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MANUAL ON  
CLASSIFICATION  
of MOTOR VEHICLE  
TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS  
IN TEXAS

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## INTRODUCTION

As promulgated by Administrative Procedure and Texas Register Act, R.C.S. Article 6252-13a, Texas Department of Public Safety Rule 201.02.01.007 adopts the Manual on Classification of Motor Vehicle Traffic Accidents (American National Standards Institute D16.1) published by the National Safety Council as the source of definitions and classifications of accidents involving motor vehicles.

The definitions and examples in this Manual are based on Vernon's Texas Civil Statutes and ANSI D16.1 - 1976, revision of D16.1 - 1970. Where there is a conflict with ANSI D16.1 - 1976, Vernon's Civil Statutes is used and a notation is placed in parenthesis after the quoted statute. For example, the definition of a motor vehicle in 1.5 is followed by (V.C.S. 6701d).

Nothing in this Manual is to be construed as a requirement for accident reporting or investigation. State statutes and city ordinances outline these requirements.

The assignment of accidents to a geographical location, such as a city or county, does not imply that the jurisdiction is responsible for such accidents or that it could have prevented them. Such assignments indicate only that the accidents occurred within the geographical limits of the jurisdiction.

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TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY  
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[ Denotes area of change or addition





# MANUAL ON CLASSIFICATION OF MOTOR VEHICLE TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS

## 1. DEFINITIONS, INTERPRETATIONS, AND EXAMPLES RELATING TO MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENTS

### Definitions

1.1 **Trafficway** is the space within property lines or other boundary lines of any way open to the public as a matter of right or custom for moving persons or property from one place to another.

1.2 **Roadway** is that portion of a highway improved, designed or ordinarily used for vehicular travel, exclusive of the berm or shoulder. In the event a highway includes two or more separate roadways the term "roadway" as used herein shall refer to any such roadway separately but not to all such roadways collectively (V.C.S. 6701d).

1.3 **Road** is that part of a trafficway which includes both the roadway and any shoulder alongside the roadway.

1.4 **Shoulder** is that part of a trafficway contiguous with the roadway for emergency use, for accomodation of stopped vehicles, and for lateral support of the roadway structure. The line between the roadway and the shoulder may be a painted edge line, a change in surface color or material, or a curb. On some modern trafficways, there may be a surfaced shoulder on the right side, and frequently a narrower shoulder on the left side of a one-way roadway.

1.5 **Motor Vehicle** means every vehicle which is selfpropelled and every vehicle which is propelled by electric power obtained from overhead trolley wires, but not operated upon rails (V.C.S. 6701d). For purposes of this manual, any object being towed by a motor vehicle is considered a part of the motor vehicle, including such devices when detached while in motion, or set in motion by a motor vehicle, such as during pushing. Any load is considered a part of the vehicle, including persons or property upon, or set in motion by the vehicle; any persons boarding or alighting from the vehicle; any persons or property attached to and in position to move with the vehicle. If the load includes another motor vehicle, the entire unit including the load is considered to be a single motor vehicle. Motor vehicle includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Automobiles (any type), bus, motorcycle, motorized bicycle or scooter, motorized fire engine, truck, van, trolley bus not operating upon rails.
2. Construction machinery, farm and industrial machinery, road roller, tractor, highway grader, or similar devices equipped with wheels or treads, while in transport under own power to move persons, the machine itself, or property from one place to another.
3. Special motorized devices such as go-carts, midget racers, riding lawn mowers, invalid chairs, snowmobiles, swamp buggies, or similar devices, while in transport under own power.

1.6 **Railroad Train** means a steam engine, electric or other motor, with or without cars coupled thereto, operated upon rails, except street cars (V.C.S. 6701d). For purposes of this manual, motor vehicles equipped with flanged wheels and driven upon the tracks will be considered a railway vehicle. Non-motorized devices, not set in motion by a railroad train or railway vehicle are not considered to be a railroad train or railway vehicle.

1.7 **Motorcycle** means every motor vehicle having a saddle for the use of the rider and designed to travel on not more than three (3) wheels in contact with the ground but excluding a tractor or motor-assisted bicycle. "Motor-assisted bicycle" means a bicycle which may be propelled by human power or a motor, or both, with a motor of a capacity of less than sixty (60) cubic centimeters piston displacement, which is capable of a maximum speed of not more than twenty (20) miles per hour on a flat surface with not more than a one (1) percent grade in any direction when the motor is engaged (V.C.S. 6701d). For purposes of this manual, motor scooters, motorbikes, minibikes, and motor-assisted bicycles (moped) when the motor is being used to propel it, will be considered as motor vehicles under the appropriate style classification.

1.8 **Pedalcycle** is a nonmotorized vehicle propelled by pedalling.

1.8.1 **Includes.** Bicycle (any size, with two wheels in tandem), tricycle, unicycle, sidecar or trailer attached to any of the above devices, and pedalcars (three wheeled PPV).



1.8.2 **Excludes.** These devices when towed by a motor vehicle, including hitching.

1.9 **Pedestrian** means any person afoot (V.C.S. 6701d).

1.9.1 **Includes.** Person afoot, sitting, lying, or working upon a way or place. Person in or operating a pedestrian conveyance.

1.9.2 **Excludes.** Person boarding or alighting from another conveyance, except pedestrian conveyance. Person jumping or falling from a motor vehicle in transport.

1.10 **Driver** means every person who drives or is in actual physical control of a vehicle (V.C.S. 6701d).

1.11 **Accident** is an unintended event or unstabilized situation that produces injury or damage (harmful event) not directly resulting from a cataclysm.

1.12 **Unstabilized Situation** is a set of events not under human control. It originates when control is lost and terminates when control is regained or, in the absence of persons who are able to regain control, when all persons and property are at rest.

1.12.1 **Excludes.** Deliberate intent - Suicide, homicide, and other harmful events under human control do not imply the existence of an unstabilized situation. A set of unintended consequences of such acts might be an unstabilized situation.

1.12.2 **Excludes.** Legal intervention - Legal intervention is a type of deliberate intent involving intentional acts by a law-enforcing agent or other official.

1.13 **Cataclysm** is a cloudburst, cyclone, earthquake, flood, hurricane, lightning, tidal wave, torrential rain, tornado, or volcanic eruption.

1.14 **Harmful Event** is an occurrence of injury or damage.

1.15 **Motor Vehicle Accident** is an accident involving a motor vehicle in transport, but not involving aircraft or watercraft.

1.16 **Motor Vehicle Traffic Accident** is any motor vehicle accident that occurs on a trafficway or that occurs after the motor vehicle runs off roadway but before events are stabilized.

