

BLOOMINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

TRAFFIC CRASH INVESTIGATION

Reviewed by: Lt. James B. Clesson	Effective Date: February 28, 2020
Authorized by: Chief Jamal A. Simington	Revision Date: July 1, 2025

PURPOSE

The policy of the Bloomington Police Department is to investigate traffic crashes in the City of Bloomington. The purpose of the following guideline is to maintain a standard and consistent procedure for traffic crash reporting by the members of the Bloomington Police Department. The authority to investigate traffic crashes is stated in the Illinois Vehicle Code, Chapter 625, sections [11-401](#) and [11-407](#).

PROCEDURE

Traffic crash reports will be completed and submitted using the IyeTek electronic crash reporting system.

REPORTING ACCIDENT

1. A Bloomington Police Officer, Community Service Officer (CSO), or dispatcher receiving a report of a traffic crash by telephone or other means shall:
 - a. Attempt to determine injuries.
 - b. Request an ambulance or other necessary equipment if applicable.
2. Officers who observe or are notified by the public of a motor vehicle crash shall notify the dispatcher of the location and conduct the investigation unless otherwise directed.
3. An on-duty police supervisor will respond to all accidents involving a Bloomington police vehicle. In rare situations, a Vice Unit car may be involved in a crash. To maintain the integrity of a covert investigation, this directive may be altered. The supervisor in charge of the covert operation will later provide the Chief of Police with a memo detailing the circumstances surrounding the accident involving the covert vehicle.
4. The supervisor shall determine the need for traffic crash reconstruction.
5. Traffic crash reports shall be taken when they occur on a roadway or highway within the jurisdiction of this department under any of the following circumstances:
 - a. When there is a death or injury to any persons involved in the crash.
 - b. When there is damage to the property of any one person valued over \$500, including the driver
 - c. When there is an identifiable violation of the Illinois Vehicle Code or similar local ordinance.
 - d. When a report is requested by any drivers involved.

- e. Whenever a school bus is involved.
6. All traffic crash reports shall be submitted at the end of the officer's tour of duty. If further investigation is to be done, the officer will notify the shift commander. At a minimum, the date/time of the crash, involved parties, location, and vehicle information will be filled out before the end of the officer's shift.
7. The reporting officer or CSO shall provide each involved driver with a completed pre-printed LexisNexis e-crash exchange of information card. The officer or CSO shall place the crash report number, location of the crash, date of the crash, other involved parties' names, agency name, and the number of days until the report will be available on this card.
8. In general, traffic crash reports may be taken at the front desk when all drivers involved are present. A supervisor may authorize a report to be taken at the front desk when a driver is hospitalized, or the accident is a hit-and-run, and there is no information on the skip driver.

ON SCENE INVESTIGATION AND OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

Upon arrival at the scene of an accident, the responding officer will:

1. Park the police vehicle in a conspicuous place, alerting the general motoring public of the crash without creating an additional traffic hazard. When possible, the police vehicle should be parked legally.
2. Officers should be aware of fire hazards such as ruptured gas tanks when approaching the scene. Fire Department personnel should be requested at any scene where any such hazard exists. See [SOP 6.06 Hazardous Materials Transportation Incidents](#).
3. The [Emergency Response Guidebook](#) is available in Power DMS. This book allows for rapid identification of DOT placards, which identify hazardous materials, and provides information concerning the nature of the hazard, emergency procedures, evacuations concerns, etc.
4. For crashes involving a [commercial motor vehicle](#) and injury or death, or those of a suspicious nature (apparent fatigue, equipment issues, etc.), contact the Illinois State Police as soon as practical to request a Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Officer for the purpose of providing technical assistance and conducting a Motor Carrier Safety Inspection as the ISP determines is necessary.
5. As soon as practical, responding officers **shall** don their department issued ANSI safety vest.
6. Determine injuries, summon an ambulance if needed, and render first aid if practical. Injured persons will not be transported in a police vehicle unless authorized by a shift commander.
7. Protect injured persons, damaged vehicles, and personal property. Locate the area of impact if possible.
8. Move vehicles from traffic lanes and restore normal traffic flow as soon as possible.
9. Investigate hit-and-run crashes.

