



Fatal Case Reviews

Aggregate Data Meets “The Story”

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WIDAC Meeting

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OVERVIEW


- What is the history of Fatal Case Reviews?
- What is a Fatal Case Review?
- Why conduct Fatal Case Reviews (FCR)?
- How do we choose what cases to review?
- What type of information is used?
- Who participates in an FCR?
- What is produced from an FCR?
- What are the FCR program development goals moving forward?

HISTORY OF FATAL CASE REVIEWS

Began in the U.S., in the 1970s, focused on child and infant deaths.



The WTSC supports the Cooper Jones Active Transportation Safety Council's fatal crash reviews, under RCW 43.59.156.




Recognized as helpful tool that can lead to important changes to traffic safety.



The WTSC is expanding reviews beyond ATSC's scope, starting with impaired driving.

WHAT IS A FATAL CASE REVIEW?

- A comprehensive deep dive into the factors of a fatal crash or sample of multiple crashes with similar factors (e.g., impairment).
- Identifying and reporting the modifiable risk and protective factors using the Safe System Approach and Spectrum of Prevention framework.

A magnifying glass with a black frame is positioned over a piece of white paper. The word "Research" is written in blue ink on the paper and is significantly enlarged and in focus through the lens of the magnifying glass. The background is a dark, circular shape, possibly a shadow or a graphic element.



Spectrum of Prevention

- Influencing **Policy & Legislation**
- Changing **Organizational Practices**
- Fostering **Coalitions & Networks**
- Educating **Providers**
- Promoting **Community Education**
- Strengthening **Individual Knowledge & Skills**

WHY CONDUCT FATAL CASE REVIEWS?



AGGREGATED
DATA IS A
SNAPSHOT



HAMPERS
ASSUMPTIONS
MADE THROUGH
THE AGGREGATED
DATA



IDENTIFICATION
OF MODIFIABLE
RISK FACTORS



BETTER
UNDERSTANDING
OF INVESTIGATIVE
PROCESS



PATTERNS
EMERGE OVER
TIME AND
EXPERIENCE

HOW DO WE CHOOSE WHAT CASES TO REVIEW?

- Start with aggregate data, ask questions, and look for patterns
- Drill down into subgroups and narrow scope for case selection
- Legislatively mandated
- Sometimes it just arrives





WHAT INFORMATION IS USED?

- Police traffic collision report
- Technical, reconstruction, investigation reports
- Toxicology reports
- Drivers' license history
- Roadway, weather, lighting, traffic control conditions
- Location visualizations
- Press memos

WHO IS PART OF A FATAL CASE REVIEW?

- WTSC Research Director and/or Senior Research Associate
- FARS Analyst
- WTSC Program Managers
- Investigating Officer or Traffic Unit Lead
- Licensing
- Public Health
- Engineers
- Traffic Safety Prosecutors
- EMS
- Medical Examiner / Coroner



WHAT IS THE OUTCOME OF A FATAL CASE REVIEW?

The observations shared during a review are summarized in a report and may be used for consideration when determining possible action steps, new countermeasures, policy, or programs.



FATAL CASE REVIEW REPORT EXAMPLE

- [ATSC FCR Study Team Observations 2021-2022 Yakima Co Nov2023 .pdf](#)

WIDAC Fatal Case Reviews

- Conducting four FCRs
 - March, June, Sept, Dec
- FCR team is members of WEB
 - Not open to the public
- Scope of first two FCRs
 - Impaired drivers BAC at .05 or less
 - Fentanyl & Unlicensed
- Observations reported to WIDAC



FUTURE GOALS OF FATAL CASE REVIEW PROGRAM

- Implementing best practices
- Expanding FCRs to other programmatic areas (e.g., speed, distracted driving, etc.)
- Developing FCR toolkit for partners
- Reporting on patterns of observations overtime via QA software
- Publishing annual reports





THANK YOU

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