1.17 **In Transport** denotes the state or condition of a motor vehicle which is in motion or within the portion of a way ordinarily used for travel by similar vehicles. When applied to motor vehicles, in transport means in motion or on a roadway.

1.18 **Transport Accident** is an accident (1) that involves a vehicle in transport and (2) in which the first harmful event is not produced by the discharge of a firearm or explosive device.

1.19 **Traffic Accident** is a vehicle accident in which (1) the unstabilized situation originates on a trafficway or (2) a harmful event occurs on a trafficway.

1.20 **On Roadway Accident** is (1) a collision accident in which the initial point of contact between colliding units in the first harmful event is within a roadway or (2) a noncollision accident in which the vehicle involved was partly or entirely on the roadway at the time of the first harmful event.

1.21 **Off Roadway Accident** is any vehicle accident other than an on roadway accident.

1.22 **Non-traffic Accident** is a vehicle accident which is not a traffic accident.

1.23 **Fatal Accident** is any injury accident that results in one or more fatal injuries.

1.24 **Non-fatal Injury Accident** is any injury accident other than a fatal accident.

1.25 **Non-injury Accident** is any vehicle accident other than an injury accident. A non-injury accident is also called a property damage accident.

1.26 **Person** is every natural person, firm, co-partnership, association, or corporation (V.C.S. 6701d). Within the context of this manual, a fetus is not considered to be a person.



1.27 **Property** is any physical object other than a person.

1.27.1 **Inclusions.** Real property, personal property, animals, signs, guardrails, impact attenuators, trees, fences, traffic control devices, shrubs, etc.

### **Interpretations and Examples**

1.28 **Trafficway.** The following interpretations and examples further clarify the definition of 1.1 for determining trafficway status of any way or place:

1.28.1 **Examples.** Trafficway includes approaches to public buildings, docks, and stations, but excludes private driveways, parking stalls and parking aisles of public parking lots, places away from trafficways, ramps, or roads on airfields, farms, industrial premises, mines, quarries, and private grounds.

1.28.2 **Exclusions.** Exclusions from trafficway status apply only if the land ways or places are not open to the public for purposes of vehicular travel as a matter of right or custom, such as a trafficway closed for repair purposes. Private ownership is not the sole criterion for the exclusion. For example, the approach to a private fishing dock or boat-launching dock is a trafficway if it is open to the public for vehicular travel; that is, any person may drive a motor vehicle upon the dock approach. Also, the fact that a fee or toll may be charged for the use of the trafficway does not remove it from trafficway status.

1.28.3 **Jurisdiction.** Maintenance or police jurisdiction is not a criterion for deciding trafficway status of any way or place.

1.28.4 **Boundary Lines** are the lateral limits of the trafficway. In the case of public right-of-way, they are usually coincident with the property lines which mark the line between the trafficway and the adjoining property. In the case of right-of-way on private property, the boundary lines are the lateral limits of the easement or other area set aside as a trafficway.

1.29 **Motor Vehicle.** The following interpretations and examples further clarify the definition in 1.5 for determining motor vehicle status of any device:

1.29.1 **Exclusions.** Excluded from motor vehicle status are devices used solely to move persons or property **within the confines of a building and its premises**, such as an electric baggage or mail truck used solely within a railway station, or a forklift used solely within an industrial plant. The exclusion does not apply if these devices are in transport upon a way or place outside the confines of a building and its premises for the purpose of transporting persons, property or the device itself from one place to another.

1.29.2 **Registration.** Whether a particular device is considered to be a motor vehicle shall not depend upon registration requirements.

1.29.3 **Examples of Use.** The use of the device at the time of the accident is the primary criterion for establishing motor vehicle status. Any determination regarding under own power, or in use on a way or place, is not difficult. Also, establishing motor vehicle status is not a problem with devices that come within the provisions of motor vehicle registration laws. Problems arise with devices normally not used in transport upon trafficways, and with motor vehicles used in an uncommon manner. The following examples are illustrative of the application of the use concept in determining motor vehicle status of the device or motor vehicle at the time of the accident:

1. A registered motor vehicle is being drawn by a team of horses upon a city street: It is other road vehicle (animal harnessed to a conveyance).
2. A registered motor vehicle is being used to draw a breaking plow engaged in breaking ground on a farm: It is machinery (farm) while engaged in plowing.
3. A registered truck hauling concrete (transit-mix) is engaged in discharging or spreading its load of concrete at a road construction site: It is machinery (road construction) while engaged in discharging or spreading its load of concrete.
4. A motorized highway grader, under its own power, is moving from one work place to another, upon a public way: It is a motor vehicle in transport.



5. A road roller, under its own power, is engaged in compacting road materials on a trafficway under construction: It is machinery (road construction) while engaged in compacting road materials or otherwise moving at the construction site.
6. A registered truck, with a blade attached for plowing snow, is engaged in plowing snow from a trafficway: It is machinery (road maintenance) while engaged in plowing snow.
7. A riding motorized lawn mower, under its own power, is being driven from one home to another, upon a trafficway: It is a motor vehicle in transport.

**1.29.4 Driverless Motor Vehicle.** A driverless motor vehicle, though previously parked, or a motor vehicle out of control while being towed or pushed, is considered to be a motor vehicle in transport. Also, a driverless motor vehicle, or an abandoned motor vehicle, upon a roadway, is considered to be a motor vehicle in transport. This principle does not apply to such devices as farm or industrial machinery, highway graders, construction machinery, or similar devices which are not in use at the time of the accident for transport.

**1.29.5 Insufficient Information.** When available information is insufficient to determine whether the injury or damage resulted from a motor vehicle in a transport accident, assume that it did and that the event is a motor vehicle accident.

**1.29.6 Mechanical Failure.** Any mechanical failure, such as, a tire blowout, broken fan belt, broken axle, or similar event does not, by itself, constitute a motor vehicle accident. However, any subsequent injury or damage producing event resulting from the mechanical failure would be a motor vehicle accident if the motor vehicle is in transport.

