

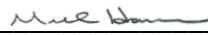


CEDAR PARK POLICE DEPARTMENT
GENERAL ORDER

Collision Investigations

NUMBER: 7.16.01

EFFECTIVE: 09-01-2011

APPROVED: 
Chief of Police

I. POLICY

It is the policy of the Cedar Park Police Department ("Department") to respond to and properly document vehicle collisions in compliance with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). This general order establishes collision response procedures and responsibilities to help ensure officer safety, medical aid to the injured and the safe, speedy restoration of traffic flow.

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to set forth a clear set of guidelines and procedures for the Department to create a common standard for investigation of collisions and reporting vehicle collisions. Accomplishing the guidelines and procedures outlined herein shall attempt to provide a safe flow of vehicular traffic and to protect the public and their property.

III. DEFINITION

City Vehicle – Vehicles owned or leased by the City of Cedar Park.

CR-3 – Texas Peace Officer's Collision Report.

Collision – Also known as a crash, an event that produces injury, death, or damage as defined by TxDOT.

Collision investigator – An officer trained in Accident Reconstruction.

Fleet – A motor vehicle collision involving a vehicle leased or owned by the City of Cedar Park.

Investigating Officer – Any officer who is investigating a report of a collision.

Injury – See [Texas Penal Code 1.07](#) for purposes of criminal charging. For collision investigations the following can be used. Refer to TxDOT CR-100 for expanded definitions.

- Suspected Serious Injury – Severe injury that prevents continuation of normal activities.
- Non-Incapacitating Injury – Evident injury such as bruises, abrasions, or minor lacerations which do not incapacitate.

Possible Injury – Injury claimed, reported, or indicated by behavior but without visible wounds, includes limping or complaint of pain.

IV. CRITERIA FOR RESPONSE

Officers will respond as soon as practical to the scene of a collision, involving any of the following that occur in the corporate limits of the city or roadways subject to its jurisdiction:

1. Death or injury,
2. Hit and run,
3. Impairment of an operator due to alcohol or drugs,
4. Damage to public/private vehicles or property,
5. Disturbances between parties involved in the collision,
6. Major traffic congestion as a result of the collision,
7. Damage to vehicles to the extent towing is required, or
8. Hazardous materials.

V. RESPONSIBILITIES

TELECOMMUNICATIONS –

1. A telecommunicator receiving the report of a collision will first attempt to pinpoint the exact location.
 - a. In situations of undetermined location or jurisdiction, Cedar Park Police Department units may be dispatched to the collision.
2. Telecommunicators shall attempt to determine the necessity of medical, fire, or hazardous material response.
3. Telecommunicators shall assign unit(s) to respond in accordance with established response protocols.

FIRST RESPONDING OFFICER –

1. The first officer on scene will verify the location and jurisdiction with dispatch, as well as whether additional units are needed.
2. Officers shall summon EMS personnel when there are obvious injuries or anyone involved in the collision requests medical treatment.
3. Administer emergency medical care (basic life support measures) as necessary and in accordance with training, pending arrival of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) personnel.
4. Summon additional help as required (officers, EMS, and/or wreckers).
5. Identify and deal with fire hazards and/or hazardous materials;
 - a. In the case of hazardous materials, the officer should observe basic officer safety protocols and resist the urge to run in. Officers should ascertain the amount and type of material involved while maintaining a safe distance from any released material. A safe

distance will depend on the materials involved, severity of the incident, and scene characteristics. If appropriate, the officer should initiate protective action to include at a minimum:

- i. locating any hazmat placards and advising telecommunications,
 - ii. determining wind direction and speed for airborne hazards and remaining upwind of the incident, and
 - iii. determining the need to evacuate or isolate the immediate area.
 - b. If a reportable amount of hazardous material is released at a collision scene, the Fire Department will be responsible for Federal and State required reporting of the incident.
6. Protect the collision scene.
 7. Preserve short-lived evidence (broken parts, skid marks).
 8. Establish a safe traffic pattern around the scene.
 9. Locate witnesses and record key collision information.
 10. Expedite removal of vehicles, persons, and debris from the roadway except for confirmed fatal or potentially fatal collisions.
 - a. An officer may request an on-duty commercial vehicle enforcement officer if the collision involves a commercial motor vehicle for post-collision inspection purposes.
 11. Controlling property belonging to collision victims.
 - a. Officers shall adhere to the guidelines in [GO 7.17.01 Tow Guidelines](#).
 12. The initial officer arriving at the collision is deemed to be in charge of the scene, but may be relieved by an FTO for training purposes, a collision investigator, or other officer, as assigned by a supervisor.
 - a. The officer assigned to a collision shall have the responsibility and authority to request assistance from any other officers as needed.

ALL OTHER UNITS

At a minimum, the additional officers at a collision scene shall perform the following functions:

1. Assist the primary investigating officer however requested.
2. Utilize patrol vehicles, traffic cones, and flares to provide the greatest possible scene protection while giving the maximum amount of hazard warning to other vehicular traffic.
3. Utilize every effort to quickly and safely restore the flow of traffic while also giving due regard to scene protection. Restoration of traffic flow may be accomplished by directing traffic around the immediate area of the scene.
 - a. Officers may direct traffic through alternate streets if the immediate area of the collision is completely blocked and cannot be re-opened within a reasonable amount of time.
4. Move involved vehicles to a parking lot, shoulder of the road, or other safe place to clear the roadway as soon as possible and practical.

