# The DISPATCH

*PennDOT Crash Newsletter - News you can use!*

## What's New?

**PCIT Update**

The Pennsylvania Crash Reporting Tool (PCIT) is a public gateway that provides crash statistics in regard to reportable crashes statewide. The site is available at the link below. We encourage you to visit this site to see what it has to offer.

Recently, PennDOT enhanced the PCIT site, allowing police agencies access to data that is not available to the general public. This includes up-to-date data specific to the police agency.

Police can quickly access their data quality dashboards and print accreditation reports that provide crash timeliness metrics for accreditation entities. Police can create custom queries to show where crashes take place and provide specific crash categories.

Police agencies that want to use restricted data will need to request a PCIT Police User Account. The onboarding process can take 6 to 8 weeks. Please contact your Law Enforcement Liaison listed below to start the process.



**CR LEL AREA MAP**
**Crash Reporting Law Enforcement Liaison**
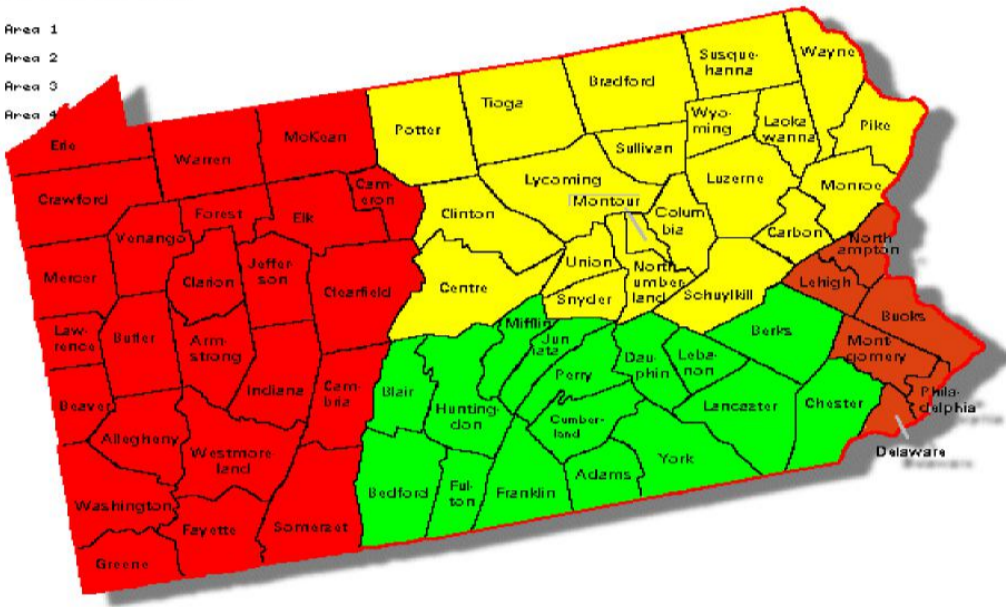
**Area 1:** James Moriarty (215-292-0433) jmoriarty@hsnetwork.org
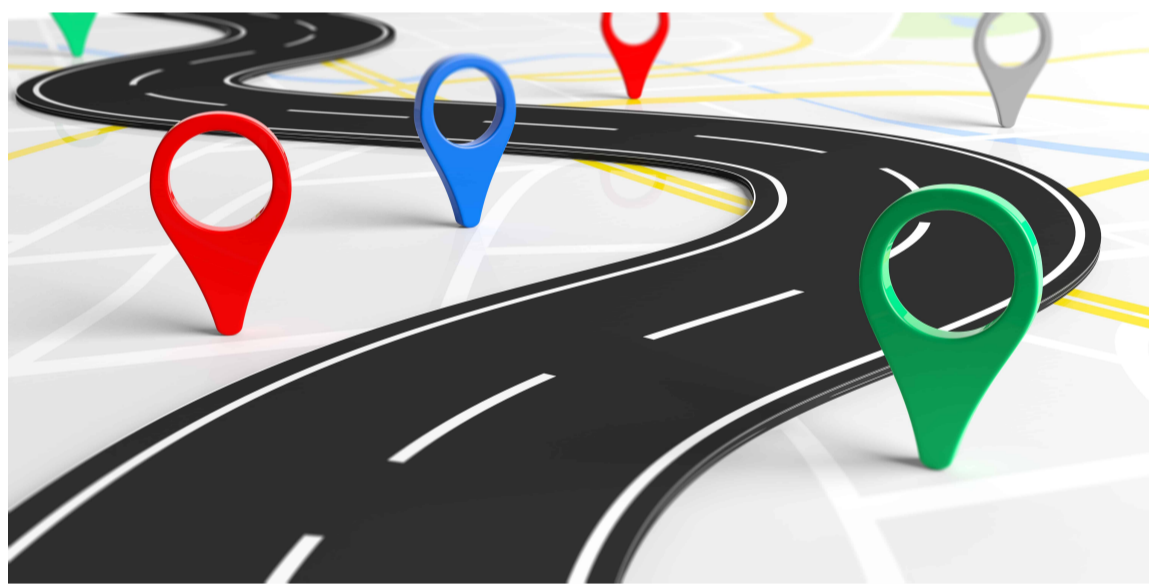**Area 2:** Gordon Beck (215-219-8575) gbeck@hsnetwork.org
**Area 3:** Rick Leymeister (570-516-7881) rleymeister@hsnetwork.org
**Area 4:** Mike Ragan (412-327-9488) mragan@hsnetwork.org