**1.30 Accidents After Stabilized Situations.** A stabilized situation marks the end of an event; that is, nothing further will occur insofar as the event itself is concerned, but other events may follow because of subsequent actions closely related to the first event. The stabilized situation may be brief,

but it separates the end of one event from the beginning of another event caused by further action. In some events a temporary position of safety may be reached; that is, a position in which a person would not be in jeopardy again if the position were maintained until rescue or the hazard were removed. In an accident in which a stabilized situation can be identified, subsequent injury or damage producing events should not be considered a part of the original accident. The following examples are illustrative of the application of the stabilized situation principle:

1. In a motor vehicle accident live electric wires fall on a motor vehicle, but there is no injury from the electric current because the occupants remain in the motor vehicle. This is a stabilized situation. Any subsequent injury resulting from attempts to leave the motor vehicle, or attempts to rescue, attributable to the electric current, is not a part of the original motor vehicle accident.
2. In a motor vehicle accident the occupants of the motor vehicle are carried or thrown into water, but there is no injury from the submersion, and the occupants reach a temporary position of safety, other than the motor vehicle itself, unless it has stabilized and is no longer sinking. This is a stabilized situation. Any subsequent injury from attempts to reach shore, or attempts to rescue, attributable to submersion, is not a part of the original motor vehicle accident.
3. In a motor vehicle accident objects are loosened which remain in place until all occupants are removed from the hazard of the objects that might fall or roll. This is a stabilized situation. Any subsequent injury or damage, attributable to the fall or roll of the loosened objects, is not a part of the original motor vehicle accident.
4. In a motor vehicle accident the motor vehicle catches on fire and is burning, but all occupants have been rescued and the danger of the fire spreading is under control. This is a stabilized situation. However, if the heat of the fire induces ignition in nearby combustible materials, any subsequent injury or damage from the induced ignition is not a part of the original motor vehicle accident.



5. In a motor vehicle accident an involved motor vehicle carrying explosive materials is stopped and occupants and bystanders are removed from the scene. This is a stabilized situation. If the explosive materials subsequently detonate during attempts to remove or salvage, any injury or damage resulting from the explosion is not a part of the original motor vehicle accident.

1.30.1 **Chain Reaction Accidents.** Sometimes, in the same area and within a short time, several motor vehicles may be involved in accidents during an adverse driving condition, such as reduced visibility due to fog. In such chain reaction accidents, it is frequently difficult to determine afterward whether this event was one accident without a moment in which the accident situation was stabilized, or whether several accidents occurred with the accident situation stabilized between separate accidents. Consequently, for purposes of uniformity, consider such chain reaction accidents to be **single** motor vehicle accidents, unless a stabilized situation can be established between the several events that may occur in such chain reaction accidents.

1.30.2 **Originating on a Trafficway.** A motor vehicle accident that results from an unstabilized set of events originating upon any part of a trafficway shall be classified as a motor vehicle traffic accident.

1.30.3 **Terminating on a Trafficway.** If an unstabilized set of events originates off a trafficway, but the motor vehicle accident occurs on a trafficway, the accident is a motor vehicle traffic accident.

1.30.4 **Crossing a Trafficway.** If an unstabilized set of events originates and terminates off a trafficway, but during the series of events the motor vehicle crosses the trafficway without incident, any accident that occurs off the trafficway in this case is a motor vehicle accident, but not a motor vehicle traffic accident.

## 2. SEVERITY OF MOTOR VEHICLE TRAFFIC ACCIDENT INJURIES

### Classification

**2.1 Classification of Injuries.** The injury classification for motor vehicle traffic accidents applies to any person involved in such accidents while either in or out of a motor vehicle. This classification is commonly used to describe the severity of motor vehicle traffic accidents in terms of the degree of injuries sustained. For this purpose, the entire accident is categorized according to the most serious injury sustained by any person involved. For example, if any person is killed in the accident, the accident is classified as a fatal injury accident, or simply as a fatal accident. If no person is injured, the accident is classified as a noninjury accident.

The categories are so defined that, for the most part, neither medical examination nor special tests are required ordinarily for classification. Classification usually can be done by ordinary observation at the time of the accident or from information submitted on the accident report form.

The classification of injuries provides a category for any person involved in a motor vehicle traffic accident. There are five mutually exclusive categories of injury to persons by which such injury may be classified:

1. Fatal injury.
2. Incapacitating injury.
3. Nonincapacitating evident injury.
4. Possible injury.
5. No injury.

These classifications apply to injuries; however, they are also used to describe the severity of motor vehicle traffic accidents.

### Definitions

**2.2 Injury** is bodily harm to a person.

**2.2.1 Exclusions.** Effects of diseases, such as cerebral hemorrhage, heart attack, diabetic coma, epileptic seizure.



[ 2.3 **Fatal Injury** is any injury that results in death within thirty days of the motor vehicle traffic accident.

2.4 **Incapacitating Injury** is any injury, other than a fatal injury, which prevents the injured person from walking, driving or normally continuing the activities he was capable of performing before the injury occurred.

2.4.1 **Inclusions.** Severe lacerations, broken or distorted limbs, skull or chest injuries, abdominal injuries, unconscious at or when taken from the accident scene; unable to leave accident scene without assistance.

2.4.2 **Exclusion.** Momentary unconsciousness.

2.4.3 **General.**

1. Determinations are made at the time the injured person leaves the accident scene; it is not necessary to consult with doctors or hospitals unless information is not otherwise available, apparent condition immediately after the accident does not govern classification because the person may recover from hysteria quickly, or may begin to feel the effects of internal or other injuries between the time of the accident and time of leaving the scene.
2. Medical treatment at the accident scene or later makes no difference; what the person does at the scene is important.
3. Hospitalization normally will be required for incapacitating injuries.
4. Duration of the disability after injury makes no difference; incapacitation is important.
5. Developments after leaving the scene make no difference except in case of death.

2.5 **Nonincapacitating Evident Injury** is any injury, other than a fatal injury or an incapacitating injury, which is evident to observers at the scene of the accident in which the injury occurred.

2.5.1 **Inclusions.** Lump on head, abrasions, bruises, minor lacerations.

2.5.2 **Exclusion.** Limping (the injury cannot be seen).

2.5.3 **Example.** Pedestrian is unconscious on the ground after accident; his clothes are torn and blood oozes from abrasions; when the ambulance arrives he is conscious, able to give information, and walks around; he goes to the hospital in the ambulance, but is able to sit up in it; there is not evidence that he is incapacitated.

2.6 **Possible Injury** is any injury reported or claimed which is not a fatal injury, incapacitating injury or nonincapacitating evident injury.

2.6.1 **Inclusions.** Momentary unconsciousness, claim of injuries not evident, limping, complaint of pain, nausea, hysteria.

2.6.2 **General.** Possible injuries are those which are claimed or reported, or indicated by behavior, but not by wounds.

2.6.3 **Example.** Occupant complains of pain but shows no signs of bleeding or other wound; leaves the scene in a taxi to keep an appointment; he dies; this is possible injury when classified at the time of leaving the scene.

2.7 **No Injury** is a situation in which there is no reason to believe that the person received any bodily harm from the motor vehicle traffic accident in which involved.

2.7.1 **Includes.** Confusion, excitement, anger. Internal injuries unknown to the injured until after leaving the accident scene.

