

# Forming a Fatal Collision Review Committee (FCRC): Inspiring and informing action

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TRAFFIC INJURY RESEARCH FOUNDATION



TIRF



Applying research to the real world.



# About TIRF

TIRF is registered charity providing the following services:

- > Research on road crashes;
- > Program and policy development;
- > Evaluation plans, program, and policy evaluations; and
- > Knowledge transfer



**Giving Communities | Safe Roads Home**



The **vision** of TIRF is to ensure people using roads make it home safely every day by eliminating road deaths, serious injuries and their social costs.

TIRF's **mission** is to be the knowledge source for safer road users and a world leader in research, program and policy development, evaluation, and knowledge transfer.



# Overview

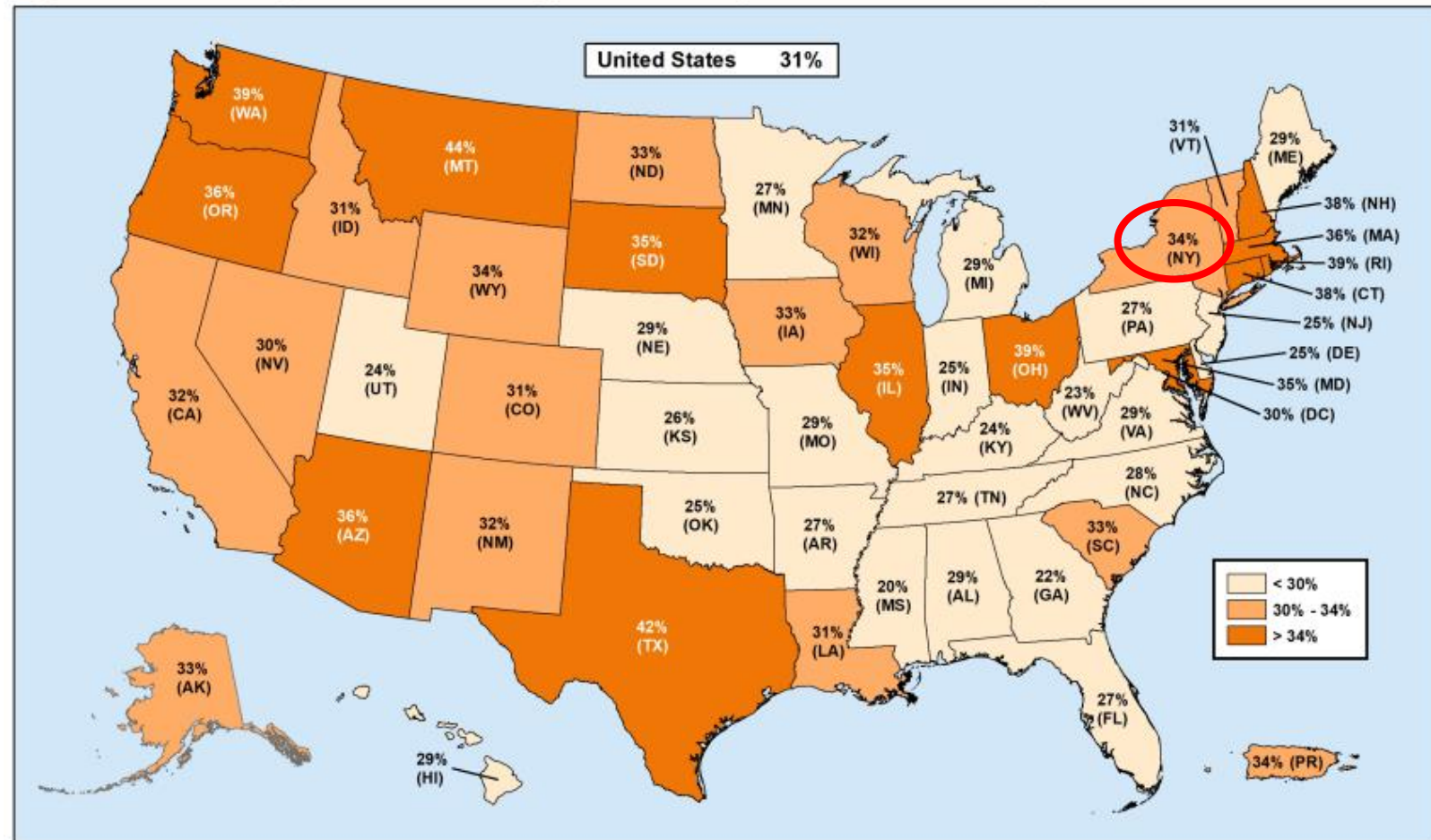
- > Objective of an FCRC
- > Functions of an FCRC
- > Role of FCRC in a community
- > Tools to establish an FCRC
- > An FCRC in practice





