

PROCEDURE MANUAL

06-03



MICHIGAN STATE POLICE

Traffic Crash Investigations

Purpose: This manual establishes department procedures for investigating and reporting motor vehicle traffic crashes.

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Definitions:

None

Section 1: Motor Vehicle Traffic Crashes

1.1 Motor Vehicle Crashes

- a. The driver of a motor vehicle involved in a crash that injures or kills any person, or that damages property to an apparent extent totaling \$1,000.00 or more, shall immediately report that crash at the nearest or most convenient police station, or to the nearest or most convenient police officer ([MCL 257.622](#)).
- b. The driver of a motor vehicle involved in a crash resulting only in damage to fixtures legally upon or adjacent to a highway, shall take reasonable steps to locate and notify the owner or person in charge of the property damaged in the crash. They shall provide their name, address, registration number of the vehicle involved in the crash, and shall upon request exhibit their operator's or chauffeur's license. If the owner cannot be found, the driver shall forthwith report the crash to the nearest or most convenient police officer (paraphrased from [MCL 257.621](#)).
- c. Reporting and Recording Motor Vehicle Crashes Occurring on a Public Highway.
 - i. Traffic crashes occurring on a public highway are normally assigned a 9300-1 file class. Exceptions to this rule are listed in Section d. below.
 - ii. Enforcement members, acting within the scope of their lawful authority, shall accept reports of all motor vehicle crashes made to them by any person, which occur on a public roadway. In each case, they shall prepare as completely as possible and submit to the Criminal Justice Information Center (CJIC), in the manner prescribed by this section, copies of the crash report, and other reports if required.
 - c. Enforcement members, acting within the scope of their lawful authority, shall take such reports regardless of the seriousness of the crash. For further information regarding required crash reporting see [MCL 257.620](#), [MCL 257.621](#), [MCL 257.622](#), [MCL 324.81143](#), and [MCL 324.82132](#).

- iv. An on-scene investigation shall normally be made of every motor vehicle crash reported.
 - v. Enforcement members shall be guided by commonly accepted investigation procedures while conducting a crash investigation. These procedures may include instruction received during recruit school and through subsequent refreshers and advanced training. The [“ANSI D16.1-2017 Manual on Classification of Motor Vehicle Traffic Crashes,”](#) published by the Association of Transportation Safety Information Professionals, shall be used as a guide when defining and classifying motor vehicle crashes.
- d. Reporting and Recording Non-Traffic Motor Vehicle Crashes
- i. Non-traffic crashes are those not occurring on a public roadway and are assigned a 9300-2 file class.
 - ii. A non-traffic crash shall be investigated and reported when it involved a death or personal injury, property damage to an apparent extent totaling \$1,000.00 or more, a hit-and-run, a department or privately-owned vehicle being used for department business, or a snowmobile or off-road vehicle (ORV) with estimated property damage of \$100.00 or more. Worksite commanders may develop work unit policies, based on workload or other requirements, for reporting non-traffic crashes that do not meet the above criteria.
 - iii. A report of a non-traffic crash shall be accepted and recorded upon the request of a driver of a vehicle which has struck an unattended vehicle, if the driver or owner cannot be located for notification, according to [MCL 257.620](#).
- e. Reporting and recording a criminal violation related to a traffic or non-traffic crash shall be completed using one of the following four procedures.
- i. Where a violation (i.e., Operating While Intoxicated [OWI], Operating Under the Influence of Drugs [OUID], Operating While Visibly Impaired [OWVI], Operating with the Presence of Drugs [OWPD]) contributes to the crash, a crash report shall be completed and assigned the appropriate file class in accordance with the hierarchy rule for file class designation.
 - ii. Any incident and/or violation that occurs but does not contribute to the crash shall be recorded using a separate incident report in addition to the crash report. The report shall be assigned a separate incident number with the appropriate file class designation. When the crash involves a hit and run, upon either public or private property, a crash report shall be completed and assigned the appropriate file class in accordance with the hierarchy rule for the file class designation.
 - iii. If a crash results in a manslaughter or negligent homicide violation, an additional incident report with the same incident number as the UD-010 crash report shall be submitted. This additional incident shall use the 0-900 file class with a sequential file class of 9300-1 to include the UD-010 crash report.
- f. A crash report is required under the following statutes: [MCL 257.622](#), [MCL 257.620](#), and [MCL 257.621](#).