## **Interpretations**

2.8 **Medical Examination.** The existence of an injury is judged at the scene of the accident and not on a medical examination after a motor vehicle traffic accident. Transportation from the scene of the accident for medical attention does not, by itself, signify existence of an injury.

[ 2.9 **Time of Classification.** Injuries should be classified on the basis of conditions observed at the scene of the accident or known at the time the



accident report is prepared. However, if information is received establishing that an injury produced death within thirty days of the motor vehicle traffic accident, the severity of injury classification should be changed accordingly.

**2.10 Classification of Fatal Injuries.** Injuries sustained in a motor vehicle traffic accident may or may not be the direct cause of death. There may have been subsequent illness that contributed directly to the death of the injured person, or the death may have happened so long after the accident that it cannot be considered in current statistical summaries. Thus, time and underlying cause of death must be considered. The following guides are provided for determining underlying cause of death:

**2.10.1 Underlying Cause of Death** is the cause of death assigned for primary tabulation and analysis purposes. Determine the underlying cause of death from information recorded in the medical certification portion of the death certificate in accordance with the categories in the current revision, **International Classification of Disease, Adapted for Use in the United** (1), and the rules outlined in the **Vital Statistics Instruction Manual, Part II, Cause-of-Death Coding** (2). Usually, the underlying cause is the disease or external means of injury which initiated the sequence of events leading to death.

(1) **Eighth Revision, International Classification of Diseases, Adapted for use in the United States**, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Public Service, Publication No. 1693, Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402

(2) **Vital Statistics Instruction Manual, Part II, Cause-of-Death Coding**, (issued annually), U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Public Health Services, National Center for Health Statistics, Washington, D.C.

**2.10.2 Classification Assistance.** Since the underlying cause of death must be determined from the medical certification portion of the death certificate, and detailed instructions are required to do this successfully, classifiers of motor vehicle traffic accidents should seek assistance when questionable cases arise. Normally the medical examiner or coroner will be the final authority on matters pertaining to cause of death.

[ **2.10.3 Late Effects of Motor Vehicle Accident Injury.** If the selected underlying cause of death is a motor vehicle accident that occurred more than 30 days prior to death, the death will not be assigned to that accident and previously released injury statistics should not be adjusted.

**2.11 Discharge From Hospital** of a person who has been injured in a motor vehicle traffic accident is not proof of recovery. If the person dies later, assign the death to the condition indicated by the physician to be the underlying cause of death in accordance with the **Vital Statistics Instruction Manual, Cause-of-Death Coding (1)**.

(1) **Vital Statistics Instruction Manual, Part II, Cause-of-Death Coding**, (issued annually), U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Public Health Services, National Center for Health Statistics, Washington, D.C.



### 3. LOCATION OF MOTOR VEHICLE TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS

#### Classification

**3.1 Classification by Location.** The location classification of motor vehicle traffic accidents applies to junction, class of trafficway, land use character, and political subdivision at, upon, or within which such accidents may occur. The classification is used to assign motor vehicle traffic accidents to political subdivisions, such as counties, and to specified locations, such as trafficways, within these limits.

The classification provides categories by which the location of motor vehicle traffic accidents may be identified and summarized. The categories include:

1. Relationship to Junction:

- a. At intersection.
- b. Intersection related.
- c. Driveway access.
- d. Nonintersection.

2. Class of Trafficway:

- a. Interstate system.
- b. U.S. route - numbered.
- c. State route - numbered.
- d. County roads.
- e. Local streets.
- f. All other trafficways.

3. Land Use Character:

- a. Urban.
- b. Rural.

4. Political Subdivisions:

- a. County.
- b. City.

## Definitions

**3.2 Classification by Relationship to Junction.** Motor vehicle traffic accidents occurring at and between junctions may be categorized as at intersection, intersection related, driveway access, or nonintersection accidents.

### 3.2.1 Intersection.

1. The area embraced within the prolongation of connection of the lateral curb lines, or, if none, then the lateral boundary lines of the roadways of two highways which join one another at, or approximately at, right angles, or the area within which vehicles traveling upon different highways joining at any other angle may come in conflict.
2. Where a highway includes two roadways thirty (30) feet or more apart, then every crossing of each roadway of such divided highway by an intersecting highway shall be regarded as a separate intersection. In the event such intersecting highway also includes two roadways thirty (30) feet or more apart, then every crossing of two roadways of such highways shall be regarded as a separate intersection.
3. The junction of an alley with a street or highway shall not constitute an intersection.
4. Notwithstanding the provisions of Subsection 2 of this section, the State Highway Commission and local authorities may, in matters of highway and traffic engineering design, consider the separate intersections of divided highways with medians thirty (30) feet wide or wider, as defined in Subsection 2 of this section as components of a single intersection (V.C.S. 6701d).

**3.2.2 Driveway Access** is a roadway providing access to property adjacent to a trafficway.

**3.2.3 At Intersection Accident** is a traffic accident in which the first harmful event occurs within the limits of an intersection.



**3.2.4 Intersection Related Accident** is a traffic accident in which the first harmful event (1) occurs on an approach to or exit from an intersection and (2) results from an activity behavior or control related to the movement of traffic units through the intersection.

**3.2.5 Driveway Access Accident** is a traffic accident in which the first harmful event occurs on a driveway access or involves a vehicle entering another roadway from a driveway access or entering a driveway access from another roadway.

**3.2.6 Nonintersection Accident** is a traffic accident that is not an intersection accident or intersection-related accident.

**3.3 Class of Trafficway.** Class of trafficway is an order of precedence by which motor vehicle traffic accidents may be categorized and assigned to the trafficway location classification. Such accidents are assigned to the highest class, or category, to which the trafficway, or trafficways, on which they occur can be attributed. The classes, or categories, are, in descending order:

**3.3.1 Interstate** is any trafficway within the national system for interstate trafficways.

**3.3.2 U.S. Route Numbered** is any trafficway within the U.S. trafficway system, excluding interstate.

**3.3.3 State Route Numbered** is any trafficway within the State trafficway system, excluding interstate or U.S. route numbered highway.

**3.3.4 County Road** is any trafficway within a county trafficway system that does not fall within the interstate, U.S. route numbered, State route numbered, or local street system.

**3.3.5 Local Street** is any trafficway within a city trafficway system that does not fall within the interstate, U.S. route numbered, State route numbered, or county road system.

**3.3.6 All Other Trafficways** are trafficways which do not meet the specifications for the trafficways of higher precedence such as alleys and private roads open to the public for purposes of vehicular travel.

3.4 **Land Use Character.** Classification by land use character provides categories for the assignment of motor vehicle traffic accidents to areas that conform to the concept of incorporated and unincorporated places. For example, motor vehicle traffic accidents are located as rural or urban based upon city limit boundaries.