# Impaired driving in NY (2021)

- > Total impaired driving fatalities: **1,157** (2.7% of all US fatalities)
- > BAC .08: **388** (34% of NY fatalities)
- > BAC .15: **249** (21% of NY fatalities)





# What is an FCRC?

- > A Fatal Collision Review Committee is a multi-disciplinary committee formed with the intention of undertaking a timely review of fatal road crashes as they occur in a municipality.
- > Provides key decision makers at the county level with a more complete understanding of fatal crashes in their communities.
- > Structured through a TOR and MOU, agencies can share data to undertake a complete analysis of fatal crashes.



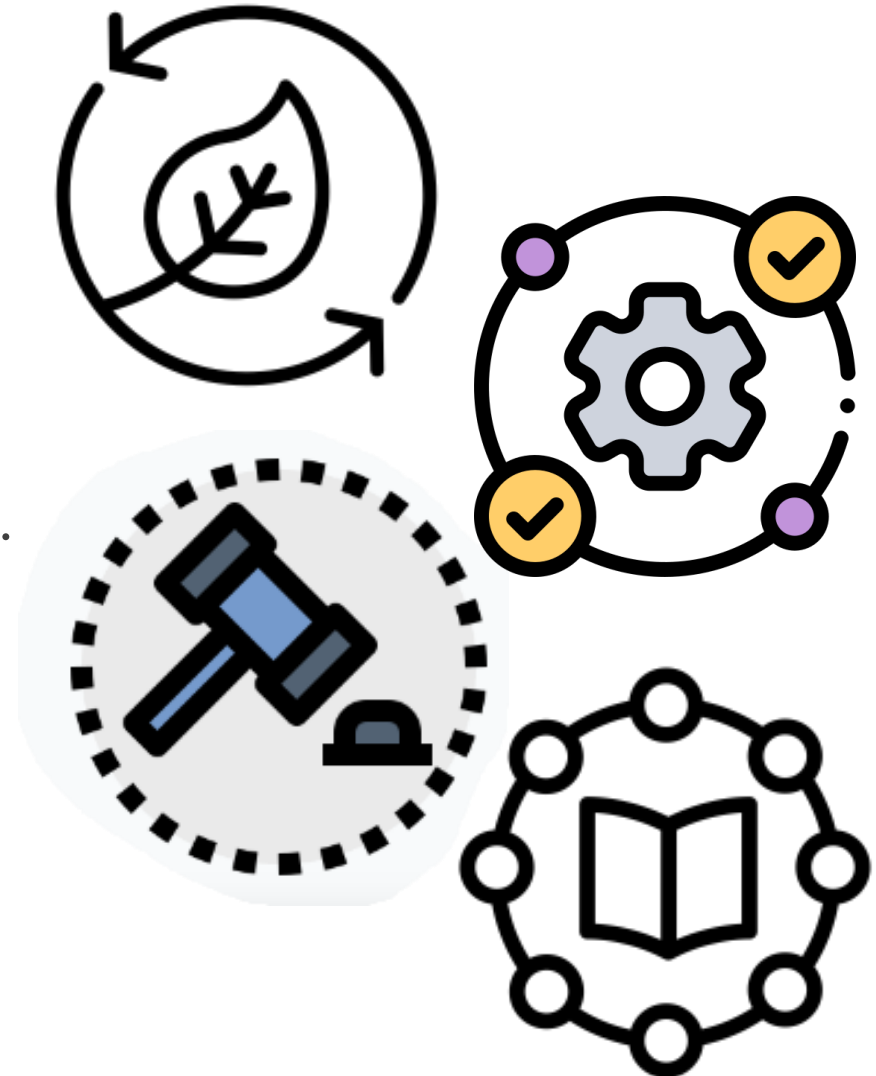
# What is the objective of an FCRC?

