

THE ASSOCIATION

Indiana Association of Certified Accident Investigators
www.iacai.com



Solving Problems Through Education

Issue #1/2006

February 2006

I know that we have all had problems in the past with scenes being destroyed by other emergency personnel. We've had wrecker drivers start cleaning up debris before we have had a chance to photo, measure, and mark all of our key evidence. We have all complained about how they don't know what they are doing, and how stupid they all must be for destroying our scene and ruining our case. Maybe though, just maybe, there is a way that we can help solve some of these problems with some education.

Now, I do understand that patient care is most important. When someone is alive and pinned in a vehicle, extrication and patient care has to be *the* top priority. The fire departments have a job to do, and you are going to lose evidence during this process. Unfortunately, that's a fact of life we just can't change. I have to say that overall, we have very good departments that we work with in our county. Generally, I will have personnel ask if and what can be moved prior to them starting the evidence eradication process. It still may happen on occasion, but I do normally have pretty good luck.

Several years back, I was

**By Phil Nott, IACAI
North Director**

asked to speak at a wrecker association meeting to explain what our job at crash scenes are. There was a good response to the presentation and I really wish I would have kept all that information to use as an inservice with fire departments, EMS, and wrecker companies now.

What I did is start by explaining the training that I had gone through to become a reconstructionist. How it starts out with you getting all this neat equipment like tape measures, rulers, templates, and other drafting equipment, and eventually graduating to using colored pencils, tracing paper and scissors. I was and still am hoping that one of my future classes requires a box of 128 Crayola crayons. You know, the one where the box has the built-in crayon sharpener in the back? I know I would be the envy of all the other reconstructionists and engineers if I could start with a fresh box will all the colors in order; fresh, sharp points on all my crayons, and none of the paper wrappers torn!

Anyway, what I did was take a practice problem from a

book, and showed the process that is necessary in order to reconstruct a crash. Starting with the scene photos, I showed the marks and debris left on the road, what all would have to be measured, and the process of collecting all the evidence. Granted, they had all seen this being done at the scene, but then I explained the vehicle inspection process and also about measuring the cars back to scale. Then we went into a completed diagram, and how the crash could be pieced back together because of the information that was gathered. An explanation of the court process, along with how important the smallest piece of evidence can be would also be vital information to cover.

So, instead of just complaining and getting upset, yelling, screaming and going off on a rampage at the scene, maybe we should try some education prior to these crashes. I believe every fire department has inservice training almost weekly, and I would imagine that they would allow us to put on a short class on what we need to do at a scene. I think if we would approach the problem in a positive manner, we could save ourselves a lot of headaches out in the field.

Inside this issue:

Solving Problems Through Education	1
Up-coming Training/ Seminars	2
Employer Guidelines To Reduce Motor Vehicle Crashes	3
What Makes A Good Crash Investigator?	4
IACAI Board Minutes	6
March IACAI Training Announcement	7



2006 ILEETA Conference & Expo

**April 25-29, 2006
Chicago, IL**

Host Agencies:

- ★ Arlington Heights PD
- ★ Chicago Office of the DEA
- ★ Chicago Office of the FBI
- ★ Chicago PD
- ★ Hoffman Estates PD
- ★ Mount Prospect PD
- ★ Niles PD
- ★ Rolling Meadows PD
- ★ Schaumburg PD

ILEETA
International Law Enforcement
Educators and Trainers Association

The 2006 ILEETA Conference and Expo will offer an unprecedented number (over 20) of Instructor Certification and Armorer Courses.



In addition, the nation's top law enforcement training professionals will be on hand to deliver some of the latest and greatest information and skills programs. The 2006 ILEETA Conference and Expo is an elite "instructor only" event with a total focus on the professional law enforcement instructor.

The 2006 ILEETA Conference and Expo vendor area specifically focuses on vendors that want to reach the professional law enforcement instructor.

Be a part of this exclusive association, based on your qualifications. Remember, ILEETA has strict guidelines in place on who can be a member.

