

FROM UCR TO IBR

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

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Reporting crimes at both the state and national level helps generate credible data for law enforcement agency administrators to use in their daily management and operations. In addition, it provides the public with a more robust understanding of crime rates in any given area. Summary Reporting, more commonly known as Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR), was established as the national crime reporting process in the 1920s as a way to help generate national crime statistics. Currently, UCR collects crime data for only eight crime index categories. In the 1990s, law enforcement administrators saw a need for more detailed reports and introduced the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS) as the reporting protocol for the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), with Incident Based Reporting (IBR) being the state level of reporting. Until recent years, there has been relatively slow adoption to this new way of reporting because of the simplicity of the current UCR system. However, that is about to change.

In June 2016, the Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) Advisory Policy Board (APB) issued a statement announcing that the FBI UCR Program would be transitioning to a IBR-only data collection process by January 1, 2021. The progress of the goal is evaluated each year by the FBI, ensuring that all agencies are on track to convert to the new reporting style or at least working closely with the FBI to develop a transition plan and timeline that will work for their agency.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN UCR AND IBR

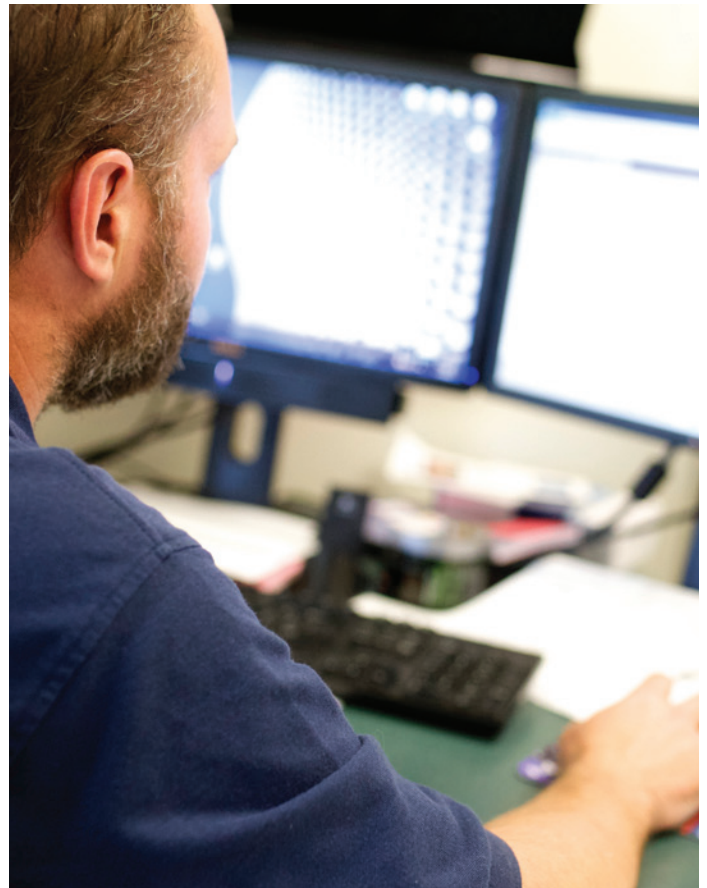
IBR supplies agencies with a way to identify crimes using 49 offense categories, compared to the eight offense categories personnel currently use with UCR. In addition, personnel using IBR are expected to report all offenses that occur within any given situation, rather than just reporting the most serious offense that took place during an incident. This will provide national and regional departments a comprehensive look into crime statistics for each jurisdiction. The new IBR process also outlines what information is required for each report, allowing for standard data collection nationwide. This also provides a comprehensive narrative for each incident, rather than the statistical-based Summary Reporting that only contains the information the officer or records clerk deemed important at the time.

Another major difference between the new IBR and UCR is the need for validation. IBR requires that all reports be validated before they are submitted. This helps to ensure that all necessary data is included in each report. However, it will also create the need for agencies to establish a workflow in their reporting processes, if they do not already have one in place.

Utilizing an IBR process will increase an agency's access to accurate and reliable statistics for their community.