- > Provide a tool to communities providing them with a better understanding of fatal crashes in their jurisdictions.
- > Share a high-level overview of fatal crashes with key community stakeholders so each agency represented can get a more complete picture of the factors contributing to crashes.
- > Facilitate discussion about concrete steps to address crash factors and prevent future crashes.
- > The foundation of this initiative is the four E's including: education, enforcement, engineering, environment.



# What is the objective of an FCRC?

- > It is essential communities have a thorough and timely understanding of the contributing factors to fatal crashes.
- > This enables decision makers to make data driven decisions relating to the 4Es.
- > It also creates a more current analysis of crashes that enables decision-makers to take action as problems are occurring.







# Benefits of an FCRC

- > Brings together multi-disciplinary group with expertise in health, engineering, enforcement and education.
- > Provides timely review of fatal collisions with detailed information from multiple sources.
- > Enables observation and analysis of patterns/trends on type of fatal collisions occurring over a longer time.
- > Communication is more timely and much easier between all the partners.
- > More timely identification of contributing factors and opportunities for prevention.



# Benefits of an FCRC

- > Allows partners to identify and deliver initiatives to address contributing factors.
- > Greater understanding of inputs of all partners make for more effective thinking regarding recommendations.
- > Recommendations can be implemented in much shorter timeframes.
- > Aligns with road safety as a service priority.
- > Increased awareness and learning by all members.



# Benefits of an FCRC

- > Provides a channel for input and recommendations with regards to enforcement, engineering, and education efforts with some specificity.
- > Development of Annual Report highlights trends based on data and provides recommendations to make our roads safer.





# Who should be involved on the FCRC?

- > Agencies represented on an FCRC may include:
  - » police services;
  - » coroner's or medical examiner's office;
  - » public health;
  - » EMS;
  - » city planners; and,
  - » other key stakeholders such as licensing authorities or probation officials as needed.





# Who should be involved on the FCRC?

- > The key to a successful FCRC is to ensure the group stays small and agile and involves key decision-makers at the local level.
- > Other agencies can potentially be engaged in an advisory or consulting role or to gather/share specific or technical expertise pertaining to trends or key factors as needed.





## Is there a role for community partners in the FCRC?

- > While community partners are generally not formal members of an FCRC to protect personal information, they do play an essential role when it comes to advocacy.
- > The information contained in each FCRC annual report should provide timely data to individuals and organizations who wish to advocate for change and improvement.
- > Community partners may often be able to speak about issues relating to fatal crashes using more personalized and relevant messages.



