



**Division of State Patrol
Policy and Procedure**

Number
6-1

Subject CRASH INVESTIGATION	
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I. POLICY

It is the policy of the Division of State Patrol (DSP) to investigate all reportable motor vehicle traffic crashes. The degree of investigation shall be commensurate with the seriousness of the crash and/or the seriousness of any related offense.

II. BACKGROUND

Thorough traffic crash investigation is important due to:

- A. Criminal and civil aspects of traffic crash cases.
- B. Litigation against police agencies and officers.
- C. Documentation of the economic and personal loss and injury of those involved in traffic crashes.

III. OBJECTIVE

The objective of this policy is to provide DSP personnel guidelines to investigate traffic crashes.

IV. PROCEDURE

- A. Law Enforcement Dispatcher (LED)
 - 1. Notification
 - a. Receive information of traffic crash
 - i. Location

- ii. Severity (i.e., personal injury, property damage, hazardous materials involved)
 - iii. Road blockage
 - iv. Other units responding:
 - A. Police
 - B. Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
 - C. Fire
 - D. Tow and recovery services
 - E. Other as applicable
 - b. Dispatch nearest available personnel to the scene and provide pertinent data.
 - c. Notify region/post duty supervisor of serious crashes.
 - d. Notify the Traffic Management Center (TMC) and the appropriate media regarding road closure of 30 minutes or more or highway infrastructure damage.
 - e. Notify other agencies as necessary.
 - 2. Follow-up responsibilities
 - a. Record the preliminary crash investigation information.
 - b. Complete Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatality Report and send via teletype (TTY) before end of the tour of duty.
 - c. Assist troopers/inspectors with entering the information required by P&P 5-4 into the CFS Resource fields, as necessary.
- B. Investigating Officer**
- 1. Respond to the scene.
 - a. Proceed immediately to the traffic crash scene upon notification.
 - b. Notify the communication center if you were not dispatched to the crash by the LED.
 - c. Advise the applicable communication center of your arrival and exact location.

2. Arrive at the scene.
 - a. Protect and manage the scene in accordance with WISDOT Emergency Traffic Control and Scene Management Guidelines.
 - b. Be alert for hazards (i.e., toxic fumes, hazardous spillage, power lines, etc.).
 - c. Evaluate the crash to determine additional needs and provide dispatch, via radio, in a timely manner with the following information, as appropriate:
 - i. Need for emergency medical services - indicate type of injuries and degree of urgency
 - ii. Need for additional law enforcement personnel
 - iii. Need for detour route and county highway department Traffic Incident Management (TIM) resources
 - iv. Need for tow/recovery services or other specialized equipment (i.e., rescue units)
 - v. Need for firefighter personnel
 - vi. Need for utility company personnel or equipment
 - vii. Need for coroner/medical examiner and district attorney
 - viii. Need for a crash Reconstructionist
 - xi. Request a post-crash Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program (MCSAP) inspector, if the crash involves a commercial motor vehicle subject to MCSAP and the crash meets one or more of the following criteria: fatality, great bodily harm, personal injury, or at supervisory direction.
 - A. MCSAP Inspectors shall be available to assist other departments investigating crashes involving vehicles subject to the MCSAP regulations.
 - B. MCSAP Inspectors are encouraged to take enforcement action resulting from their inspections due to their specialized training.
3. Account for all occupants of vehicles involved in the crash.
4. Provide emergency first aid care until relieved by emergency medical personnel.

5. Determine if a hit-and-run vehicle is involved and relay description to the communication center as soon as possible. If the crash is determined to be a fatal hit and run, the officer shall request that the LED issue a Wisconsin Crime Alert Network (WCAN) alert.
6. Locate and protect the property of incapacitated/involved persons as necessary.
7. Crash scenes should be cleared as quickly as is practical, emphasizing restoration of all available traffic lanes without compromising short-lived and irretrievable evidence necessary for a thorough investigation. Traffic congestion resulting from crashes must be minimized by all appropriate and available means.
8. Investigate the circumstances of crashes thoroughly.
 - a. Locate and interview all witnesses, drivers, and others involved, as may be appropriate.
 - b. Identify and gather evidentiary video recordings that are relevant to the investigation.
 - c. Gather and preserve physical evidence from the scene, when necessary. Vehicles shall only be impounded after receiving supervisory approval. NOTE: When assisting other agencies, any towing or impounding of vehicles shall be done under the authority of the lead agency.
 - d. Take appropriate photographs of all fatal, personal injury, extensive property damage crashes, and when feasible, all crashes where enforcement action is taken.
 - e. Sketch the scene and record necessary measurements on all fatal, personal injury and extensive property damage crashes.
 - f. Diagram every crash unless exempted by the abbreviated Non-Domesticated Animal w/No Injury (DT4000) crash form.

Facilitate contact with Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources when necessary advising the individual desiring to take possession of a car-killed deer to call 608-267-7691 via phone and to provide their name, address, and the carcass location BEFORE the individual takes possession in accordance with Wis. Stat. 29.349.
 - g. Collect all other information necessary to complete the following, as necessary:
 - i. Wisconsin Motor Vehicle Crash Report (DT4000)

- ii. Traffic Crash Report (Witness) Statement (SP4426)
- iii. Wisconsin Motor Vehicle Fatal Supplement Form (DT3480)
- iv. Emergency Vehicle Involvement (MV3347)
- v. MACH CAD entries required by P&P 5-4

NOTE: If a crash report where an involved vehicle meets one of the criteria for emergency vehicle involvement, the officer should notify Division of State Patrol Information Technology (DSPIT) via email and copy the officer's supervisor so that DSPIT submits the necessary forms to Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to have the crash removed from the involved officer's driver record.