VI. MOTOR VEHICLE COLLISION INVESTIGATIONS

Nothing in these guidelines is intended to prohibit completion of a CR-3. Officers shall make a written CR-3 report at a minimum when one or more of the following conditions are met:

1. Collisions that involve death or injury and these involvements are reported at the collision scene.
2. Vehicle collisions involving bicyclists and/or pedestrians where claim of injury is reported.
3. Collisions involving impairment due to alcohol or drugs.
4. "Hit and run" collisions when any of the following are present:
 - a. the vehicle is significantly damaged,
 - b. injuries resulted from the collision, or
 - c. there is actionable identifying information for investigation of the hit and run, regardless of damage or injury.
5. Collisions involving multiple vehicles with damage which renders one or more of the vehicles unsafe to operate, requiring towing.
6. Collisions involving any Federal, State, or Local government owned property.
7. Private property collisions that involve injury or death, or multiple vehicles with damage which renders one or more of the vehicles unsafe to operate, requiring towing.
8. At the discretion of an officer or supervisor.

Note: Collisions occurring on private property or privately owned parking lots where a fee is charged which involve death or injury will be documented via an offense/incident report when a CR-3 is not applicable.

Officers may provide an information exchange form as an alternative reporting method in other collision situations.

When an officer chooses not to complete a collision report due to all involved persons' choice, they shall complete the following:

1. Obtain adequate information to complete the CAD record including:
 - a. Drivers' names, addresses, and driver license information.
 - b. Vehicles' makes, models, and license plate information.
 - c. Verify insurance.
2. Advise all involved persons that they are responsible for exchanging information.
3. Advise all involved persons that should anyone decide at a later time that they want a police collision report completed; that said report will not be completed.

Employees may observe the following guidelines during inclement weather:

During periods of inclement weather causing an influx of traffic collisions, i.e., ice on the roadways, the Public Safety Communications Division or officers may refer drivers to exchange information when all vehicles involved are drivable, the damage is minor, and there are no injuries. CAD documentation

shall still be made involving all available information and the drivers involved may be provided a call number for reference.

VII. COLLISION REPORT ROUTING

Officers will submit all collision reports digitally to their immediate supervisor. Approved reports are automatically submitted to TxDot upon approval.

VIII. SAFETY EQUIPMENT

1. All sworn personnel shall be issued a reflective vest.
2. Employees shall wear a Department approved reflective vest when directing traffic or working a collision scene in the roadway.
3. Employees should wear a reflective vest when removing large amounts of debris from the roadway.

Employees should use the following safety related equipment when applicable and when the equipment is available, including but not limited to:

1. Traffic cones
2. Road flares

IX. ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS

Enforcement action should be taken by officers for violations that contribute to the collision when appropriate.

Officers who make a physical arrest for offenses that contributed to a collision shall complete CR-3 Collision Report.

X. FATALITY COLLISIONS

1. All fatal or suspected serious injury collisions are investigated by a collision investigator, who will be responsible for completing the CR-3 as part of the investigation.
 - a. Special attention should be given to scene protection until a collision investigator has completed the initial investigation.
2. The collision investigator or designee may respond to the hospital where seriously injured persons(s) were transported prior to completing the preliminary investigation (when applicable).
3. A commercial motor vehicle enforcement officer may be dispatched to all fatal or expected fatal collisions involving a commercial vehicle.

XI. FLEET COLLISIONS

A supervisor shall respond to all fleet collisions in the city. A member of the Department shall respond to fleet collisions outside of the city at the discretion of the on-duty supervisor based on severity and distance.

The following guidelines apply to fleet collisions in the city or jurisdiction:

1. A CR-3 and Department memorandum shall be created for all collisions and provided to a supervisor or collision investigator for review.
2. An on-duty collision investigator will work all fleet collisions.
3. If there is no on-duty collision investigator and there is confirmed injury to any party, contact the Collision Investigator Supervisor to evaluate possible callout. In the absence of a collision investigator response, an uninvolved supervisor will investigate the fleet collision.
4. If there is no on-duty collision investigator and there are no injuries to any party, fleet collisions may be investigated by any uninvolved supervisor.

It will be the responsibility of the investigating supervisor to obtain the CR-3 or other documentation for fleet collisions that occur outside the city jurisdiction.

Fleet reviews will be submitted in compliance with [SOP 8.03.01 Paperless Reporting](#) and conducted in compliance with [GO 4.10.01 Employee Accident Prevention and Reporting](#).

XII. FOLLOW UP INVESTIGATIONS

The nature of some collisions may necessitate a follow-up investigation to obtain information that cannot be obtained at the collision scene. Follow-up investigations may include, but are not limited to:

1. Collecting off scene data such as additional information about drivers, pedestrians, vehicles, roadway control, etc.;
2. Obtaining/recording formal statements from witnesses in collisions involving serious injury or damage:
 - a. Statements may be notarized, or witnessed by an officer as appropriate;
3. Reconstructing collisions based on data gathered at the collision scene when the cause of sequence of events cannot initially be determined; and
4. Preparing formal reports to support criminal charges arising from the collision.
5. In collisions involving damage to third party's property, officers will make every effort to identify the owner of the property and, as soon as practical, make notification of the damages. The property owner will be supplied with all available information on the person(s) responsible for the damage.

In cases where the initial investigating officer cannot complete the follow-up investigation, a supervisor may assign the completion of investigation to another officer.

The operations bureau commander or designee must authorize obtaining expert and technical assistance in collision investigations, such as that offered by surveyors, mechanics, physicians, etc., if there will be any budgetary impact.