3.4.1 **Urban Accident** is a motor vehicle accident that occurs at a location within the limits of a city having 5,000 or more population.

3.4.2 **Rural Accident** is a motor vehicle accident that cannot be classified as an urban accident.

3.5 **Highway Engineering Terms.** The following definitions are included for clarification of words and phrases used in this section:

3.5.1 **Ramp.** An interconnecting roadway of a traffic interchange, or any connection between highways at different levels or between parallel highways, on which vehicles may enter or leave a designated roadway (V.C.S. 6701d).

3.5.2 **At-Grade Intersection** is an intersection, or junction, where all roadways cross or join at the same level.

3.5.3 **Unchannelized At-Grade Intersection** is an at-grade intersection, or junction, without islands for directing traffic into definite paths.

3.5.4 **Channelized Intersection** is an at-grade intersection, in which traffic is directed into definite paths by raised or painted traffic islands.

3.5.5 **Grade Separation** is a crossing at different levels of two trafficways, or a trafficway and a railway.

3.5.6 **Interchange** is a system of interconnecting roadways in conjunction with one or more grade separations, providing for the movement of traffic between two or more roadways on different levels.

3.5.7 **Frontage Road** is a roadway generally paralleling an expressway, freeway, parkway, or through street so designed as to intercept, collect and distribute traffic desiring to cross, enter, or leave such facility and to furnish access to property which otherwise would be isolated as a result of the controlled-access features.



**3.5.8 Collector-Distributor Road** is an auxiliary roadway, separated laterally from and parallel to a through roadway, which serves to collect and distribute traffic from several access connections between selected points of ingress and egress from the through-traffic lanes.

**3.5.9 Crosswalk.**

1. That part of a roadway at an intersection included within the connections of the lateral lines of the sidewalks on opposite sides of the highway measured from the curbs or, in the absence of curbs, from the edges of the traversable roadway.
2. Any portion of a roadway at an intersection or elsewhere distinctly indicated for pedestrian crossing by lines or other markings on the surfaces (V.C.S. 6701d).

**Interpretations**

**3.6 Assignment by Class of Trafficway.** Motor vehicle traffic accidents shall be assigned, by class of trafficway location, to the highest trafficway class to which the trafficway, or trafficways, on which they occur belong as listed in 3.3. The following assignment guidelines shall be applied.

**3.6.1 At an Intersection.** A motor vehicle traffic accident which occurs at a joining or crossing of two or more trafficways, shall be assigned to the highest trafficway class of the trafficway which join or cross.

**3.6.2 At a Grade Separation.** A motor vehicle traffic accident which occurs at a trafficway grade separation, without ramp connections between the trafficways, shall be assigned to the trafficway class of the trafficway on which it occurs, without regard to the final position of motor vehicles, occupants, or pedestrians involved.

**3.6.3 On a Ramp.** A motor vehicle traffic accident which occurs on a ramp connecting two trafficways shall be assigned to the highest trafficway class of the trafficways concerned.

**3.6.4 On the Frontage Road.** A motor vehicle traffic accident which occurs on a frontage road shall be assigned to the highest trafficway class of which it is a part, or to the trafficway which it serves.

**3.7 Assignment by Political Subdivision.** Assign all motor vehicle traffic accidents occurring within the political subdivision of a locality, such as a county, or city, to that locality regardless of the class of trafficway that may be involved.

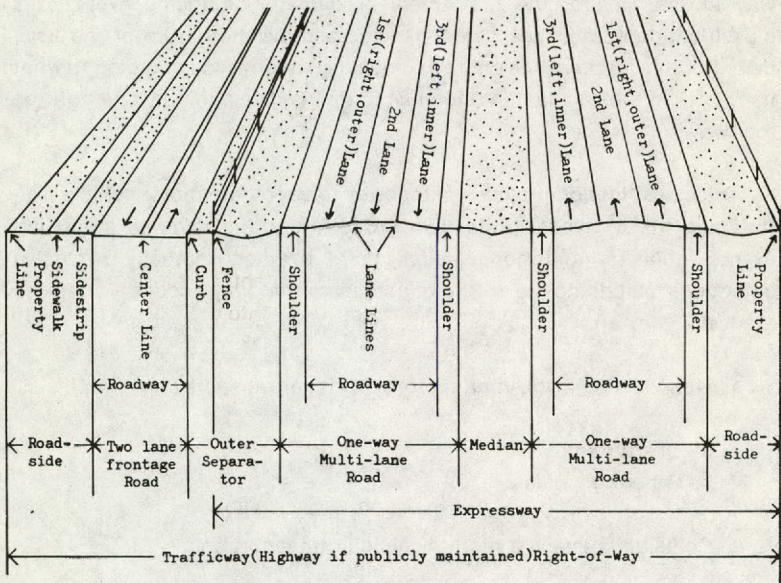
**3.7.1 Jurisdiction.** Assign each motor vehicle traffic accident to the county, or city within which the accident occurred, regardless of the maintenance or police jurisdiction over the trafficway upon which the accident occurred. However, this assignment does not preclude a classification breakdown of such accidents into categories to indicate jurisdiction over the trafficways on which they occur.

**3.7.2 Place of Injury or Damage.** Assign the motor vehicle traffic accident to the locality within which the first injury or damage producing event in the accident occurred. For example, a speeding car loses control and runs off a highway which is contiguous to, but outside the boundaries of a city. The automobile careens into the city and strikes a tree. This accident would be assigned to the city because the first harmful event occurred within the city. Any and all injuries and fatalities resulting from such an accident also would be included in the city's traffic records and statistics. Location of the accident should be identified in reference to the highway from which the vehicle departed, and at that point on the highway that is nearest to the damage or injury producing event.

**3.7.3 Boundary Lines.** If the motor vehicle traffic accident occurs exactly on a boundary line between two geographic limits or jurisdictions, the matter should be referred to the State Traffic Accident Records Agency for final decision. In most cases the accident will be assigned to the area from which the vehicle was headed. For example, if the vehicle was leaving County A going to County B and has an accident exactly on the county line, the accident would be assigned to County A. The same example would apply when a city limit is involved.



# TRAFFICWAY



Source: DICTIONARY OF HIGHWAY TRAFFIC, J. Stannard Baker and William R. Stebbins, Jr., Northwestern University Traffic Institute, 1960.

## 4. TYPES OF MOTOR VEHICLE TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS

### Classification

4.1 **Classification by Type.** The type classification, also called First Harmful Event, for motor vehicle traffic accidents applies to the nature of the accident and the location of the motor vehicle in relation to the roadway at the time of the first injury or damage producing event. This classification establishes categories to describe the nature of the accident. For this purpose, the entire accident is categorized according to what happened in the accident in reference to the roadway; that is, on or off the roadway.

