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Not-in-Traffic Surveillance (NiTS) System

NiTS 2007: Nontraffic Crash Database User's Manual

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16. Abstract

The Not-in-Traffic Surveillance (NiTS) system is a virtual data collection system designed to provide counts and details regarding fatalities and injuries that occur in nontraffic crashes and in noncrash incidents. The NiTS 2007 system provided information about an estimated 1,159 fatalities and 98,000 injuries that occurred in nontraffic crashes on private roads, on driveways and in parking facilities. The NiTS 2007 system also provided information about an annual average of 588 fatalities and 743,000 injuries in noncrash incidents that occurred inside of or otherwise involved a passenger vehicle.

This document describes the creation of the nontraffic crash database using police reports and other sources obtained through the Fatality Analysis Reporting System and National Automotive Sampling System data collection infrastructures in 2007. The database contains 19 variables that describe the crash, vehicles, and persons involved in nontraffic crashes. The database also contains an adjustment factor to produce national estimates of the number of injuries and fatalities that occur in nontraffic crashes. This database was used for the Report to Congress, "Fatalities and Injuries in Motor Vehicle Backing Crashes." The nontraffic crash database is available as a SAS and Microsoft Excel file.

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INTRODUCTION

Motor-vehicle-related fatalities and injuries can occur in a variety of situations. The three major categories of motor-vehicle-related fatalities and injuries are traffic crashes, nontraffic crashes, and noncrash incidents. Since 1975 the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has collected extensive information on fatalities that occur in traffic crashes through the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS). Additionally, NHTSA's National Automotive Sampling System (NASS) has provided national estimates of the number and nature of traffic crash injuries since 1979. Data regarding fatalities and injuries that occur in nontraffic crashes, which can occur on private roads, driveways, and parking lots, and in noncrash incidents, such as fatalities involving children left in hot vehicles or injuries that occur while repairing a vehicle, have not routinely been collected by NHTSA. Congress required NHTSA to collect and maintain information about fatalities and injuries in nontraffic and noncrash incidents in Public Law Number 109-59, Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). Section 10305 of SAFETEA-LU states:

> (a) IN GENERAL. — In conjunction with the study required in section 10304 [Vehicle Backover Avoidance Technology Study], the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration shall establish a method to collect and maintain data on the number and types of injuries and deaths involving motor vehicles with a gross vehicle weight rating of not more than 10,000 pounds in non-traffic incidents.
> (b) DATA COLLECTION AND PUBLICATION. — The Secretary of Transportation shall publish the data collected under subsection (a) no less frequently than biennially.

Congress also required the Secretary of Transportation to establish and maintain a database of motor-vehicle-related fatalities and injuries that occur in nontraffic and noncrash incidents in Public Law Number 110-189, the Cameron Gulbransen Kids Transportation Safety Act of 2007 (K.T. Safety Act). Section 2(f) of the K.T. Safety Act states:

> (1) IN GENERAL. — Not later than 12 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall establish and maintain a database of injuries and deaths in nontraffic, noncrash events involving motor vehicles.
> (2) CONTENTS. — The database established pursuant to paragraph
> (1) shall include information regarding—
> (A) the number, types, and causes of injuries and deaths resulting from the events described in paragraph (1);
> (B) the make, model, and model year of motor vehicles involved in such events, when practicable; and
> (C) other variables that the Secretary determines will enhance the value of the database.
> (3) AVAILABILITY. — The Secretary shall make the information contained in the database established pursuant to paragraph (1) available to the public through the Internet and other means.