Click here to access PCIT

## Working Together



**Importance of Locating Crashes Correctly**

A reportable crash is one in which a fatality occurs within 30 days of the crash; or injury in any degree, to any person involved; or crashes resulting in damage to any vehicle serious enough to require towing.

The importance of locating a reportable crash correctly is to provide accuracy when tracking areas that may require safer ways to travel. This information helps to determine which locations may need traffic signals, rumble strips, or maybe road engineering adjustments. In order for these new safety measures to be implemented the information we receive from reporting officers must be as precise as possible to accurately determine where there may be high crash locations.

A common error when reporting crash locations is when the reporting officer marks the location of the vehicle where it is at rest upon their arrival, as opposed to determining the location of the first harmful event that occurred which caused the crash. Another common mistake is when the reporting officer determines that a crash occurred mid-block, when in fact, the first harmful event occurred within a close-range intersection. Either of these errors, along with any others misconstrues the data that is submitted to PennDOT to track potential high crash locations.

The ultimate goal for locating crashes correctly is to be sure public funding is being used in an efficient and sensible manner to reduce all potential high crash locations to zero.
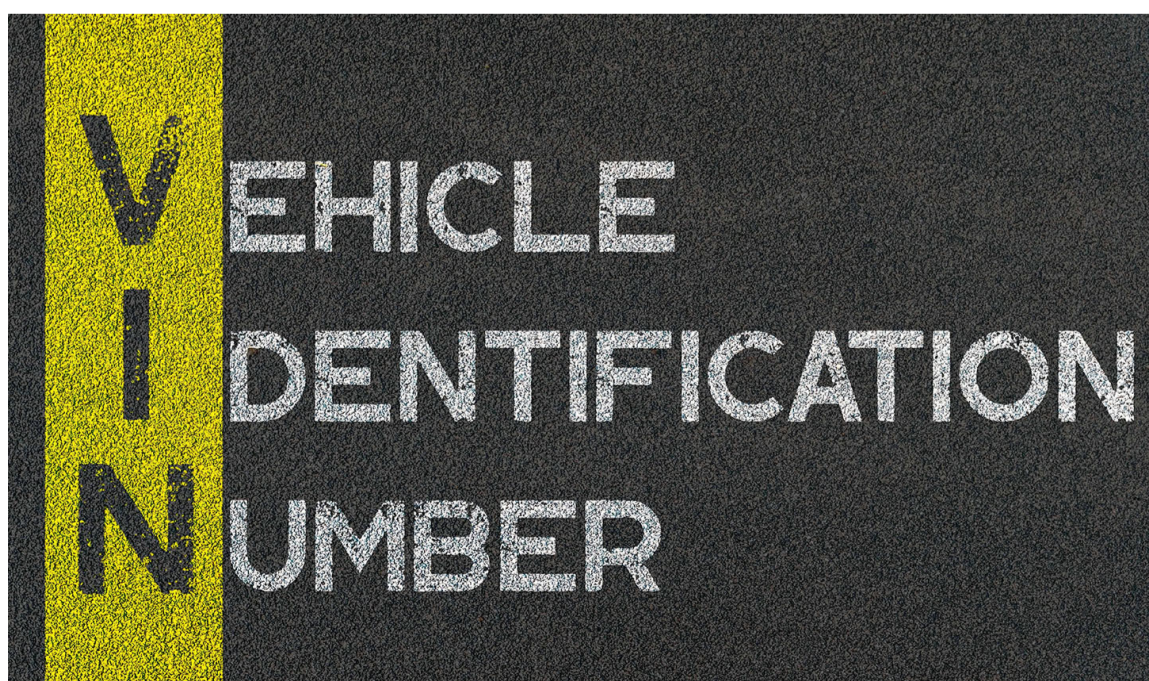


