

PATROL

TRAFFIC COLLISION INVESTIGATION

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures for traffic collision Investigation, including response to collision scenes, collision scene duties, and follow-up investigations.

Policy Statement: It is the policy of the North Little Rock Police Department to investigate motor vehicle accidents and determine whether first aid, vehicle removal and traffic assistance are required. Members of the Department will make every effort to provide public safety, ensure the efficient flow of vehicular and pedestrian traffic, and enforce vehicle and traffic laws when investigating motor vehicle accidents.

Summary of Changes: New format.

Procedure:

1 Policy

- 1.1 The Patrol Division is responsible for traffic collision investigation and reporting.
- 1.2 The North Little Rock Police Department investigates any collision that results in injury and all collisions that occur on the public roadway resulting in damage to any vehicle. The extent of the investigation varies, depending on the severity of the collision. The Patrol Division investigates the following: [CALEA 61.2.1b, c, d, e respectively]
 - 1.2.1 Non-life threatening injury collisions with property damage;
 - 1.2.2 Hit and run accidents;
 - 1.2.3 DUI/DWI collisions; and,
 - 1.2.4 Collisions involving hazardous materials.
- 1.3 If these cases require a follow-up investigation, the officer completing the accident report will complete supplements every seven (7) days until a disposition has been reached. The officer will complete a supplement to close out the investigation.
 - 1.3.1 Area supervisors will keep an accident "hit and run log" and will make sure that all reports involving a follow-up are completed and closed out.
- 1.4 Private property, non-injury collisions are completed on a private property accident form at the driver's request. Officers will facilitate the exchange of information between the drivers. [CALEA 61.2.1f]

2 Responding to a Collision Scene

- 2.1 The North Little Rock Police Department will respond to all reported traffic collisions. Officers will respond in the most expeditious manner possible, based on factors such as; injury, the type of collision reported, time of day, weather conditions, and the availability of officers due to workload. Examples of collisions that require a police response include: [CALEA 61.2.2a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h respectively]
 - 2.1.1 Death or injury;
 - 2.1.2 Hit and run;
 - 2.1.3 Impairment of an operator due to alcohol or drugs;
 - 2.1.4 Damage to vehicles or property;
 - 2.1.5 Hazardous materials;
 - 2.1.6 Collisions that result in disturbances between principles;
 - 2.1.7 Major traffic congestion; and,
 - 2.1.8 Vehicles blocking the roadway.
- 2.2 The officer should protect the involved parties and the collision scene by using the patrol vehicle and any traffic control equipment.
- 2.3 Officers will determine if the roadway can be cleared. If the vehicles can be moved, and the investigation will not be jeopardized by moving them, the road should be cleared to facilitate the safe flow of traffic.
 - 2.3.1 Prior to moving vehicles, the investigating officer should check the scene for any short-lived evidence, which should be collected prior to clearing the road.
- 2.4 During times of snowfall, or other labor intensive emergencies, the on duty supervisor may suspend non-injury collision investigations. If this occurs, the supervisor will request dispatchers to inform complainants of the situation. Dispatchers should instruct the individuals to exchange information and contact their insurance agencies as soon as possible.
 - 2.4.1 If the individuals decide at a later date that they would like a report, a CSA can provide them with an accident report form for the involved party to complete.

3 Collision Scene Duties

The first officer arriving at the scene of a collision has the following responsibilities:

- 3.1 The first officer on the scene assumes command of the scene. [CALEA 61.2.3a]
 - 3.1.1 Serious injury and fatality collisions usually require call out of the Investigations Division. The Investigations Detective will take command of the scene upon arriving and handle all aspects relating to the accident.
 - 3.1.2 The overall investigation and the criminal aspect of the investigation will be handled by the Investigations Division.
- 3.2 Check for injuries and provide immediate first aid to those injured in the collision. Notify the fire Department and MEMS as needed; [CALEA 61.2.3b]
- 3.3 Notify the on duty supervisor as soon as practical to advise of injury status;
- 3.4 If the roadway can be cleared, have the vehicles moved to the shoulder or a parking lot as quickly as possible to minimize danger to other motorists.
 - 3.4.1 If damage to vehicles is so extensive they cannot be moved, or the investigation requires the vehicles be left on the roadway, the officers should establish a safe traffic pattern around the collision. If the Investigations Division is called to the scene, the vehicles should not be moved prior to their arrival. [CALEA 61.2.3e]
 - 3.4.2 The officer should position the police vehicle in such a manner as to enhance the safety of the accident scene. Emergency equipment should be activated to alert motorists.
 - 3.4.3 This action protects the scene, those involved in the collision, and the other motorists. The officer will call for a tow truck and other assistance for the rerouting of traffic, as needed.
- 3.5 The officer will quickly gather any physical evidence that may be lost.
 - 3.5.1 Officers investigating collisions will collect evidence commensurate with the severity of the collision.
- 3.6 Any officer at a collision scene should look for hazardous materials. If a collision involves a vehicle containing hazardous materials, or a hazardous material spill occurs, the officer will immediately notify the fire Department. The fire Department is responsible for cleanup of materials such as gasoline, oil, battery acid, antifreeze, or any other hazardous material. [CALEA 61.2.3c]
- 3.7 Officers in charge of an investigation will interview drivers and witnesses. The officer will obtain identifying information from each person, and as much detail as possible about the collision. [CALEA 61.2.3d]
- 3.8 The investigating officer will thoroughly examine each vehicle involved in the collision. Officers will enter damage information on the collision report form.
- 3.9 In accidents involving serious physical injuries or fatalities, the Patrol Lieutenant will contact the Investigations Division to respond to the scene. [CALEA 61.2.1a; CALEA 61.2.3d]
- 3.10 Officers investigating accidents will take measurements at the scene to include the dimensions of the roadways and intersections.
- 3.11 Accidents that occur on a private parking lot will not require measurements to be taken unless injury occurs and a state accident form is required.
- 3.12 The officer at the scene of a collision will ensure that property belonging to the collision victims is protected from theft and is removed to a place of safekeeping if the owner is unable to care for it. All property removed from vehicles is noted on a property form and turned into the property room for safekeeping or as evidence. [CALEA 61.2.3f]

4 Follow Up Investigations [CALEA 61.2.4]

- 4.1 Certain collisions require follow-up investigations. The officer assigned to the initial investigation conducts the follow-up investigation unless the Investigations Division is called out.
- 4.2 All hit and run accidents that involve death, personal injury, or property damage in excess of \$10,000 will be forwarded to the Investigations Division for a follow-up investigation if the duty officer was not called to the scene.
- 4.3 All other hit and run accidents will be investigated by the initial responding officers, who will complete the appropriate report (Arkansas Motor Vehicle Traffic Accident Report or NLRPD Property Damage Accident Report), fully documenting all available information attainable at the scene. The initial investigating officer will make every reasonable effort to follow-up on any information obtained during the investigation and document any findings on the report prior to the end of his/her shift.
- 4.4 The initial investigating officer will be responsible for submitting supplemental reports every seven (7) days following the initial accident report.
- 4.5 The initial investigating officer will continue to submit supplements until a disposition has been reached.
- 4.6 Information developed during the investigation of a hit and run accident, or the follow-up will be documented on a Supplemental Report form. At the conclusion of the investigation, the victim will be notified of the result of the investigation and will be advised of the necessary procedures for prosecution (referral to City Attorney)

5 Broadcasts

5.1 An officer at the scene of a hit and run accident will, without delay, obtain and broadcast any available information or description concerning a hit and run vehicle and/or driver.

6 Supervisor Responsibilities

6.1 Supervisors will review all accidents for completeness and accuracy.

6.2 Supervisors will review all hit and run accidents for content and correctness and determine if the initial investigating officer has done everything that can be done.

6.3 The on duty area commander will determine, based on the information contained in the report, if a follow-up investigation would most likely provide positive results. If in the determination of the area commander a follow-up investigation is not warranted or feasible (lack of information), it will be so noted on the original report and initialed by the area commander.

6.3.1 If a follow-up investigation is warranted and it cannot be effectively handled by the initial investigating officer, the affected area commander will make a copy of the original report and forward it to the Patrol Commander

6.3.2 The Patrol Commander will assign it for follow up. The officer assigned the follow-up will complete a supplemental report detailing the follow-up investigation. The area commander should note on the original report that a copy was sent to the Patrol Commander for follow-up.

6.4 Supervisors will be responsible for maintaining a "hit and run accident log." The log will track the history of all hit and run accident investigations until dispositions have been reached. Dispositions will be designated as follows:

6.4.1 Closed, no follow-up information available.

6.4.2 Suspect determined: information provided to victim.

6.4.3 Suspect determined and cited.

6.4.4 Forwarded to investigations for follow-up.

6.4.5 Forwarded to Patrol Commander for follow-up.

Mike Davis
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