# How does the FCRC function?

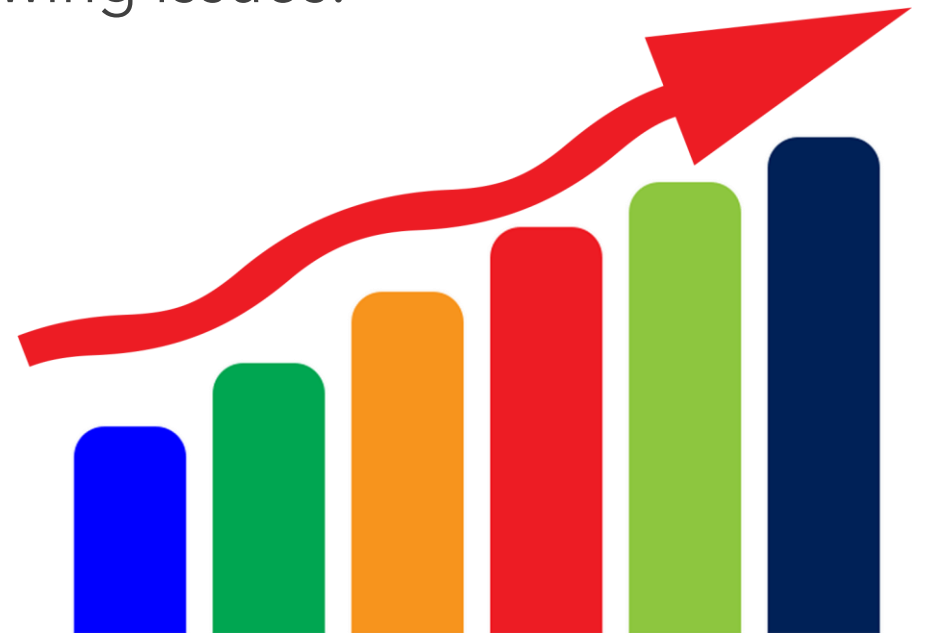
- > Involves a presentation of the characteristics and factors in each fatality within a specified number of days after it occurs.
- > A round table discussion occurs with the goal of identifying contributing factors relating to the crash.
- > The discussion also explores concrete solutions and interventions to prevent a future fatal crash at this particular location.





# Data sharing within the FCRC

- > Depending on authorizing legislation in each jurisdiction, it may be necessary to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding or data-sharing agreement. In this event, key elements of a data-sharing agreement should address the following issues:
  - » confidentiality;
  - » restricted use of the data;
  - » ownership of the data;
  - » destruction of the data; and,
  - » intellectual property rights/ownership.







# Data sharing within the FCRC

Several sources of data are presented during FCRC meetings. The most common sources include:

> **Law enforcement data**

- » Information related to the crash investigation, the driving history of the individuals involved and other related information.
- » It is also important to have a good understanding of enforcement related data and formal complaints from the public.
- » Whether the crash location has a history of dangerous behaviours, if residents made formal complaints in the past, if any formal enforcement campaigns taken place.

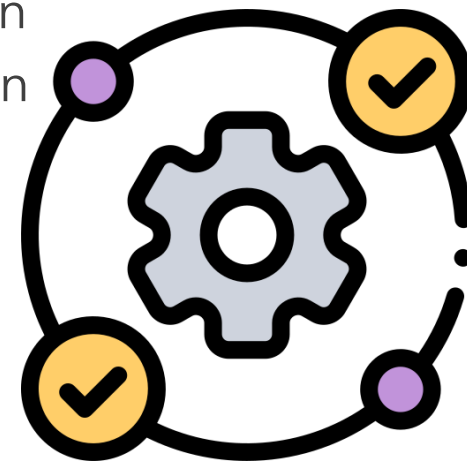




# Data sharing within the FCRC

## > Engineering data

- » Consider the history of crashes at each location which can be provided by the local municipality and background information of what physical improvements/changes have been undertaken at each site.
- » Engineering changes, the implementation of road safety technology (Red Light Cameras, Automated Speed Enforcement etc).
- » Most jurisdictions also can provide a history of complaints from residents about the location (speeding, dangerous behaviours, faded paint markings, etc.).