If you are a law enforcement instructor and if you can attend only one conference each year, this is definitely the one to attend. Ask yourself, "Can you really afford not to attend the 2006 ILEETA Conference and Expo?" Make your plans now to be part of one of the best "instructor only" law enforcement conferences ever held — the 2006 ILEETA Conference and Expo!



Register NOW!
www.ileeta.org
262.279.7879

Wisdom and Courage Through Knowledge and Skill

Notice:
2006 IACAI
Membership
dues have been
sent. If you
have not
received your
renewal notice,
please contact
the IACAI
Secretary.

Training Seminars, Notices:

The Indiana Prosecuting Attorney's Council (IPAC) will be sponsoring several classes in 2006 which will be of interest to Crash Investigators/Reconstructionists:

March 13-15, 2006

Trial Advocacy School
Features a mock OWI trail and information on how to prosecute the 'Drug' driver. Will also discuss issues involving DRE officers.

April 25-26, 2006

1st Annual Fatal Alcohol
Crash Summit

June 9, 2006

2006 Traffic Safety
Legal Update

TBA- Poss Sept. '06

Lethal Weapons Course

Northwestern University
(<http://server.traffic.northwestern.edu/>) will be sponsoring several training programs for Crash Investigators/Reconstructionists:

March 6-17, 2006

Accident Investigation I
\$1100

March 20-31, 2006

Accident Investigation II
\$1100

April 10-14, 2006

Vehicle Dynamics
\$825

April 17-28, 2006

Traffic Accident
Reconstruction I \$1200

May 1-5, 2006

Traffic Accident
Reconstruction II \$925

May 8-12, 2006

Heavy Vehicle
Reconstruction \$1150

IPTM (www.iptm.org/courses.html)

will be hosting several training courses in the coming months. Here are a few:

March 13-24, 2006

Advanced Crash Invest.
Indianapolis \$795

April 24-28, 2006

Special Problems in Traffic
Crash Reconstruction
Jacksonville, FL \$495

May 8-19, 2006

Crash Reconstruction
Indianapolis, IN \$795

NHTSA Releases Employer Guidelines To Reduce Highway Deaths



The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), in cooperation with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS), recently released a booklet entitled, "Guidelines For Employers To Reduce Motor Vehicle Crashes." The booklet was developed in an effort to reduce motor vehicle-related deaths and injuries in the nations' workforce. While motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of death and injury for all ages, crashes on and off the job have far-reaching financial and psychological effects on employees, their co-workers and families, and their employers.

The booklet addresses the need for a driver safety program, one that should address such issues as driver attitude and behavior, and skill improvement. It addresses key safety issues for the workplace, real-life examples of successful safety programs and instructions for calculating an organization's loss from motor vehicle crashes, as well as a list of resources.

Citing 2003 NHTSA statis-

tics, the booklet points out that motor vehicle crashes cost employers \$60 billion annually in medical care, legal expenses, property damage, and lost productivity. The average cost per employer is estimated to be at \$16,500 per crash, while an on-the-job personal injury crash drives the cost upward to around \$74,000 per event. The problem is that most of these crashes are preventable.

The booklet also cites several successful programs implemented by different nationally known companies, including General Motors and Nationwide Insurance.

A 10 step Program to Minimize Crash Risk is included in the booklet, providing guidelines for what an employer can do to improve traffic safety performance and minimize the risk of motor vehicle crashes. Outlined in the program include such steps as:

- Employee commitment
- Written Policies and Procedures
- Driver Agreements
- Motor Vehicle Record Checks

- Crash Reporting/ Investigation
- Vehicle Selection/ Maintenance
- Disciplinary Actions
- Reward/Incentive Programs
- Driver Training
- Regulatory compliance

Finally, the booklet provides information promoting safe driving practices designed to protect employees, covering such areas as securing transported materials, seat belt usage, driver distractions, fatigued driving and alcohol/drug impairment.

