

Peter K. O'Rourke Special Achievement Award Presented to **Maine's Crash Reporting System**

Maine's Crash Reporting System (MCRS) streamlined a paper data collection process that was untimely and prone to inaccuracies.

After being developed, tested and gradually implemented during the past three years, the electronic system has been adopted by all counties in Maine. Using laptop and desktop computers, police officers digitally record all pertinent crash information. The new method has drastically reduced the time it takes for crash reports to be submitted. For example, data from commercial truck crashes, which is submitted to the Motor Carrier Safety and Assistance Program (MCSAP), is now submitted on average, after 10 days— compared with more than 300 days in the previous system.

With the new computerized system, all crash data is immediately scanned for completeness and instantly returned to the officer if more work is required. Another benefit is that the crash reports are easier to read because they are no longer completed by hand.

MCRS eliminated the need for the "48 hour form," a special crash report form that motorists involved in a crash were required to submit to the Bureau of Motor Vehicles within 48 hours of the crash. Previously motorists often failed to turn in the form on time, or if they did, it was incomplete.

As a result, the new system may aid police departments in preventing future crashes. The database allows police departments to easily analyze crash data holistically to reveal dangerous trends and develop suitable countermeasures.



*Richard Perkins,
Director of Maine's Bureau
of Highway Safety*

Funding was one of several difficulties the program overcame in order to succeed. As a small state, finding adequate staffing and funds to establish the program was difficult. Also challenging was integrating the incompatible computer systems already in use by 20 departments.

The efforts of the Bureau of Highway Safety's six employees, aided by just two contractors, proves that size doesn't stand in the way of having a big impact on highway safety.

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