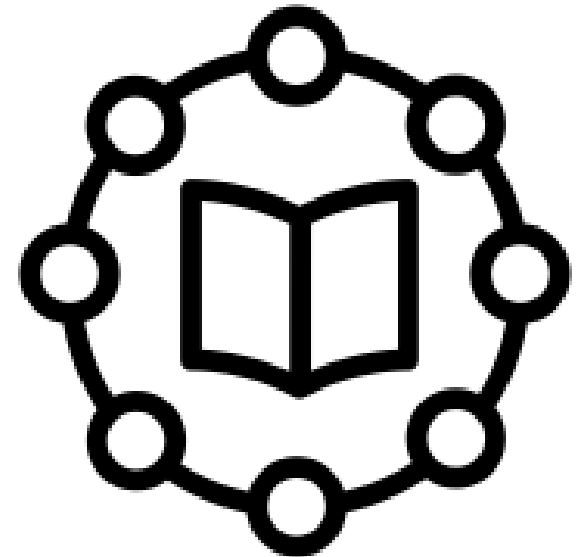




# Data sharing within the FCRC

## > Education campaigns

- » Any public education campaigns undertaken in each of the jurisdictions.
- » An important component when it comes to new infrastructure being implemented in municipalities or new laws put in place and also if there is a spike in a specific type of crash.





# Data sharing within the FCRC

## > Environmental data

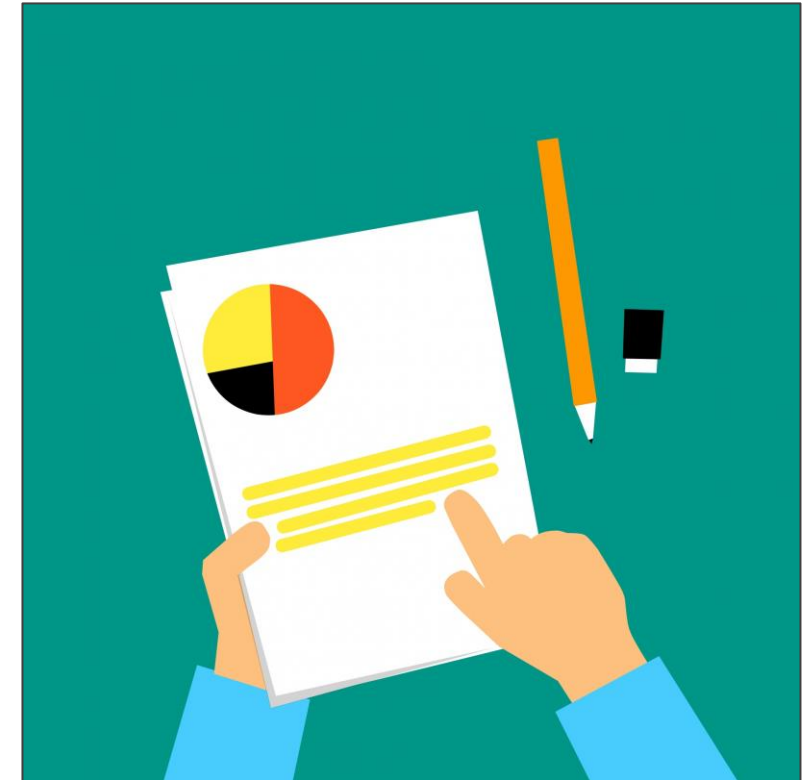
- » Many jurisdictions are now taking a more upstream approach with the goal of building communities that are physically safer than what has been constructed in the past 50 years.
- » It is important that information generated by FCRC's be shared openly so that planning staff and decision makers so that planning staff can begin to influence subdivision design decisions at the concept stage.





# Are the findings of the FCRC published?

- > Yes. It is critical that the work of the FCRC be published on an annual basis.
- > This achieves a needed level of accountability for the committee and the municipality to keep road safety a focus of the political agenda.
- > It also provides various community stakeholders an opportunity to evaluate the progress of their cities becoming safer as well as an opportunity to provide input into proposed initiatives.





# Who can use the work of the FCRC?

- > The data and insight generated by an FCRC is crucial for community partners:
  - » elected officials;
  - » public health professionals;
  - » local MADD or Safety Council chapter;
  - » cycling and pedestrian organizations;
  - » private sector partners; and,
  - » media organizations.