While the booklet is geared more towards civilian/general business than government/law enforcement, the booklet does provide several pieces of good information that those involved in law enforcement EVOC training or administration may want to look at. The booklet is available as a .pdf download through the OSHA website at www.osha.gov/publications/Motor_vehicle_guide.pdf or at the NETS website at www.trafficsafety.org

"The average cost per employer is estimated to be at \$16,500 per crash"
-taken from the "Guidelines For Employers To Reduce Motor Vehicle Crashes" booklet

NHTSA Releases FARS Data For Rural & Urban Crashes

According to a new technical report released recently by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), there were 42% more fatal crashes in rural areas as compared to urban areas. The study, based off of data from the Fatal Analysis Reporting System (FARS) for the 1994-2003 period, also reported that fatal rural crashes were more likely to involve multiple fatalities, rollovers, and more trucks. Fatal rural crashes more often occurred on curved roadways and had greater vehicle damage. Not too surprising, head-on crashes were also found to be more prevalent in rural areas than in urban areas. Finally, the time for EMS to arrive at the scene was found to be longer in rural areas than in urban areas...



What Makes A Good Crash Investigator?

What really makes a good crash investigator? Think about that...

Okay, now that you've had time to think, what'd you come up with? Do they need the skills akin to that of the team on CSI? How about the interview skills similar to Columbo? Should those officers being considered for a crash investigator's position have detective experience?

What criteria should a supervisor or administration use to select the 'right' person for the job?

Recently, I posed the question of 'What really makes a good crash investigator?' to several of our former and present Board of Directors for their opinions. Here is just a sampling of the criteria that all should use in the selection process:

Open-Minded: Perhaps the first and foremost on the list of criteria should be the ability to have an open mind about the situation. "I believe you need to start with an open-minded

view of the situation," cites South Director Marc Lahrman. "The ability to look at the evidence and the scene without being influenced by everybody's statements or opinion, but rather an overview of everything. North Director Phil Nott concurs, adding that the investigator should not only be able to not jump to conclusions but should also look at a crash from several different perspectives.

Methodical: "Being able to process a scene in a manner as not to miss items and being able to document what is found or observed at the scene," advises Nott. Being analytical can't hurt, either. Former South Director John Evans stated that investigator should "be willing to study something until you make sense of it and have an understanding of how it works, how to apply it."

Communications Skills: Nott explains that the investigator should "be able to relate and connect to people while conducting interviews." Another im-

portant point is that fact that the investigator should have the ability to describe and express effectively a case while testifying. Evans points out that the investigator, "by knowing how it works, following through, being patient, be able to tell it in English, not in Academicese (the language REALLY REALLY smart people use to make other people feel stupid and confuses jurors, or in the words of a very astute co-worker I know "makes their eyes glaze over")."

Interviewing Skills: Being able to interview is one of the top 5 skills that any good investigator should have. Interviewing witnesses, drivers, other participants, and to do it good, is a gift. Nott points out that the investigator should "be able to interview (drivers and witnesses) in a way not to mislead them, yet be able to read them for signs of truth or deception."

(Continued: Page 5, Column 1)

...But you said, "Cross the creek!"

The driver of this vehicle got a little more than he expected when he decided to go off-roading in Southern Huntington County. The 19 year old driver sustained head and facial injuries which required surgery after running across this ditchline after a long night out. The driver somehow got off the beaten path, traveled a considerable distance before coming to an abrupt stop. He sustained head/facial injuries which required surgery.





More about: What Makes A Good Crash Investigator?

(Continued from page 4)

Another skill suggested by those who responded include the ability to be patient. Patience is one of those "born" skills that some have...If you don't already have it, it's a hard skill to learn and to put to good use. While you don't have to have the patience of Job, it's not a bad idea to strive for that kind of goal..! Lahrman says that investigations sometimes take some time to complete, yet, just as important, when the crash is completed, it be completed promptly and professionally. When selecting an officer to fill the position of crash investigator, officers should be evaluated for their ability to not only finish a report, but to *complete* the report as well. Getting in a hurry, or just giving 50% ef-

fort is not going to cut it. As Lahrman points out, "Every accident is a big deal to someone..", therefore, you want the best for the public you serve.