The classification provides categories to segregate motor vehicle traffic accidents by types. Under two broad injury and damage producing events, collision and noncollision, there are ten mutually exclusive categories describing the nature of accidents that may occur on or off the roadway. They are:

1. Noncollision involving a motor vehicle in transport:
  - a. Overturning.
  - b. Other noncollision.
  
2. Collision between a motor vehicle in transport and
  - a. Pedestrian.
  - b. Motor vehicle in transport.
  - c. Parked motor vehicle.
  - d. Railway train.
  - e. Pedalcyclist.
  - f. Animal.
  - g. Fixed object.
  - h. Other object.

Every motor vehicle traffic accident consists of a series of events. In classification by type, one of these events must be selected before further classification can be made. This event must be one which can be easily determined by whomever classifies the accident report from information about what occurred in the accident. For uniformity in classification, the



event to be selected is the first injury or damage producing event that can be determined to have happened in the accident, such as overturning, catching on fire, or collision. The ten categories describing the nature of the accident are applicable to both on and off roadway accidents.

## **Definitions**

**4.2 Motor Vehicle Accident** is any of the events listed in 4.1 and defined in 1.12, which involves a motor vehicle in transport.

**4.3 Noncollision Accident** is any accident involving a motor vehicle in transport, which may occur in any manner other than by collision. There are two types of noncollision accidents: overturning and other noncollision.

**4.3.1 Overturning Accident** is any accident in which a motor vehicle in transport overturns for any reason without antecedent accident.

**4.3.2 Other Noncollision Accident** is any accident involving a motor vehicle in transport, other than overturning and collision.

### **4.3.2.1 Includes.**

1. Accidental poisoning from carbon monoxide generated by a motor vehicle in transport.
2. Breakage of any part of the motor vehicle, resulting in injury or in further property damage.
3. Explosion of any part of the motor vehicle.
4. Fire starting in the motor vehicle.
5. Occupant falling, jumping, or being pushed from the motor vehicle.
6. Occupant hit by an object in, or thrown against some part of the motor vehicle.
7. Injury or damage from moving part of the motor vehicle.

8. Object falling from, or in, the motor vehicle.
9. Object thrown towards, or in, or on, the motor vehicle.
10. Object falling on the motor vehicle.
11. Toxic or corrosive chemicals leaking out of the motor vehicle.
12. Injury or damage involving only the motor vehicle that is of a noncollision nature, such as a bridge giving way under the weight of a motor vehicle, striking holes or bumps on the surface of the trafficway, or driving into water, without overturning or collision.
13. Other injury or damage which originates upon or in the motor vehicle, excluding events not a hazard of transport, such as a fight between occupants, occupant injured by a burning cigarette, or similar events.

#### 4.3.2.2 Excludes.

1. Carbon monoxide poisoning in a motor vehicle not in transport.
2. Breakage of any part, such as fan belt or axle, if there is no additional damage or injury.
3. Injury or damage resulting from discharge of a firearm in the motor vehicle.
4. Injury or damage resulting from working on a motor vehicle not in transport.

**4.4 Collision Accident** is any accident involving a motor vehicle in transport, in which the motor vehicle, its load, its parts, or objects set in motion by the motor vehicle, collide with other things, such as other motor vehicles, railway trains, pedestrians, animals, or objects fixed, movable or moving. Types of collision accidents include:

**4.4.1 Collision Involving Pedestrian** is any accident involving a motor vehicle in transport and a pedestrian.



4.4.1.1 **Includes.** Person afoot, sitting, lying, or working upon a way or place.

4.4.1.2 **Excludes.** Person boarding or alighting from another conveyance. Person in the process of jumping or falling from a motor vehicle in transport.

4.4.2 **Collision Involving Motor Vehicle in Transport** is any accident involving at least two motor vehicles in transport.

4.4.2.1 **Includes.** Collision with motor vehicle stopped, disabled, or abandoned on a roadway other than an area designated for parking.

4.4.3 **Collision Involving Parked Motor Vehicle** is any accident involving a motor vehicle in transport and a motor vehicle not in transport.

4.4.3.1 **Includes.** •

1. Motor vehicle parked in a place designated for parking, even though the permitted time period may have expired.
2. Motor vehicle stopped or parked along the roadway where normal usage permits such stopping or parking, including parking adjacent to curbs and parking on trafficway shoulders.
3. Motor vehicle stopped or parked illegally, but otherwise outside the roadway traffic lanes, such as blocking driveway, beside fire hydrant, or in loading zone.
4. Motor vehicle stopped, disabled, or abandoned off roadway.
5. Load in the process of falling from parked motor vehicle.

4.4.3.2 **Excludes.**

1. Motor vehicle stopped or parked in traffic lanes where

parking is prohibited, such as double parked, on the side of the street where there is no parking at any time along the length of the street, in tunnels or on bridges where parking is prohibited, or in a parking lane during the hours that it is required to be clear for traffic.

2. Stopped or parked self-propelled machinery even though such machinery is considered a motor vehicle when in transport.
3. Load that has fallen from a parked motor vehicle.

**4.4.4 Collision Involving Railway Train** is any accident involving a motor vehicle in transport and a railway train or railway vehicle (see 1.6).

**4.4.4.1 Includes.**

1. Railway train, with or without cars.
2. Motorized railway device.
3. Railway device, such as cars, set in motion by a railway train or railway vehicle.

**4.4.4.2 Excludes.**

1. Devices operated upon railway by human power.
2. Nonmotorized devices not set in motion by a railway train or railway vehicle.
3. Collisions in which a railway train was involved in a railway transport accident prior to involvement with the motor vehicle, such as derailment, or throwing some part, animal, or pedestrian against a motor vehicle.

**4.4.4.3 General.**

1. Motion of the motor vehicle is immaterial; it can be in motion or stopped in the path of the railway train.



2. Motion of the railway train is immaterial; it can be stopped in the path of the motor vehicle or in motion.
3. Whether the motor vehicle or the railway train does the actual striking is immaterial.

**4.4.5 Collision Involving Pedalcyclist** is any accident involving a motor vehicle in transport and a pedalcyclist in transport.