- g. Completion of a crash report is not required for non-traffic motor vehicle crashes except as outlined in this section.
- h. Non-traffic motor vehicle crashes involving a department vehicle, or a privately owned vehicle being used for department business, shall be reported according to Official Order 10-01 – Use of Department Vehicles.
- i. Number of Copies and Distribution
 - i. The crash report shall be completed and distributed in the following manner:
 - 1. The original copy shall be sent to the CJIC Traffic Crash Reporting Unit (TCRU) using eCrash.
 - 2. If the enforcement member believes that road maintenance or engineering is a factor in the crash, that information shall be included in the “Remarks” section of the crash report and a copy may be forwarded to the local road commission or local office of the Michigan Department of Transportation.
 - a) One additional copy of the crash report, including supplementary reports, shall be forwarded to the district commander where the crash occurred. The district commander or their designee shall review the report, contact the affected highway office, and follow up on any road maintenance or engineering changes deemed necessary.
 - 3. When a crash results in damage to a traffic control device, sign, or signal, the agency responsible for its repair shall be notified immediately. Enforcement members shall fill out the appropriate section of the crash report, noting the agency and person contacted.
- j. Reports Required When Limited Information is Available
 - i. A crash report shall be submitted on the date of the original investigation when practical and forwarded for distribution in the prescribed manner.
 - 1. If not all the information is available for immediate completion of the crash report, submission of the report may be delayed up to two weeks if needed, to gather additional information.
 - 2. Fatal traffic crash reports shall be submitted via LEIN immediately followed by the crash report within ten days. Additional information may be submitted as outlined below.
 - ii. When the information (other than a closing) is not available for completion of the crash report within the time constraints mentioned above, the initial information shall be submitted and then followed by a revision through eCrash when all the necessary information is available.
 - iii. When delayed information is received indicating a death due to injuries received in a crash, such information shall be forwarded to the Operations Section via LEIN and a revision of the crash report through eCrash.

- iv. Investigations of unfounded reports of motor vehicle crashes shall be reported using an appropriate incident reporting method.
- k. Reporting Traffic Investigation Assistance
 - i. When directing traffic is the only assistance rendered at the scene of a crash, the incident report shall have a 9300-6 file class and shall be submitted using an appropriate incident reporting method.
 - ii. When an enforcement member assists another post in the investigation of a motor vehicle crash, an incident report shall be completed with an original incident number and appropriate file class. The report shall refer to the originating post's incident number and nature of the incident as both a prominent heading and entry in the body of the incident report.
 - iii. When an enforcement member assists another police agency in the investigation of a motor vehicle crash and the crash report is submitted by that agency, the enforcement member shall report the type of assistance rendered on an incident report bearing the appropriate file class. The report shall contain the following information:
 - 1. County and city, village, or township where the crash occurred.
 - 2. Name of roadway upon which the crash occurred in relation to the name of the nearest intersecting roadway or identifiable point given on a standard state, county, or city map. Private property crashes should include the address of such property.
 - 3. Names of drivers involved in the crash.
 - 4. Registration plate and vehicle identification numbers of vehicles involved.
 - 5. Names of persons killed in the crash.
 - 6. Nature of assistance or investigation provided.

1.2 Completion Instructions

- a. Every reasonable effort shall be made to obtain factual information on all items required on the crash report. However, enforcement members shall use their best judgment and record their considered opinions on driver, bicyclist, pedestrian, and engineer/train condition, which shall indicate alcohol and/or drug consumption, hazardous actions, and how the crash happened. These opinions shall be based on their investigation of the crash, as well as their knowledge gained from past experience. This shall be done even though it may not be possible to substantiate all recorded information or obtain sufficient evidence to initiate prosecution.
- b. Members shall adhere to Procedure Manual 06-07 - UD-10 Traffic Crash Report Instruction Manual when completing the crash report.

