

ASSEMBLY THIRD READING
AB 2761 (Petrie-Norris)
As Amended March 19, 2026
Majority vote

SUMMARY

Repeals and recasts the state's vehicle accident reporting requirements and requires the California Highway Patrol (CHP) to develop and make available to all law enforcement agencies an electronic reporting system for reporting accidents causing serious injury or death.

Major Provisions

- 1) Repeals the requirement that the CHP provide accident reporting forms to police departments, coroners, sheriffs, and other suitable agencies or individuals.
- 2) Requires CHP, by January 1, 2030, to prescribe minimum traffic crash reporting requirements and determine the method and standards for electronically submitting all crash investigation reports by providing a crash investigation report system to police departments, coroners, sheriffs, and other suitable agencies or individuals to be used in the documentation of traffic crashes.
- 3) Exempts this reporting system and development of reporting requirements from the Administrative Procedures Act.
- 4) Requires law enforcement agencies to document traffic crashes pursuant to the above requirements and electronically submit crash investigation reports in a timeframe determined by the CHP.
- 5) Requires a coroner or medical examiner to submit required reports of motor vehicle accident deaths electronically instead of in writing.
- 6) Waives fees for electronic copies of crash investigation reports and maintains fees for a printed copy of a crash investigation.
- 7) Clarifies that CHP must maintain a database of all crash investigation reports.
- 8) Replaces "accident" with "crash" throughout the bill.

COMMENTS

The state's vehicle accident or crash investigation reporting system is outdated and as a result crash data that CHP reports to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) typically suffers a two-year delay. Despite state law requiring law enforcement to submit crash investigation reports—for accidents involving serious injury or death—to the CHP in a certain form and timeframe (by the fifth of each month), many agencies miss this deadline and submit paper-based reports (via U.S. mail) of varying format and quality. According to the CHP, 40% of law enforcement agencies do not submit crash reports electronically. The lack of timely or standardized data makes it difficult for state and federal regulators to detect safety risks or trends, address urgent safety needs via recalls, assess the efficacies of safety equipment or monitor new technologies like automated driving systems.

These issues are not limited to California. According to NHTSA, crash data often vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction and from state to state. This makes it especially difficult to compare data across state and local agencies, between states, and between states and the federal government. Determining larger patterns and timely trends in motor vehicle traffic crash data becomes much more challenging under these circumstances. In 2022, NHTSA issued a notice of intent to provide grant funding to States that create centralized crash data systems to facilitate the electronic transfer of uniform crash data to NHTSA. As discussed below, California was among 19 states and territories to be awarded a grant (\$60.3 million over five years) in 2024. Grant funding will help modernize the state's outdated systems and standardize data consistent with the Model Minimum Uniform Crash Criteria (MMUCC), a voluntary guideline developed by NHTSA. NHTSA envisions that all law enforcement agencies of grant recipients will compile crash data electronically in the field using a uniform, efficient approach consistent with the MMUCC and validation rules, which mandate that crash data be validated at the point records are added to the State's central crash repository. The 2025-26 Budget included \$3.5 million in federal funds for the CHP to begin planning the California Crash Data System Modernization (CalCrash) IT Project. According to the Department of Finance's Budget Change Proposal:

The CalCrash IT Project [Project] will modernize crash data collection from a combination of paper and electronic process to a fully automated electronic process that will be adopted by all law enforcement agencies across the State of California. The CHP received a five-year, \$60.3 million grant from [NHTSA] to build a crash reporting system to provide California's law enforcement agencies an application to electronically complete crash reports for data collection by the CHP. The application will be developed in compliance with the NHTSA's State Electronic Data Collection program requirements.

[Law enforcement agencies] currently submit crash report data to CHP either via an interface with their existing crash data systems or paper crash reports for manual entry into the CHP's Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System. The CalCrash system will be offered to agencies at no cost to improve efficiency and streamline the process of communicating data to all stakeholders. The Project will modernize data collection from a combination of paper and electronic process to a fully automated electronic process. Electronic crash reports will be easier to share with stakeholders, and the data transfer to NHTSA will improve.

This bill is consistent with and furthers NHTSA's grant requirements and the budget appropriation mentioned above. It requires CHP, by January 1, 2030, to develop minimum crash data reporting and electronic submittal standards that all law enforcement agencies would be required to use. CHP has indicated it has solicited and will continue to solicit input from these agencies and will create a working group of enforcement agencies across the state to help inform the development of minimum reporting and other standards to be incorporated into CalCrash.

In addition to improving the collection, timeliness, accuracy, uniformity, integrity, and accessibility of the State's crash data system, CalCrash will empower all stakeholders to gain a deeper understanding of crash data and allow the state to improve its own understanding and analysis of crashes to enhance safety for all road users.

According to the Author

"Current law does not require law enforcement agencies to submit crash reports electronically or to use the most up-to-date reporting format. As a result, California's crash data is incomplete, delayed, and inconsistent. The delays in data reporting compromise California's ability to

identify trends, evaluate programs, develop enforcement strategies, secure grant funding, and implement safety improvements. These delays also hinder NHTSA's ability to identify vehicle defects and issue timely recalls or safety advisories.

AB 2761 amends the California Vehicle Code to modernize data collection from a combination of paper and electronic process to a fully automated electronic process. Electronic crash reports will be easier to share with stakeholders, ensure consistency statewide, and provide timely information to identify trends, evaluate programs, refine enforcement strategies, and target safety improvements".

Arguments in Support

Automobile Club of Southern California, and AAA Northern California, Nevada & Utah state:

High-quality crash data is essential to reducing fatalities and serious injuries. Today's largely paper-based system can result in delays, inconsistencies, and incomplete reporting, limiting the ability of state and local agencies to identify safety risks and respond effectively. AB 2761 addresses these gaps by improving data consistency across jurisdictions and accelerating access to critical crash information. More timely and reliable data will enable transportation agencies to better identify high-injury corridors, evaluate safety countermeasures, and prioritize investments that deliver the greatest safety benefit.

Arguments in Opposition

None on file.

FISCAL COMMENTS

This bill creates significant new costs for CHP to prescribe minimum requirements to document traffic crashes and determine the method and standards for electronically submitting all crash investigation reports (special funds or federal funds). CHP reports it is currently building the reporting system as required by this bill and that costs to do so are covered by the NHTSA grant mentioned above.

VOTES

ASM TRANSPORTATION: 16-0-0

YES: Wilson, Davies, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Carrillo, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Jackson, Lackey, Macedo, Papan, Ransom, Rogers, Sharp-Collins, Ward

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 15-0-0

YES: Wicks, Hoover, Aguiar-Curry, Calderon, Caloza, Dixon, Fong, Mark González, Krell, Pacheco, Pellerin, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Ta, Tangipa

UPDATED

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