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**CHAPTER 14**  
**PROCESSING MOTOR VEHICLE**  
**VIOLATIONS**  
**SR 16 / BMV ABSTRACTS**

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Processing abstracts of motor vehicle violations is an important function of trial court clerks. Not only is this function important to the administration of justice, but it is also necessary for the state to remain in substantial compliance with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Act of 1999. Failure to remain in substantial compliance with federal rules and regulation could result in Indiana losing millions of dollars of federal highway funding. The accurate and timely reporting of court actions to the Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) assures that suspensions are properly instituted or terminated and that driving records are properly assessed and available to law enforcement authorities. Federal rules require courts and clerks to report to the BMV serious traffic violations by commercial drivers promptly after conviction so that the BMV can notify the licensing agency in the driver's home state of the conviction within 10 days of conviction.

An SR 16 is the BMV's Abstract of Court Record form that is used by courts to notify the BMV that a driver has:

- been convicted of;
- failed to appear (FTA) for;
- or failed to pay (FTP) a citation for;

a violation of a motor vehicle law.

The SR 16 allows the BMV to impose administrative driver license suspensions and to record court ordered license suspensions. The license suspensions for FTA and for FTP are indefinite suspensions that remain in effect until the Bureau receives notice: in the case of FTA, that the defendant has appeared and a final judgment determined, and, in the case of FTP, that the defendant has now satisfied all fines and court costs. The SR 16 is also used to notify the Bureau of these changes that terminate the indefinite license suspensions.

The [Court Abstract Transmission System \(CATS\) Technical Manual](#) was prepared by the Bureau of Motor Vehicles to assist trial court clerks in processing the SR 16 form. Included in this technical manual are a sample SR 16 with instructions and 8 [flowcharts](#) illustrating the steps when an SR 16 is to be submitted. Questions regarding this form should be addressed to the Bureau.

For statistical reporting purposes to the Division of State Court Administration, a traffic infraction or ordinance violation is reported on the Quarterly Case Status Report (QCSR) as closed when a defendant fails to appear or fails to pay (when appearance is not compulsory), even though the case remains technically open until a judgment is entered, the case is dismissed or payment is made. Otherwise, it appears that the court is carrying a substantial backlog of cases that are essentially dormant. Once an infraction or ordinance violation is reported as disposed for either failure to appear or failure to pay, it should not be reported again on the QCSR even if the defendant later appears, pays or proceeds to trial or enters an admission. *Caveat:* If the defendant fails to appear in a criminal case, that failure to appear

may be the basis of the issuance of a bench warrant, but it does not dispose of the case. A criminal case will remain open until the defendant appears and judgment is entered or the case dismissed. Questions regarding statistical reporting on the QCSR form should be addressed to the Division of State Court Administration.

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