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ORDER

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Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System (SWITRS)  
SWITRS (Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System)  
Traffic Collision Investigation and Reporting  
Traffic Collision Scene Management  
Vehicle Collision Investigation and Reporting

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**TRAFFIC COLLISION SCENE MANAGEMENT,  
INVESTIGATION AND REPORTING**

The purpose of this order is to adopt the Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System (SWITRS) and to implement the California Automated Reporting System (CARS). The order also establishes guidelines for managing traffic collision scenes and to set forth policy and procedures for the investigation and reporting of traffic collisions occurring within the City of Oakland.

**I. POLICY FOR SCENE MANAGEMENT OF TRAFFIC COLLISIONS**

The following actions shall be taken as applicable:

- A. The priority of the first officer upon arrival at the scene of a traffic collision is to provide care for the injured and/or tend to the dead and to protect and preserve the scene, thus preventing further injury. The officer may accomplish this by the following actions:
  - 1. The responding officer shall:
    - a. Administer first aid, as necessary, to any injured party.
    - b. Request the response of the Fire Department and emergency medical personnel if not previously done by the Communications Division.
    - c. Request additional personnel to the scene, if needed, to assist in towing or traffic control.
  - 2. The on-scene supervisor or fatal traffic collision investigator shall ensure that the coroner is notified when the collision involves a fatality.

- B. Determine whether fire hazards and/or hazardous materials are involved and take the appropriate action in accordance with the provisions of Departmental General Order K-1, HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES.
- C. Establish traffic control measures at the location of a collision to protect individuals from further injury and contamination of the scene. The perimeter can be accomplished by any or all of the following methods:
  - 1. Positioning of patrol vehicles) with emergency lights activated to block oncoming traffic from entering the scene.
  - 2. Setting up flare patterns to alert oncoming motorists of the hazard and to direct the traffic away from the scene.
  - 3. Assigning personnel to divert traffic away from or around the scene.
  - 4. Using any other traffic control devices (i.e., cones, yellow crime scene tape, barriers) available at the scene.
- D. Maintain control of involved/uninvolved parties at the scene of a collision to:
  - 1. Ensure the safety of all persons.
  - 2. Protect evidence and personal property that may be at the scene.
  - 3. Keep uninvolved persons out of the scene and prevent them from interfering with fire department or medical personnel who are treating the injured parties.
- E. Identify, separate, and interview witnesses.
- F. Remove involved vehicles.
  - 1. The first officer at the scene of a traffic collision shall determine if the collision involves injury.
    - a. If it is a non-injury collision and the involved vehicles are drivable, the officer shall mark the position of the vehicles. The officer shall then have the vehicles moved out of the traffic lanes to allow normal flow of traffic as soon as practical.

- b. Vehicles involved in an injury collision, a collision resulting in injuries likely to cause death or a fatal collision should not be removed from the scene or point of rest. A supervisor or Fatal Traffic Accident Investigator may authorize that the vehicles be marked and removed from the scene if it is necessary to provide medical care to any of the involved parties or to protect the public from additional vehicle hazards and/or hazardous materials exposure.
- 2. Vehicle removal from the scene can be accomplished in several ways:
  - a. The vehicle(s) can be driven away from the scene.
  - b. The vehicle(s) may be towed at the request of the owner (O.R. Tow) or at the request of the officer (OPD Tow).
- G. Hit and Run Collisions

When an officer arrives on the scene and determines the collision is a hit and run collision, the officer should obtain, if possible, a description of both the suspect vehicle and the suspect driver. The officer shall broadcast the information as soon as possible.

H. Hazards or Debris in the Roadway

If a hazard or debris is in the roadway after a collision, the officer shall have the roadway cleaned by either having the responding tow truck driver sweep up the debris or by requesting the appropriate agency to respond and remove the hazard.

