

CHANGE PROPOSAL ACD017 – CHANGE TERM ‘ACCIDENT’ BY ‘CRASH’ IN ACD MANUALS

Date Received: 23 May 2019

Source (Organization/Person): CDLIS Working Group

1 Description of Trigger or Reason for the Change Proposal

This Change Proposal is initiated by AAMVA as an effort to be aligned with other traffic safety professionals and organizations and with the strategy of “shifting the nation’s safety culture to include a traffic safety focus.”

Per Brian A. Ursino, Director of Law Enforcement at AAMVA, we should “move forward with taking whatever necessary steps involved in gaining permission to remove the word ‘Accident’ from all AAMVA documents and systems within Driver Systems division. The official term used by USDOT, IACP, GHSA and other highway safety organizations is ‘Crash.’ This vocabulary change is one strategy in shifting the nation’s safety culture to include a traffic safety focus. 94% of all crashes are caused by human behavior, and are not ‘Accidents.’

To add to this, communication from FMCSA’s Associate Administrator for Motor Carriers published in 2014 supports the importance of this matter and the need for this change:

“A crash is not an accident.

Changing the way we think about events and the words we use to describe them affects the way we behave. Motor vehicle crashes occur "when a link or several links in the chain" are broken. Continued use of the word "accident" implies that these events are outside human influence or control. In reality, they are predictable results of specific actions.

Since we can identify the causes of crashes, we can take action to alter the effect and avoid collisions. These are not Acts of God but predictable results of the laws of physics.

The concept of "accident" works against bringing all appropriate resources to bear on the enormous problem of highway collisions. Use of "accident" fosters the idea that the resulting damage and injuries are unavoidable.

"Crash," "collision," and "injury" are more appropriate terms, and we encourage their use as substitutes for "accident."

Along with the Department's Research and Special Programs Administration, the Federal Highway Administration has joined the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration in declaring that the word "accident" will no longer be used in materials we publish, in speeches or other statements, or in communications with the media and others.”

Source: <https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/newsroom/crash-not-accident>

2 Impact Assessment (Including which entities are impacted)

Entity	Impact
AAMVA	Update the ACD Manual.
Jurisdictions	No impact.

3 Entities to Be Involved in Reviewing the Details of the Change Proposal

ACD WG, AAMVA, FMCSA, CDLIS WG, NDR WG

4 Pros and Cons

Pros	Cons
The suggested ACD Manual will encourage AAMVA and SDLAs to use more appropriate, industry accepted terminology.	Complexity of the effort to update every instance of the term 'accident' in ACD Manual.

5 Detailed Explanation of the Change Proposal

5.1 Changes to the ACD Manual

Location	Current Version	Updated Version
Entirety of ACD Manual	N/A	All instances of the term 'accident' will be removed from the document and replaced with the term 'crash.'

6 Change History

Version	Date	Author	Description
1.0	05/29/2019	T. Bauza	Change proposal created
1.0	06/19/2019	T. Bauza	Change proposal presented to ACD working group
1.1	10/21/2019	T. Bauza	Approval received from NY (email) Approval received from WI (email) Approval received from CO (email) Change proposal is approved.
1.2	2/16/2021	T. Bauza	Change proposal applied in Author-it

