is also important for us to understand that crash reports are used by many others, and the quality of the information we collect identifies hazardous locations, roadway and vehicle defects, effects construction projects, and also helps law enforcement analyze locations requiring enforcement. These podcasts will be an important resource for New York’s law enforcement community.”

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#### CREDITS:

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Voices featured in the podcast series:

- Danielle Besso, Regional Safety Evaluation Engineer of New York State Department of Transportation, Binghamton, NY;
- Louise Cesare, Supervisor of the Fatality Analysis Reporting System at the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles, Albany, NY;
- Sgt. James Daily, New York State Police, Albany, NY;
- Debbie Langevin, Director of Ticketing at the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles, Albany, NY;
- Bill Leonard, Director of the Motor Carrier Compliance Bureau of the New York State Department of Transportation, Albany, NY;
- Michael McMullen, Office Manager of the Crash Records Center at the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles, Albany, NY;
- Frank Pearson, Regional Traffic Engineer, New York State Department of Transportation, Long Island, NY;
- Matthew Roe, Planning and Research Manager of New York City Department of Transportation, NYC;
- Andrew Sattinger, Transportation Analyst, New York State Department of Transportation, Albany, NY;
- Todd Staring, Civil Engineer in the Planning Group of New York State Department of Transportation, Hornell, NY.

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