NHTSA designed and implemented the Not-in-Traffic Surveillance (NiTS) System to fulfill the requirements of SAFETEA-LU Section 10305 and the K.T. Safety Act Section 2(f). NHTSA considered several methods for collecting information about nontraffic crashes and noncrash incidents including police reports, trauma registries and hospital records, insurance company data, and newspaper stories. The available sources were reviewed and evaluated by the degree to

which they could provide accurate national counts as well as useful information. The assessment indicated that the most appropriate source of data depended upon whether the event was a nontraffic crash or noncrash incident and whether it was a fatality or nonfatal injury. Therefore, the NiTS system was developed as a virtual system comprised of four major components. One component is a database of fatalities and injuries in nontraffic crashes based predominantly on police reports. A second component is a database of noncrash fatalities based upon death certificate information, and the third component is a database of noncrash injuries based upon a nationally representative sample of emergency department records. The fourth component is a collection of detailed investigations of particular types of crash and noncrash events such as backovers where a driver reverses into a pedestrian or pedalcyclist, power window strangulation, children left in hot vehicles (hyperthermia) and trunk entrapment, which are conducted by NHTSA's Special Crash Investigations (SCI) program.

The first component, the database of fatalities and injuries in nontraffic crashes, is described in this document. NHTSA also created this database to address the requirements of SAFETEA-LU Section 2012 that the Secretary of Transportation collect data and compile statistics on crashes involving motor vehicles being backed up that result in fatalities and injuries, including those crashes that occur on nonpublic roads, residential and commercial driveways, and parking facilities. The database described in this document was used in the Report to Congress, "Fatalities and Injuries in Motor Vehicle Backing Crashes," which also was required by Section 2012 of SAFETEA-LU.

The nontraffic crash database was designed to use NHTSA's existing crash data collection infrastructures. To collect information about injuries in nontraffic crashes, NHTSA requested that beginning in 2007 the NASS researchers, who visit the police jurisdictions that provide crash reports to the National Automotive Sampling System – General Estimates System (NASS-GES) sample, send all injury cases that did not qualify for NASS-GES to a NHTSA contractor for tracking and cataloguing. The injury crashes that did not qualify for NASS-GES because they were off the trafficway (nontraffic) were then entered into NiTS. To collect information on nontraffic crash fatalities, NHTSA requested that beginning in 2007 the FARS analysts, who collect and enter the fatal traffic crash information into FARS for each State, send all cases that did not qualify for FARS to the NHTSA contractor. Similar to the nontraffic injuries, the crash fatalities that did not qualify for FARS because they were off the trafficway were then entered into NiTS. NHTSA also supplemented the nontraffic crash fatality reports in NiTS with reports of nontraffic crash fatalities submitted by the NASS researchers. All total, NHTSA received information about 455 fatalities and 1,973 injuries in nontraffic crashes that occurred in 2007. The information in this document only represents NHTSA's data collection and coding activities for cases from 2007. NHTSA's future data collection and coding activities for NiTS cases may involve different variables or variable definitions.

The cases entered into NiTS provide useful information about nontraffic fatalities and injuries. However, NHTSA is aware that NiTS does not have a complete count of all nontraffic crash fatalities. State laws and regulations vary considerably regarding when reports are required for nontraffic crash fatalities, the types of report used to document the crashes, and whether the report is sent from the local jurisdiction to the State. Most States require some type of report, but the report is generally kept at the local police jurisdiction and is not sent to the State. Since the

FARS analysts work at the State level, there may be reports of nontraffic crash fatalities of which they are not aware. NHTSA did not receive any reports from eight States, and only received one report from each of six other States. NHTSA cannot determine if it did not receive any reports from the eight States because there were none or because the State did not have nontraffic fatalities. Similarly, NHTSA is aware that not all of the NASS-GES sample police jurisdictions were able to provide nontraffic police reports. Over 80 percent of the more than 400 NASS-GES sampled police jurisdictions indicated that they complete reports for nontraffic crashes involving injury. (Most of the exceptions were State Police, who call in the local police for nontraffic crashes.) However, NHTSA received nontraffic crash reports from only about two-thirds of the sampled police jurisdictions. Some of the practical problems reported by the NASS-GES researchers regarding why they could not obtain nontraffic crash reports included situations where the nontraffic crash reports were stored with general police incident reports including criminal complaints such as robberies and assaults and could not easily be separated, where the nontraffic crash reports were sent to another office or location, and where the researcher could not obtain permission to receive or to look for the nontraffic reports.

