

What information may be available to you?

Documentation

Where a collision involves injury a MGNCRF (National Collision Report Form) booklet must be completed by the attending officer. This will (should) contain details of all parties involved and witness details along with any first account given.

In all cases a CAD message will have been created for the incident. This message may contain details of possible additional witnesses that are not listed in the MGNCRF.

Under disclosure rules the Police will not provide details of any person or telephone number contained in the CAD message. However you can request that the Police make contact with the person on your behalf and seek their permission to release their details to you. In a fatal or 'likely to prove' collision it is normal practice for Police to make contact with any person who features within the body of the CAD message, but in less serious collisions this witness trawl is often overlooked.

Witness statements.

Vehicle examination statement or notes.

Photographs

Always request copies of all available photographs on a CD; this will provide you with the best quality images.

Dependent on the severity of the injury there may be photographs available from a number of sources. For example if a Collision Investigator attends the scene there should be a wealth of useful images available to you and quite often a Police Vehicle Examiner will also take their own photographs during their vehicle inspection.

Another, less obvious, source of photographs is from the recovery agent. It is now common practice for the agent to take their own photographs of the vehicle prior to recovery to help negate any subsequent claim of further damage or loss.

Finally at some point the insurance company will appoint an assessor to inspect the vehicle and again it is usual practice to take photographs.

Plans

Any plan is useful – whether a simple sketch or full scale scene plan.

Always ask if the scene was surveyed – you may need to seek clarification from the officer in the case.

Where a Collision Investigator has attended the scene it would be normal practice to survey the scene. It may be that the final plan is never completed due to a change in

circumstances (significant improvement in the health of the casualty) but the original raw data should be available. This unprocessed plan is often known as a 'dirty plot' i.e. it has not been tidied or annotated.

If a scale plan or survey data is available request a 'hard copy' of the plan and an electronic version on CD in either DXF or DWG format. This will enable measurements to be taken in the course of any reconstruction.

Tachographs

There are two main types: - analogue (wax coated circular chart) and digital. The type of tachograph instrument fitted to a vehicle is determined by the age of the vehicle.

Digital tachographs – these should be fitted in any vehicle registered on or after 1st May 2006. This data is usually recorded at 1 Hz (one recording every second) although VDO Siemens instruments record at 4 Hz (one recording every ¼ second). To obtain the 4 Hz data requires a bespoke download tool. The unit will only store 24 hours worth of driving (vehicle movement) after which it is over written.

Analogue instruments are fitted to pre May 2006 registered vehicles. Forensic examination of the chart is required to determine accurate speeds and distances.

If a speed from tachograph is quoted you will need to establish firstly that the tachograph was operating within the acceptable tolerances (i.e. correctly calibrated) and secondly that it has been correctly analysed. If it has been forensically analysed there should be an accompanying statement containing the expert's findings.

Data recorders

It is common place now for emergency vehicles to be fitted with some form of data recorder or tracking device.

Police vehicles tend to have either UDS or RSG units, the first being an incident recorder the second a journey recorder. Both will provide speed, distance and information regarding ancillary equipment use.

The majority of frontline ambulances in the East of England region are fitted with Terrafix units which transmit vehicle location and speed data back to base.

Some insurance companies now fit data recorders to vehicles as part of their policy requirement. This is not something unique to the obvious young driver but can also be part of a fleet package. It is always worth asking if such a device was fitted to the vehicle.

CCTV

CCTV is not limited to the cameras in our town and city centres. It is always worth visiting the scene to specifically look for nearby cameras on private and business premises.

Again seek clarification from Police if any CCTV footage is available. Even if it doesn't show the collision it does not mean that it will not be useful in any investigation.

Many passenger carrying vehicles (PCVs) are now fitted with CCTV; some buses, mostly on the larger fleets such as stagecoach, have up to 6 cameras fitted giving internal and external views. If your collision involves a PCV ask if the footage has been recovered. Generally if a PCV is involved in an incident the company will preserve the footage as a matter of policy even if the police haven't requested it.

Large Goods Vehicles (LGV)

Some fleets are now fitted with CCTV cameras similar to the Fleetsentinal system.

It may be that the Police vehicle that initially attended the scene was fitted with cameras – if so is that footage still available?

Check list

MGNCRF

Witness statements

CAD message (witness trawl)

Photographs (request copies of all available photographs on CD)

Plans (request a hard copy and electronic copy in DXF or DWG format if available)

Tachograph (digital – analogue – has the data been secured?)

Data recorders (were any fitted? If yes has the data been secured?)

CCTV – (street – vehicle)