## II. COLLISION INVESTIGATION AND REPORTING POLICY

The Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System (SWITRS) produces eight computer-generated reports each quarter reflecting tabulations and categorizations of traffic collision activity within the respective jurisdictions. These reports allow the city to identify high collision frequency locations, high collision causing violations, type of collisions, types and ages of parties involved, and other information to assist in the analysis of traffic collisions.

Personnel shall complete and submit a Collision Report (CHP 555) in accordance with the provisions of the associated Report Writing Manual Insert P-2, VEHICLE COLLISION REPORT – SWITRS/CARS.

A. Investigated Collisions

1. Collisions which occur on public or private property shall be investigated whenever one or more of the following factors are involved:
  - a. Hit and run, if any of the following circumstances are involved:
    - 1) Investigative leads sufficient to identify the offender.
    - 2) Major property damage.
  - b. Any City of Oakland or Oakland Housing Authority (OHA) vehicle.
  - c. A driver is suspected of being under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs.
  - d. Death.
  - e. Any visible injury more serious than a complaint of pain for which the person is removed from the scene by ambulance to a hospital.

**Note:** A complaint of pain is defined as a condition without obvious external symptoms and where the injured party is not transported to the hospital by ambulance.

**Example:** A broken bone may not exhibit “visible” injuries to the untrained eye; however, trained emergency medical personnel may detect or recognize external symptoms of the injury. The nature of this injury would require a collision investigation.
  - f. Any of the drivers involved is cited or arrested for a traffic offense arising from the collision.
  - g. Injuries or complaints of pain shall be documented by completing an Injured Witness-Passenger Form (CHP 555, page 3).

2. An investigated collision shall require:
  - a. Taking formal statements from persons involved (i.e., drivers, passengers, pedestrians, etc.) and from witnesses in cases involving:
    - 1) Fatal collisions or collisions which result in injuries likely to cause death.
    - 2) City of Oakland vehicles and OHA.
    - 3) In-custody DUI, hit and run or 2800 V.C.
    - 4) In all other cases, "summary statements" may be taken and the information recorded on an Additional Information Report (536-937).
  - b. Detailing pertinent physical evidence, and arranging for photographs to be taken if they will serve a useful evidentiary purpose.
  - c. Taking measurements and preparing a detailed collision Scene Diagram (TF-382) or CHP Form 555 page 4.
  - d. Completing a Vehicle Collision Report (CHP 555, pages 1 & 2), Injured Party Report (CHP 555 page 3), if applicable, and, in the case of hit and run collisions only, a Vehicle Damage Report (TF-746).
  - e. Use of an Additional Information Report articulating information and/or observations which cannot be documented on any other form.

B. Reported Collisions

1. Collisions shall be reported under the following circumstances:
  - a. A hit and run on public and private property if all the following factors are involved:
    - 1) Minor property damage,

- 2) No death nor injuries more serious than a complaint of pain, and
    - 3) Insufficient investigative leads to identify the offender.
  - b. A collision on public or private property which involves City property other than vehicles.
  - c. A collision involving a visible injury or complaint of pain where the person does not seek immediate medical attention.
  - d. An injury or complaint of pain shall be documented by completing an Injured Witness-Passenger Form (CHP 555, page 3).
2. A reported collision shall require the completion of a Vehicle Collision Report (CHP 555, pages 1 & 2) unless all principals involved in the collision decline to make a report (Part II, B, 2, b, 2, of this order).
- a. The reporting officer shall inform all parties involved that:
    - 1) A report is not required by law.
    - 2) No follow-up investigation will be conducted .
    - 3) Drivers involved should exchange names and other pertinent information and report the collision to their respective insurance companies.
    - 4) Each party shall obtain, complete and submit a California Department of Motor Vehicles Form SR-1, CALIFORNIA TRAFFIC ACCIDENT REPORT within 10 days.
  - b. Assignment Reports (236-253) shall be used to report vehicle collisions when:
    - 1) The member or employee dispatched to the collision determines that all participants involved have left the scene (i.e., "GOA" - Gone on Arrival).