Because of these limitations, NHTSA derived adjustment factors to account for the incompleteness of the NiTS system. NHTSA estimated the expected number of nontraffic fatalities and injuries using other data sources. The adjustment factors inflate the number of cases received to a national estimate of nontraffic injuries and fatalities. The adjustment factors were determined separately for fatalities and injuries and for occupants and nonoccupants. For fatalities, NHTSA obtained two special mortality files that contain 2003 and 2004 death certificate information from the National Center for Health Statistics' National Vital Statistics System. The adjustment factor for nontraffic crash fatalities accounts for the difference between the number of fatalities expected, based upon death certificates and traffic fatalities reported in FARS, and the number of fatalities received. For nontraffic injuries, NHTSA turned to its State Data System and used information from three States that collect information on both nontraffic and traffic injury crashes. The information from these States was then applied to estimates of injuries in traffic crashes from NASS-GES to determine an expected number of nontraffic crash injuries. The weights based upon the NASS-GES sample design were then inflated to produce adjustment factors that reflect the expected number of nontraffic injuries. Due to the necessary use of outside sources in developing the adjustment factors, standard errors as an estimate of sampling error are not validly developed from the adjustment factors and are therefore not recommended. (A more complete discussion of the calculation of the adjustment factors may be found in the Report to Congress, "Fatalities and Injuries in Motor Vehicle Backing Crashes.")

This 2007 NiTS Nontraffic Crash User's Manual provides an overview of the variables that were collected and coded for nontraffic crash cases covering the year 2007. This manual uses definitions based on NHTSA's Fatality Analysis Reporting System and the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) D16.1 "Manual on Classification of Motor Vehicle Traffic Accidents." In general terms, a fatality or injury in a nontraffic crash must fit the ANSI D.16 definition of a nontraffic motor vehicle accident fatality or injury. Based on these definitions, several types of crashes were excluded from the final nontraffic crash data set:

- Cases in which the fatality was attributed to natural causes or a medical condition
- Cases in which the fatality occurred more than 30 days after the crash
- Cases in which the fatality or injury was due to deliberate intent such as homicide, suicide, and legal intervention
- Cases in which the fatality or injury was due to a cataclysmic event
- Cases in which there was no motor vehicle in transport
    - In transport means in motion or stationary on a roadway such as a vehicle stopped at a stop sign.
    - Not in transport means off the roadway and not in motion such as a parked vehicle.
    - Examples excluded because no motor vehicle in transport:
        - A vehicle falls off a jack stand and injures a person; or
        - A bicyclist strikes the open door of a parked motor vehicle
- Cases in which the only vehicles involved were not designed primarily for road use
    - Vehicle classifications were based on definitions used by the NASS-GES 2006 Coding Manual.
    - Common examples of these types of excluded vehicles are ATVs, dirt bikes, golf carts, snowmobiles, go-carts, fork lifts, motorized wheel chairs, farm equipment, and construction equipment (other than trucks).

The NiTS program accepted potential crashes only from FARS analysts and from sampled NASS-GES police jurisdictions. Crashes contributed from either program source were not restricted to standard forms or State Reporting requirements. The primary source documents from NASS-GES were limited to those completed by law enforcement. Cases originating from FARS could be from any notification source, including Internet articles and Death Certificates. The NiTS project is grateful for all the cooperation received from the NASS-GES police jurisdictions, researchers, and Zone Centers; FARS analysts and headquarters staff; and numerous other NHTSA staff members in establishing this vital research project.

NiTS 2007 VARIABLE LIST

The NiTS 2007 Nontraffic Crash database is a person-level file. When more than one person was in a crash or a vehicle within a crash, the variables descriptive of the crash or vehicle are repeated for each person in the crash or vehicle, as noted in the variable definitions. A person record is uniquely identified by the variables CASENO, VEHNO, and PERNO.

VARIABLES AND DEFINITIONS

Adjustment Factor

SAS variable name: ADJUST

Definition: The adjustment factor is used to produce national estimates of the number of nontraffic crash fatalities and injuries. For more detailed information about the adjustment factor; see the "Introduction" section of this document.

Case Number

SAS variable name: CASENO

Definition:

This variable is a unique number assigned to each crash. This variable is repeated for each person involved in the crash.