- h. Take enforcement action when the elements of a violation are present.
 - i. Enforcement action should comply with the Division's Uniform Enforcement Policy (P&P 14-1) unless reasonable mitigating circumstances exist.
 - ii. Enforcement action shall be taken at the scene rather than delivered at a later date unless precluded by unusual circumstances.
 - iii. All enforcement action shall be recorded in the MACH CFS Notes consistent with the requirements of P&P 5-2.
- i. Arrange for removal of vehicle parts, debris, etc. from the crash scene.
- j. Tag damaged Wisconsin highway property with DT1692.
 - i. Extensive uprooted sod, rutting and damage to plants and vegetation along the highway right-of-way shall be considered losses to public property.
 - ii. Although it may not always be possible to tag highway landscape, a DT1692 should be completed and submitted to the region/post to insure recovery and replacement, or repair of the damaged item.
- k. When investigating a fatal crash, contact should be made with a supervisor to determine if additional driver(s) information covering the 24-hours prior to the crash is needed. If it is determined additional information is needed, the information areas to consider may be as follows, but are not limited to:
 - i. Sleep - typical pattern, previous night, any disturbances, times.

- ii. Meals - history, pattern, time, foods eaten, caffeine use.
 - iii. Medical - history, medications taken (over the counter, prescribed, illegal).
 - iv. Attention - cell phone and use, radio or other music and use, itinerary to and from, times expected to depart and arrive.
 - v. Mechanical - known issues (owner and/or driver) prior to the crash, maintenance history, issues at the time of the crash.
 - vi. Personal Contacts - people that may be able to corroborate information provided.
9. Time expended on a crash investigation shall be proportional with the seriousness of the crash.
- a. Vehicle crashes not involving a fatality, injury, disabling vehicle damage, or damage to other property, may be self-reported by the motorists under circumstances where DSP officer services are immediately needed elsewhere, or in those cases reported after the fact, and no on-scene investigation is possible.
 - i. Motorists shall be directed to the Crash Self-Reporting website (wisconsin.gov/crashreporting), and officers should complete an electronic Contact Summary, including the vehicle information.
 - ii. Officers shall confirm the identity of all drivers involved prior to initiating the self-reporting procedure and identify the driver on the electronic Contact Summary form.
 - iii. Self-reporting is never authorized in cases involving a hit-and-run or where any damage to government property has occurred.
 - iv. Damage reporting threshold amounts may be considered in determining if self-reporting is appropriate, however, it shall not be the sole reason to initiate a self-report.
10. Advise the LED when you leave the crash scene.
- Ensure that sufficient information is provided to the LED by entering it into the Call For Service (CFS) record for a news release in cases of death, serious injury, extended road closures, etc.
11. Complete and transmit the Wisconsin Motor Vehicle Crash Report form (DT4000). Forward related documents to region/post headquarters upon completion.

- a. The DT4000 shall be completed in accordance with the Traffic and Criminal Software (TraCS) F2 User Guide.
 - b. Completed reports shall be transmitted no later than three (3) days after the date of the crash, except in extenuating circumstances authorized by a supervisor.
- C. Use of Inspectors at Crash Scenes.
- 1. Inspectors should be used as necessary to stabilize crash scenes, care for medical emergencies, and take other appropriate action until other responding troopers/officers arrive.
 - 2. When inspectors are working scheduled mitigation overtime or sector overtime, they shall follow procedures in IV. B. of this policy.
 - 3. During a normal scheduled shift, inspectors will generally not be used to write crash reports or conduct crash investigations.
 - a. During inclement weather, or at other times when troopers or officers from other law enforcement agencies are not available to handle the crash, a supervisor may approve an inspector to be used at a crash scene following procedures in IV. B. of this policy.
- D. Region/Post Duty Supervisor (Sergeant)
- 1. Proceed, if practical, to any serious crash scene being investigated by the State Patrol.
 - 2. Monitor the crash investigation process.
 - 3. Notify the region/post Executive Officer of all serious crashes and those crashes of an unusual nature.
- E. Region Commander or Designee
- 1. Maintain a file system on crashes investigated by personnel within the region (i.e., file forms, statements, photos including any uploaded digital photographs attached to an eSP4500 report, video recordings, and sketches).
 - 2. Ensure established procedures for review of all completed DT4000 forms for accuracy and completeness are followed.
 - 3. Provide information to the media, via news release, as appropriate.
 - 4. Establish procedures for furnishing copies of crashes investigated by the DSP to other agencies or the public in accordance with open records procedures.

V. REFERENCES

Wis. Stats. Sec. 29.349
Wis. Stats. Sec. 346.03
Wis. Stats. Sec. 346.04
Wis. Stats. Sec. 346.66 through 346.74
Wis. Stats. Sec. 347.25
Wis. Stats. Sec. 347.38
Wis. Stats. Sec. 349.13
Chapter TRANS 100
DSP Policy & Procedure 3-9, Pursuit Operations
DSP Policy & Procedure 5-2, Traffic Stops and Security Reporting
DSP Policy & Procedure 5-4, Time System Inquiries
DSP Policy & Procedure 8-13, MCSAP Post Crash Inspections
DSP Policy & Procedure 14-1, Uniform Enforcement Policy
Traffic and Criminal Software (TraCS) F2 User Guide
WISDOT Traffic Incident Management Enhancement (TIME) Emergency Traffic Control
and Scene Management Guidelines
DT1692 Tag-Damaged Property
DT3480-Wisconsin Motor Vehicle Fatal Supplement Form
DT4000-Wisconsin Motor Vehicle Crash Report
eSP4500 (Electronic Offense/Incident Report)
MV3347-Statement-Emergency Vehicle Involvement
SP4426-Traffic Crash Report-Statement