


**Department of Public Safety  
Police Division  
Policies and Procedures**

<b><u>Title</u></b>  Traffic Collision Investigation and Safety	<b><u>SOP Number</u></b>  10.2.100
<b>Approval Signature</b>  	
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## ***Traffic Collision Investigation and Safety***

- I. **Purpose:** The purpose of this directive is to establish policy and procedure for the investigation of all reported traffic accidents and traffic safety concerns.
- II. **Policy:** Proper motor vehicle accident investigation provides heightened safety for the public and creates preventive tools for effective management of traffic administration. It is crucial that reported accidents, particularly those involving injuries and fatalities, are investigated to provide an explanation of the series of events occurring in the accident and also the cause of the accident based on facts and evidence found at the scene. Therefore it is the policy of the University of Cincinnati Police Division to conduct thorough and complete traffic collision investigations.

### III. Definitions:

**Private Property:** Property that is not a thoroughfare to the general public for vehicular travel. (i.e. parking garages, aisle ways, and parking stalls within a parking lot, public property temporarily closed to the general public for construction, special events, etc.)

**Public Property:** Property that is a thoroughfare to the general public for the purposes of vehicular travel. This may be any passageway through campus including traffic way portions of parking lots.

**Serious Injury:** Any injury requiring admission into a medical facility. Injuries not included are those requiring treatment and release from a medical facility.

### IV. Procedure:

#### A. Response to Accidents

1. Officers will respond to the scene of accidents involving any of the following:
  - a. Death or injury
  - b. Hit and run
  - c. Impairment of an operator due to alcohol or drugs
  - d. Damage to university vehicles or university property
  - e. Hazardous materials
  - f. Major traffic congestion resulting from an accident
  - g. Property damage – no minimum limit
  - h. Damage to vehicles to the extent towing is required
  - i. Any accident where police are requested
  - j. Disturbances between involved parties
  - k. Any accident that occurs as a result of other criminal activity
  - l. Any accident involving public or mass vehicles
2. The level of response, normal speed versus emergency lights and siren, to an accident scene will be determined by the circumstances of the accident and will

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be conducted following SOP 9.1.300 Response to Emergency, Non-Emergency, and Urgent Calls.

3. The responsibilities of the first responding officer are:
  - a. Position the police vehicle and activate emergency warning lights to provide protection of the scene and alert the public.
  - b. Officers should request additional officers if necessary to direct traffic and avoid any further collisions.
  - c. Immediately determine if there are injuries requiring emergency medical attention. If medical attention is required, summon medical assistance through UCPD Communications. If injuries warrant, administer emergency medical care or basic life support until emergency medical personnel arrive. Assisting the injured will take priority over accident investigation procedures.
  - d. Immediately identify any fire hazards or potential hazardous materials and summon additional medical, fire, police, or other assistance, as needed.
  - e. Protect the scene and preserve evidence.
  - f. Establish safe traffic patterns around the scene.
  - g. Locate witnesses and record crash information;
  - h. Arrange for moving vehicles and debris from the roadway, if necessary.
  - i. Establish control of the scene and resolve any disturbances or conflicts between the parties involved in the accident.
  - j. Secure the property of involved parties.
4. UCPD officers may be requested to respond to off-campus accidents involving university-owned vehicles in a support role to the agency of jurisdiction and to complete an information report as directed by the on-duty patrol supervisor.

### **B. Accident Investigation and Reporting**

1. UCPD officers investigating a motor vehicle accident on public property involving a personal injury or property damage in an amount greater than one thousand dollars shall complete a written report on form [OH-1](#). (Any sequence of events of a motor vehicle crash on public property shall require a form OH-1 if the above standards are met).
2. UCPD officers investigating a motor vehicle accident on public or private property involving a fatality shall complete a written report on form [OH-1](#).
3. All other motor vehicle accidents not requiring a form OH-1 may be documented on an internal report.
4. To be considered a motor vehicle accident, the accident must involve at least one motor vehicle in transport.
5. Electronic scooters and electronic bicycles are considered personal conveyance devices, not motor vehicles.
6. The Records Manager will submit completed form OH-1 reports to the Ohio Director of Public Safety within 5 days.
7. Traffic Accident reports will be released in accordance UCPD SOP 12.3.400 Public Information and Social Media Policy.

