Notification: Activating the Crash Response Team

A fatal or serious crash is the trigger. **Notification is what activates the city's response.**

In many cities, police are the first department to know that a qualifying crash has occurred. The challenge is making sure that information reaches the people responsible for learning from the crash and preparing the Crash Analysis Studio.

This does not need to be complicated. Based on our work with cities, a direct line of communication between the police department and the Crash Response Team is often the most effective approach. It may be a phone call, an email, or an existing notification system. What matters is that someone knows who to contact and that the notification happens consistently.

The initial notification only needs to share the basics: where the crash occurred, when it occurred, who was involved, what is known about the severity, and who in the police department can provide additional information. The Crash Response Team can gather additional information as it becomes available.

Cities do not need to wait for the police investigation to be completed or the final crash report to be issued before activating the team. The police investigation and the Crash Analysis Studio serve different purposes and can proceed alongside one another.

What We Have Learned From Cities

In Ann Arbor, Michigan, and Pittsburgh, relationships between police and transportation staff help move crash information directly to the people responsible for reviewing it. In Flint, Michigan, one of the first improvements identified was similarly straightforward: establish a direct communication pathway so transportation and engineering staff know when a fatal or critical crash has occurred.

The lesson is simple: **departments can work together.** This can be as easy as picking up the phone, and this can be accomplished while protecting sensitive information within the crash report. Police do not need to conduct the Crash Analysis Studio, and transportation staff do not need to conduct the police investigation. They only need a reliable way to hand information from one part of the city to another.

Once the Crash Response Team is notified, the process begins: **gather what we know, observe the location, convene the Crash Analysis Studio, and identify what the city can learn and do next.**