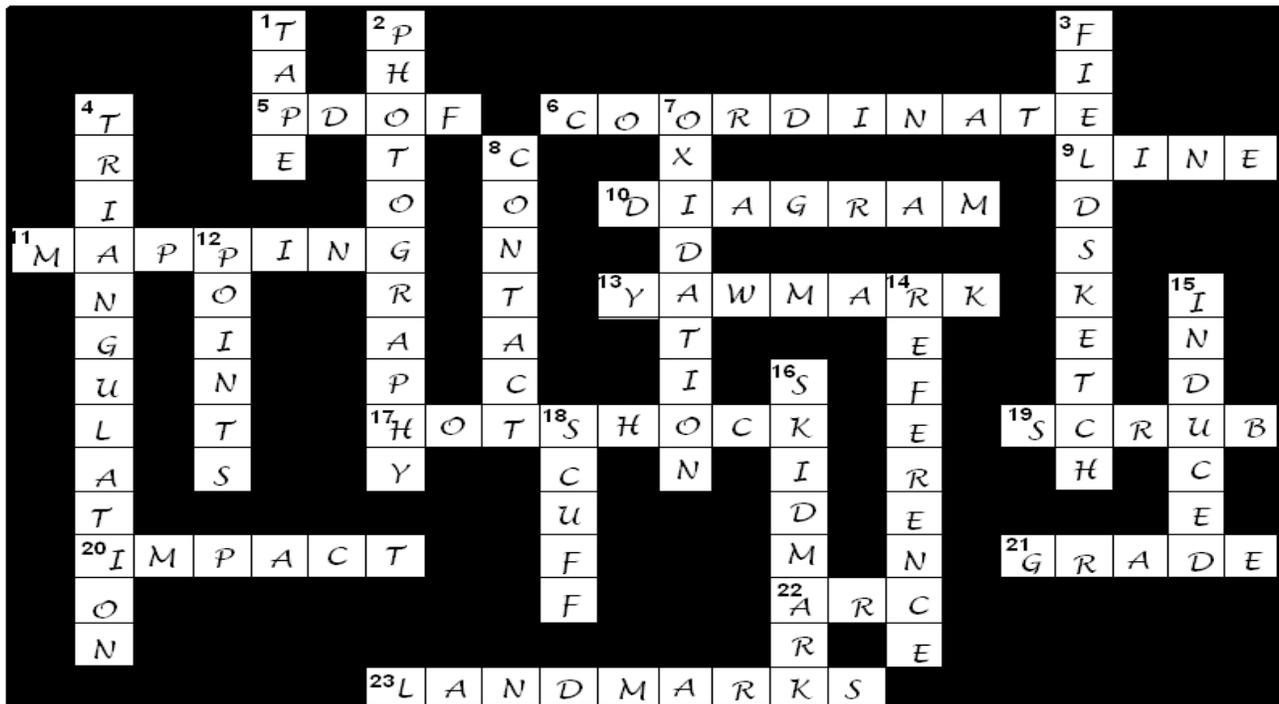
Additional nominations for skills needed include:

Experience: Just how necessary is it for officers to have experience before getting into the crash investigation field? This can be a double-edged sword; you need experience before you can adequately investigate crashes, yet, you need to get out in the field and investigate crashes so you know what crash investigation is really all about... Classroom education and practical field training is great, but getting outside and doing it for real is where experience really comes into play.

Willingness To Learn: Kind of goes along with Experience; however, it doesn't matter how much 'experience' you shove down an officer's throat, if they are not interested in being a crash investigator, you won't get a good crash investigator.

Finally, the last but probably the most important 'skill' needed for a good crash investigator is common sense. Without it, it doesn't matter how much training you pour into the officer, you won't get good results. "One of the most basic skills needed for police work," points out Nott. While not complete, this can be a good starting block for selecting new crash investigators.

