



GENERAL ORDER

Loudoun County Sheriff's Office

Chapter: Operations	Section: 408.6	
Subject: Traffic	Topic: Severe Weather Crash Investigation	
Accreditation: OPR.07.05	Revised:	Reaffirmed:
Enacted: 07/30/2015	Last Review: 07/24/2015	Review: 07/30/2016

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this General Order is to provide guidelines for the suspension of deputy response to property damage accidents during severe weather or other emergent situations that overwhelm available personnel resources.

II. POLICY

While it is the policy of the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office to investigate all reportable motor vehicle accidents within this jurisdiction, circumstances will occasionally occur that overwhelm available personnel resources. These circumstances may include severe weather in the form of snow, sleet and/or ice, a major disaster, or other significant emergency situation. In such situations, it may not be possible to provide for a timely response to, or investigate all accidents. To ensure that a prompt response may be provided to those accidents that involve personal injury, it is, at times, necessary to modify this policy to suspend Sheriff's Office investigation of those accidents that are limited to property damage only. Virginia State Code §46.2-373 requires a written report for any accident involving injury to or death of any person, or total property damage to an apparent extent of \$1,000 or more. With this in mind, the following shall be the policy of the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office.

III. PROCEDURE

- A. When supervisory or command personnel determine that existing calls for service or environmental conditions pose an imminent threat to the ability of the Sheriff's Office to respond to urgent calls for service, or a substantial portion of pending calls for service consists of property damage accidents, the supervisor will advise communications that calls for accidents shall be prioritized.
- B. Deputies shall investigate accidents, given the following priority:
 - 1. Fatal and personal injury accidents
 - 2. Hit and run accidents
 - 3. Accidents involving county vehicles
 - 4. Other accidents as directed by a supervisor

- C. On all other accidents the deputy will provide assistance in the exchange of driver's license, registration and insurance information, and in obtaining wreckers, if needed. The deputy will obtain as much information as possible and an FR-300 will be completed for all reportable accidents.
- D. The decision to prioritize accidents may be implemented by any of the below listed personnel, however request for implementation shall be made through the chain of command and in the following order:
1. Field Operations Division Commander
 2. Bureau Commander
 3. Sheriff
- E. Emergency Communications Center Responsibilities
1. All reports of accidents will be screened by dispatch personnel receiving such report to determine if the accident is reportable. If the accident is reportable, a deputy will be dispatched, per sub-sections C and D, listed above.
 2. If the accident is non-reportable, the caller will be advised to exchange all relevant information and to contact his/her insurance company.
 3. If the caller demands to see a deputy, or information provided by the caller indicates that the assistance of a deputy will be needed to clear the vehicles from the roadway, then a deputy will be dispatched.
 4. If conditions are such that a deputy would not be able to respond to a reportable property damage accident, the caller should be advised to make note of all pertinent information and that a deputy will contact them at a later time/day. An incident number will be generated and given to the deputy who will investigate the accident, so that the correct reporting information may be added to the FR-300.
- F. Crash Investigations; Suspensions thereof
1. The highest ranking on-duty supervisor for each service area, or his/her designee, has the authority to suspend the investigations of minor property damage crashes when a primary contributing factor in the crash is the winter weather or other significant weather event and the volume of crashes and other

calls-for-service strains agency's resources in that particular service area. For the purpose of this General Order, a minor property damage crash is any crash in which there are no personal injuries and all involved vehicles are able to be driven from the scene.

2. Any supervisor invoking this procedure shall notify the Emergency Communications Center and request that a notification be broadcast via radio and MDC to all units in the affected service area(s). Emergency Communications Center personnel shall use the following language: "All units in service area(s) (Insert sector number[s]) are advised that, per unit (patrol supervisor radio designator), the investigation of property damage accidents shall be suspended until further notice."
3. The investigations of motor vehicle crashes involving personal injury, hit and run and driving under the influence shall not be suspended.
4. When calls for service have reached a level where resources are no longer compromised or significantly strained, the highest ranking on-duty supervisor, or his/her designee, for the affected service area shall notify the Emergency Communications Center that the investigation of property damage crashes has resumed. Emergency Communications Center personnel shall broadcast a notification to all units within the affected service area(s) using the following radio language: "All units in service area(s) (Insert service area[s]) are advised that the investigation of property damage accidents has resumed, per unit (patrol supervisor radio designator)."
5. When a citizen who is directly involved in a crash that may be suspended under this General Order, requests or demands that a crash be investigated, the responding deputy shall investigate and complete and submit all required documentation.