

MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT

GENERAL ORDER

Subject: Traffic Crash Investigation	General Order: 705
Effective Date: August 27, 2004 Revision Date: January 16, 2024	Distribution: All Sworn Personnel

I. PURPOSE

This directive establishes procedures for the investigation of motor vehicle crashes.

II. POLICY

The Meridian Township Police Department will investigate motor vehicle crashes and report data in compliance with statutory requirements. Traffic crash statistics will be tabulated and analyzed for the purpose of identifying the causes and locations of traffic crashes within the Township in order to direct appropriate enforcement to reduce the impact and frequency of traffic crashes.

III. PROCEDURES

A. Officers shall respond to the scene of all reported traffic crashes which occur on the public right of way within the Township except for those being reported after the fact, or as described below.

Revised

1. The on-duty patrol supervisor may direct the dispatcher to order drivers involved in minor property damage crashes into the police department, within 48 hours, for the report, when:
 - staffing limitations combined with the number or priority calls for service so necessitate,
 - road and weather conditions contribute to an unusually high number of crashes,
 - other circumstances exist as determined by the Chief of Police or Uniform Division Commander.

Revised

2. All crashes investigated by officers that require a report shall be documented on the State of Michigan Traffic Crash Report (UD-10E) form. The form must be fully completed in compliance with published instructions.
 - a. If other property or buildings are damaged, the owner's name, address, etc., must be included in the designated location on the form. *If the officer is unable to personally contact/inform the property owner, prior to leaving the scene, then a letter must be mailed to the property owner within 24 hours; and a copy of the letter attached to the crash report.*

- B. Traffic crashes that require an officer response and a complete investigation include those involving:
1. Death or injury
 2. Property damage of \$1000 or greater on the public right-of-way, or damage to vehicles to the extent towing is required.
 3. Hit and run on the public roadway
 4. Driver impairment due to alcohol or drugs
 5. Hazardous materials
 6. School buses
 7. Vehicles owned or operated by the Township (for police employees, see III.P.)
 8. Hit and run on private property when a witness and suspect identifying information exist.
 9. Officers shall also respond to all traffic crashes, which involve a report of:
 - a. major traffic congestion, or
 - b. a confrontation or disturbance amongst the persons involved.
- C. The severity and circumstances surrounding a crash will determine the extent of an officer's investigation. Crashes resulting in death, or serious personal injury that may result in death, require a comprehensive investigation, which should include,
1. Measurements (may include laser mapping of the scene)
 2. Photographs
 3. Collection of pertinent physical evidence
 4. Inspection of all vehicles involved for defects, and
 5. Assistance from technical experts where appropriate.
 - a. When investigating a crash as described in this section, all the involved vehicles should be impounded, with a HOLD placed

against their release, until a determination regarding the completion of a technical inspection is made.

6. Written supplemental reports from each officer involved in the investigation.

Revised D. Certain circumstances may arise when an officer will not be required to document the crash on a UD-10E form. In order for this to occur all of the following conditions must exist:

1. All principals/and or operators (all must be responsible adults) must request that no investigation occur, and
2. No injuries were sustained by an occupant or pedestrian, and
3. Property damage is under \$1000 as required by statute, and
4. Operator, vehicle and insurance documents, for all parties, are in proper order, and
5. There are no extenuating circumstances which would dictate that a formal crash report be taken, to include:
 - a. no serious offense having been committed
 - b. no township owned or operated vehicles involved
 - c. no school bus involved
 - d. no hazardous materials involved
 - e. none of the vehicles require towing as a result of the crash.

Revised E. In those cases where a UD-10E form is not required to be completed, the officer shall record the full name, D.O.B. and Operator's License Code of all drivers on the officer's Daily Activity Report and in CAD, along with the registration plate number of each vehicle involved.

1. The officer should also facilitate the exchange of information between the parties involved and may provide them with a copy of the Accident Information Pamphlet.

F. Motor Vehicle Crashes Reported After the Fact

1. Motor vehicle crashes, which occurred on the public roadway or involve injury to a person(s) and are reported after the fact will be documented using the state Traffic Crash Report Form (UD-10E).
 - a. In such cases enforcement action will only be taken after an appropriate investigation, which includes an examination of the crash scene by the investigating officer.
2. Motor vehicle crashes, which did not occur on the public roadway, did not involve personal injury and are reported at the police department may be recorded on a Private Property Crash report form.

