

GES OPERATIONS

Data from the National Automotive Sampling System (NASS) General Estimates System (GES) was obtained from a nationally representative probability sample selected from all police-reported crashes. The GES began operation in 1988 and ended in 2015. To be eligible for the GES sample, a police crash report (also called a police accident report, PAR) must be completed for the crash, and the crash must involve at least one motor vehicle traveling on a trafficway and must result in property damage, injury, or death. Although various sources suggest that about half the motor vehicle crashes in the country are not reported to police, the majority of these unreported crashes involve only minor property damage and no significant personal injury. By restricting attention to police-reported crashes, the GES concentrated on those crashes of greatest concern to the highway safety community and the general public.

GES data collectors made weekly visits to 410 police jurisdictions in 60 sites across the United States, where they randomly sampled about 55,000 PARs per year. The collectors obtained copies of the PARs and sent them to the NASS quality control centers for coding. No other data were collected beyond the selected PARs—no driver license, vehicle registration, or medical information was obtained.

Trained data entry personnel interpreted and coded data directly from the PARs into an electronic data file. Approximately 90 data elements were coded into a common format. Some elements were modified every other year to meet the changing needs of the highway safety community. To protect individual privacy, no personal information (names, addresses, specific crash locations) was coded. During data coding, the data were checked electronically for validity and consistency. After the data file was created, further quality checks were performed on the data through computer processing and by the data coding supervisors.