



U.S. Department  
of Transportation

**National Highway  
Traffic Safety  
Administration**

APR 16 2004

400 Seventh Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20590

Michael Brooks  
Staff Attorney  
Center for Auto Safety  
1825 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.  
Suite 330  
Washington, DC 20009

Dear Mr. Brooks:

This is in response to your letter dated March 23, 2004 to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, NHTSA requesting information concerning a fatal crash that occurred on March 4, 2004 in Pacific Palisades, CA.

Based on the information you provided with your letter, we conclude that this incident does not meet the definitions for inclusion in the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS), database. Therefore, to answer your question, it will not be included in our FARS data for 2004.

FARS contains only data on fatal motor vehicle traffic accidents. These have a very specific definition. While the vehicle in this incident may have been "in motion", it does not appear to have been involved in a "traffic accident" as defined in ANSI D16.1. This appears to have been a non-traffic accident and beyond the scope of the FARS database. However, you may be interested to know, there are two initiatives underway at NHTSA to expand upon the data available through FARS.

One is an effort to redesign the FARS data collection system to include records for not-in-transport motor vehicles. This will allow us to include in FARS, vehicle level data on, for example, parked motor vehicles that are involved in motor vehicle traffic accidents. The second initiative is one to periodically report on fatal incidences of non-traffic accidents - such incidences as children trapped in auto trunks, power window injuries and strangulations, crashes entirely on private driveways and the like. It is this second initiative that will capture crashes like the one described in the material you included with your inquiry.



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If you are interested in learning more about how FARS selects crashes for its files, then you can refer to ANSI D16.1-1996 for relevant definitions.

Please review the following definitions for additional information:


- 2.2.1 Trafficway
- 2.2.28 Roadway
- 2.2.29 In-Transport
- 2.4.1 Harmful Event
- 2.4.2 Deliberate Intent
- 2.4.3 Legal Intervention
- 2.4.4 Unstabilized Situation
- 2.4.5 Cataclysm
- 2.4.6 Accident
- 2.4.9 Transport Accident
- 2.4.12 Motor Vehicle Accident
- 2.4.18 Traffic Accident
- 2.4.22 Motor Vehicle Traffic Accident**
  
- 2.3.1 Injury
- 2.3.2 Fatal Injury
- 2.3.3 Fatality
- 2.2.26 Injury Accident
- 2.2.27 Fatal Accident
  
- 2.1.3 Transport Device
- 2.1.4 Transport Vehicle
- 2.1.7 Land Vehicle
- 2.2.6 Road Vehicle
- 2.2.7 Motor Vehicle

Also, please see the following classification rule from ANSI D16.1-1996:

- 3.1.3 Time of Classification

We appreciate your interest in highway safety. If you need any additional information, please contact my office at (202) 366-1503.

Sincerely yours,

  
Joseph S. Carra, Director  
National Center for Statistics  
and Analysis