



## Accreditation Commission for Traffic Accident Reconstruction

# News

2003 Newsletter

### Message from the Chairman

This will be my final message as the Chair of ACTAR. I have served the organization and more importantly the participating organizations since October of 2000. It has not only been an educational experience for me but it has also allowed me the privilege of working with people whom I consider extremely talented in the reconstruction arena and also in leading this organization as part of the Governing Board of Directors of ACTAR. I have observed the Board form a consensus at meetings, and for the good of the organization, work to implement the decisions. It is my belief that it is an indication as to the health of an organization when Board Members, without reservation, share their views and opinions on a particular subject both pro and con. This, in my view, has allowed us to vote intelligently because all views on a particular subject are expressed and considered. It has been my privilege to serve with such a dedicated group of men whose only goal is to improve ACTAR and its standing in the reconstruction community.

I would also like to take this opportunity to publicly express my deep appreciation to the Administrator of ACTAR, Al Baxter. I have worked closely with Al, as Chair, for almost four years. It is my belief that this organization would not function at the level that it does without Al. I wish that it were possible for everyone to serve as Chair in order that each individual could truly see how extremely valuable Al is to ACTAR. It is the Chair's responsibility to implement the decisions that the Board makes. Al and I worked closely together to implement and put into practical organization those decisions and it was during those times that I observed first hand his talents and abilities.

As I step down I have left the proverbial "woodpile higher." ACTAR is in better condition financially because of cost containment measures implemented during my tenure and it has also grown,

both in accredited individuals and participating organizations serving on the board. I ask that you please join with me in continuing to support ACTAR, the Board of Directors, and my successor.

Stan Oglesby, ACTAR # 62

### New Participating Organizations

*Welcome Rocky Mountain Institute for  
Transportation Safety and Ontario Provincial Police*

In June 2002 and September 2003 the Rocky Mountain Institute for Transportation Safety (RMITS) and the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), Canada, respectively became the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> participating organizations of ACTAR. The addition of both organizations to the Governing Board of Directors (GBOD) further serves to broaden ACTAR's resources and international affiliation.

Bill Mael, RMITS representative to the ACTAR GBOD, provided the following background on the organization. "The Rocky Mountain Institute for Transportation Safety at Colorado State University, Denver Center - regionally known as RMITS (pounced "rim-its") was formed in 1987 by the State of Colorado's Department of Highway Safety under funding from Federal Highway Safety 402 funds. At its inception, RMITS hand selected a group of law enforcement and paraprofessional experts in the field of crash reconstruction to develop and deliver comprehensive training programs in the field of crash analysis. The concept was to start with a clean sheet and generate our own curriculum based on our knowledge of what had been offered previously in this training arena by other entities. After several months of hard effort our course development was completed and training courses were offered to the law enforcement community.

In the early 1990's, Colorado, under funding restrictions closed the states law enforcement training academy and RMITS was relocated through an excellent marriage with Colorado State University. CSU was able to add a new dimension to our efforts by providing support staff, logistics and administrative management of the program. Since our relationship with Colorado State University, our program has continued to grow and expand into the surrounding region. New technology, program enhancements and delivery methods have been added to our core mission.

RMITS offers training programs in all phases of Accident Investigation and Reconstruction, Driving Under the Influence, Drugs that Impair, Standardized Field Sobriety Testing and Instructor Development. In the last few years RMITS has expanded our Accident Investigation programs to include advanced topics such as, Motorcycle Collision Reconstruction, Computerized Collision Analysis, Collision Mapping using CadZone and Advanced Collision Reconstruction Workshops. RMITS is constantly evaluating our program content and course offerings to insure that the latest technology is available to our clients. Several new and exciting programs are currently under development.

RMITS offers approximately 30 courses per year with an average attendance of 18 students per session. Our philosophy is to strive for low student to instructor ratios, allowing for a more comprehensive learning experience and better student/instructor interaction. Our core instructors are all active professionals in both the law enforcement and the traffic safety community. We take pride that our core AI instructors have achieved and maintain ACTAR accreditation.

In June 2002, RMITS was proud to be accepted as a sponsoring entity for the Accreditation Commission for Traffic Accident Reconstruction and looks forward to being a contributing player in the accreditation process. Several of our program courses have been approved for ACTAR CEU's and RMITS will continue to serve as a training alternative for Accredited Reconstructionists.