HOW THIS CHANGE BENEFITS YOUR AGENCY

Switching to IBR could involve workflow changes for many agencies across the nation, but it will also come with important advantages. Having more detailed reports provides your agency, not just the FBI, with a more accurate depiction of crime trends in your specific jurisdiction, as well as surrounding areas. With IBR, your personnel will have access to the thorough data needed to identify when and where a crime took place and other incidents that connect to that crime, rather than only what crime occurred. In addition, specifications on victims and perpetrators, including their relationships, will be kept on file, making it easy to go back later and use those details to clear up questions during an investigation.



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The new IBR is meant to help your agency identify common problems and trends in your community faster, helping your personnel to remain transparent and informative during the moments that matter. This improves your agency's image to the public and helps to ensure that your administrators are always aware of what information is being circulated around their community. Because IBR requires such detailed information, you can quickly build advanced reports from any data collected during the process. You can also easily compare data across similar jurisdictions using common data elements because all agencies will be using the same reporting system. Your agency can then work together with neighboring communities to develop strategies and solutions to comparable problems or trends.

Finally, the new incident reporting process helps ease the burden on records clerks who have to try and interpret how an incident unfolded. All crucial information is being recorded upfront by your agency's field personnel and is then verified by other parties during the reporting process. This gives all national and local agencies access to more accurate data, as well as speeds up the reporting process.

The screenshot shows the Spillman Flex incident reporting interface. The title bar reads "Incident - [1702-0002 : Assault, Simple] - Spillman Flex". The interface includes a navigation menu with "Report" and "Summary" tabs, and sub-tabs for "Incident", "Offenses (1)", "Persons (2)", "Vehicles", "Property", and "Narrative (1)". The main form area is titled "138 ASIM Assault, Simple" and includes a "Remove" button. The form contains several sections: "Cargo Theft Related" with "Attempted" and "Completed" radio buttons; "Location Type" with a dropdown menu and "Method of Entry" and "Premises Entered" checkboxes; "Bias Motivation" with a dropdown menu; "Offender Suspected of Using" with a dropdown menu; "Criminal Activity and Gang Information" with a dropdown menu; and "Weapon Code" with a dropdown menu. The "Observed" field is set to "Assault, Simple" and the "Reported" field is empty.

Your agency's personnel can follow the highlighted fields in Spillman Flex's Mobile Field Report as a guide for what information is needed in an IBR report.

HOW SPILLMAN FLEX MAKES IT EASIER

During this transition to IBR, having a system that incorporates these changes into the actual forms and reports used in the software will help you make sure you are capturing all needed information when you first enter the data. The Spillman Flex system creates a seamless integration process for your agency personnel using the Mobile Field Report module. Highlighted fields in Flex Mobile show which fields are needed for state requirements, creating an easy-to-use validation process from the very beginning. This saves time later on for records clerks who are checking to make sure that everything is in order. In addition, the Flex system will display an error message when you try to submit a report that is not complete. The error messages are clear and concise, making it easy for you to understand what exactly is wrong with any given report without needing to decipher any NIBRS jargon.

With each state eventually making the move to an IBR process, Flex developers are currently working closely with state representatives on timelines and specifications to ensure that all customer agencies will have the functionality they need when the time comes to make the move. You should also take advantage of any state training courses that become available, which will make the transition smoother for all parties involved in the process.

The screenshot shows a table of error messages for an incident. The table has columns for "Screen Name", "Data Field", "Error Number", and "Error Message". The error messages are as follows:

Screen Name	Data Field	Error Number	Error Message
Offenses	Weapon Code	265	The field Weapon Code must be Personal Weapons, Other, Unknown, or None when the field Offense is 138 = Simple Assault
Offenses	Weapon Code	269	The field Weapon Code submitted with other than Personal Weapons, Other, Unknown, or None when the field Offense is 138 = Simple Assault indicates a possible classification error and should be reclassified as 13A = Aggravated Assault or weapon type should be changed.
Offenses	Domestic Violence	201	This field must be populated with a valid data value and cannot be blank.
Victims	Injury Type	479	The field Injury Type must contain Apparent Minor Injury or None when the field Offense is 138 = Simple Assault
Victims	Relationship to Offender	488	The field Relationship to Offender cannot be entered when the field Offender to be Related is Unknown Offender

Error messages help you understand quickly what is wrong with a report or what information is still required.

