eCrash Frequently Asked Questions

Why was eCrash created?

There are several factors why DPS decided to create eCrash. One of the main reasons is the need for the state of Alabama to comply with new federal guidelines for crash reporting. eCrash is fully MMUCC (Model Minimum Uniform Crash Criteria) 2008 compliant and is easily updatable when future MMUCC iterations are released. Another reason eCrash was created was the need for electronic transfer of crash reports to DPS. Since eCrash is a freely distributable application, every agency has the ability to transfer a crash report to DPS.

Can I still use my Records Management System (RMS) vendor?

DPS in conjunction with the University of Alabama will be releasing an SDK (Software Development Kit) that will allow a vendor to update their RMS crash module. If your vendor plans on updating their crash module to the new standards and will allow your agency to electronically transfer the crash report, you

can still use your vendor.   The eCrash vendor SDK is scheduled for a release sometime early June 2009. Please note that the SDK will be web service based.

However, if your vendor does not update their RMS crash module to the new Alabama standards, then your agency must use eCrash to complete crash reports.

When must I start using eCrash?

If you do not have an existing RMS system with a crash reporting module, or if your vendor chooses not to update their crash reporting module to the new Alabama standards, then you must use eCrash starting June 1, 2009.

If your agency has an existing RMS system with a crash reporting module, DPS is giving your vendor until December 31, 2009 to update their software. DPS, in conjunction with the University of Alabama will release an eCrash vendor SDK early June 2009 that will give your vendor all the tools needed to update their software. This means the vendor will have six months to update their software. During this time, your agency may continue to submit crash reports by mail. Starting January 1,2010 all crash reports in the state will be required to be sent to DPS electronically either with eCrash or your updated RMS system.

What must my agency do to be prepared for eCrash?

You first need to ensure that all your officers have valid AlaCOP accounts. Next you must make sure that all of those AlaCOP accounts has the eCrash privilege in AlaCOP. Then you must have your AlaCOP agency administrator go to the eCrash website (http://ecrash.aladata.com) and add your agency's eCrash supervisors (supervisors are users who will review the crash report from the website). Finally, you need to either download the eCrash software directly from the website, or your AlaCOP agency administrator can request a CD by mail. The eCrash website (http://ecrash.aladata.com) has a support page that has multiple documents and videos that will further explain everything you need to know for your agency to use eCrash.

My agency needs help training, who do I turn to?

Every DPS post has trained eCrash users that have been assigned to help local agencies be prepared for the changeover. If your agency needs help getting ready, please contact your nearest DPS post and request a DPS representative to come to your agency for help. Also, there are multiple agencies throughout the state that have people who have been trained to train people to use eCrash. Please contact agencies surrounding you to see if they are one of those agencies.

Will every officer need a computer?

No. An officer will not be required to have a computer at the scene of a crash. An officer may choose to use the Field Notes and Flip Chart to gather all the crash-related details and then go back to an office computer at the agency and log into eCrash and complete the crash report. There can be any number of users on one computer. eCrash does not restrict the user/agency in how many users one computer can have.

What if my officers do not use the same computer all the time?

Your officers do not have to use the same computer all the time. If you agency has computer/car specific settings, that is fine. Be advised that on the local computer, only crash reports that were done on that specific computer will be visible to the officer. There is a way to download reports to any computer that an officer has completed by date.

If an officer is not finished with a crash report and his/her shift is finishing and they know they will not use that computer the next shift, and then he/she can export the unfinished report to the server in an unfinished state. She/he can then import that report on another computer to finish the report. Please note that an internet connection is required. You may not use an external USB drive to accomplish this task.

Does my computer have to be connected to the internet all the time?

No. There are only 3 times that a computer must be connected to the internet for eCrash.

1. First time logging into eCrash & AlaCOP password changes

   The first is when the user first logs into the computer. This is because when the user logs into eCrash the first time on a computer, eCrash must communicate with the AlaCOP server to pull down the officer information.

   When you change your AlaCOP password on the AlaCOP website, you will need to have an internet connection the next time you log into eCrash so that eCrash can pull down the new password down from AlaCOP.

2. Printing crash reports from the eCrash client

   The eCrash client does not create a crash report locally. Once you have transferred a completed crash report to the server, DPS creates a PDF file of the crash report. To pull that PDF down to the eCrash client to view it, you must have an internet connection. Remember that DPS looks

for any newly transferred crash report every 5 minutes so please wait 10-15 minutes after transferring your report before trying to retrieve the PDF of the report.

3. Transferring crash reports to DPS

   Once you have completed a crash report with eCrash, you must transfer the report to the server so that a supervisor may review your report. You must have an internet connection to transfer a crash report.

Any other time besides the times listed above, the computer you are using does not have to have an internet connection. The internet connection does not have to be a high speed connection. In fact any internet connection will be fine. When eCrash connects to the eCrash servers, it connects securely so you do not have to worry about any security issues with the connection to the eCrash servers. If your computer is behind a firewall and you have sites blocked, please contact our support staff (go to the eCrash support page, please see the question [Where can I find more eCrash help?](#))

Can my agency still sell crash reports to the public?

Yes. DPS is not preventing any agency from selling an uncertified crash report to the public. An agency may use the eCrash website (http://eCrash.aladata.com) to look up their agency's crash reports and print them and sell them. Please note that just like now, you are selling an uncertified crash report. You will not be restricted in any way just like you are not restricted now from making a copy of the crash report before mailing the report to DPS.

DPS is the only entity in the state that may sell a certified crash report.

Will all eCrash users need AlaCOP accounts?

Yes. AlaCOP is the only unified officer login system in the state. If AlaCOP were not used, then every officer would have to create a new username and password to use eCrash. This causes more burden on the officer to have to remember another login credential. Therefore, AlaCOP was the best choice to use to login into eCrash.

How do I obtain an AlaCOP account?

If you do not have an AlaCOP account, then you may do two things to obtain one:

1. Contact your agency's AlaCOP administrator. Every law enforcement agency in the state has at least one person who controls your agency's AlaCOP use. To create an account, please contact this person in your agency
2. You may also apply for an AlaCOP account online at the AlaCOP website (http://alacop.gov). Go to this website and click the "Obtain a login" link and fill out the online form. You will be contacted accordingly after you have filled out the form.

Where can I find more eCrash help?

Please log into the eCrash website (http://ecrash.aladata.com) and click on the support button. Here you will find documents that will be useful in training your officers, answering any questions you have, etc. Also this page contains videos that will show you how to do specific tasks in eCrash. This page also has support contact numbers to help you if you have any further questions.

How do my supervisors review the crash report?

Make sure your supervisors are set up to be supervisors in eCrash. If you are not sure, please go to the eCrash website (http://ecrash.aladata.com) and log in and click on the support button. You will find a document entitled "Agency Startup Document" that will guide you through the process of adding supervisors.

Once you are sure your supervisors are set up properly, all they have to do is go to the eCrash website (http://ecrash.aladata.com) and on their home page, they will see a list of pending crash reports that need to be reviewed. They can click on the magnifying glass for the report and they will be able to view the crash report.