Crash Data Retrieval Tool

Seattle Police Department (SPD)

What is the technology?

Crash Data Retrieval (CDR) tools are important technology used to aid investigators in the reconstruction of traffic collisions. Nearly all passenger vehicles sold in the US since 2013 has an onboard Event Data Recorder (EDR) which automatically records important technical information during a critical event such as a collision. These EDR units only record information when certain events occur, such as when airbags deploy or when sensors detect a collision and do not have interfaces which display the information. These tools allow investigators to download and view this information.

Why do we use the technology?

SPD utilizes CDR tools in the reconstruction of traffic collisions. These tools allow investigators access to information recorded by vehicles around the time of critical events that are associated with vehicle collisions. The CDR technology utilized by SPD is required to download and view any data recorded by the EDR units.

The open comment period for this technology is currently underway. You can provide comments to **Seattle.gov/SurveillanceComment**.

All comments will be included in the Surveillance Impact Report on this technology and submitted to Council.

If you would like to provide feedback outside of the open comment period, please submit them directly to City Council.

Collection

CDR tools collect information stored in vehicle EDR units. These tools are utilized only after legal standards of consent and/or court-issued warrant have been met in the investigation of a traffic collision. SPD uses CDR tools when it investigates collisions involving specific circumstances such as the death of any person, life-threatening injuries, hit and run collisions, collisions involving substantial bodily injury where it appears a driver was negligent or under the influence of alcohol and or other drugs, vehicular homicide, felony eluding, felony DUI, and other vehicular crimes.

Use

The Traffic Collision Investigation Squad (TCIS) is a detective unit responsible for scene response and investigative follow-up for collisions involving vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians, boats, trains, light rail vehicles, and aircraft. Only TCIS sworn investigators utilize the Crash Data Retrieval (CDR) tools. TCIS investigates collisions involving specific circumstances such as the death of any person, life-threatening injuries, hit and run collisions, collisions involving substantial bodily injury where it appears a driver was negligent or under the influence of alcohol and or other drugs, vehicular homicide, felony eluding, felony DUI, and other vehicular crimes.

Protections

CDR Tools are utilized only after legal standards of consent and/or court-issued warrant have been met, as required by the Washington Privacy Act, Chapt. 9.73 RCW. Use of CDR Tools is constrained to the conditions stipulated by consent and/or court order, which provides the legal authority and the scope of collection. All deployments of audio recording devices are documented by TCIS and subject to audit by the Office of Inspector General and the federal monitor at any time.

City of Seattle