# How to organize an FCRC

## **Step 1: Engage stakeholders to gauge interest and gather ideas about the value and potential of forming an FCRC**

- > Start a discussion with key stakeholders in your community about their interest in forming an FCRC.
- > Key stakeholders to include:
  - » Regional Coroner's Office
  - » Police (Collision investigations and Traffic Enforcement)
  - » Municipal road safety engineers
  - » Representatives from the local Public Health Unit (PHU)
  - » Other road safety stakeholders as appropriate



# How to organize an FCRC

## **Step 1: Engage stakeholders to gauge interest and gather ideas about the value and potential of forming an FCRC**

- > The value of forming an FCRC for these partners is the sharing of information related to fatal collisions .
- > Developing key talking points to help structure the conversations with individual agencies and groups is very useful to focus discussion.
  - » Objective of FCRC
  - » Clear ask for each agency
  - » Terms of Reference





# How to organize an FCRC

## **Step 2: Send a formal letter of invitation to stakeholders interested in participating in an FCRC**

- > Send a formal email or letter to the local coroner's office requesting an FCRC be established in their region.
- > Regional Coroner's Offices typically have the ability to engage various partners and often the legal authority to enable the sharing of confidential fatal crash information among partners.
- > In most jurisdictions, fatal crash investigations fall under the authority of the local or regional coroner's office



# How to organize an FCRC

## **Step 3: Host a meeting of participating agencies to create the FCRC scope of work and explore strategies to address challenges**

- > This first, formal meeting of agencies agreeing to participate in the FCRC is essential to create a framework for the activities to be undertaken.
- > Mechanisms needed to formalize the relationship between agencies can be explored.
- > A Terms of Reference or similar document may be the most useful way to structure the partnership and describe its functionality.



# How to organize an FCRC

## **Step 3: Host a meeting of participating agencies to create the FCRC scope of work and explore strategies to address challenges**

- > Identify any perceived challenges and ways they can be addressed.
- > The sharing of data and information related to fatal crashes is likely to be identified as a priority issue.
- > Including legal representation from agencies can help agencies determine what tools and strategies may be needed to facilitate data-sharing.



# How to organize an FCRC

## **Step 4: Identify relevant data sources and ways that essential data can be defined and shared**

- > Agencies should discuss what data sources and data elements (i.e., variables) are necessary to facilitate the work of the FCRC. A good starting point for discussion is the types of data needed to create a complete picture of a fatal crash.
  - » What are the top contributing factors in fatal crashes in your community?
  - » What is the profile and characteristics of persons involved in fatal crashes?
  - » Where in the community to fatal crashes most often occur?
  - » What are the most common crash configurations?



# How to organize an FCRC

## Step 4: Identify relevant data sources

- > Enforcement data.
  - » historical enforcement data for the particular location or corridor
    - » enforcement strategies (e.g., automated enforcement, high-visibility enforcement, targeted enforcement)
    - » is the location or corridor known for specific high-risk behaviours (e.g., speeding)
  - » driver history of drivers in fatal crashes (e.g., 15+ years)
    - » all charges and convictions
    - » previous suspensions
  - » class of driver's licence and year of licensure
  - » statements of any witnesses to fatal crashes

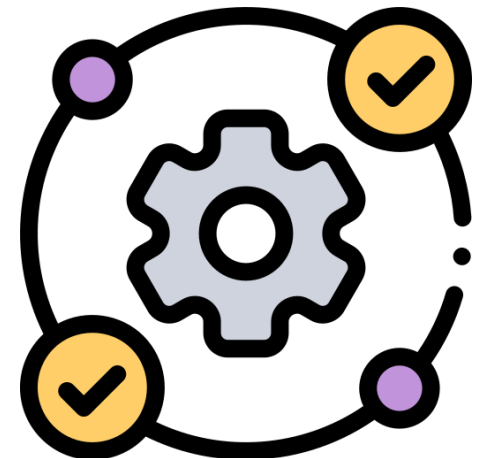




# How to organize an FCRC

## Step 4: Identify relevant data sources

- > Engineering data.
  - » 10 years of historical crash data per location (date, time, weather conditions etc)
  - » any roadway improvements at location in past five years
  - » outcomes of any safety audits underway or completed
  - » complaints from residents