### **C. Investigating Officer**

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1. The investigating officer will be that officer initially assigned by Communications unless otherwise directed by the on-duty patrol supervisor. The investigating officer will take charge of the scene upon his/her arrival. Other officers present will assist the investigating officer.
  2. The investigating officer's responsibility in collecting and recording information at the scene is as follows:
    - a. Locate and interview parties and witnesses;
    - b. Examine and record vehicle damage;
    - c. Examine and record the effects of the accident on the roadway;
    - d. Record appropriate measurements and take necessary photographs;
    - e. Collect and preserve other evidence;
    - f. Record vehicle information (license plate, VIN, etc.)
    - g. Record information of involved parties (name, DOB, address, license number, etc. of drivers, passengers, cyclists, pedestrians, etc.)
    - h. Exchange information among the parties;
    - i. Secure personal property and the effects of the victims, when necessary.
- D. Follow-Up Investigations
1. When necessary, the investigating officer will complete a follow-up accident investigation, utilizing the following guidelines:
    - a) Complete any supplement to the UCPD incident report.
    - b) File or amend charges, as appropriate.
    - c) Collect off-scene data (breathalyzer results, blood tests, lab reports).
    - d) Obtain and record formal statements from witnesses.
    - e) Reconstruct accidents (CPD, OSP, or other appropriate agency).
    - f) Prepare formal reports to support any criminal charges arising out of the incident.
- E. Hit and Run Investigations
1. When an accident is confirmed as a hit and run, any available description or other pertinent information about the suspect vehicle/driver is to be relayed to the Communications Center for broadcast.
  2. Evidence should be gathered and retained for identification of the suspect vehicle.
  3. Witnesses should be interviewed to obtain essential information about the accident.
- F. Death or Injury Investigations
1. When an accident has resulted in injury or death, the Cincinnati Fire Department (CFD) will be contacted Communications Personnel to respond for medical treatment.
  2. When an accident has resulted in serious injury or death, the Director of Public Safety will determine the investigating agency such as Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSP) or Cincinnati Police Department (CPD) Traffic Unit.
- G. Property Damage Investigations

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1. Accidents resulting in damage to property will be investigated by the responding officer.
  2. The officer should secure the scene until all evidence has been collected.
  3. Photographs of the scene, if taken, should be taken before any evidence is collected.
  4. Evidence should be gathered and retained for the duration of the case.
  5. All witnesses should be interviewed at the scene. Follow-up interviews may be conducted as needed.
- H. Accidents Reported After the Fact/Late Notification
1. On occasion, individuals report accidents that occurred at an earlier time or date, thus prohibiting on-site investigation. In these instances, the following procedure will apply:
    - a) The investigating officer shall attempt to conduct the best possible investigation, including an examination of the scene, vehicles, and complete OH-1 or an information report.
    - b) The investigating officer is to note on the report that the accident was not reported at the scene and that none of the facts can be substantiated.
    - c) OH-1 reports will not be taken over the phone however an information report may be taken.
- I. Enforcement Action
1. Enforcement actions arising out of traffic accident investigations shall be taken when appropriate and following the Ohio Revised Code and other applicable state and local laws.
  2. Charges that constitute criminal offenses and serious traffic charges (e.g. death by vehicle) will require additional investigative efforts and documentation. These additional proceedings should be conducted in the same manner as officers would conduct other criminal casework.
- J. Fire Hazards
1. The following procedures are to be employed in accidents involving fire hazards:
    - a) The first responding officer that determines a fire hazard exists or that there is a potential for such hazard is to contact the UCPD Communications Center and request CFD assistance.
    - b) The officer will provide any fire suppression service possible.
    - c) The officer will establish crowd and vehicle control to prevent further injuries and accidents.
    - d) Additional units will be summoned, as necessary, to assist with crowd and vehicle control.
    - e) Utilize UCPD SOP 17.1.200 Critical Incident Response Plan as appropriate.
- K. Hazardous Materials
1. The following procedures are to be employed in accidents involving hazardous material:

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- a) The first responding officer suspecting hazardous materials is to contact the UCPD Communications Center, and on-duty Supervisor, and request assistance from CFD.
- b) The officer will attempt to identify the hazardous materials by any container placards or vehicle identification. Communications will be notified of the type of hazardous material when possible.
- c) Officers at the scene are to secure the area and evacuate non-essential personnel. Only CFD Hazmat will be allowed to enter the area.
- e) Utilize UCPD SOP 17.1.200 Critical Incident Response Plan as appropriate.

### **L. Control of Property at Scene**

- 1. Investigating officers have a responsibility to protect the property of accident victims. When applicable, the following procedures are to be performed:
  - a) Officers are to be alert for pilferage and theft problems, which may occur at accident scenes.
  - b) When it becomes necessary to seize the personal property of a victim, the officer is to enter the item(s) into the Division's property control system following established procedures.
  - c) When it becomes necessary to release a victim's personal property to a third party (e.g. relative) the officer is to record this person's identity and, if feasible, secure a signed receipt.