- 2) **All** of the principals involved in a reported collision decline to make a report. In such cases, the participants' refusal shall be recorded on the Assignment Report and they shall be asked to sign the form. If a party refuses to sign the card, the member or employee shall record the refusal on the form.

C. Unreported Collisions

No investigation or report shall be required regarding collisions on private property unless the collision involves:

1. Hit and Run
2. Driving Under the Influence of Alcohol and/or Drugs
3. City Vehicle
4. OHA Emergency Vehicle
5. Death or Injury

**III. RESPONSIBILITY FOR INVESTIGATING AND REPORTING VEHICLE COLLISIONS**

- A. Traffic Enforcement Unit (motorcycle) officers shall have the primary responsibility for investigating and reporting vehicle collisions in their Area. Patrol officers shall be assigned to investigate and report collisions when motorcycle officers are not available for timely dispatch to the scene.
  1. Any field unit may be assigned to determine whether an ambulance is needed at the scene of a collision (901B).
  2. The assignment priority in the case of a collision which meets the definition of a reported collision shall be:
    - a. Traffic Enforcement Unit
    - b. Beat officer
    - c. Supplemental unit
    - d. If no unit is available, the collision assignment shall be "stacked" pending the availability of a unit to respond.
  3. An on-view collision which meets the definition of a reported collision shall be handled by the officer on-viewing it, unless the officer is enroute to or currently on an assignment, and no other unit has been previously dispatched to the collision.

4. The assignment priority in the case of a collision which meets the definition of an investigated collision shall be:

- a. Traffic Enforcement Unit
- b. Beat officer
- c. Supplemental unit
- d. Any available uniformed member.

NOTE: The Communications Division shall notify the on-duty Traffic Enforcement Unit whenever a non-motor officer is assigned to investigate a serious collision.

5. An on-viewed collision which meets the definition of an investigated collision shall be handled as set forth in Part II, A, of this order.

- B. Any member who investigates a collision involving on-duty City of Oakland personnel shall notify the Area or Watch Commander if anyone (City personnel or private citizen(s)) is seriously injured.
- C. Whenever there is an actual or probable fatality at the scene of any collision, the Area or Watch Commander shall notify the Departmental Fatal Accident Standby Team, whose members shall respond and assume command of the investigation. On-duty team members shall be assigned prior to a call-out of off-duty personnel.
- D. The Homicide Section shall be notified or a call-out made when a Departmental vehicle is involved in a pursuit which causes or results in a collision(s) producing a fatality or injuries likely to cause death.
- E. Departmental personnel shall not investigate collisions in which they are involved or write their own statements. If available, a motorcycle officer who is not personally involved shall investigate the collision.
- F. If a citizen moves a vehicle a substantial distance from the scene of the collision before the Department is notified, the Communications Division may advise the citizen to bring the vehicle to the Traffic Investigation Unit (TIU), or to a Neighborhood Resource Center, to make a report in person as long as the following elements are not involved: injuries, death, intoxication, drugs, or City property.



**IV. VEHICLE COLLISION CITATION POLICY AND FOLLOW-UP**

- A. A Notice to Appear (836-001) shall not be issued at the scene of a collision unless:
  - 1. The issuing officer witnessed the violation, or
  - 2. The issuing officer is qualified under Vehicle Code Section 40600, and the violation has been established by a complete investigation, to include the completion of a Vehicle Collision Report, Statements (either formal or summary) and a scene diagram.
- B. TIU follow-up investigators shall seek a complaint when their subsequent inquiry regarding an investigated collision discloses that the elements of the violation which resulted in the collision can be substantiated in court.
- C. TIU personnel shall make a determination if a follow-up investigation is needed on a reported collision. A citation may be issued upon completion of a follow-up investigation, for a driver's license, or a financial responsibility violation.

By order of

Richard L. Word  
Chief of Police