For more information on the RMITS program and the Colorado State University Denver Center please visit our web site at [www.learn.colostate.edu/rmits/](http://www.learn.colostate.edu/rmits/) or contact Bill Mael at [bmael@juno.com](mailto:bmael@juno.com) or our Program Manager Karima Bounini at 1-800-847-6487."

RMITS becomes the second educational institute to join ACTAR.

The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) becomes the fourth law enforcement agency to join the GBOD and recognize the importance of ACTAR accreditation. The participation of OPP will assist ACTAR in meeting the needs of the international reconstruction community and will bring additional expertise to the GBOD.

Contact information for OPP's representative to the GBOD will be posted on the ACTAR website ([www.actar.org](http://www.actar.org)).

### **Annual GBOD Meeting**

The 2003 Governing Board of Directors meeting was held April 4-5 in Seattle, Washington. As the accreditation process continues to expand, board members are working to further refine the process and better serve the needs of participants.

Some of the Board's ongoing tasks include creating new exams, expanding examination locations and enhancing the Continuing Education Units (CEU) process.

ACTAR continues to remain in good fiscal shape. The organization continues to meet its financial obligations and will fund several practical crash tests in the coming year to enhance the practical exam database. Exam and renewal fees remain unchanged from last year. In keeping with a cost control plan implemented by the GBOD in 2001, new participating organizations to the ACTAR GBOD must finance their own attendance at the annual GBOD meeting.

### **ACTAR Stats**

As of October 2003, more than 1,420 individuals have applied to ACTAR for accreditation with more than 852 having successfully passed the exam and attained accreditation. Currently about 104 applicants are qualified to sit for the examination.

Of those accredited<sup>1</sup>, 53% identified themselves as law enforcement, 21% as involved in an engineering discipline and 18% identified themselves as consultants (with varying backgrounds). The remaining 6% of accredited reconstructionists identified their area of discipline as "other".

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<sup>1</sup> Figures current through October 2003

## Exam Notes

Of the applicants who successfully passed the exam, analysis revealed an average pass rate of 84% for the theory portion and about 66% for the practical portion. These rates have remained relatively consistent since the inception of the accreditation process and illustrate the continued credibility of the exam.

For applicants more familiar with the metric system, the practical portion of the ACTAR exam will be available in a metric version, thereby eliminating the need for imperial to metric conversions.

During 2002, the ACTAR exam was offered at 15 locations. During this past year, ACTAR has also received accreditation inquiries from reconstructionists in several other countries. Inquiries have been received from Singapore, Brazil, Australia, South Africa and Japan. The GBOD is exploring criteria and methodology for providing the accreditation exam to reconstructionists outside the U.S. and Canada.

At the 2002 GBOD meeting, the Board implemented several important procedures for the accreditation exam that are worth restating. Concern was expressed that the increased use of electronic devices by applicants during the exam could compromise the integrity of the exam. In particular, concern arose regarding the ability of persons taking the exam to potentially copy and remove portions of the exam.

Procedures implemented by the GBOD include:

- All diagrams are to be hand-drawn (this method is still taught during basic collision reconstruction training),
- No electronic printing devices will be permitted,
- No scanning devices will be permitted, and
- No saving or removing of exam variables, questions or answers will be permitted.

Violation of these procedures will result in permanent expulsion from the accreditation process.

## Accreditation Renewal

### *Continuing Education Units & Accreditation Extensions*

As a reminder, ACTAR will award CEU's to accredited individuals for the submission of original technical or research papers. To date, ACTAR has received a few papers that are undergoing review. With the cooperation of authors, the GBOD is considering the posting of selected papers to a future "accredited individuals only" section of the ACTAR website.

The following procedures apply to the submission of papers or research for CEU credit.

- Maximum 5 CEU's per submission
- Maximum 20 CEU's awarded during accreditation cycle (5 years)
- Maximum 4 papers permitted per accreditation cycle
- Papers must be submitted within 120 days of accreditation expiration
- ACTAR must be granted permission to publish the paper

Please contact the ACTAR administrator for additional information.

Renewal difficulties for a few accredited individuals materialized following the activation of military personnel in the fall of 2001. In response to the military call-up and other concerns of a few accredited persons, the GBOD initiated a policy regarding extension of the five-year renewal process.

An accredited individual called to military service may have their renewal period extended for the length of time they fulfill their military commitment. Individuals in need of a military extension must request such an extension in writing and provide proof of the military commitment. Individuals on a military service extension will retain full accreditation designation during the extension period.

Accredited persons experiencing debilitating medical or other hardship that renders the individual incapable of attaining CEU's may apply to the GBOD for an extension of the renewal period. To qualify for such an extension, individuals must request the extension in writing at or about the time of the injury, illness or debilitating event describing the reason for the request. Consideration of such requests will also be based upon how active the individual has been in obtaining CEU's up to the date

of the request and the amount of time remaining in the renewal period.

In addition to renewal extensions, the GBOD decided to permit accredited individuals the opportunity to voluntarily place themselves in an "inactive status". Individuals may desire such a determination in situations such as taking a hiatus from reconstruction work. If an inactive status is approved, the individual's accreditation will be declared inactive for the duration of the request. Upon reactivation of accredited status, the individual's renewal period picks up from the point at which it was placed in an inactive status.

### **ACTAR Directory and Website**

The ACTAR Directory is due for a reprint in 2004. Due to waning demands and increasing printing costs, the primary format for the Directory will be electronic. A searchable Directory is currently published on the website and can be downloaded if desired. ACTAR also has the ability to reproduce the Directory on electronic media such as CD. Hard copy editions will continue to be available upon request.

Regarding the ACTAR website, the organization has been working to provide additional resources to collision reconstructionists via the website. For those who haven't visited the site in a while, the following is just a glimpse of what is available:

- Searchable Directory
- Listing of State motor vehicle accident report templates with images of the report forms
- Contact information for all participating organizations
- Listing of upcoming test sites
- FAQ for accreditation
- Past issues of the ACTAR News
- ACTAR merchandise
- Contact link to address comments or questions to ACTAR

In the future, ACTAR intends to provide a secure area for accredited persons only.

### **Newsletter**

Unfortunately, you may have noticed the lack of regular mailing of the ACTAR News. Until recently, ACTAR has distributed News by printing and mailing hard copies of the newsletter. Although more personal, this method does not necessarily

provide a timely and expeditious avenue for disseminating information. To address the need for conveying information faster and more cost effectively, the ACTAR News will become primarily an electronic publication.

Future editions of the ACTAR News or news briefs will be published to the ACTAR website. For major news announcements post cards may be mailed advising recipients to visit the website.

For those persons without web access or who prefer a hard copy of the News, a hard copy printed version can be requested.

### **ACTAR Merchandise and Advertising**

Just a reminder that ACTAR is selling merchandise that you can use to demonstrate your hard work and commitment to attain accreditation. The following items are available and can be ordered through the website.

- Lucite desktop paperweight, available in three sizes and engraved with the ACTAR logo. Prices range from \$41 - \$52.
- ACTAR stamp/seal, available as an ink stamp or embossing seal each bearing the ACTAR logo and your accreditation number. Prices range from \$15 - \$40.
- ACTAR pin, 7/8-inch diameter pin bearing the ACTAR logo. Price is \$5.

ACTAR has just produced a full-color brochure that targets potential clients for accredited reconstructionists. The aim of the brochure is to promote the benefits of hiring an accredited reconstructionist.

The brochure provides a brief history of collision reconstruction accreditation and the role of ACTAR. A roster of participating organizations is also provided.

These brochures are designed for distribution at functions likely to be attended by persons looking to hire expert witnesses, such as the legal or insurance industries. If you would like to help promote ACTAR at any function, contact the ACTAR administration for additional information.

To help promote accreditation and the role of ACTAR within the collision investigation and reconstruction community, ACTAR has a PowerPoint® presentation that can assist.

If you would like to help promote ACTAR to other reconstructionists or demonstrate the role of accreditation, contact the administrative office for details on the presentation.

### **Other Items of Interest**

During the winter of 2002/2003, several accredited individuals raised concern regarding state licensing of collision reconstructionists as private investigators. All of the issues that were forwarded to ACTAR or brought to the attention of a GBOD member were discussed by the entire board at the Seattle meeting.

The Board concluded that although this issue is of some importance to the private sector engaged in collision reconstruction, it would be financially impossible for ACTAR to intervene on an individual state level. ACTAR would more appropriately be able to address issues on a national or international level to the degree that the entire collision reconstruction industry may be affected.

