Introduction

Statewide crash data provide the basic information for most of the analyses and data collection programs that support the NHTSA mission. Each state maintains a database that contains comprehensive information about the people, vehicles, and conditions recorded in police accident reports (PARs). Information will vary from state to state because each state has different data collection and reporting standards.

Since the early 1980s, NHTSA has been obtaining crash data files derived from data recorded on PARs. NHTSA refers to the collection of these computerized state crash data files obtained from seventeen states as the State Data System, which is conducted by the National Center for Statistics and Analysis (NCSA). The seventeen states participating in the program are: **California**, **Florida**, **Georgia**, **Illinois**, **Indiana**, **Kansas**, **Maryland**, **Michigan**, **Missouri**, **New Mexico**, **North Carolina**, **Ohio**, **Pennsylvania**, **Texas**, **Utah**, **Virginia**, and **Washington**. The crash data files from these states are requested annually from the appropriate state agencies. In most instances, the coordinating state agency is the state police, the state highway safety department, or the state Department of Transportation. These files are received in various digital formats and are converted to a common SAS® data format. (The details of the SAS® file structure are described in the following section, Data File Structure.) These SAS® files are placed on the Local Area Network (LAN) where they are available for the analytical needs of the NHTSA staff. Generally, the state crash data files in the State Data System are not available to researchers outside the DOT unless written permission has been granted by the state whose data have been requested.

The State Data System is a part of NCSA's overall State Data Program, which supports NHTSA's efforts to identify traffic safety problems, help develop and implement vehicle and driver countermeasures, evaluate motor vehicle standards, and to study crash avoidance issues, crashworthiness issues, and regulations. The State Data Program provides essential crash information detail that complements national data collection programs such as FARS and GES.

Crash data can be linked to non-crash specific data to generate information about the environment of the crash and the medical and financial outcome of persons injured in the crash. Consequently, other components of the State Data Program work to enhance the quality and utility of these crash data. These efforts include:

• Providing analytic support to NHTSA programs using state crash data;

• Providing states with technical assistance, and offering guidance on standardized reporting procedures, e.g., the Model Minimum Uniform Crash Criteria (MMUCC);

- Encouraging states to link their crash and injury outcome data in programs such as the Crash Outcome Data Evaluation System (CODES); and

- Providing resources through the CODES Data Network project for NHTSA's analysts to obtain access to an ever-increasing inventory of state-specific crash outcome data.

The State Data Program's objective is to fully develop the analytic potential of all state data of relevance to highway safety. Currently, NCSA is expanding its capabilities to include more states in the program as well as taking steps to improve PAR quality and uniformity.