Day of Week

SAS variable name: DAY

Definition:

The day of the week in which the crash occurred. This variable is repeated for each person involved in the crash.

Attribute Codes:

1 Sunday
2 Monday
3 Tuesday
4 Wednesday
5 Thursday
6 Friday
7 Saturday
9 Unknown

Crash Month

SAS variable name: MONTH

Definition:

The two-digit month in which the crash occurred. If the month is unknown, the attribute is "99." This variable is repeated for each person involved in the crash.

Crash Time

SAS variable name: TIME

Definition: The four-digit (military) time when the crash occurred. This variable is repeated for each person involved in the crash.

Attribute Codes:

HHMM: Two-digit hour (01-24) and two digit minute (00-59)
2400: Midnight
HH99: Known hour, unknown minute
9999: Unknown time

Crash Year

SAS variable name: YEAR

Definition:

The four-digit year in which the crash occurred. For the NITS 2007 SAS file, YEAR is always 2007. This variable is repeated for each person involved in the crash.

Driver Presence

SAS variable name: DRIVER

Definition:

This variable is intended to identify the presence and status of the driver of a motor vehicle. This variable is repeated for each occupant of the motor vehicle. Hit-and-run is used to create a driver record with all available information when a nonoccupant or occupant of another vehicle is injured or killed by a hit-and-run vehicle. The variable is not applicable for nonoccupants.

Attribute Codes:

1 Driver operated vehicle
2 Unattended/driverless vehicle
3 Hit-and-run
4 Unknown driver presence

Location of Most Harmful Event

SAS variable name: MHELOC

Definition: Indicates where the most harmful event occurred. The definitions of the various location attributes are defined below. This variable is repeated for each occupant of the motor vehicle. The variable is not applicable for nonoccupants.

Attribute Codes:

1 Residential Driveway. A *residential driveway* is a private road giving access from a trafficway to a building used as a private residence or home.
2 Residential Garage. A *residential garage* is the enclosed portion of a private residence or home for sheltering motor vehicles.
3 Parking Garage. A *parking garage* is a building, facility, or structure specifically designed for the sheltering, storage, or parking of motor vehicles.
4 Residential Parking Lot. A *residential parking lot* is an open area used primarily for parking road vehicles and providing access to multiple residences.
6 Commercial/Other Parking Lot. A *commercial parking lot* is an open area used primarily for parking road vehicles and providing access to commercial buildings such as shopping malls, grocery stores, department and discount stores, and restaurants. O*ther parking lot* includes parking lots designed for employee, industrial, institutional, educational and recreational purposes.
7 Other Private Road. *Other private roads* are private roads that are not driveways or parking lots. Examples include roads on military bases or in gated communities with restricted access and private roads in oil fields, on farms, and on ranches.
8 Railway. A *railway* is a private way reserved primarily for vehicles that operate on rails.

9 Other Residential Area. An *other residential area* includes areas around a house or private residence that are not commonly used for the operation of motor vehicles.
10 Other Commercial Area. An *other commercial area* includes areas surrounding commercial buildings that are not commonly used for the operation of motor vehicles.
11 Other Developed Area. *Other developed areas* include industrial areas, construction areas, and institutional areas that are not commonly used for the operation of motor vehicles.
12 Undeveloped Area. *Undeveloped areas* include all other areas not commonly used for the operation of motor vehicles such as farm land and open fields.
14 Unknown.

Most Harmful Event

SAS variable name: MHEVENT

Definition: Indicates the most severe injury-producing event for the vehicle. When a vehicle is involved in multiple harmful events, the event which produced the most severe injury or property damage is used. This variable is repeated for each occupant of the motor vehicle. The variable is not applicable for nonoccupants.