Puzzle Solution from last issue:





IACAI Board Announces Training, Dates for 2006

The board of Directors for the Indiana Association of Certified Accident Investigators recently announced the IACAI training schedule for 2006. Training seminars are planned using input from seminar attendees/evaluations and what members express to their board member representatives throughout the year. The training for 2006 has been tentatively set as follows:

March 22, 2006
Bicycle / Pedestrian Crash Investigation
Bloomington Police Dept.
Bloomington, IN

June 21, 2006
Legal Update
Indianapolis PD Academy,
Indianapolis, IN

September 20, 2006
Momentum/Dynamic Equation Review

Notre Dame University,
South Bend, IN

November 2006 (TBA)
Crash Data Retrieval Certification Course
Greenwood PD Training Center
Greenwood, IN

From the Minutes of the IACAI Board of Directors Meeting, December 13, 2005:

North Director Kip Shuter reported that some of the IACAI clothing that was previously offered is no longer being carried by the association's supplier, 24/7 Hero. This will necessitate making up a new order form for future IACAI clothing orders. Look for a new brochure in the coming newsletter(s).

There was discussion regarding the IACAI putting on a ba-

sic crash investigation course for those interested in getting into this profession. One of the biggest problems was the lack of commitment by those requesting the class. Last year, for example, the IACAI joined with the Indiana Law Enforcement Academy to put on a basic crash investigation course. The overall response to the class offering was very disappointing, with less than a handful of officers signing up for the program.

The IACAI is still committed to putting together a crash investigation course, however, the board of directors voted on conducting a survey of all its members prior to the next board meeting. The results of this survey will be discussed at the next IACAI board meeting, which is scheduled for April 19, 2006, at the Greenwood Training Center.

More On the CDR Ownership Question:

Recently, CBS news ran a news report in which they reported on a very important issue regarding CDRs— The question regarding ownership of the material in the CDR itself. The January 19, 2006 report stated that most auto manufacturers are now saying that when you buy a vehicle, you buy the black box and the data which is contained in it. The auto manufacturers, however, will not willingly download data off of the box on behalf of the owner or owner's families in the event of a collision or question about vehicle operation. While that may put an end to the ownership question at face value, it will be interesting to see how this issue is manipulated in future court cases.

Jokes!!!

A couple of rednecks are out in the woods when one of them falls to the ground and his eyes roll back into his head. The other guy whips out his cell phone and calls 911. He gasps to the operator, "Help! Help! My friend Billy Bob is dead! What do

I do?" The operator, in a clam voice, says, "Take it easy. I can help. First, let's make sure he's really dead." After a brief moment of silence, a shot rings out, then the guy gets back on the line and says, "OK, now what?"

A drunken Irishman is driving recklessly through town and an alert officer pulls him over. "Where have you been?" asks the officer. "To the pub," slurs the drunk. "Well," says the officer, "do you know your wife fell out of the vehicle a few intersections back?" "Oh, thank heavens!" sighs the drunk. "For a minute there, I thought I'd gone deaf!"



Indiana Association of Certified Accident
Investigators
www.iacai.com

Contact us at:

P.O. Box 346
Greenwood, IN 46142
317-882-2901 (FAX)

Seminar Announcement

The IACAI will be sponsoring
A
Training Seminar on

Bicycle & Pedestrian Crashes

On

March 22, 2006, beginning at 0900 hrs, with
Registration beginning at 0830 hrs.

To be held at the

**Bloomington Police Department
220 East Third Street
Bloomington, IN**

The cost for the seminar will be \$25 for members,
\$50 for non-members.

Pre-registration is not necessary.

The course fee may be paid the day of the seminar or invoiced to your
respective department.

The Association is published
quarterly as a service to mem-
bers of the Indiana Association
of Certified Accident Investiga-
tors.

Articles submitted are the re-
sponsibility of the author; the
IACAI assumes no responsibility
as to an article's content.