**4.4.5.1 Includes** any of the following devices in transport:

1. Bicycle.
2. Tricycle.
3. Unicycle.
4. Trailers or sidecars attached to any of above devices.
5. Pedalcar (PPV).

**4.4.5.2 Excludes.** Pedalcycle towed by motor vehicle, including hitching and unoccupied pedalcycle.

**4.4.5.3. General.**

1. A pedalcyclist is any person riding upon a pedalcycle or in a sidecar attached to the pedalcycle.
2. A stopped pedalcycle is considered to be in transport if attended (pedalcyclist need not be occupying the riding saddle) and in readiness for transport, such as stopped at a stop sign, traffic light, or waiting in traffic for any reason, but not pushing the pedalcycle.
3. A coasting pedalcyclist with rider is in transport.
4. If the motor vehicle and pedalcycle are in transport, which one does the actual striking is immaterial.

**4.4.6 Collision Involving Animal** is any accident involving a motor vehicle in transport and an animal.

**4.4.6.1 Includes.** Domestic and wild animals, flying animals, such as birds and bats.

4.4.6.2 **Excludes.** Ridden animals, animal drawing a conveyance.

4.4.6.3 **General.**

1. Injury to wild animals, such as birds and rabbits, is excluded if there is no injury to any person or damage to the motor vehicle.
2. Injury to domestic animals is treated as property damage, if there is no injury to any person or damage to the motor vehicle.

4.4.7 **Collision Involving Fixed Object** is any accident involving a motor vehicle in transport and a fixed object.

4.4.7.1 **Includes.**

1. Any object attached to the terrain.
2. Tree, boulder, utility pole, traffic signals, guard rail, bridge abutment or similar objects.
3. Any object intentionally placed for an official purpose; traffic barricades, road machinery, construction machinery, construction materials, or similar objects placed on or along the roadway for some purpose.

4.4.7.2 **Excludes.** Any object in motion.

4.4.8 **Collision Involving Other Object** is any accident involving a motor vehicle in transport and any other object which is moveable or moving, but not fixed.

4.4.8.1 **Includes.**

1. Animal-drawn vehicle (any type).
2. Animal carrying a person.



3. Street car.
4. Objects dropped from motor vehicle or other vehicles but not in motion.
5. Special devices not considered in transport or as fixed objects.
6. Fallen tree or stone.
7. Landslide or avalanche materials, not in motion.
8. Pedalcycle not in transport.
9. Railway devices moved by human power.
10. Nonmotorized devices not set in motion by railway train or railway vehicle.

#### 4.4.8.2 Excludes.

1. Objects set in motion by aircraft, watercraft, railway, or other motor vehicle.
2. Objects set in motion by cataclysm, lightning, or other natural and environmental factors.

### Interpretations

**4.5 Location of the Event or Motor Vehicle.** The nature of the injury or damage producing event affects the location classification of the motor vehicle traffic accident; that is, on or off the roadway. The distinction is made when noncollision and collision accidents are considered. In the first, the location of the motor vehicle is considered; in the second, the location of the accident is considered.

**4.5.1 Noncollision Accident.** In a noncollision accident, the location of the motor vehicle at the time of the accident determines whether the accident occurred on or off the roadway. If, at the time of the accident, the motor vehicle occupied any portion of the roadway, the accident shall be considered to have occurred on the roadway (see Figure 1).

**4.5.2 Collision Accident.** In a collision accident, the on and off roadway classification is determined by the location of the accident, or the point of impact, in relation to the boundaries of the roadway. If the accident is established as having been within the boundaries of the roadway, the accident shall be considered to have occurred on the roadway. If the accident is established as having been outside the boundaries of the roadway, the accident shall be considered to have occurred off the roadway, even though the motor vehicle may occupy a part of the roadway (see Figure 2).

**4.6 When More Than One Event Occurs.** A motor vehicle traffic accident in which there is more than one injury or damage producing event should be classified by type according to the location and nature of the first event to occur, considering the distinctions made in 4.5 on location of the event or motor vehicle.

**4.6.1 Examples.** Two motor vehicles in transport collide on the roadway and an accident results, then one motor vehicle runs onto the sidewalk and injures a pedestrian; classify the entire accident as "on roadway - collision involving motor vehicle in transport." Two motor vehicles in transport bump together, but there is no injury or damage, but one motor vehicle runs onto the sidewalk and injures a pedestrian; classify the accident as "off roadway - collision involving pedestrian." A motor vehicle in transport leaves the roadway while avoiding another motor vehicle in transport, strikes and breaks a yielding or breakaway sign damaging the sign and motor vehicle, then returns to the roadway and collides with a motor vehicle in transport; classify the entire accident as "off roadway - collision involving fixed object" (see Figure 3).

**4.7 Pedalcyclist and Pedestrians.** Types of motor vehicle traffic accidents can provide useful information on the involvement of persons in accidents who are not occupants of motor vehicles or riding animals. Involved persons may be divided into three categories and their severity of injury established by using the categories of injury listed in Section 2. The three categories are:

1. Pedalcyclist - persons occupying a pedalcycle or a sidecar attached to the pedalcycle.



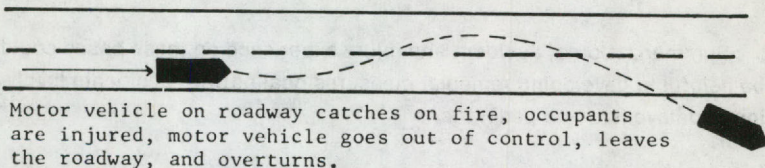
2. Persons afoot, including walking, sitting, lying, or working upon a land way or place.
3. Persons in or operating a pedestrian conveyance.

Summarization of accident and injury experience on these bases could be helpful in developing remedial measures dealing with accidents involving pedalcyclists and pedestrians.

**FIGURE 1**

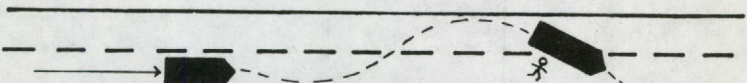
NONCOLLISION EVENTS - ON OR OFF ROADWAY

1. ON ROADWAY - OTHER NONCOLLISION



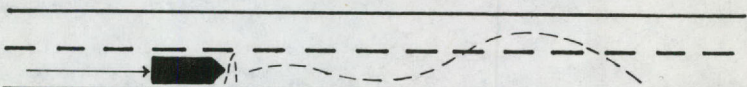
Motor vehicle on roadway catches on fire, occupants are injured, motor vehicle goes out of control, leaves the roadway, and overturns.

2. ON ROADWAY - OTHER NONCOLLISION



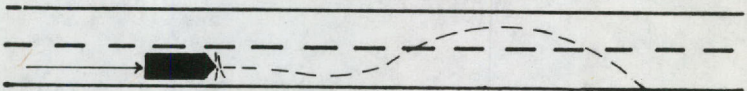
Motor vehicle on roadway goes out of control, an occupant jumps out while motor vehicle occupies a portion of the roadway, occupant is injured in the jump, motor vehicle leaves the roadway and overturns.