G. On Scene Responsibilities

1. Upon arriving at the scene, the officer will:
 - a. Park the patrol vehicle in a manner that helps to protect the scene and persons present
 - b. Check for fire hazards
 - c. Check for hazardous materials
 - d. Check for injuries and assist the injured as appropriate
 - e. Notify dispatch of any unusual situations so that the appropriate assisting agencies may be notified (ambulance, wrecker, etc.)
 - f. Request assistance for traffic control as necessary
 - g. When injuries are serious or potentially life threatening, notify a supervisor immediately
 - h. Move the involved vehicles out of the traveled portion of the roadway as soon as practical depending upon the seriousness of injuries and condition of the vehicles involved
2. Securing the scene
 - a. Officer(s) will secure the scene by establishing a safe traffic pattern around the scene by parking their patrol vehicle in such a manner as to protect the scene, protect the injured, preserve evidence, and protect the public from further harm.

- Revised
- b. Traffic direction around the scene should be established using overhead emergency lights, hand traffic direction, traffic cones and/or flares patterns.
 - c. Flares are useful to warn motorists or direct the flow of traffic on a temporary basis. However, flares shall not be used when spilled fuels, hazardous materials, etc. are present.
 - d. Traffic cones are also useful when diverting traffic from one lane to another lane, or when moving traffic around the scene for a period of time.
 - e. Barricades are appropriate when an entire roadway or intersection must be closed for an extended period. Barricades are available from the Ingham County Road Commission on a 24-hour basis.
3. If hazardous materials are present officers must isolate the area while remaining up wind at a safe distance from the scene. Officers should attempt to identify the vehicle placards and notify incoming fire personnel. Only properly trained and equipped personnel should enter areas where hazardous materials are present.
- a. A supervisor must also be notified immediately of all crashes involving a hazardous materials incident.
 - b. Officers should take similar precautions when utilities have been damaged and potentially high voltage wires are exposed to the public.
4. Once the crash scene has been stabilized the officer's responsibilities include:
- a. Preserving short-lived evidence
 - b. Locating and interviewing witnesses
 - c. Recording crash report information
 - d. Notifying the proper authorities of damaged utilities or traffic control devices/signs.

Revised H. Investigative Responsibility

- 1. The officer assigned to the call by dispatch will be responsible for the investigation, unless otherwise directed by a supervisor.

2. Depending upon the nature and seriousness of the crash, the supervisor may request an Accident Investigation Specialist to conduct the investigation. In such cases the first responding officer should continue to assist the specialist with completion of the report, interviewing witnesses, etc. Criteria for requesting the assistance of an Accident Investigation Specialist are:
 - any fatal or potentially fatal crash
 - any personal injury crash where the future condition of the injured person(s) cannot be reasonably forecasted
 - any property damage crash resulting in extreme damages or resulting from exceptional occurrences (with approval of a supervisor)
 - any other crash involving exceptional circumstances, or deemed by the supervisor to require the expertise of an Accident Investigation Specialist.
3. To request the assistance of an Accident Investigation Specialist, the supervisor should make contact with the Accident Team Sergeant to review the request. In consultation with the Patrol Supervisor, the Accident Team Sergeant will decide if an Accident Investigation Specialist will be called out to assist with the investigation. The on-duty patrol supervisor will direct that the necessary personnel are contacted. If the Accident Investigation Team Supervisor cannot be contacted, the on-duty patrol supervisor should contact the Patrol Lieutenant or on-call commander. When an Accident Investigation Specialist is not on-duty, the supervisor will direct the dispatcher to contact an off-duty team member(s) for response to the scene.
4. In the event that an Accident Investigation Specialist is not available or able to respond, the supervisor may request the assistance of a trained specialist from a neighboring police agency.
5. All drivers will be given an Accident Information Pamphlet with the incident complaint number and other pertinent information completed on the form.

I. On Scene Information Collection

1. A successful crash investigation requires a thorough investigation of all the facts and circumstances so that the investigating officer can accurately describe or reconstruct the crash and circumstances of the crash for prosecution of traffic law violations. Information about a crash may be obtained from a variety of sources to include:
 - a. Interviews with principals and witnesses

- b. Examining and recording physical damage to vehicles and the roadway
- c. The taking and recording of measurements (including laser mapping)
- d. Taking photographs of vehicles or conditions at the scene
- e. Collecting and preserving evidence

J. Procedures for Investigating Fatal Traffic Crashes

A comprehensive investigation is required for all traffic crashes involving a fatality or suspected fatality. These cases will be investigated and reported, at a minimum, in conformity with this procedure. Information required for the completion of a successful investigation and court proceedings is provided through checklists in Appendices "A", "B", and "C" of this procedure. The investigating officer should strive to document all the listed information unless it specifically does not apply to the individual case. Any additional information pertinent to the case should also be thoroughly documented.

