



FARS and GES Auxiliary Datasets Q & A

1. What are the auxiliary datasets?

A. The new auxiliary datasets contain data derived from the regular FARS/GES variables using NCSA analytical data classifications. These classifications are widely used in NCSA publications and research. Many definitions such as “speeding-related” or “distracted driving” comprise a combination of variables whose names or attributes have changed over time. The derived variables in the auxiliary files incorporate these nuances, thus simplifying the use of standard classifications in any traffic safety research.

2. How do these auxiliary datasets relate to the usual FARS datasets?

A. These auxiliary datasets are one-to-one mappings of the Accident, Vehicle, and Person files, and contain new variables derived using the data classifications mentioned above. These auxiliary files contain about 60 FARS variables and 40 GES variables.

3. What are the benefits of these auxiliary datasets?

A. Using the new variables derived from the NCSA defined analytical data classifications means that a researcher does not have to be concerned with any underlying definition -- and therefore any corresponding coding issue -- and can simply use the variable directly in any analysis. This also helps in overcoming potential pitfalls associated with variable changes over time as the user will be transparent to these changes when using the auxiliary files.

4. Which files do I use?

A. It depends on the safety question being asked. Some researchers may want to analyze the variable in its full detail as coded in FARS while others may want to analyze the auxiliary variables that have been derived from the original variables.

5. How do I link these files with original FARS/GES files?

A. The auxiliary files are joined with any of the other files by using the standard FARS/GES key variables, namely the case numbers, Vehicle numbers, and Person numbers, where applicable.

6. How many years do these files cover?

A. Auxiliary files have been produced for the years 1982 to 2009.

7. How about future annual updates?

A. These files will be made available each year in conjunction with the release of the standard FARS/GES files.

8. How does FARS/GES consolidation affect these datasets?

A. This should not affect production of these files. In fact, the auxiliary files should greatly help in this process by maintaining consistency.

9. How do I interpret the attributes in these datasets?

A. Analytical user’s manuals have been produced for each auxiliary file.