In the event of a hit-and-run traffic crash, the officer will record all available information and check the box marked "Hit/Run Report." Under no circumstances shall persons be instructed to report to the front desk for a crash report unless a traffic collision alert is in effect.

10. Call for additional assistance as needed.
11. When fire equipment is called to extricate persons, the ranking officer of the Fire Department at the scene shall be in charge of that operation until such rescue has been terminated.
12. In situations where there is a disturbance between the involved parties, the officer shall attempt to separate those involved and take the appropriate law enforcement action required to resolve the situation. Officers are reminded to take into consideration that the subjects may be emotionally charged due to the accident itself.

Field Investigation Steps

1. Locate drivers of all vehicles involved.
2. Locate all witnesses.
3. Obtain statements of drivers and witnesses.
4. Compare statements and evaluate.
5. Officers shall complete electronic crash reports when:
 - a. All drivers are insured, and damage is estimated at \$1500.00 or more.
 - b. When one of the drivers does not have insurance, and damage is estimated at \$500.00 or more.
6. Observe the physical condition of those involved in the crash, including personal injuries sustained in the accident. If the driver appears to be under the influence of intoxicating liquors or drugs, the investigating officer shall investigate and arrest if probable cause for DUI is present.
7. Note the physical conditions at the scene. Check the scene for hazards and defects in the road, lighting, signs, signals, etc. Hazards or defects present shall immediately be reported to the proper departments.
8. Officers shall determine if the driver of the vehicle is either the owner or has legal authority to be in possession of the vehicle and issue citations as appropriate.
9. The scene should be cleared of debris.
10. Parties involved in the crash should be contacted at the hospital, if necessary, to obtain further information.

PRIVATE PROPERTY TRAFFIC CRASH INVESTIGATION

1. Officers will be dispatched on private property traffic crashes. Under the following conditions, a report shall be taken:
 - a. Complaint of personal injury.
 - b. Driving Under the Influence.
 - c. Leaving the scene of an accident.

- d. Both drivers are insured, and damage is estimated at \$1500.00 or more.
 - e. Either driver is uninsured, and damages are estimated at \$500.00 or more.
 - f. Any of the involved parties request that a report be taken.
2. If none of the above-mentioned circumstances have occurred, the responding officer will inform the drivers of the vehicles involved that a report will not be necessary for our department, and none will be taken.
 3. The officer will inform the drivers to contact their insurance companies to settle any claim.

ENFORCEMENT ACTION

1. After a thorough investigation in which physical evidence or independent witness statements indicate that a violation of a traffic law (traffic of equipment) contributed to the crash, authorized members should issue a citation or arrest the offending driver, as appropriate.
2. More serious violations, such as driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol, vehicular manslaughter, or other felonies, shall be enforced. If a driver who is subject to enforcement action is admitted to a hospital, a supervisor shall be contacted to determine the best enforcement option.
3. Out of state drivers involved in traffic crashes may be issued a citation the same as Illinois residents.
4. Officers shall not indicate that charges are “pending” or “incomplete” when they are unable to determine a violation due to conflicting accounts—such as both drivers having a green light or each accusing the other of an improper lane change. In such cases, the report should reflect that there are “no charges due to conflicting statements and lack of physical evidence,” and this determination must be clearly documented in the body of the report.

