

**LEESBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT  
REGULATIONS AND GENERAL ORDERS MANUAL**


General Order Number: 211	Section: OPERATIONS	Effective Date: FEBRUARY 2023
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Title: <b>TRAFFIC CRASH INVESTIGATION</b>
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Accreditation Standards: OPR.07.05, OPR.07.06, OPR.07.07, OPR.07.08
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Review Date:  JUNE 2024
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Total Pages:  5
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Chief of Police:  
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**I. TRAFFIC CRASH INVESTIGATION**

**A. Crash Investigations Reports.**

1. All traffic crashes on public highways and private property shall be investigated, to include crashes on public property resulting in injury, death, or total property damage to an apparent amount of \$1,500 or more. The results of all crash investigations meeting requirements outlined in the Code of Virginia §46.2-373 shall be reported on the DMV Police Crash Report, FR300P. In addition to the FR300P, all traffic crashes involving hazardous materials (placarded cargo) shall be reported on a Leesburg Police Department (LPD) case report. All hit and run violations occurring on public property shall be reported on the FR300P and on the LPD case report. Hit and run violations that occur on private property will be documented on a LPD case report. All traffic crashes involving an intoxicated driver shall be documented on a LPD case report and shall be handled according to the procedures set forth in General Order 209 DWI Enforcement. Crashes where the operator of a motor vehicle is placed under custodial arrest shall be reported in a LPD case report.
2. Filing of Reports.  
The motor vehicle laws of Virginia under §46.2-373 require law enforcement officers to submit a police crash report to the DMV for all reportable crashes within 24 hours after the completion of the crash investigation. All reports required by this general order shall be submitted to the investigative officer's supervisor prior to the end of their tour of duty; incomplete reports will require supervisor approval for delayed submission.
3. Public Vehicle Crashes.
  - a. Crashes involving a vehicle owned by Loudoun County will be investigated by the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office (LCSO). Upon identifying that a vehicle involved in a crash belongs to Loudoun County, the investigating officer shall contact LCSO and request that a deputy respond. In the event that a deputy is not available, the investigating officer shall document the crash as if it were a LPD cruiser.
  - b. Crashes involving a vehicle owned by the State of Virginia will be investigated by the Virginia State Police (VSP). Upon identifying that a vehicle involved in a crash belongs to the State of Virginia, the investigating officer shall contact VSP and request that a trooper respond. In the event that a trooper is not available, the investigating officer shall document the crash as if it were a LPD cruiser.
  - c. Crashes involving vehicles owned by the Town of Leesburg that occur within the Town will be investigated by LPD. Upon completion of the crash investigation the investigating officer shall complete and submit an FR300P to TREDs within 24 hours regardless of the damage amount.
  - d. Crashes involving Town of Leesburg property, other than vehicles, in excess of \$1,500 will require the completion of an FR300P. For crashes involving Town of Leesburg property that are less than \$1,500, an incident report will be required.
4. Police Vehicle Crashes.

- a. With the exception of exigent and/or extenuating circumstances, the operator of a police vehicle involved in a crash shall immediately and without delay stop at the scene, determine/assess injuries, and notify the Leesburg Police Communication section by radio.
- b. Upon being notified of a crash involving a police vehicle, the responding supervisor shall make notification in accordance to General Order 201 Patrol.
- c. In all crashes involving a police vehicle, the operator, unless physically incapable, shall submit a memorandum detailing the circumstances of the crash.
- d. A complete and thorough investigation shall be conducted for all crashes involving police vehicles. Generally, crash investigations involving a police vehicle that results in minor property damage will be conducted by the officer's immediate supervisor. In the event the immediate supervisor is not available, the crash investigation shall be conducted by an available supervisor, Officer in Charge (OIC) or Traffic Management Unit (TMU) officer. Crashes that result in serious damage, injury or loss of life will be investigated by the Crash Reconstruction Team (CRT). Crashes involving police vehicles that come into contact with another object as a result of the intentional actions of a departmental employee, shall be investigated in accordance with General Order 104 Response To Threats/Resistance.
- e. Crashes involving fatal or serious injuries require an oral report to be made to the Chief of Police and the Field Operations Division commander as soon as practical.
- f. The investigation of any crash involving a police vehicle that occurs outside the boundaries of the Town of Leesburg will be conducted as directed by the Chief of Police or designee.
- g. The investigating authority shall determine the cause of the crash based upon all evidence and known facts and document their findings according to procedures outlined in General Order 115.
- j. Upon completion of a crash investigation involving a police vehicle the FR300P and the administrative investigation memorandum shall be provided to the Chief of Police. Original reports are to be submitted. Copies may be made for section or division files as needed.

B. Officer Response.

1. Officers will respond to all traffic crashes, both on public or private property, to aid the injured, identify the operators, and assist all parties involved. This may include but is not limited to:
  - a. Hit and Run
  - b. Driver impaired by alcohol or drugs
  - c. Hazardous materials
  - d. Disturbances between principals, owners, or operators of vehicles or property, e.g. fights or disputes
  - e. Major traffic congestion
2. During inclement weather and poor road conditions, crash investigations may be curtailed; however, such action shall not include crashes involving personal injury or significant property damage. Authority to implement this action shall rest with either the on-duty Patrol Commander or the Command Duty Officer. In the event that an officer cannot safely respond to the scene of a crash, an assigned officer will speak to the citizens over the phone and inform them of the present operating procedures instructing them to exchange necessary information. The officer shall document the crash electronically by making notes of the circumstances and providing the citizen with an incident number.

C. Officer Responsibilities.

1. The following is a chronologically correct procedure for responding to, arriving at, and completing a traffic crash investigation.
  - a. Arrive on the scene quickly and safely.
  - b. Position the police vehicle in a manner to protect the scene, preserve evidence and protect the public. Do not create an additional hazard. Emergency lights will be activated while the police vehicle is parked on the roadway.

- c. Check for injuries, fire hazards, hazardous materials and other dangers. Officers who arrive at the scene of a crash that involves personal injury shall provide first aid to the victim and summons the assistance of the Loudoun County Fire and Rescue as soon as practical. Additional officers shall be requested as needed. Victims complaining of back or neck injury should only be moved by rescue personnel unless conditions at the scene are life threatening to the victim. When rescue personnel arrive, officers will provide assistance as requested.
  - d. If a crash involves a fire or there is potential for fire, officers shall immediately request the assistance of the Loudoun County Fire and Rescue. All persons in the immediate area should be evacuated and any injured victims should be assisted in evacuating. Officers shall then isolate the area to prevent unauthorized persons from entering.
  - e. Officers should be aware that any crash involving a cargo vehicle is a potential hazardous material incident. When there is a question whether material at a crash scene may be hazardous, officers shall avoid contact with the material and will keep others from contacting the material. Loudoun County Fire and Rescue will be requested to identify any possible hazardous materials.
  - f. Immediately preserve all evidence that may be easily destroyed.
  - g. Establish traffic control around the scene. As soon as practical, remove vehicles from the roadway to a safe location. This will alleviate the possibility of causing other collisions and relieve traffic congestion. The use of highway flares or traffic cones to assist motorists should be considered at all crashes.
  - h. Identify operators and witnesses. If the parties involved in the crash are being hostile towards each other, the officer should separate the involved parties and request assistance of a second officer for interviews and statements. When practical officers shall document statements and ensure a proper exchange of information is conducted between operators.
  - i. Request a tow truck if damage to the vehicles will not allow them to be driven from the scene.
  - j. Check to be sure all information has been obtained regarding operators' licenses, vehicle registrations and insurance companies.
  - k. Investigate the scene and document damage to property and vehicles by taking photographs, making sketches, and taking measurements when needed.
  - l. Issue appropriate summonses.
  - m. Ensure the roadway is clear of debris before leaving the scene. The responding tow truck operator is required to clear the scene of debris to the satisfaction of the investigating officer prior to leaving.
2. Patrol officers will be primarily assigned to investigate crashes by the Communications Section based on their assigned patrol area. The officer assigned to investigate a crash will be in charge at the crash scene unless relieved by a responding supervisor or a member of the Traffic Management Unit.
  3. Hit & Run crashes should primarily be assigned to Patrol Officers. On-duty Traffic Management Units will assist as needed for the purposes of investigative assistance and/or traffic management.
  4. Hazardous Materials.
    - a. Hazardous material is defined as any element, compound, or combination which is flammable, corrosive, explosive, toxic, radioactive, an oxidizer, or is highly reactive and may have a detrimental effect to emergency personnel, the general public, equipment, or the environment.
    - b. Any crash or spill involving a hazardous material presents a serious threat to the health and safety of the general public. The first officers on the scene are frequently the most vulnerable and should adhere to the following procedures:
      - (1) Request Loudoun County Fire and Rescue Services;
      - (2) Prepare to evacuate the immediate area, staying clear of all spills, vapors, fumes and smoke. Do not assume that gases or vapors are harmless because of lack of odor;
      - (3) Isolate the hazard and maintain surveillance of the area in a position upwind from the material;

- (4) Regulate traffic, monitor crowds, and control the scene, allowing the Loudoun County Fire and Rescue Hazardous Material Team to secure the crash scene and remove any hazardous material;
    - (5) Assist with any evacuations required at the direction of the Loudoun County Fire and Rescue.
  - c. If an employee is exposed to a hazardous material the employee will notify their supervisor immediately. The supervisor will report the exposure following the guidelines for reporting employee injuries. The employee shall receive a medical evaluation under the following conditions:
    - (1) When the employee is exposed to a hazardous substance with concentration levels that are above the permissible exposure levels as determined by the Loudoun County Fire and Rescue Services;
    - (2) When the employee is injured due to exposure to a hazardous substance;
    - (3) When the employee suffers symptoms from exposure to hazardous materials such as dizziness, rashes, nausea or headaches.
- D. Follow-Up Investigation.
  - 1. Crash investigation follow-up is the responsibility of the investigating officer. The officer shall notify their supervisor and arrange for the collection of scene data, vehicle safety inspections, obtaining recorded formal witness statements, reconstruction of crashes and the preparation of formal reports to support any charges made from the investigation.
  - 2. Should technical assistance beyond the capabilities of the Department's personnel be required; the investigating officer will seek assistance from the Virginia State Police, the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office, or any other criminal justice agency as needed.
- E. Property Safekeeping.
 

The investigating officer at the scene of a crash shall ensure that personal property belonging to a crash victim is protected from theft and is removed to a place of safekeeping if the owner is unable to care for their personal items. When an injured person is removed from a crash scene, and their vehicle must be towed, procedures in General Order 212 Abandoned Towed Vehicles, shall be followed.
- F. Crash Reconstruction Team (CRT).
 

The Leesburg Police Department's Crash Reconstruction Team shall investigate crashes involving fatalities, serious property damage, and personal injury crashes involving injuries that are deemed life threatening. The Traffic Management Unit Supervisor or designee will be consulted on all crashes involving a pedestrian or bicyclist to determine if a CRT callout is necessary. All other CRT callouts will be at the discretion of the on-scene supervisor after collaboration with the Duty Officer or Platoon Commander. The on-scene supervisor shall obtain a patient assessment from EMS personnel and make a determination for call-out, based on this and other relevant case factors.

  - 1. CRT Call-Out.
 

Members of the team shall be notified by LPD ECC utilizing the following protocol:

    - a. Residential/cell phone
    - b. Secondary telephone/Cell Numbers
    - c. Everbridge Alert

The on-scene supervisor will also make notification to the LPD on-call Duty Officer.
  - 2. During Crash Reconstruction operations, the responsibility for traffic control and detours will be the on-duty patrol team.
  - 3. CRT Responsibility
    - a. The Evidence Technician will be directed to photograph and collect evidence at the scene by the lead CRT officer. Other CRT members shall assist in the collection of evidence to include forensic mapping, scene diagram, motor vehicle assessment, and any other pertinent collections.

- b. The lead CRT officer will handle the investigative nature of the crash such as collecting witness statements, making notifications, follow-up investigation with the Hospital or the Medical Examiner's Office.
  - c. Upon completion of the crash investigation a complete and thorough investigative report will be submitted for review to the Traffic Management Unit supervisor prior to final submission.
4. CRT Members
- The Crash Reconstruction Team consists of Officers who have received advanced training and instruction in basic crash scene reconstruction.