

Comment from Lois Durso

Posted by the **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration** on Aug 30, 2022

In 2004, I lost my daughter Roya to a side underride crash. After obtaining the FARS report I discovered that her death was not counted as an underride fatality. In the FARS report, it states no underride/no override. The report was inaccurate.

Training law enforcement to identify underride and accurately describe and code underride deaths will improve the accuracy of underride fatalities.

Not all underride crashes look the same. Some cars are lodged under the trailer when police arrive, others enter on one side of the trailer and exit out the other side, shearing off the roof of the vehicle. Some underride crashes are not under the trailer when law enforcement arrives. This was true in my daughter Roya's crash.

Her car was trapped under the rear tire of the trailer. Because of the momentum of the moving tractor trailer, my daughter's vehicle was released and ended up next to a guardrail.

There was PCI - Roya's hair was found on the rear wheel of the trailer. Roya's crash and death was NOT coded as an underride in the FARS data. It's important to ensure that ALL underride crashes are captured on any/all accident reports.

According to a recent GAO report on underride fatalities, underride is underreported. There are two GAO recommendations relating to data collection that have yet to be implemented. These recommendations will have a positive impact on capturing underride fatalities in the FARS databank.

1. The Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration should recommend to the expert panel of the Model Minimum Uniform Crash Criteria to update the Criteria to provide a standardized definition of underride crashes and to include underride as a recommended data field.

2. The Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration should provide information to state and local police departments on how to identify and record underride crashes.

Underride is a decades old problem. There is significant research that front, side and rear underride protection around tractor trailers will save countless lives. Accurate FARS data is important to developing standards that will prevent underride fatalities.

Lois Durso
STOP UNDERRIDES-
In Loving Memory of Roya