FATAL OR NEAR-FATAL TRAFFIC CRASHES

1. If a traffic crash results in a life-threatening injury or fatality, the responding officer shall notify a supervisor. The shift supervisor shall then make notifications in accordance with the directives and procedures outlined in this SOP.
2. The investigation of a fatal or near-fatal injury traffic crash does not follow the same procedure as an ordinary traffic crash investigation. The responding officer shall complete a traffic crash report.
3. Care should be exercised in preserving all physical evidence at the scene until needed evidence has been collected, and measurements and photographs are taken.
4. Officers arriving at the scene of a fatal or near-fatal traffic crash will notify the Shift Commander. The Shift Commander will make the determination about the activation of the McLean County Accident Reconstruction Team (MCART). The appropriate procedure for the activation of MCART is listed in [SOP 6.23](#).
5. The shift Command will make the determination about the request of a Drug Recognition Expert (DRE). For the appropriate procedure for the activation of a DRE, see SOP [6.47 Drug Recognition Expert Program](#).
6. If there are crash investigators on duty at the time of the accident, one should be sent to the scene. The scene should be completely preserved. Vehicles, debris, and all other items involved in the

traffic crash, other than injured persons, should be secured in their place until released by the investigator in charge.

7. Formal statements should be taken from all persons involved in the traffic crash and from witnesses to the traffic crash. This should be done as soon as possible as directed by a traffic crash reconstructionist or detective.
8. Ambulance attendants at the traffic crash scene will make the determination to transport an injured person.
9. The authority to remove deceased persons at the scene of fatal vehicle accidents rests with the coroner alone. The Bloomington Police Department will not authorize the removal of any deceased person.
10. The body of the deceased person at the scene of an accident will not be searched for identification. Identification of the deceased will be made later by the coroner.
11. Appropriate measures will be taken to preserve the dignity of deceased persons at the scene. Examples of appropriate measures may be, but are not limited to, using police or fire department vehicles to obstruct views, using available tarps, or setting a perimeter large enough to shield the scene from public view.
12. When practical, an on-duty supervisor should respond to the scene and take responsibility.
13. When the scene is released by investigators, the on-duty supervisor shall ensure the roadway is cleaned up. The on-duty supervisor may request the contracted towing service to clean debris from the roadway. The on-duty supervisor may also request the fire department to spray water on the roadway to remove liquid debris from the roadway.

NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES FOR FATAL OR NEAR-FATAL TRAFFIC CRASHES

The notification process for fatal or near-fatal traffic crashes is critical to ensure a swift, coordinated response from relevant agencies. These procedures typically involve law enforcement, emergency medical services (EMS), and other key authorities. The following outlines the general steps:

Action	Who	When	Details
Send Email Notification	BPD Officer (authoring crash report)	Within one hour of accident or as soon as practical	Include date, time, location, case number, investigating officer, and on-duty supervisor.
CC	Elected SA, 1st Assistant SA, BPD Operations Chief, BPD Chief, BPD CID Lt., both CID sergeants, BPD PIO		Ensure all relevant parties are included in email for awareness.
Phone Notification	BPD Officer (sending email)	Within one hour of accident or as soon as practical	Make courtesy call to the on-call MCSA office phone for criminal awareness.

*The above is in addition to the [BPD Notification Protocol Directive 3-30-22](#). See the [BPD Notification Protocol Reference](#) chart for additional information.

SUPERVISOR RESPONSE TO CITY OF BLOOMINGTON POLICE VEHICLE CRASH

1. Ensure there are no injuries. For any Injury Classification Type A or Type K involving a City of Bloomington Police or Parking Enforcement vehicles, refer to SOP [6.23-Activating the McLean County Area Reconstruction Team \(MCART\)](#) and SOP [6.47 Drug Recognition Expert Program](#).
2. For property damage-only crashes involving a City of Bloomington Police and Parking Enforcement vehicles, take the following steps:
 - a) A supervisor should normally respond to the scene. In situations involving a parking enforcement employee/vehicle, the parking enforcement supervisor should be notified as well. Note: It is the involved employee's responsibility to ensure that a supervisor is notified and informed of the situation
 - b) The responding supervisor shall oversee the crash investigation conducted by an officer. Note: The employee involved should ensure that their Body-Worn Camera and in-car camera are activated as soon as possible after being involved in a vehicle accident."
 - c) The responding supervisor shall be responsible for completing and ensuring compliance with the [Squad Car Accident Check-Off Sheet](#). This should normally be completed prior to the end of their tour of duty.