



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

2009 FARS/NASS GES Standardization



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For over 30 years, the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) has been the most referenced source for U.S. fatal crash data. Since 1988, the National Automotive Sampling System General Estimates System (NASS GES) has been an essential source for non-fatal injury crash data. Both systems have used fairly similar sets of data elements (variables) to describe crashes, but the differences in the systems' coding details have required separate software, documentation, coding, and analysis.

In 2009, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) took a big step toward the goal of unifying the FARS and NASS GES data definitions and coding, simplifying crash data entry and analysis while also reducing costs and errors. The Data Standardization Work Group, consisting of representatives from NHTSA, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), was chartered in 2006. The mission of the work group was to improve the compatibility of FARS and NASS GES and to bring both systems into alignment with the Model Minimum Uniform Crash Criteria (MMUCC), the guideline now used by nearly all States in the development and revision of their crash report forms and databases. After a thorough review of the data elements and attributes (variable values) in FARS and NASS GES and comparison to the recommended MMUCC data elements and attributes, the first phase of identified standardization changes were implemented in 2009, involving 45 common data elements, to include:

- ✓ Hit and Run
- ✓ Rollover / Location of Rollover
- ✓ Vehicle Removal
- ✓ Cargo Body Type
- ✓ Driver Presence
- ✓ Violations Charged
- ✓ Speed-Related
- ✓ Driver Vision Obscured by
- ✓ Air Bag Deployed
- ✓ Alcohol Test / Drug Test
- ✓ Number of Occupants
- ✓ Work Zone

Two phases remain to complete the standardization. The next phase of standardization changes will be introduced in 2010 data collection, to include even more affected elements, and adoption of one coding manual for both systems. The final phase, scheduled to be implemented in 2011, will result in one data entry system for both FARS and NASS GES.

For more detailed information on MMUCC:

2008 MMUCC Guideline

For more detailed information on FARS:

<http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/811352.pdf>
<http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/811353.pdf>

For more detailed information on NASS GES:

<http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/811354.pdf>
<http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/811355.pdf>