



POLICY AND PROCEDURE NO. 675

Motor Vehicle Crashes: Response, Investigation and Reporting

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2 Pages

POLICY:

The response to, investigation, and reporting of motor vehicle crashes is a fundamental and necessary duty of a police officer. Because motor vehicle and pedestrian accidents are a significant cause of death and injury of virtually all age brackets, these responses and investigations are a major component of the public safety function of police. Accurate and timely crash reporting is critical for those citizens involved in the crash as well as their insurers and the legal community. Moreover, these crash reports are the only objective and official source of information for local and statewide analysis to study these crashes insofar as where, why, when and how they occurred. It is through this data analysis that motor vehicle deaths and injuries can be reduced through targeted enforcement, redesigned/repared roads, as well as how other causal elements can be addressed.

PROCEDURE:

Reporting Generally:

Massachusetts General Law Chapter 90§29 [in pertinent part] requires that the police department shall notify the registrar of the RMV, within fifteen days, via an Official Crash Report, of the particulars of every accident where a person is killed or injured or where the damage to property or a vehicle exceeds \$1,000.

As a matter of public service, it is the policy and procedure of the Worcester Police Department to further this reporting obligation so that a police officer is to respond to, investigate, and prepare and submit an official Crash Report detailing each motor vehicle crash to which he or she is dispatched. If conditions dictate (i.e. snowstorm with numerous reported crashes) a police supervisor may, on a case-by-case basis, relieve officers of this reporting obligation. All crash reports filed should be completed by the end of the Officer's tour of duty, unless authorized by his or her Supervisor for an extension due to investigative purposes.

In the course of the investigation, if it is clear that the crash was caused by one or more motorists operating in violation of the laws and ordinances relative to vehicular operation, issuance of a citation is the preferred response. As with all investigations, witness(es) names and their statements should be listed within the report. In addition, attempts to locate and if found, utilizing recorded video, which is typically abundant especially in urban areas, may provide direction to the investigation and assist the officer with easily obtainable information crucial to determining any violations.

Investigating officers shall further ensure that an exchange of motorist information is affected by the involved motorists for purposes of operator reporting.

Fatal, Near Fatal, Crashes Involving Substantive Destruction/Damage, Hazardous Materials:

Crashes where a person is killed, where injuries are so extensive that a death may result, where the damage to property is extensive (i.e. truck-bridge collisions) or crashes where hazardous material carriers are involved, the Crash Reconstruction Unit is to be deployed for a comprehensive investigation and subsequent reporting. Such deployment is to be made with the authorization of the respective sector sergeant.

In cases where the deployment of the Crash Reconstruction Unit is in question and where the crash occurs outside the CRU's normal hours, the sector sergeant is encouraged to consult via telephone with a CRU official.

In the event the CRU is activated and does effect a comprehensive investigation, the responding officer is relieved of his or her obligation to prepare and submit any report unless specifically requested to do so by an official of the CRU.

Per:

Paul B. Saucier
Chief of Police