

	The University of North Carolina Greensboro Police Department	
	General Order 2-6.2	Traffic Collision Investigation

Purpose and Scope

This policy provides guidelines for responding to and investigating crashes.

Policy

It is the policy of the UNCG Police Department to respond to crashes and render or summon aid to injured victims as needed. The Department will investigate and prepare reports according to established minimum reporting requirements of the North Carolina Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) 349 Instructional Manual with the goal of reducing the occurrence of crashes by attempting to identify the cause of the crash and through enforcing applicable laws., Crash reports will be made available to the public in accordance with state law and the records retention policy (N.C.G.S. § 20-166.1).

A. Definitions

- Motor Vehicle – Every vehicle which is self-propelled and every vehicle designed to run upon the highways which is pulled by a self-propelled vehicle. (This does not include bicycles or mopeds with helper motors rated less than one-brake horsepower, which produces only ordinary pedaling speeds up to a maximum of 20 miles per hour.)
- Reportable Collision – As defined by G.S. §20-4.01(33b), a reportable collision is any collision involving death or injury or that has total property damage of \$1000 or more, or property damage of any amount to a vehicle seized pursuant to G.S. §20-28.3.
- Non-reportable Collision – Any collision that does not meet the requirements of a reportable collision.

B. Reporting and Investigation Requirements

When an officer responds to a motor vehicle collision on university property, a collision report (DMV-349) should be completed when the collision involves property damage of \$1000 or more. A collision report and an investigative report must be completed in collisions involving death, hit-and-run involving injury or property damage of more than \$1000, impairment due to alcohol or drugs, and hazardous materials.

An investigative report and Carfax exchange slips must be completed when a hit and run collision occurs but does not otherwise meet the definition of a reportable collision. If the hit and run vehicle is located and the total of all damages exceeds \$1000 then a DMV-349 must also be completed.

Collisions involving State Vehicles that do not meet the definition of a reportable collision must have Carfax exchange slips completed with as much information that is available.

A law enforcement officer who investigates a reportable collision, whether at the scene of the collision or by subsequent investigations and interviews, must make a written report within 24 hours of the collision and must forward it as required by G.S. §20-166.1. The report must contain information on financial responsibility for the vehicle driven by the person whom the officer identified as at fault for the collision. The collision report must be forwarded to the NC Department of Motor Vehicles within 10 days after receiving the report. The reports made by law enforcement officers are public records and are open to inspection by the general public at all reasonable times.

When a person injured in a reportable collision dies as a result of the collision within 12 months after the collision and the death was not reported in the original report, the law enforcement officer investigating the collision must file a supplemental report that includes the death.

Minor crashes, which are settled between the parties involved and go unreported initially, are not routinely investigated after the fact if the agreement between the parties collapse.

C. Traffic Collision Response

UNCG officers will have primary responsibility for motor vehicle collisions that occur on campus except for collisions involving fatalities or injuries that may result in fatalities.

UNCG officers may assist the Greensboro Police Department (GPD), who has primary responsibility, with collisions that occur in the immediate vicinity, including, but not limited to the following:

- Death or injury
- Hit and run
- Impairment of operator due to alcohol or drugs
- Damage to public vehicles or property
- Hazardous materials
- Disturbances between principle parties/operators
- Major traffic congestion as a result of the collision
- Damage to vehicles to the extent towing is required
- Any other collision that is defined by statute as a reportable collision

In the event that inclement weather causes an undue hazard to officer safety or responding to the incident would cause a backlog of calls that might seriously delay response to emergency calls, the on duty supervisor or any command staff member may temporarily suspend collision investigation involving property damage. Those involved in the collision should be instructed to return to the police station within the next 72 hours to have the appropriate collision reports completed.

D. Collision Scene Responsibilities

The officer who is initially assigned to the collision will be the primary investigating officer and will be in charge of the collision scene until relieved by a higher-ranking officer. If a collision involves fatalities or injuries that may result in fatalities, the officer in charge will defer the investigation to GPD.

The responsibilities of the first officer on the scene, and any subsequent officers arriving on the scene will be the following:

- Administering emergency medical care pending arrival of emergency medical personnel.
- Summoning additional help as required.
- Protecting the collision scene.
- Preserving short-lived evidence.
- Establishing a safe traffic pattern around the scene.
- Locating witnesses and recording key collision information.
- Expediting the removal of vehicles, persons, and debris from the roadway.

In the event that hazardous materials are present, the officer in charge of the scene will ensure that the following steps are taken:

- The materials are identified.
- The scene is protected.
- The immediate area is isolated.
- Non-essential personnel are evacuated.
- The appropriate technical assistance is obtained.
- Only properly trained and equipped agency personnel are allowed into the area.

E. Collision Follow-up Investigation

When necessary, the follow-up investigation of a collision will be conducted in order to collect off-scene data, obtain and record formal statements from witnesses, reconstruct collisions, obtain expert or technical assistance, and prepare formal reports to support criminal charges. If feasible, the

investigating officer should attempt to conduct a collision follow-up before the end of their shift. If this cannot be done, the collision follow-up responsibilities will be deferred to the Criminal Investigation Unit. GPD will investigate collisions involving fatalities or injuries that may result in fatalities.

F. Property of Collision Victims

The officer in charge of a collision scene will ensure that all property belonging to collision victims is protected from theft or pilferage. If the owner is unable to secure their own property, the officer will secure the property by having the vehicle towed to a place of impoundment or will inventory the property as confiscated property and secure it in departmental evidence storage.

G. Traffic Direction and Control for Collision Scenes

In the event that a collision investigation is likely to cause traffic to be rerouted for an extended period of time (longer than one hour), the officer in charge of the collision scene will ensure that flares, cones, or barricades are used to provide for the safe routing of traffic around the scene. When the traffic is to be blocked for only a short time, the officers should position their vehicles in such a manner as to protect the collision scene and reroute traffic safely.

H. Enforcement Policy

Upon completion of any investigation of a traffic collision and determination that a violation of traffic laws has occurred, the investigating officer may take one of the following actions:

- Infractions – Charges for infractions will not be made unless the investigating officer feels that aggravating circumstances warrant charges.
- Misdemeanors – Enforcement action will only be taken when the investigating officer firmly establishes that probable cause exists to believe a violation has been committed.

An officer is not required to make a determination of fault or violations.