Attribute Codes:

1 Overturn/Rollover
2 Fire/Explosion
3 Immersion
5 Fell/Jumped From Vehicle
6 Injured in Vehicle
7 Other Noncollision
8 Pedestrian
9 Pedalcycle
10 Railway Train
12 Motor Vehicle in Transport
14 Parked Motor Vehicle or Motor Vehicle Stopped off Roadway
15 Nonmotorist on Personal Conveyance
16 Thrown or Falling Object
17 Boulder
18 Other Object (Not Fixed)
19 Building
21 Bridge Pier or Abutment
24 Guardrail Face
25 Concrete Traffic Barrier
26 Other Traffic Barrier
31 Other Post, Other Pole, or Other Supports
32 Culvert
33 Curb
34 Ditch
37 Embankment
38 Fence
39 Wall
40 Fire Hydrant

41 Shrubbery
42 Tree
43 Other Fixed Object
46 Traffic Signal Support/Signal
47 Vehicle Occupant Struck or Run Over by Own Vehicle
60 Cargo/Equipment Loss or Shift
99 Unknown

Model Year

SAS variable name: MODYEAR

Definition: The four-digit manufacturer's model year. This variable is repeated for each occupant of the motor vehicle. The variable is not applicable for nonoccupants.

Attribute Code:
YYYY Model year
99999 Unknown

Principal Impact Point

SAS variable name: IMPACT

Definition: Indicates the point of impact on the vehicle for the most harmful event. This variable is repeated for each occupant of the motor vehicle. The variable is not applicable for nonoccupants.

Attribute Codes:
0 Noncollision
3 Right
6 Back
9 Left
12 Front
13 Top
14 Undercarriage
18 This Vehicle Set Something in Motion Causing Injury or Damage
99 Unknown

Vehicle Body Type

SAS variable name: BODYTYPE

Definition: This variable identifies the body type of the vehicle. This variable is repeated for each occupant of the motor vehicle. The variable is not applicable for nonoccupants.

Attribute Codes:
Automobiles
1 Convertible
2 2-door sedan, hardtop, coupe
3 3-door/2-door hatchback
4 4-door sedan, hardtop
5 5-door/4-door hatchback

6 Station wagon
7 Hatchback, number of doors unknown
8 Sedan/Hardtop, number of doors unknown
9 Other or Unknown automobile type

Utility Vehicles

14 Compact utility
15 Large utility
16 Utility station wagon
19 Utility, unknown body type

Vans

20 Minivan
21 Large van
22 Step-van or walk-in van
28 Other van type
29 Unknown van type

Light Conventional Truck (pickup-style cab)

30 Compact pickup
31 Standard pickup
39 Unknown (pickup style) light conventional truck type

Other Light Conventional Trucks

40 Cab chassis based (includes light stake, light dump, light tow, rescue vehicles)
48 Unknown light truck type (not a pickup)
49 Unknown light vehicle type (automobile, utility vehicle, van, or light truck)

Buses

50 School Bus
51 Cross Country/Intercity Bus
52 Transit Bus (City Bus)
58 Other Bus Type
59 Unknown Bus Type

Heavy/Medium Vehicles (Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) > 10,000 pounds)

60 Step van
61 Single-unit straight truck (10,000 lbs. < GVWR < or = 19,500 lbs.)
62 Single-unit straight truck (19,500 lbs. < GVWR < or = 26,000 lbs.)
63 Single-unit straight truck (GVWR > 26,000 lbs.)
64 Single-unit straight truck (GVWR unknown)
65 Medium/heavy truck-based motor home
66 Truck-tractor (Cab only, or with any number of trailing units; any weight)
67 Medium/heavy Pickup (Ford Super Duty 450/550)
71 Unknown if single-unit or combination-unit Medium Truck (10,000 lbs. < GVWR < or = 26,000 lbs.)
72 Unknown if single-unit or combination-unit Heavy Truck (GVWR > 26,000 lbs.)
73 Camper/Motorhome, Unknown truck type
78 Unknown medium/heavy truck type
79 Unknown truck type (light/medium/heavy)

Motorcycles, Mopeds

80 Motorcycle

81 Moped (motorized bicycle)
88 Other motored cycle type (mini-bikes, motor scooters)
Other Vehicles
92 Farm equipment other than trucks
93 Construction equipment other than trucks (includes graders)
97 Other vehicle type (such as go-cart, fork-lift, city street sweeper, golf cart)
99 Unknown body type

Vehicle Make

SAS variable name: MAKE

Definition: This variable identifies the make of the vehicle based on the definitions in the NASS-GES 2006 Coding Manual. This variable is repeated for each occupant of the motor vehicle. The variable is not applicable for nonoccupants.