**Importance of Verifying Vehicle Identification Numbers**

Vehicle Identification Numbers (VINs) are the fingerprint of every motor vehicle.

All vehicles manufactured since 1956 were assigned a VIN to give an accurate description of the vehicle. Early VINs came in all sorts of variations and depended on the individual manufacturer. Beginning in 1981, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration began requiring that all road vehicles contain 17 characters that identify the year, make, model, country of origin, and even the factory where it was manufactured.

It is perfectly comprehensible to foresee how these characters can be misconstrued when being transcribed. The importance of verifying these numbers when entering on a crash report is key to many factors. An accurate

VIN improves the overall data which is used mostly by Vehicle Crash History Services, such as Carfax and Experian and Data Research Faculties, such as Universities or public research companies. Vehicle Crash History Services can help consumers make informed decisions when purchasing a used vehicle by disclosing an accurate record of the vehicle's history involving any reportable crashes. The data research conducted by public research companies that are vetted and required to adhere to data protection rules by agreement, such as the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety is used for vehicle safety testing and research.

All things considered, it is evident that accurately recording and reporting Vehicle Identification Numbers is a clear contributor to increasing the protection and safety of all Pennsylvania citizens.

## Understanding Crash Terms



### Hit and Run vs. Phantom Vehicle

A **hit-and-run** is when a driver hits another vehicle, person, or piece of property and then flees the scene without stopping to provide their personal information.

**Example:** Unit 1 entered an intersection after stopping at the four way stop and acknowledging clearance. Unit 2 failed to stop at the four way stop and collided with Unit 1 in the center of the intersection. Unit 2 then fled the scene without stopping to provide their information.

**How to code a hit and run:**

- Unit Type = "Hit and Run Vehicle"
- Complete all driver data with unknowns and 9's.
- Enter whichever Harmful Event coincides with what the hit and run vehicle struck.
- Complete the Contributing Factor for the unit. (At least 1 contributing factor is required for a Hit and Run Vehicle.)
- Complete all remaining applicable fields.

A **phantom vehicle** is one that causes injury, death or damage without any physical contact. This can include pedestrians. There should be evidence or witness statements to corroborate a phantom vehicle.

**Example:** Unit 1 was traveling on the interstate in the right lane. Unit 2 cut across the right lane from the left lane to reach the exit ramp. Unit 1 then slammed on their breaks and swerved in order to avoid hitting Unit 2. Unit 1 then spun out of control hitting a guard rail. Several witnesses stopped to assist the driver of Unit 1 and reported the accident as being caused by a phantom vehicle.

**How to code a phantom vehicle:**

- Unit Type = "Phantom Vehicle"
- Do not include any of the Driver data since this unit had no harmful events in the crash.
- Enter "00 = No Harmful Event" as the only harmful event for this unit.
- Complete the Contributing Factor for the unit. (At least 1 contributing factor is required for a Phantom Unit.)
- Complete all remaining applicable fields.

### Non-Collision Crash

A non-collision crash is any crash that does not involve contact between units or a motor vehicle and a fixed object. A Police Crash Report Form should be prepared if the resultant incident meets the definition of a reportable crash.

**Examples:**

- Occupant falling from exterior of vehicle (motorcycle, pick-up bed, etc.)
- Vehicle roll-over (not preceded by a collision)
- Breakage of any part of the vehicle, resulting in injury or further property damage
- Fire starting in the vehicle or mechanical failure while in motion (not parked)
- Occupant hit by an object in, or thrown against some part of the vehicle
- Object falling on the vehicle (not from another unit)



**Now that you've made it to the end of the newsletter, how would you rate its content?**

Not helpful at all    0    1    2    3    4    Very helpful