

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY
[JURISDICTION NAME]

Policy Number: _____

Effective Date: _____

Supersedes: _____

Approved by: _____

SUBJECT: Crash Analysis Studio Process for the Review of Fatal and Serious Traffic Crashes

1. PURPOSE

This policy establishes a Crash Analysis Studio process as a standard practice for reviewing fatal and serious traffic crashes occurring within [Jurisdiction Name]. The purpose of this process is to identify contributing factors, document opportunities to improve safety, and share findings with decision-makers and the public.

A Crash Analysis Studio is a learning process, not an investigative or legal proceeding. It does not assign fault, determine liability, or replace existing emergency response, law enforcement, or claims management processes. It exists alongside those processes to ask a different question: what can we learn from this crash that might prevent the next one?

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all departments with responsibility for public safety, transportation, public works, planning, and related functions. It establishes shared expectations for participation, coordination, and documentation across those departments.

3. CRITERIA FOR REVIEW

A Crash Analysis Studio shall be conducted following any crash that results in a fatality or serious injury occurring on streets within the jurisdiction. Serious injury is defined as any injury requiring hospitalization or resulting in permanent impairment.

The [City Manager / Department Head / Designee] may also convene a Crash Analysis Studio for crashes that, while not meeting the above criteria, present significant safety concerns or opportunities for learning.

Nothing in this policy obligates the jurisdiction to conduct a Studio for crashes that do not meet the above criteria. Nothing in this policy prevents the jurisdiction from doing so if it serves the public interest.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Studio Coordinator

The [Department / Position] shall serve as Studio Coordinator and shall be responsible for:

- Establishing a process for receiving timely notification of fatal and serious crashes
- Determining whether a crash meets the criteria for review
- Activating the Crash Response Team following a qualifying crash
- Coordinating the scheduling and logistics of Studio sessions
- Ensuring that findings are documented and shared in accordance with this policy
- Maintaining records of completed Studios and recommended actions

Crash Response Team

The Studio Coordinator shall assemble and maintain a Crash Response Team responsible for visiting crash locations, documenting conditions, and preparing materials for review. The Crash Response Team should include people with knowledge and experience in areas relevant to understanding crash contributing factors, which may include:

- Transportation engineering
- Planning and urban design
- Public works and maintenance
- Traffic operations
- Walking and bicycling infrastructure
- Neighborhood conditions and local knowledge

The Crash Response Team shall visit the crash location as soon as practical following a qualifying crash. Team members shall document street conditions, take measurements and photographs, review available information, and experience the site from the perspective of those involved in the crash.

Studio Facilitator

Each Studio session shall be guided by a skilled facilitator whose role is to ensure that all participants are heard, that the conversation remains focused on learning and contributing factors rather than fault or blame, and that the discussion produces findings that are clear and actionable.

The facilitator may be a staff member, a community partner, or an outside resource with relevant experience.

Studio Participants

Studio sessions shall include both technical professionals and community members. Participants may include staff from relevant departments, elected officials, neighborhood representatives, advocates, people familiar with the crash location, and others whose perspectives may contribute to a fuller understanding of the crash and its contributing factors.

5. THE CRASH ANALYSIS STUDIO PROCESS

Step 1: Crash Notification

Once notified of a fatal or serious crash, the Studio Coordinator shall determine whether the crash meets the criteria for review and, if so, activate the Crash Response Team.

Step 2: Site Visit

The Crash Response Team shall visit the crash location as soon as practical. Team members shall document conditions, gather available information, and prepare materials for review in the Studio session.

Step 3: Studio Session

The Studio Coordinator shall schedule a Studio session and assemble participants. The session shall be facilitated and shall include review of information gathered by the Crash Response Team, identification of contributing factors, and discussion of opportunities to improve safety.

A typical Studio session runs between sixty and ninety minutes.

Step 4: Documentation of Findings

Following the Studio session, a written summary of findings shall be produced. The summary shall include:

- A description of the crash being reviewed
- Information reviewed during the session
- Contributing factors identified by participants
- Any immediate actions identified for consideration

The findings shall focus on learning and improvement, not fault or liability.

Step 5: Sharing of Findings

Findings shall be shared with relevant department heads, elected officials, and the public. The Studio Coordinator shall maintain a record of all completed Studios and their findings.

Step 6: Follow-Up

Recommended actions shall be assigned to relevant departments or individuals for consideration and response. The Studio Coordinator shall track the status of recommended actions and report periodically on progress.

6. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PROCESSES

A Crash Analysis Studio is a learning process that operates alongside, and does not replace or supersede, existing emergency response, law enforcement investigation, insurance, and legal

processes. Participation in a Crash Analysis Studio does not affect the rights, responsibilities, or obligations of any party in connection with those processes.

Studio findings are advisory in nature. They do not constitute official determinations of fault, cause, or liability, and shall not be represented as such.

7. DOCUMENTATION AND RECORDS

All Studio reports and related documentation shall be maintained in accordance with the jurisdiction's records retention policy. Findings shall be made available to the public in a format that is clear and accessible.

8. TRAINING AND SUPPORT

Staff with responsibilities under this policy shall receive appropriate orientation and training. Strong Towns provides training, facilitation guidance, peer learning opportunities, and technical assistance to communities that have established a Crash Analysis Studio process. Staff are encouraged to participate in those offerings, as they become available.

9. POLICY REVIEW

This policy shall be reviewed periodically and updated as needed to reflect lessons learned from completed Studios, changes in best practice, and the evolving needs of the jurisdiction.

APPROVED:

[City Manager / Executive Director]

DATE: _____