# How to organize an FCRC



## Step 4: Identify relevant data sources

- > Municipal data.
  - » local crash data
  - » as needed, recent road work, engineering treatments or repairs in fatal crash locations (e.g., whether roadway was plowed or salted for winter fatal crashes)
  - » other data sources related to forestry data, line painting standards, and so forth
  - » other safety reviews undertaken such as school audits or local neighborhood initiatives



# How to organize an FCRC

## Step 4: Identify relevant data sources

- > Medical data.
  - » medical history of drivers in fatal crashes (e.g., sleep apnea, etc)
  - » toxicological results of forensic testing
  - » any medical information about the driver provided by family members (e.g., history of mental illness, recent traumas)







# How to organize an FCRC

## **Step 5: Create a terms of reference document in consultation with proposed members which describes the working relationship of the partners**

- > The TOR should provide a foundation or framework for the FCRC.
  - » a description of how the work of the committee is to be completed;
  - » which agency is responsible for leading the FCRC and its meetings;
  - » the roles and responsibilities of members;
  - » how soon after fatal crashes a meeting will occur; and,
  - » how the information collected will be protected and shared among the members.



# How to organize an FCRC

**Step 6: The legal and privacy teams representing each agency participating in the FCRC should review the TOR to ensure agencies are adhering to all municipal and provincial legislation**

- > Protecting the confidentiality of personal information and the privacy of persons involved in or killed in road crashes is a paramount concern for government agencies, health professionals and police services.
- > Inviting legal counsel from each agency involved in an FCRC can guide the development of any TOR and ensure the work of an FCRC is compliant with applicable laws and regulation.
- > This is a critical due diligence step that each agency must undertake to protect its integrity.



# How to organize an FCRC

## **Step 7: Develop a document the committee can use to track each collision occurring in the jurisdiction**

- > This document will provide an overview of collision data elements to help identify patterns and problem areas that may need to be addressed.
- > It is recommended that the main document remain in the possession of the Coroner's Office and not be circulated, nor shared throughout the committee. This ensures that privacy and confidentiality remain intact at all times



# How to organize an FCRC

## Step 7: Develop a document the committee can use to track each collision occurring in the jurisdiction

- > Key data elements to include in a tracking spreadsheet or database include:
  - » time of day
  - » day of the week
  - » contributing factors (e.g., speed, fatigue, distraction)
  - » level of impairment
  - » make, model and year of vehicle
  - » collision location
  - » speed limit where the collision occurred
  - » previous driver history
  - » road conditions
  - » any additional contributing factors (road construction, inclement weather)



# How to organize an FCRC

## **Step 8: Discuss the preparation of an annual report and what information will be included**

- > This discussion should consider the types of information to be included in the report, the structure of it, and how it will be circulated or shared with politicians and community stakeholders.
- > Other important topics are what contextual data will be included in relation to fatal crashes and whether recommendations will be put forward to guide road safety planning and initiatives.



# How to organize an FCRC

## Step 9: The first meeting

- > The first meeting of the FCRC should occur after a set period of time following a fatal crash.
- > Some jurisdictions have a set meeting five business days following the crash as this allows the crash investigation to begin, basic information on the drivers to be collected, as well as time to gather information on the crash location.
- > This will allow the meeting to start with the collection and discussion of data, followed by a discussion regarding factors involved in the crash (i.e., alcohol, drugs, speed, pedestrians, location history, etc.) and steps needed to prevent future crashes.



# How to organize an FCRC

## Step 10: Produce annual report

- > It is important the committee provides the general public a report on its high-level activities.
- > The report should include:
  - » the total number of fatal crashes;
  - » the total number of people who were killed;
  - » what type of road user (cyclist, driver, motorcyclist, pedestrian, etc);
  - » the time of day;
  - » day of the week; and,
  - » other non-confidential collected information.