- 1. The written report should be finalized in a topical format that resembles the order supplied in Appendices "A" and "B".
- 2. *The initial report consisting of the UD-10 form and News Release information, at minimum, should be completed and turned into the shift supervisor by the conclusion of the officer's work shift.*
- 3. The assigned Accident Investigation Specialist will be responsible for the follow-up of technical aspects of the investigation to include presenting the case to the Ingham County Prosecutor's Office for review and disposition. The original responding/reporting officer should continue to assist the specialist as required with obtaining written statements from the witnesses and principals in the crash.

Note: If a specialist has not been assigned to the investigation, the reporting officer will be responsible for completing the investigation at which time it will be assigned to a specialist for review and presentation to the prosecutor.

- 4. All fatal traffic crashes investigated by the Meridian Township Police shall be presented to the Ingham County Prosecutor's Office for a factual review and authorization of appropriate charges, if any. A written closure letter will be requested for all cases not formally charged.

Revised 5. Oversight: The Uniform Division Commander is responsible for oversight and case monitoring of fatal or potentially fatal traffic crash investigations to ensure proper and timely completion of investigation and prosecutorial review.

Revised K. Follow-Up Activities

1. In some instances follow-up accident investigation activities may be necessary. This will be determined by the investigating officer and supervisor on a case-by-case basis. The follow-up investigation may include:
 - a. Collection of off-scene data/information
 - b. Draft and execution of search warrants
 - c. Additional witness interviews or formal witness statements
 - d. Technical crash reconstruction (by a specialist)
 - e. Vehicle mechanical safety inspections
 - f. Additional photographic or aerial photographic recording of the scene
 - g. Creation of detailed drawings of the scene
2. Technical or Expert Assistance – During the investigation of some traffic crashes the use of experts may be required to properly evaluate the circumstances or prepare the case for court proceedings. This assistance may include:
 - a. Physicians
 - b. MSP Motor Carrier Officers for certain commercial vehicle crashes
 - c. Mechanics
 - d. Surveyors
 - e. Accident re-constructionist

Note: Contracting or arranging for outside assistance requires the prior approval of the Chief of Police or his designee.

Revised L. Traffic Crash Investigation Equipment

1. Each supervisory patrol vehicle will be equipped with basic traffic crash investigation equipment and investigative checklists.
2. Specialized equipment; such as skid calculators, laser mapping devices, etc., will be maintained by the Accident Investigation Team.

M. Enforcement Action

Enforcement of traffic crash violations, except for OWI and OWPD will be taken in accord with the guidelines established by General Order 701 - Traffic Enforcement.

1. Crashes involving OWI or OWPD violations or suspected violations will be handled in accord with General Order 704 - Driving Impaired.

N. Private Property Motor Vehicle Crashes

Private Property Motor Vehicle crashes that do not involve injury and do not meet the criteria established in section III, B shall be investigated pursuant to General Order 708.

O. Safeguarding of Property Belonging to Crash Victims

The investigating officer is responsible for reasonably ensuring that valuables belonging to victims who cannot attend to their property are protected from theft or tampering. If the vehicle is towed because the occupant was unable to attend to their property, an inventory of the vehicle shall be conducted and valuables held for safekeeping pursuant to General Order 706 Impound and Inventory of Motor vehicles.

P. Crashes Involving Meridian Police Vehicles

If the accident involves a Meridian police vehicle (marked or unmarked), the following will occur:

1. The involved employee will provide aid, as needed, to anyone injured in the crash and ensure the scene is safe.
2. Dispatch will be advised of the crash and a supervisor will be sent to the scene.
3. Depending on the severity of the crash, the supervisor will request that another agency respond to investigate the crash.

4. The investigating agency will be in charge of the crash scene and the supervisor will ensure that they receive whatever assistance they need to complete their investigation.
5. Crashes that result in minor damage and no injuries or crashes in which no fault can be assigned may be investigated by the on-duty supervisor. Examples include car deer accidents, collisions with fixed objects on private property, etc. The on-duty sergeant should be cautious and thorough when investigating these types of crashes and shall request an outside agency to investigate if they feel it is necessary. All crashes falling outside of these parameters shall require the supervisor to request an outside agency to investigate.
6. Any crashes occurring outside of the Meridian Township Police Department's jurisdiction shall be investigated by the agency with geographical jurisdiction.

Q. Administrative Investigation and Report

After the on-scene investigation is complete, the supervisor will conduct an administrative investigation into the crash and submit a report to the Uniform Division Commander.

1. The Administrative Investigation will include a review of:
 - a. The UD-10E report
 - b. Available video evidence (BWC, in-car video, etc.)
 - c. Radio traffic and dispatch logs
 - d. Witness statements (civilian and officer) and
 - e. Any other evidence deemed pertinent.
2. The Investigation Report will be documented in Guardian Tracking and will include the following:
 - a. A copy of the UD-10E
 - b. A summary of the investigative findings
 - c. A recommendation on what could have been done to prevent the crash.