Although ACTAR may not always be in a position to assist with an issue, the GBOD appreciates input and comments on any issue that affects the industry.

### **Administrator's Message**

As we near the end of 2003 I am happy to report that ACTAR continues to grow with additional applicants applying to test.

One question I get is someone looking for a form to renew their accreditation. Although we are a form-driven society, currently ACTAR does not have such a document. All I require is a letter or note indicating the desired renewal date and this should be accompanied by a check for the appropriate fees. I send out a notice letter about 30 days prior to the individuals expiration date providing the number of CEU's on record and the renewal amount.

To reduce the time needed to process renewals, I assign a renewal date as close as possible to an existing test date. This way I have folks processed in groups rather than 900+ individual expire dates. In the end this works out with people either getting an extra week or two or less than that during their five year term.

In July, I had the opportunity to visit Japan where I spoke to an assembled group of engineers, police

officials and academia about the ACTAR Accreditation Program. Although there is a language barrier (some technical terms in crash reconstruction are not in the Japanese lexicon), the feedback from our hosts was positive. One aspect is that the Japanese have formed their own association called the Accreditation Commission for Traffic Accident Analysis of Japan. I am working closely with these folks in getting their crash training and analysis up and running. We also had meetings with the Director of the Identification Center of the National Research Institute of Police Science. This agency is sort of the national crime lab of Japan and their staff reconstructionists are engineers. I also visited the Japanese Automotive Research Institute (JARI) which is similar to the Transportation Research Center in East Liberty Ohio. They are in the process of building a completely new crash test facility with state-of-the-art technology. Their current facility is slated to be dismantled to make way for a new high-speed train station. JARI does occasionally train Japanese police officers over a 30-day course (with crash tests included). It was a highly informative and educational trip, and as always there was just not enough time to see everything Japan (and Tokyo) has to offer.

If you know a reconstructionist who is considering apply to receive ACTAR Accreditation, please remind them to send in their application package at least three weeks in advance of the examination location's posted cutoff date. This date is designed for those applicants whose package has already been approved by the Review Committee. It takes about three weeks to get the package reviewed, and there may not be sufficient time to obtain approval before the examination date.

The website contains the latest examination dates as well as the current contact information on each accredited reconstructionist. Take a few moments to see that your information is current. If not, simply send me an e-mail or snail mail and I will make the corrections.

### **Contacting ACTAR**

Website: [www.actar.org](http://www.actar.org)  
Mail: ACTAR  
P.O. Box 5436  
Hudson, FL 34674-5436  
Phone: 800-809-3818  
Administrator: Al Baxter

Quick Reference Guide to ACTAR Fees and Merchandise

<i>Item</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Cost</i>
Participating Organization	Participation fee to become a participating organization	\$1500
Application for Accreditation	Application fee	\$150 if member of a participating organization \$175 if not a member of a participating organization
Examination Fee	Due when exam taken	\$50 if member of a participating organization \$75 if not a member of a participating organization
Accreditation Renewal	Fee(s) due at time of renewal	\$100 Base renewal fee \$1 additional fee for each pre-approved CEU (maximum \$80) \$3 additional fee for each non pre-approved CEU (maximum \$240) Late renewal fee – 1-60 days past due (status is “expired” after 60 days) \$25
Website/Email Link	Links your Directory entry at the ACTAR website to your email or website address	\$25 to an email address \$50 to a website address
ACTAR Pin	7/8-inch diameter pin imprinted with the ACTAR logo	\$5
Desktop Paperweight	Lucite, embossed with ACTAR logo	\$41 small 6X5 inches \$47 medium 7 ½ X 7 ½ inches \$52 large 8 ½ X 8 ½ inches
Stamp	Ink stamp with ACTAR logo and your accreditation number	\$15 rubber stamp \$30 self-inking stamp
Seal	Metal embossing seal with ACTAR logo and your accreditation number	\$40
Shipping/Handling	Stamp and seal	\$8

Use of the ACTAR logo/seal for products/merchandise for commercial purposes requires written approval from ACTAR. Accredited persons are permitted to use the seal/logo on personal items not intended for sale. A commercial use fee of 10% of the retail price for each item offered will be imposed.