Introduction
This bulletin provides best practice guidance on reporting and responding to work zone crashes and incidents. This area is often overlooked or may lack a defined process, but is an important function in managing work zone safety. The Work Zone Safety Task Force has developed the following guidance with regional input on issues and solutions.

Background
Increased traffic volumes, busy construction and maintenance work schedules, increased night work, temporary roadway features and impaired drivers can lead to higher levels of crashes in work zones. The 2007 Collision Data Summary showed a 50% increase in non-injury work zone crashes with a total of just over 1,700 work zone crashes on state routes. Work zone crashes are an unfortunate but real occurrence. WSDOT has a responsibility to respond in a manner that not only addresses the initial crash consequences but also captures the appropriate information and documentation for work zone assessment, possible revisions and for legal liability purposes.

Best Practice Guidance
This bulletin is not intended to focus on first response actions, but it is worth restating the basic first steps when a crash or other incident occurs during active work operations:

First Response Actions
- Call 911
- Assess the situation for first aid and emergency traffic control needs
- Some incidents may have potential for confrontation, avoid this if at all possible, it is always best to stay at a safe distance and warn others of the situation.
- Record as much information as possible about the vehicle, driver and work zone:
  - License plate number
  - Make, model and color of vehicle
  - Description of driver
  - Take photos
  - Document all relevant facts, conditions, (construction signs, devices, etc.)

Work Zone Crash Reporting and Response
The following guidance is intended to raise awareness and assist with incorporating work zone procedures after a work zone crash or incident occurs and steps to follow in collecting accident reports from the WSP. Some work zone crashes occur during non-working periods and may not be immediately discovered. Some of the above actions may still be appropriate if vehicles and/or other damage are present when personnel return to the project site. It is possible that project personnel may not be aware of a crash at all. Unreported and
uninvestigated crashes may remain that way even though there may be some evidence that a crash occurred. Those crashes or incidents that were investigated by law enforcement (usually WSP) but without initial knowledge of project personnel need a timely accident report submission to the Project Engineer or Maintenance Superintendent. This timely exchange of information is critical to establishing the facts as they relate to the work zone.

Receiving accident reports and information in a timely manner from the WSP has been a challenge statewide. This may be tied in part to the restrictions on distribution of WSP accident reports within the legal requirements. Past annual statewide work zone reviews have shown inconsistencies and a lack of process to address this issue.

It is important to address this issue in a consistent manner to ensure that work zone crash information is being captured, reviewed and responded to as needed. Accident reports are the key document to initiate appropriate response and interaction between WSP and WSDOT, and to maintain documentation for any future legal action that may arise. A close partnership with WSP District commanders and staff can be the most practical and effective best practice to ensure timely and complete documentation, awareness and response to a given work zone crash or incident. All regions have an identified contact person(s) to receive WSP accident reports, but it appears that there are issues regarding timeliness and consistency in receiving these reports as follows:

**WSP Accident Report Issues**
- Slow or no distribution to WSDOT
- Poor WSDOT internal distribution to Traffic Office (Traffic Engineer or Work Zone Specialist), Project Engineering Office and/or Maintenance Superintendents and Region Safety Office.
- Lost reaction time on potentially valuable information for work zone deficiencies or other work zone related issues that may have an impact on safety.
- Confirmation that the accident report agrees with our assessment of any work zone contributing factors.

**Suggested WSDOT Process Elements** – many of these elements already exist, but may not occur on a routine basis or as part of an identified region process.
- Region process – a simple process that outlines the who, what and where of receiving and routing work zone accident reports.
- Consider including the Region Traffic Office in the process. Not necessarily as a first response since the WSP and the PEO are usually involved, but a follow-up work zone review may be valuable.
- Consider if a work zone crash indicates the possibility of a work zone safety issue. If so, what action might be taken?
- Adequate documentation on file in case of future legal action?
- Project level notification and follow up with WSP to facilitate timely distribution of accident reports.
- Preconstruction conference notification and attendance by WSP.
- Consider routine meetings with WSP that include work zone safety agenda items (work zone crashes, enforcement, assistance, etc.).

**Securing Accident Reports, Best Practices**
- Ongoing communication with local Law Enforcement agencies establishes expectations of receiving accident reports in a timely manner.
- Work through the region Incident Response program since a close working relationship with law Enforcement already exists in this area.

Contact the Region Public Information Officer, Traffic Office or Safety Office for further assistance with establishing procedures.