1.3 Photographs in Motor Vehicle Crash Investigation

- a. Photographs shall be taken at the scene of a motor vehicle crash when necessary to record factual information, reconstruct the crash, and record evidence to support any violation of the law that may have contributed to the cause of the crash. Indicate whether photographs were taken in the "Photos" field near the right top corner.

- b. Photographs shall be taken for the following types of vehicle crashes:
 - i. Fatal or serious injury crashes
 - ii. Serious and complicated crashes
 - iii. Crashes involving buses or vehicles containing large groups of people.
 - iv. Crashes involving department vehicles and privately-owned vehicles being used for department business, except for minor property damage crashes.
- c. Photographs Taken by Non-Department Members
 - i. If it is necessary to have pictures taken by a non-department member, the person must understand that the pictures are for department purposes and that the person may be subpoenaed into court with the pictures. Copies of such pictures shall be obtained for department files. Requests of this nature shall only be made when absolutely necessary.
- d. Release of Photographs
 - i. Members shall only release photographs consistent with the provisions listed in Procedure Manual 17-01 – Department Photography and Official Order 14-02 – Freedom of Information Act.

1.4 Daily Reports of Fatal Traffic Crashes and Deaths

- a. Prompt, accurate, and complete reporting to the Operations Section of fatal traffic crashes and traffic deaths is necessary to compile records of current traffic fatality trends and to make reliable comparisons with previous experience for both evaluation and awareness purposes.
- b. Agencies Reporting
 - i. Post commanders, through normal contact with reporting agencies in their respective areas, shall urge prompt and complete reporting of fatal crashes and deaths to either the local post or directly to the Operations Section.
- c. Information to be reported to the Operations Section and Respective District Headquarters.
 - i. Fatal crashes investigated by the department, as well as information received from local agencies for relay, shall be reported immediately to the respective district headquarters and to the Operations Section via LEIN. The information shall be forwarded to the Operations Section on the Fatal Traffic Crash Report that can be accessed in LEIN.
 - ii. In the event a person subsequently dies of injuries received within 30 days of the traffic crash, that information shall be submitted to the Operations Section via LEIN.

1.5 Release of Traffic Crash Reports and Other Information

- a. Release of Traffic Crash Reports
 - i. Persons wishing to obtain a copy of a specific electronic crash report shall be instructed to access the [Traffic Crash Purchasing System \(TCPS\) website](#) via the link on the department's Internet home page. They shall also be advised that there is a \$15.00 fee for this service.

- ii. If an individual is unable to access the TCPS website, worksites shall charge a \$15.00 fee for a copy of the crash report. Members shall ensure the release of the crash report complies with [MCL 257.503](#).
 - 1. An Official State Police Receipt, ADM-027, shall be completed for the \$15.00 fee and processed in accordance with local post policy and Official Order 19-25 – Cash Receipt Records and Bond Disposition.
- b. Release of Additional Information Regarding Traffic Crashes and Investigations
 - i. For direction on providing information on traffic crash incidents and investigations to the public or media, refer to Official Order 14-10 – News Media General Policy.
 - ii. Requests for documents other than traffic crash reports shall be addressed consistent with written directives covering the Freedom of Information Act.
- c. Inquires Concerning Traffic Crashes When Only Limited Information is Supplied.
 - i. When information supplied by an inquirer is so meager or inaccurate that it is impossible to identify the incident by the worksite or via the TCPS website, the inquirer shall be advised to contact the CJIC TCRU. The CJIC TCRU keeps traffic crash reports on file for a period of ten years plus the current year and may search the TCRS database.
- d. Inquires Concerning Traffic Crashes Investigated by Other Departments
 - i. Persons inquiring about crashes investigated by other departments shall be informed that the crash was not investigated by the Michigan State Police and shall be referred to the investigating department or the TCRU. (Link to website: www.michigan.gov/crash).

1.6 Enforcement Action

- a. Enforcement members who, as a result of their investigation, have reasonable cause to believe that a driver has committed an offense shall take appropriate enforcement action. Appropriate enforcement action may include a traffic citation, a verbal warning, or an arrest. For further information see [MCL 257.728](#), [MCL 257.742](#).

Review Responsibility: Field Services Bureau, State Services Bureau, and Office of the Director

Accreditation Standards: CALEA 61.1.5, 61.2.1, 61.2.2