- d. A recommendation of what should be done to prevent future crashes.

Revised R. Administrative Review

1. The administrative investigation and review process looks to prevent future crashes by agency personnel in order to minimize and mitigate future risk. The Uniform Division Commander (UDC) is responsible for the administrative investigation and review and should avoid excusing and rationalizing poor vehicle operation.
2. After a review of the Investigative Report and any evidence, the UDC will make recommendations to the Chief of Police on whether any of the following are necessary:
 - a. Changes to policy
 - b. Changes or additions to training
 - c. Equipment should be changed, altered, or procured, and
 - d. Discipline is indicated.
3. The Chief of Police will review the findings and take whatever action he/she deems appropriate. The appropriate Division Commander will be responsible to implement the Chief's findings.
4. The Uniform Division Commander shall complete an annual written review of all employee collisions.

IV. CANCELLATIONS

None

Authorized by:



Rick Grillo, Chief of Police

Index as:

Accident Investigation
Fatal Traffic Crashes

Motor Vehicle Crashes
Traffic Crash Investigations
Standard 2.1.4

Application: This directive constitutes department policy, and is not intended to enlarge the employer's or employee's civil or criminal liability in any way. It shall not be construed as the creation of a higher legal standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense with respect to third party claims insofar as the employer's or employee's legal duty as imposed by law.

Appendix A
Report # _____
Traffic Crash Investigation Checklist

AT SCENE:

☐ **Date/Time of crash _____ Complaint # _____**

☐ **Location of crash: - Detailed description:**

☐ **Roadway description (# of lanes, surface, access, etc.): _____**

☐ **Traffic control devices: _____ Posted Speed _____**

☐ **Other signs or roadway markings:**

☐ **Roadway conditions (snow covered, dry wet, ice, etc.): _____**

☐ **Weather conditions at the time of the accident (temp., sky conditions, elements) – obtain**

from National Weather Service:

☐ **Lighting conditions (dawn, dusk, lights from buildings or street lights): _____**

[] Vision obstructions (inside and outside vehicle):

[] List of all emergency personnel present

[] Witnesses (name, telephones, address, business address, age)

[] Interviews: initial verbal statements from all witnesses and principals

[] Interviews: written statements from all witnesses and principals

[] Medical Examiner: _____

Arrival time: _____

[] Body removal to/by:

[] Vehicle information (Complete a: "Vehicle Damage Record" for each vehicle)

[] Vehicle insurance form (for each vehicle)

[] Vehicle dispositions – at scene – impound, inventory and place hold on all vehicles

[] Process Scene (may be assisted by Evidence Technician & Accident Specialist for

measurements, photos, field sketch of scene, skid tests, etc.)

[] Alcohol involvement: follow Department Directive for Driving Impaired (F – 704)

[] Confirm identity of deceased and family notification after supervisory consultation(include date and time of notification)

[] News release information provided to supervisor

Appendix B

Report # _____

Traffic Crash Investigation Checklist**EMERGENCY PERSONNEL ROSTER**

Police – Meridian Township (name/ID#) **Police – other agencies**
(name/ID#/agency)

- | | |
|----|----|
| 1. | 1. |
| 2. | 2. |
| 3. | 3. |
| 4. | 4. |
| 5. | 5. |
| 6. | 6. |
| 7. | 7. |
| 8. | 8. |

EMS/Fire/Rescue – Meridian Township **EMS/Fire – other agency**
(name/agency)

- | | |
|----|----|
| 1. | 1. |
| 2. | 2. |
| 3. | 3. |
| 4. | 4. |
| 5. | 5. |
| 6. | 6. |

(Note which personnel are operating the ambulance)

Wrecker – company name: _____

Personnel:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Appendix C**Fatal Traffic Crash Investigations Checklist****POST SCENE:****INVESTIGATING****OFFICER**

COMPLAINT #:

☐ **UD-10**☐ **LEIN notification message to State, reporting traffic fatality within 24 hours (attach****copy to report)**☐ **SOS information:**☐ **Driving status of all drivers with full driving record attached**☐ **Registration and VIN information for all vehicles attached**☐ **Medical Reports: obtain copies of all reports**☐ **Medical Examiner – follow up**

- **Autopsy results**

- **Copy of Medical Examiner's report**

☐ **Death Certificate copy (from Ingham County Clerk)**☐ **Vehicle dispositions – post-investigation**☐ **Sign release form (as soon as reasonable)**☐ **Notify owners promptly**☐ **Prosecutor's review:****Date:**

By:

Outcome:

☐ **Final drawing of scene requested/completed (as required);****This form completed by:**

Date:
