

Fatality Analysis Reporting System

Summary of FARS Definitions and Criteria

Definitions and examples are taken directly from the ANSI D16.1-2007, 7th Edition.

Definitions:

- **Unstabilized Situation** - An unstabilized situation is a set of events not under human control. It originates when control is lost and terminates when control is regained or, in the absence of persons who are able to regain control, when all persons and property are at rest.
- **Motor Vehicle** – A motor vehicle is any motorized (mechanically or electrically powered) road vehicle not operated on rails (*FARS includes ALL motor vehicles driven on a trafficway regardless of authorization to drive on the trafficway*).
- **Trafficway** - A trafficway is any land way open to the public as a matter of right or custom for moving persons or property from one place to another
- **Working motor vehicle** - A working motor vehicle is a motor vehicle in the act of performing construction, maintenance or utility work related to the trafficway. This “work” may be located within open or closed portions of the trafficway and motor vehicles performing these activities can be within or outside of the trafficway boundaries
- **In-Transport** – The term “in-transport” denotes the state or condition of a transport vehicle which is in motion or within the portion of a transport way ordinarily used by similar transport vehicles. When applied to motor vehicles, “in-transport” means on a roadway or in motion within or outside the trafficway. A transport vehicle which is also a working motor vehicle at the time of the unstabilized situation is not “in-transport.” In roadway lanes used for travel during some periods and for parking during other periods, a parked motor vehicle should be considered to be in-transport during periods when parking is forbidden.
- **Deliberate Intent** – Deliberate intent is the classification given to the cause of an event which occurs when a person acts deliberately to cause the event or deliberately refrains from prudent acts which would prevent occurrence of the event.
- **Legal Intervention** – Legal intervention is a category of deliberate intent in which the person who acts or refrains from acting is a law-enforcing agent or other official.
- **Cataclysm** – A cataclysm is an avalanche, landslide/mudslide, hurricane, cyclone, downburst, flood, torrential rain, cloudburst, lightening, tornado, tidal wave, earthquake or volcanic eruption
- **Parking lot ways** – Land ways which are used primarily for vehicular circulation within parking lots and for vehicular access to parking lot aisles. Parking lot ways in parking lots open to the public **are** trafficways.
- **Work Zone** – A work zone is an area of a trafficway where construction, maintenance or utility work activities are identified by warning sign/signals/indicators, including those on transport devices (e.g., signs, flashing lights, channelizing devices, barriers, pavement markings, flagmen, warning signs and arrow boards mounted on the vehicles in a mobile maintenance activity) that mark the beginning and end of a construction, maintenance or utility work activity. It extends from the first warning sign, signal or flashing lights to the END ROAD WORK sign or the last traffic control device pertinent for that work activity. Work zones also include roadway sections where there is ongoing, moving (mobile) work activity such as lane line painting or roadside mowing only if the beginning of the ongoing, moving (mobile) work activity is designated by warning signs or signals. Exclusions: Any private construction, maintenance or utility work outside the trafficway; any area of the trafficway

where there is moving maintenance activity (e.g., roadside grass mowing/landscaping, pothole repair, snowplowing, lane line painting) without warning signs or signals; citizen removing snow from the trafficway as a neighborly gesture; area identified by signage, where the activity has not begun or is completed.

FARS Criteria:

- The crash must involve at least one motor vehicle in-transport on a public trafficway
- The crash must involve at least one human fatality
- The fatality must occur within 30 days (720 hours) of the crash
- The fatality must be as a direct result of the crash
- The fatality must not be a result of deliberate intent

Unusual FARS Inclusion Examples:

- A van left unattended in a lane during rush hour when parking is prohibited because it is in an open travel lane at that time, is considered “in-transport” and **IS** included in FARS. (See the definition of “In-Transport”.)
- If a driverless motor vehicle without engine power starts in motion from a stopped position on the shoulder, it is considered “in-transport” and it **IS** included in FARS
- A stopped vehicle partially on the shoulder with two tires on the roadway, is considered “in-transport” and **IS** included in FARS
- A tractor trailer with part of its load extended over the roadway edge line, **IS** included in FARS
- A delivery service leaves his truck stopped at the curb of a street marked with “no parking at any time” signs while making his delivery, **IS** included in FARS
- In a parking lot, the public trafficway is typically the drivable roadway area around the edge of the lot, or roadway lanes throughout the lot, but does not include the individual aisles in between the parking spaces, or the parking spaces themselves. Parking lot ways in parking lots open to the public **are** trafficways, and **ARE** included in FARS.
- If the unstabilized situation originated on a public trafficway, and ended in a parking lot, work zone, or other non-public roadway, it **IS** included in FARS
- If the unstabilized situation occurs in the public right-of-way portion of a private driveway or other private roadway, it **IS** included in FARS. (For example: accidents occurring on sidewalks within the driveway access; a car turning into a private residence driveway striking a bicyclist riding on the sidewalk that crosses over the driveway access; a tractor trailer backing out of a business entrance onto the trafficway, while partially on the driveway access, is struck by a car on the roadway)

FARS Exclusion Examples:

- A fatal injury crash resulting from deliberate intent (see definition of deliberate intent)
- If a lawbreaker crashes either intentionally or unintentionally into a road block set up by police to stop him, the crash is considered a result of the legal intervention, and **IS NOT** included in FARS. (**NOTE:** If a driver other than the lawbreaker crashes into the road block, the crash is not considered to be a result of legal intervention, and **IS** included in FARS)
- If a police car is intentionally driven into another vehicle, the crash is considered to result from legal intervention, and **IS NOT** included in FARS (**NOTE:** If a lawbreaker being pursued by the police loses

control of his vehicle and crashes, the crash is not considered to result from legal intervention, and **IS** included in FARS, unless the police intended that the lawbreaker crash in which case it **IS NOT** included in FARS.)

- Accidents occurring as a direct result of and during a cataclysm, **ARE NOT** included in FARS. (**NOTE:** An accident occurring as a result of natural event which is not a cataclysm, or an accident related to a cataclysm, but occurring after the cataclysm has ended, **ARE** included in FARS)
- Accidents occurring within the boundaries of a work zone, which are *closed to public access*, **ARE NOT** included in FARS. *For example:* two motor vehicles performing work in a work zone collide; a highway maintenance truck strikes a highway worker (both are within the closed portion of the work site); a utility worker repairing the electrical lines over the trafficway falls from the bucket of a cherry picker without being struck by a motor vehicle in-transport.
- If the fatality is a direct result of natural causes, occurs prior to the unstabilized situation, or in no way was a direct result of the crash, it **IS NOT** included in FARS. (**NOTE:** if the unstabilized situation directly causes a heart attack, stroke, etc., it **IS** included in FARS.)

If you have any questions, or require clarification, please call the Alaska FARS Analyst in the Alaska Highway Safety Office, Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities: **907-465-8532**.

References:

ANSI D16.1-2007, Manual on Classification of Motor Vehicle Traffic Accidents, 7th Edition. National Safety Council. American National Standards Institute, Inc., Board of Standards Review.

Fatality Analysis Reporting System, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

This document was produced entirely by the Alaska Highway Safety Office. It contains only a portion of the definitions and criteria used to code cases for FARS. For questions or comments, please contact:

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