

SHRP 2 Safety Data, Update 7

This is the seventh in a series of updates about Phase 1 of the implementation of the SHRP 2 Safety Data by TRB in collaboration with its partners, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). As was noted in the first of these updates, “Phase 1” is governed by a Safety Data Oversight Committee (SDOC). “Phase 1” is an experimental program designed to make the safety data as widely available as possible to qualified researchers and to gather information needed to lay the foundation for use of the data beyond the first four to five years.

This edition of the update focuses on a recent development: a set of new use case-based data use license (DUL) templates. These templates are intended to help simplify access to the NDS data by qualified researchers.

New Data Use License Templates Available

SHRP 2 NDS databases are made available to qualified researchers under the terms of a data use license reviewed by the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute (VTTI) and executed by both VTTI and the qualified research team’s institution. When the SHRP 2 NDS data first became available, a “one-size fits all requests” data sharing agreement (DSA) was used. This was sometimes cumbersome for simpler data requests since some of the sections of the agreement turned out to not be applicable. In the interest of simplifying the process of licensing data, a set of four license templates has now been prepared; these templates have been approved for use by the relevant Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) and legal counsels at the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine and at Virginia Tech University.

The four DUL templates represent the following data use cases, in order starting with the more commonly used ones:

1. Export of data displayed and searchable on the Insight web portal to a qualified researcher, but not downloadable. Data searchable on Insight include original study data, which must be tracked and destroyed after tracked or destroyed after 30 or 40 years, depending on the variables involved. This DUL is the simplest of the four to fill out and to have approved.
2. Export of non-PII NDS data to qualified researchers, which is a typical “InDepth” data use license. Many of the data use licenses put in place for the SHRP 2 NDS data will use this template, which allows researchers to utilize original, non-summarized data that are not PII for a specified amount of time—typically two years from the date of license approval. Under the terms of the research protocol for the SHRP 2 NDS data collection, original (non-summarized) data must be tracked and either returned to the data host or destroyed within a period of either 30 or 40 years.

3. Using a secure data enclave (SDE) to view potentially personally-identifying information (PII). Currently, there is one available SDE for the NDS data. PII can only be viewed and used in an SDE under the research protocol approved for the SHRP 2 NDS. It is located at Virginia Tech University in Blacksburg. Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is in the process of developing the Safety Training and Analysis Center (STAC) at the Turner Fairbank Highway Research Center just outside of Washington, DC which is serving as a pilot for additional NDS secure data enclaves.
4. Use of an algorithm to conduct an analysis within the NDS database. In this case, the analysis is taken to the data rather than the more usual approach of exporting the data and doing research with it at a location other than the data host location (VTTI). This DUL amounts to a variation of the SDE use case mentioned above, but allows the qualified researcher to avoid a physical visit to the SDE.

Each of the four DUL templates is both a form to fill in and the background information needed for the qualified researcher team to understand how to fill out the license form. For more information and to download the blank DULs, consult the InSight web portal at:

<https://insight.shrp2nds.us/>