



Colorado Springs Police Department Standard Operating Procedure

DL-1305-01 Fatal or Serious Injury Traffic Crashes

Section 1300 – Traffic Enforcement

Effective Date: 3/26/2021

Supersedes Date: 9/11/2012

.01 Purpose

The purpose of this directive is to outline procedures for investigating fatal and serious injury traffic crashes.

.02 Cross-Reference

[GO 1030 Death Notifications](#)

[GO 1305 Traffic Crash Investigations](#)

[GO 1320 Towing and Impound Procedures](#)

[GO 1400 Collection of Physical Evidence](#)

[DL-1030-01 Notification of Coroner](#)

[DL-1030-02 Organ Donor Programs](#)

[DL-1840-06 Callout Criteria for the Major Crash Team](#)

.03 Discussion

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.04 Policy

In addition to the procedures in [GO 1305 Traffic Crash Investigations](#), the following procedures are mandatory for investigating and processing all fatal and serious injury traffic crashes. If the crash involves multiple fatalities, the relevant procedures will be repeated for each decedent.

.05 Definitions

Major Crash Team (MCT): A team comprised of four full-time detectives, one sergeant, and a cadre of officers who have received specialized training in the area of traffic crashes.

Personal identifying information: Any information that can be used to identify and contact an individual (e.g., name, date of birth, physical addresses, contact telephone numbers, etc.).

.10 Notifications

Notifications to the Major Crash Team will be conducted in accordance with [DL-1840-06 Callout Criteria for the Major Crash Team](#).

.20 Authority

In all fatal and serious traffic crashes, the on call MCT sergeant, their designee, or the ranking traffic officer from the MCT will be responsible for the investigation, regardless of the rank of other officers present from other components of the department.

.30 Initial Actions

The first arriving unit will assess the scene, to include:

- Determining if additional police, fire, or medical resources are needed
- Closing the area to vehicular and pedestrian traffic
- Preventing persons from moving/removing vehicles, motorcycles, bicycles, clothing, or other roadway debris
- Determining whether crime scene screens should be requested at the scene to shield the deceased person from public view and making arrangements to do so if that can be accomplished without compromising evidence

The primary patrol officer will be responsible for preserving the scene and they will remain on-scene until released by the MCT sergeant or detective in charge of the scene.

.32 Preservation of Evidence

Special care should be taken in preserving all physical evidence at the scene, until it can be collected, measured, photographed, and statements in accordance with [GO 1400 Collection of Physical Evidence](#).

At the discretion of MCT investigators, the Metro Crime Laboratory (MCL) may respond to assist in the investigation of the crash.

.34 Notification of Coroner

The body of a decedent is the responsibility of the El Paso County Coroner's Office. Interaction with the decedent will be conducted in accordance with [DL-1030-01 Notification of Coroner](#).

.36 Disposition of Vehicles

Towing of any vehicles involved in a fatal or serious injury traffic crash will be done in accordance with [GO 1320 Towing and Impound Procedures](#).

All impounded vehicles will be placed on an administrative hold until the lead MCT detective, in cooperation with the District Attorney's Office (DA), determines whether the vehicle is to be held as evidence. If the vehicle is to be held as evidence, the lead MCT detective will be responsible for re-classifying the vehicle as in Evidence on Q.

If the vehicle(s) were towed from the scene by another wrecker company prior to determining the seriousness of the crash, the city contract wrecker company will respond to the location of the involved vehicle(s) and in doing so, will tow the vehicle(s) to the city impound lot.

.40 Interviews

Due to the seriousness of the investigation, in addition to requesting witnesses complete a written accident statement, patrol officers will obtain each witness' personal identifying information and conduct personal interviews with each. The information will be documented in a supplement to the offense/crash report.

.50 Investigative Responsibility

Vehicular homicide and vehicular assault are normally reported and documented as a traffic crash because the elements include recklessness. Follow-up in these incidents will be the responsibility of the MCT.

When death or serious bodily injury is intentionally caused by the operator of a motor vehicle, the incident is investigated as a 1st/2nd degree murder or 1st/2nd degree assault. Follow-up in these incidents will be the responsibility of the Violent Crimes, Homicide/Assault Unit.