3. ON ROADWAY - OTHER NONCOLLISION



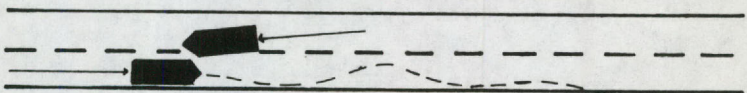
Motor vehicle on roadway strikes pavement defect, occupant is thrown against inside of motor vehicle and is injured, motor vehicle goes out of control, leaves roadway, and overturns.

4. OFF ROADWAY - OVERTURNING



Motor vehicle on roadway strikes pavement defect, there is no injury or damage, motor vehicle goes out of control, leaves roadway, and overturns, injuring occupants.

5. OFF ROADWAY - OTHER NONCOLLISION



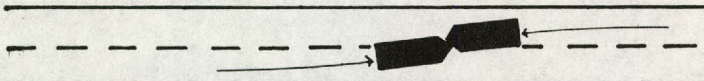
Motor vehicle on roadway avoids other motor vehicle, goes into skid, wheels catch on edge of pavement, and occupant falls out and is injured after the motor vehicle leaves the roadway, and the motor vehicle runs into a tree.



**FIGURE 2**

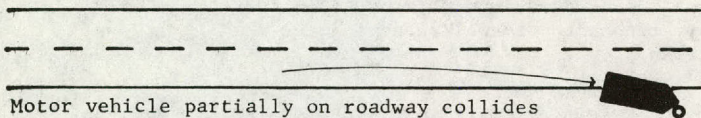
COLLISION EVENTS - ON OR OFF ROADWAY

1. ON ROADWAY - COLLISION INVOLVING MOTOR VEHICLE



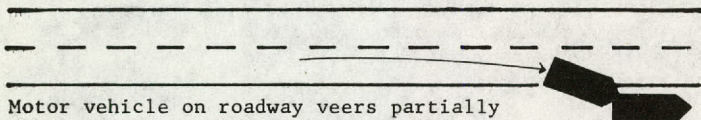
Motor vehicle on roadway collides with other motor vehicle on roadway, resulting in injury and damage.

2. OFF ROADWAY - COLLISION INVOLVING FIXED OBJECT



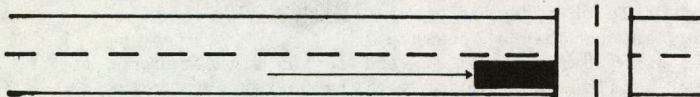
Motor vehicle partially on roadway collides with a tree off the roadway, damaging the motor vehicle and injuring occupants.

3. OFF ROADWAY - COLLISION INVOLVING PARKED MOTOR VEHICLE



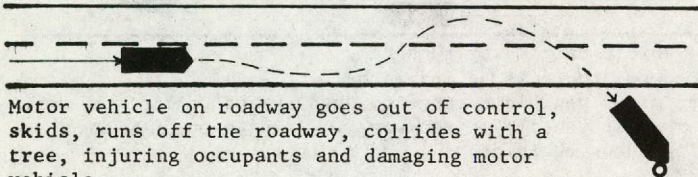
Motor vehicle on roadway veers partially off roadway and collides with a parked motor vehicle off roadway, injuring occupants and damaging motor vehicles.

4. ON ROADWAY - COLLISION INVOLVING FIXED OBJECT



Motor vehicle (overheight truck) on roadway drives under an overpass and the top of the truck strikes the overpass, damaging the motor vehicle.

5. OFF ROADWAY - COLLISION INVOLVING FIXED OBJECT

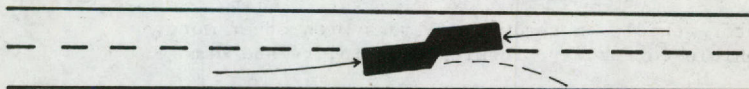


Motor vehicle on roadway goes out of control, skids, runs off the roadway, collides with a tree, injuring occupants and damaging motor vehicle.

FIGURE 3

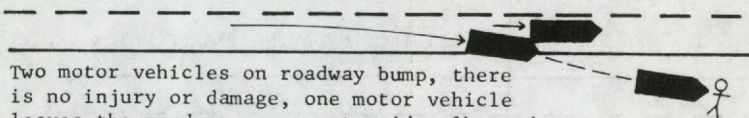
WHEN MORE THAN ONE EVENT OCCURS

1. ON ROADWAY - COLLISION INVOLVING MOTOR VEHICLE



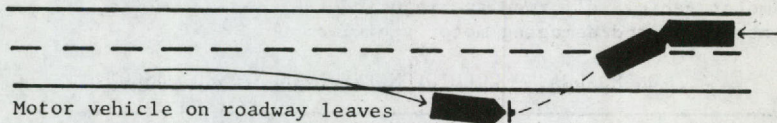
Two motor vehicles collide on roadway, motor vehicles are damaged, one motor vehicle leaves roadway, runs onto sidewalk, and injures a pedestrian.

2. OFF ROADWAY - COLLISION INVOLVING PEDESTRIAN



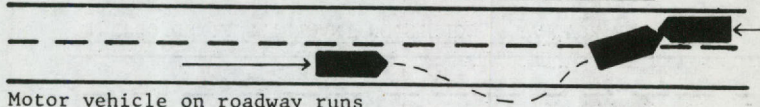
Two motor vehicles on roadway bump, there is no injury or damage, one motor vehicle leaves the roadway, runs onto sidewalk, and injures a pedestrian.

3. OFF ROADWAY - COLLISION INVOLVING FIXED OBJECT



Motor vehicle on roadway leaves roadway, knocks down a breakaway traffic sign, damaging motor vehicle and sign, returns to roadway, collides with motor vehicle on roadway, injuring occupants and damaging motor vehicles.

4. ON ROADWAY - COLLISION INVOLVING MOTOR VEHICLE



Motor vehicle on roadway runs off roadway, there is no injury or damage, motor vehicle returns to roadway and collides with another motor vehicle on roadway, injuring occupants and damaging motor vehicles.



## 5. MOTOR VEHICLE NONTRAFFIC ACCIDENTS

### Classification

**5.1 Classification Categories.** Motor vehicle nontraffic accidents may be classified according to the classification categories established for motor vehicle traffic accidents; however, suitable adaptations must be made that are applicable to the off-trafficway character of such accidents.

Since motor vehicle nontraffic accidents do not occur on trafficways, the on and off roadway classification does not apply. Such accidents occur entirely in any place other than a trafficway. The accident will be classified by categories entirely by the first injury or damage producing event to occur in the accident. Severity of the accident, location of the accident and types of accidents are identical to motor vehicle traffic accidents.





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