



Accident Investigation

.01 Policy

It is the policy of the Bladensburg Police Department to respond to accidents involving death, personal injury, hit-and-run, impaired drivers, and disturbances between principals. In addition, the Department will investigate accidents resulting in property damage occurring on roadways if the damage disables one or more vehicles.

When dispatched to an accident scene, officers shall respond without unnecessary delay and in accordance with the response classification assigned by Communications.

.02 Terms

Critical Injury: Any injury where death is expected or medical personnel believe it is probable.

Fatal Accident: Any traffic accident in which the victim dies of injuries sustained in the accident and death occurs within 30 days.

Personal Injury: Any injury that is visible or obvious, or for which an involved person is transported by ambulance.

Minor Damage: Cosmetic or non disabling damage.

.03 Governing Legislation and Reference

Governing Legislation: N/A

Forms:

Maryland Automated Accident Reporting System (MAARS) Report (MSP Form 1).

Notice to Motorist Involved in a Traffic Accident (Form 688).

Reference:

General Order 319, Impounds & Vehicles.

.04 Procedure

A. Officer Responsibility

The first officer to arrive at the scene of a motor vehicle accident shall:

- Immediately check for injuries, provide first aid and summon medical assistance. Although injured parties may refuse medical attention, officers shall request an

ambulance in instances where they suspect serious injury;

- Identify hazardous materials, dangerous conditions, or fire threats. Officers shall request assistance and protect the public from those threats or conditions when possible;
- Locate witnesses;
- Preserve evidence, pending a determination of investigative responsibility, for processing and analysis.
- Protect involved persons and property from further injury or damage through the positioning of the police vehicle, direction of traffic, or using flares or other warning devices;
- Restore traffic flow around accident scene, relieve congestion, remove involved vehicles and debris from the roadway as quickly as possible, unless investigative or rescue considerations require they be left in place. If a driver requests that a vehicle be left at the scene, officers shall ensure the vehicle is legally parked and secured;
- Ensure safekeeping of property for accident victims who are incapable of caring for their property;
- Check the license status of vehicle operators;
- Give the parties the case number and inform them that the accident report should be available after 72 hours; and,
- Turn-in completed crash reports by the end of the tour of duty.

B. Accident Reconstruction

An accident reconstruction specialist will investigate and reconstruct motor vehicle crashes that result in serious bodily injuries or fatalities.

Accidents resulting in death, serious injury, or extensive property damage require the following follow-up actions:

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- Obtaining and recording formal statements from drivers and witnesses;
- Preparing and submitting formal reports to the State's Attorney's office to support criminal charges;
- Accident reconstruction and/or vehicle mechanical inspection; and,
- Off-scene data collection, if necessary.

C. Accident Investigation and Reporting

Officers will investigate, and prepare a crash report in addition to any other required reports for any traffic accidents occurring on public thoroughfare or on private property open to the public when any of the following conditions exist:

- There is death, injury, or the report of injury by any party involved in the accident;
- An ambulance or other medical personnel are summoned or arrived on the scene;
- A vehicle must be towed from the scene;
- An allegation or suspicion one driver is intoxicated or under the influence of alcohol or drugs;
- Incidents involving uninsured, unlicensed, suspended, or revoked drivers;
- Incidents involving unregistered or stolen automobiles;
- Incidents where a building is struck;
- Hit and Run accidents; or,
- Accidents involving Government (Local, State, or Federal) vehicles.

Exception

A crash report is optional when:

- Section C does not apply;
- A minor motor vehicle accident occurs on private property; or,
- A minor motor vehicle accident occurs on public roadways that results in no injury and only minor property damage between two (or more) vehicles.

Officers shall ensure that the parties involved in the accident exchange accurate information required by the Motorist Involved in a Traffic Accident form.

At any time, should there be a question whether to write the accident, the doubt shall be resolved in favor of writing the incident.

HISTORY: Adopted July 8, 2013

This General Order supersedes all other orders and memoranda in conflict therewith.

Authority:



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Chief of Police