# How to organize an FCRC

## Step 10: Produce annual report

- > Sharing this information helps inform the general community, local decision makers and community organizations.
- > The FCRC Annual Report can serve to provide the general community with timely and insightful information on road fatalities trends.
- > Trends such as an increase in specific road user fatalities, spikes in alcohol or drug impaired, are there specific ages groups that are being impacted etc.
- > This information can be used by participating organizations to modify their plans and interventions, and by others in the community and other levels of government to have a much more timely understanding of trends.





# An FCRC in practice: Ottawa, ON

- > Formed in 2017
- > Representation from police, city traffic services, public health, and coroner's office.
- > Examined 84 fatal collisions (92 deaths) between 2020-2023.
- > The goal of the FCRC is not to determine findings of law or guilt. The FCRC's goal is to make recommendations to improve safety and prevent death on municipal roads.





# An FCRC in practice: Ottawa, ON

## Results

- > 52% of fatal collisions involved only motor vehicle occupants.
- > 48% affected active transportation users.
  - » 26% pedestrians
  - » 13% motorcyclists
  - » 5% cyclists
  - » 4% e-bike riders
- > 24% of all fatal collisions occurred in outer urban suburbs.
- > 14% of fatal collisions occurred in both July and September, and 10% occurred in June.



# An FCRC in practice: Ottawa, ON

## Factors involved in fatal collisions

- > Age
  - » 50% of the road user deaths were among those aged 55+
- > Speed
  - » 45% of drivers involved in fatal collisions were speeding.
    - » 63% were going 12.5mph over
    - » 10% were going 50mph over
- > Prior convictions
  - » Among drivers involved in fatal collisions, the average number of previous convictions was 5.3 and 19% of drivers had 10+ previous convictions.



# An FCRC in practice: Ottawa, ON

## Factors involved in fatal collisions

- > Sex
  - » 70% of drivers were male
- > Alcohol and/or drug use
  - » A third of the fatal collisions had one or more road users impaired by drugs or alcohol.
    - » Cannabis was a factor in 19%
    - » Alcohol was a factor in 19%
    - » Cocaine was a factor in 20%



# An FCRC in practice: Ottawa, ON

**Table 10: Impairment in fatal collisions, 2017–2020**

Impairment in collision	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Yes	9	5	5	9	28 (33%)
No	14	16	18	8	56 (67%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>84 (100%)</b>



# An FCRC in practice: Ottawa, ON

## Recommendations

- > Comprehensive strategy to reduce speeds on Ottawa roads.
- > Conduct an in-depth review of collisions involving road users aged 55+.
- > Conduct targeted enforcement for peak crash periods.
- > Increase enforcement and education about the risks of alcohol and drug impaired driving.

**Ottawa FCRC 2020 annual report:**





# TIRF Educational programs





### **GDL Framework Safety Center**

Research & free tools to help states and provinces identify gaps in young driver safety strategies.

[gdlframework.tirf.ca](http://gdlframework.tirf.ca)



### **Working Group on DWI System Improvements**

Education resources available to support the training efforts for agencies working with DWI offenders.

[dwiwg.tirf.ca](http://dwiwg.tirf.ca)



### **Alcohol Interlock Curriculum for Practitioners**

Training tool educate professionals, advocates & community members about alcohol ignition interlocks.

[aic.tirf.ca](http://aic.tirf.ca)



### **Young and New Driver Resource Centre**

Research about young driver crashes, strategies to prevent them, & requirements of Graduated Driver Licensing programs.

[yndrc.tirf.ca](http://yndrc.tirf.ca)



### **#MySafeRoadHome blog**

Features the latest research to help Canadians understand the risks associated with unsafe driving practices using real-life situations.

[tirf.ca/blog](http://tirf.ca/blog)



### **Knowledge Transfer Model**

Research is translated and used in the real world to effectively manage and reduce social problems.

[tirf.ca/about-tirf/knowledge-transfer](http://tirf.ca/about-tirf/knowledge-transfer)





# Thank you

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