### **M. Accidents Involving UC Public Safety Vehicles**

- 1. Investigation
  - a) Reports of accidents involving Public Safety vehicles, even where there is no noticeable damage, will be reported by the driver and will be investigated by an on-duty Patrol Supervisor. If the damage is the result of an accident involving a Patrol Supervisor (and another Patrol Supervisor is not available) the Field Operations Commander will be contacted to assign an investigator.
  - b) Photographs will be taken as part of the investigation of all UCPD vehicle accidents.
  - c) Any accident involving personal injury will be investigated by the OSP or CPD. Communications will contact CPD to request assistance.
- 2. Reporting
  - a) If a UCPD vehicle is involved in a traffic accident (the vehicle was moving at the time of the accident, or it was struck by another moving vehicle) a UCPD incident report must be completed by the investigating officer and not by the driver.
  - b) All required paperwork associated with UCPD vehicle accidents/incidents will be completed and submitted by the end of the employee's work shift unless the on-duty supervisor approves the officer completing the investigation report on their next scheduled workday.
  - c) Any time a Division vehicle is involved in a traffic accident that results in personal injury, the appropriate Bureau Commander and Chief of Police should be contacted immediately by the on-duty patrol supervisor.
  - d) Failure to report an accident may result in disciplinary action.

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- e) The vehicular accident will be entered into Guardian Tracking by the investigating supervisor with the resolution status as pending until the review of the accident investigation is completed. The investigating supervisor will also forward the results of their investigation to their Chain of Command for review and approval.
- 3. Investigations that determine negligence on the part of the employee to be the cause of damage to a division vehicle may result in disciplinary action.
  - a) The final resolution of the vehicle accident will be updated in Guardian Tracking by the Standards and Strategic Development Bureau Commander, once the final review is completed and approved by the Chief of Police.

### **N. Prevention**

- 1. The UCPD will have on hand traffic safety pamphlets published by the Ohio Department of Transportation for students, staff, faculty, or visitors that request additional traffic safety educational information. In addition, the Public Safety PIO will periodically distribute Traffic Safety information through social media and other means.

### **O. Auto and Motorist Assistance**

- 1. Police Officers will do their best to answer questions from and provide directions to motorists who make such requests.
- 2. Police officers and security officers may provide mechanical assistance to any motorist on campus property who needs help. This may include but is not limited to:
  - a. Performing a jump start (using the jump kit only, no jumper cables)
  - b. Vehicle unlocks
  - c. Adding air to tires using a compressor
- 3. UCPD Communications may request an authorized towing company on behalf of a motorist for towing services, changing tires, etc.
- 4. Police officers may standby with stranded motorists on the city roadway to provide safety for the motorist until a city unit arrives. If requested, officers will stand by with stranded motorists until their car has been moved to a valid parking location or towed and they have secured transportation for themselves.
- 5. Police officers will not perform any emergency escorts of vehicles. They will render emergency aid to any motorist regardless of whether they are on public or private property and request Emergency Medical Services if needed.
- 6. The officer has the complainant fill out and sign an Aided Case form before attempting the auto assist.
- 7. The officer will verify ownership of the vehicle.
- 8. The officer will complete the Aided Case form including the name, license plate number, and disposition.
- 9. The officer will notify the dispatcher of the disposition of the run.

### **P. Traffic Engineering**

- 1. Roadway Hazards

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- a. When possible, officers should stop and immediately remove roadway hazards even if the hazard is on public property. In doing so officers should:
  - 1) Activate their overhead lights
  - 2) Notify Communications of their activity before entering the roadway
  - 3) Notify Communications when they are clear and back on patrol
  - 4) Ask Communications to notify Work Control, Emergency Maintenance, or other appropriate party to have the item properly disposed of.
- b. If officers discover an engineering deficiency (e.g. malfunctioning traffic signal, downed sign, improper road marking, etc.) on University property, they should identify the correct department to work with to get the issue resolved and contact that department for assistance.
- c. If officers discover an engineering deficiency or a hazard that they cannot remove from the roadway on a public roadway outside of the UCPD jurisdiction, they should notify UCPD Communications, who will notify the party who can rectify the issue.

### References

UCPD Policy 9.1.300 Response to Emergency, Non-Emergency, and Urgent Calls  
UCPD Policy 12.3.400 Public Information Policy  
UCPD Policy 17.1.200 Critical Incident Response Plan