

## **NSPE Position Statement No. 07-0167— Forensic Engineering and Accident Reconstruction**

**Adopted: Unknown**

**Latest Revision: March 2024**

**Sunset Date: September 2026**

**NSPE Contact: Committee on Policy and Advocacy**

**Professional Policy Supported: 07-Government**

**Position Statement:** It is the policy of the National Society of Professional Engineers (NSPE) to support all of the National Academy of Forensic Engineers (NAFE)\* and others to improve forensic investigations, analysis and reporting, including depositional or court testimony when necessary, related to accidents involving property damage, bodily injury, or loss of life. These are well-established engineering tasks. Depending on the conventions of the jurisdiction and field of investigation, these services may be called “accident reconstruction,” “crime scene reconstruction,” “root cause reconstruction,” and similar terms.

(\*) NAFE is a Chartered Affinity Group of NSPE (all board-certified members of NAFE are also members of NSPE) and is the only North American engineering organization that is focused on the field of forensic engineering.

### **Background:**

To better serve the public interest, NSPE supports the improved training of police officers, fire investigators, safety investigators, and other individuals who provide field observations, take measurements and photographs, and gather and preserve evidence, all of which are needed in support of forensic engineering analyses. These individuals may be admitted by the court as experts in their own right to render opinions based on training, education, and experience and may have other credentials such as the Accreditation Commission for Traffic Accident Reconstructionists (ACTAR).<sup>1</sup> However, such training of police officers and other individuals does not constitute engineering education or experience and does not qualify police officers and others to perform engineering services. A professional engineer brings into reconstruction other skills, experience, and competency that a non-engineer lacks. Laws, regulations, or guidelines limiting the field to “Accident Reconstructionists,” “Private Investigators,” or other non-engineers who do not possess the necessary engineering education or experience do not serve the public interest.

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<sup>1</sup> Accreditation Commission for Traffic Accident Reconstructionists (ACTAR):  
<https://actar.org/>

Federal, state, and local courts, as well as others involved in the legal process, should view with great caution efforts to promote acceptance of “Accident Reconstructionist” certification titles as evidence of expert qualification to the exclusion of other skilled reconstruction practitioners, including professional engineers. NSPE opposes efforts by “Accident Reconstructionist” certification organizations to establish by legislation or government regulation such certifications as a minimum requirement for any accident or incident investigation or analysis. Such efforts, if successful, would constitute an unwarranted restriction upon the practice of engineering. It is up to the presiding judge to assess the merits of the expert witnesses and their testimony.