



Serious crash investigation review

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Summary

Introduction

Serious crash investigation reports are coming under increasing scrutiny particularly from investigators working in the private sector. In order to maintain the validity and reputation of Police crash analysts, a quality assurance system must be included in the report compilation process.

Given the average number of investigations conducted annually (over 400) it is appropriate that a tiered approach to reviews is adopted. This chapter outlines the peer review process for serious crash investigation reports, and provides an outline of requirements.

This chapter should be read in conjunction with the 'crash reporting' section of the '[Traffic crashes](#)' and '[Vehicle crash data recording devices](#)' chapter of the Police Manual.

What is a serious traffic crash?

A serious traffic crash is one that:

- has resulted in a serious injury or fatality, or
- is likely to attract high public interest and, for this reason, requires a detailed investigation.

Purposes of a review

All serious crash investigation reports must be reviewed within district, prior to the report being forwarded for inclusion on the crash file. The O/C case forwards the report to their supervisor for checking. If satisfied with the report, the supervisor completes the supervisor's section of the [peer review certificate](#), and decides on whether an out of district or external review is required. The final decision as to whether a further review is required is at the discretion of the report author's supervisor or district management.

Serious crash investigation reports selected for out of district or external review must be sent via the district Road Policing Manager (RPM) to the Manager: Crash Investigation & Calibration Services, Police Calibration Service, Ngauranga, who must then determine whether to engage an external reviewer. The National Advisor: Crash Investigation must also monitor reviewer's workloads.

Any report including an animation **must** undergo out-of-district review.

Reviews are initiated to ensure:

- appropriate and accurate mathematical analysis is correctly applied
- the investigation report is aligned with Police procedures, and
- the findings of the investigation are appropriate and justifiable.

Outcomes

A review may have these long-term outcomes:

- new initiatives developed during the investigation are documented and, where appropriate, incorporated into procedure manuals
- district serious crash investigators gain insight into techniques and procedures being developed in other districts, and
- inter-district communication is enhanced and allows growth.



Review

Out-of-district review

An out-of-district review involves the serious crash investigation report being sent to a suitably qualified member of another district for peer review.

Reviewer qualifications

A Police employee nominated to review a serious traffic crash investigation report must:

- have completed at least level four Crash Investigation Training;
- have completed at least one Serious Crash Case Study Course conducted by the Royal New Zealand Police College (RNZPC), or the equivalent level of training, within the previous two years of any review being undertaken; and
- be qualified to carry out speed estimates based on vehicle deformation if the file being reviewed contains such.

Note: Should a panel approach be adopted in a district, members of that panel must fall within the qualification criteria above. The formation of any such panel is at the discretion of the RPM in the reviewing district, on a case-by-case basis.

External review

All crashes involving Police, which result in death or serious injury, must be externally reviewed. Otherwise, an external review may be required when:

- there is significant interest in the incident;
- the out-of-district review and report writer cannot agree on some aspect of the report; and/or
- there are overly complex issues to address.

An external review involves the National Manager: Road Policing contracting an independent private sector analyst or academic.

An external review must not be confused with the normal investigative process, where districts are free to engage whatever investigative methods they require (at their own expense).

Review process flowchart

Download [the review process flowchart](#) details.

Review format

The entire review process hinges on communication between the reviewer and the report author. Reports must be discussed verbally to establish an agreed position. This may involve both the reviewer and report author working together to achieve an agreed report.

Once the reviewer is satisfied that the report is correct, they must forward a completed [peer review certificate](#) to the author's supervisor.

Dispute resolution

If agreement cannot be reached between the reviewer and the author of the report, the Manager: Crash Investigation & Calibration Services will determine the appropriate course of action.



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Roles and responsibilities

Crash investigator's supervisor

Internal review	Ensures: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• all serious crash investigation reports are internally reviewed; and• employees completing serious crash investigations follow the principals of good practice. Completes an assessment of the report and signs the peer review certificate as appropriate.
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District RPM

Nominating reviewers	Nominates: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• employees within their district to be reviewers; and• to the Manager: Crash Investigation & Calibration Services at least one, but no more than two, qualified employees to discharge out of district reviews.
Internal reviews	Ensures all serious crash investigations are internally reviewed.
Out of district and external reviews	Considers whether either of these are appropriate. If so, the manager refers the file to the Manager: Crash Investigation & Calibration Services for consideration and approval.
Issues raised by reviews	Raises any concerns with the Manager: Crash Investigation & Calibration Services, regarding training deficiencies or issues of national concern.

Manager: Crash Investigation & Calibration Services

Maintaining a list of reviewers	Maintains a list of personnel nominated to discharge out of district reviews.
Forwarding files for review	Forwards files submitted for out of district review to the RPM of a district other than the one in which the file originated.
Managing workloads	Ensures that workloads are spread evenly around all districts that have nominated staff to undertake out of district reviews.
Consultation and liaison	Consults and liaises with the originating district if any file is one that may be considered for allocation to an external reviewer.
Allocating and coordinating external reviews	Allocates reviews to external reviewers, receiving the external reviewer's report and forwarding the file and report to the district RPM.
Responds to implications from reviews	Informs relevant managers and coordinates any changes required to training and methodology when issues of national importance are raised.
Responds to review disputes	Should there be a district dispute from internal and supervisor reviews then consideration for further review will be determined.
Provides advice	Is available to assist employees with advice on crash investigation as required or sought.



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Peer review certificate

The Peer review certificate is available in Microsoft Word> Police Forms> Road policing> Serious crash investigation review.



Process review flowchart

