



New Jersey Legislature
★ *Office of* **LEGISLATIVE SERVICES** ★
OFFICE OF THE STATE AUDITOR

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
BUREAU OF TRANSPORTATION DATA AND SUPPORT
CRASH RECORDS UNIT
January 1, 2018 to March 31, 2022**

We found controls existed for the submission of crash reports. This information is used to identify traffic safety problems, determine how resources should be allocated, and design effective countermeasures to reduce fatalities and serious injuries on the state's roadways. However, the controls do not ensure all required crash reports are submitted to the department and in a timely manner. We determined the integrity and completeness of the data contained in the Accident Records Database (ARD) could be improved. Furthermore, we made an observation regarding a data dictionary for users of the ARD.

AUDIT HIGHLIGHTS

- Crash reports are not required to be submitted electronically, and converting paper or digitally-scanned reports to an electronic record is labor intensive and time consuming for the department. The majority of law enforcement agencies (LEAs) also convert their hand-written crash reports to an electronic record, resulting in a duplication of effort. Although the LEAs were not able to submit the electronic records to the department prior to July 2021, the department launched the New Jersey Crash Portal in July 2021 to allow LEAs to submit them through an online portal at no cost to the LEAs. However, as of March 31, 2022, only 18 of 536 LEAs were submitting crash reports through the portal.
- The department did not consistently monitor to ensure all LEAs regularly submit crash reports and did not verify submissions were within the time frames required by statute. Our analysis of submissions from the 525 LEAs that submitted crash reports in one or both of calendar years 2018 and 2019 identified an average of 84 LEAs did not submit crash reports at all for three months or more in each calendar year. Additionally, we estimate the department is missing 7,800 and 8,200 crash reports for calendar years 2018 and 2019, respectively.
- The traffic fatality counts reported in the ARD did not agree with the fatality counts per the New Jersey State Police. When traffic fatality data is missing or misclassified in the ARD, users may not have sufficient information to develop and deploy safety countermeasures.
- Edit checks were not in place to identify potential missing records, incomplete data fields, or improperly coded fields prior to the data being uploaded to the ARD. Failure to ensure records are entered and fields in the ARD are properly populated may impact decisions regarding the prioritization of projects, the design of roadways, the allocation of resources, and the development of countermeasures and other safety programs when this data is relied upon.

AUDITEE RESPONSE

The department generally concurs with our findings and recommendations.

For the complete audit report or to print this Executive Summary, click on the attached files.