Attribute Codes:

82 common vehicle makes plus "other" and "unknown"

Vehicle Maneuver

SAS variable name: MANEUVER

Definition: Indicates the maneuver taken by the vehicle at the time of the crash. This element captures the driver's action, or intended action, prior to commencement of the first unstabilized event.

Attribute Codes:

1 Going straight
2 Backing up
3 Turning right
4 Turning left
5 Making U-turn
6 Slowing or stopping
7 Negotiating a curve
8 Stopped/Parked
9 Other maneuver
10 No driver present
11 Unknown

Vehicle Model

SAS variable name: MODEL

Definition: This variable is an open field for identifying the model of the vehicle based on the definitions in the NASS-GES 2006 Coding Manual. Vehicle model provides additional information about the vehicle series (e.g., Pintos, Galaxies, Mustangs are models of Ford) or the vehicle style (i.e., various styles within a model). This variable is repeated for each occupant of the motor vehicle. The variable is not applicable for nonoccupants.

Attribute Codes:

The vehicle manufacture's model name.

Vehicle Number

SAS variable name: VEHNO

Definition: A unique number assigned to each vehicle involved in the crash. This variable is repeated for each occupant of the motor vehicle. The variable is not applicable for nonoccupants.

Attribute Code:
Unique number assigned to each vehicle in a crash. This variable is repeated for each occupant of the motor vehicle. The variable is not applicable for nonoccupants.

Vehicle Precrash Location

SAS variable name: PRELOC

Definition: Indicates the location of the vehicle prior to commencement of unstabilized event as indicated on the accident report. This variable is repeated for each occupant of the motor vehicle. The variable is not applicable for nonoccupants. For definitions that define the various location attributes for Vehicle Precrash Location, see the Location Attribute Codes and Definitions under "Location of Most Harmful Event" on page 7.

Attribute Codes:
1 Residential driveway
2 Residential garage
3 Parking garage
4 Residential parking lot
6 Commercial/other parking lot
7 Other private road
8 Railway
9 Other residential area
10 Other commercial area
11 Other developed area
12 Undeveloped area
14 Unknown

Age

SAS variable name: AGE

Definition: The age of the person involved in the crash.

Attribute Codes:
0 Up to one year
Age in years over one
999 Unknown

Gender

SAS variable name: SEX

Definition:
Indicates the gender of the person involved in the crash.

Attribute Codes:
1 Male
2 Female
3 Unknown

Nonoccupant Location

SAS variable name: NOLOC

Definition:
This describes the location of the nonoccupant at the time of the first impact with a motor vehicle. For definitions that define the various location attributes for Nonoccupant Location, see the Location Attribute Codes and Definitions under "Location of Most Harmful Event" on page 7.

Attribute Codes:
1 Residential driveway
2 Residential garage
3 Parking garage
4 Residential parking lot
6 Commercial/Other parking lot
7 Other private road
9 Other residential area
10 Other commercial area
11 Other developed area
12 Undeveloped area
14 Unknown

Person Number

SAS variable name: PERNO

Definition: The number assigned to each person involved in the crash.

Attribute Code:
The number assigned to each person

Person Type

SAS variable name: PERTYPE

Definition: Indicates the person type for each person involved in the crash.

Attribute Codes:

1 Driver of a Motor Vehicle in Transport
2 Passenger of a Motor Vehicle in Transport
3 Occupant of a Motor Vehicle Not in Transport
5 Pedestrian
6 Bicyclist
7 Other Cyclist
8 Other Persons on Personal Conveyances/In Buildings

Police-Reported Injury Severity

SAS variable name: INJSEV

Definition: Indicates the injury severity of the person injured in the crash.

Attribute Codes:

0 No known injury
1 Possible injury (C)
2 Non-incapacitating injury (B)
3 Incapacitating injury (A)
4 Fatal injury (K)
6 Injured, severity unknown (U)

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