

Done 7/24 J.L. ✓

26.0 TRAFFIC COLLISION INVESTIGATIONS

Officers dispatched to a collision involving motor vehicles must investigate and, when necessary, submit a written report using the Police Traffic Collision Report.

Death or Injury - In the event of a traffic collision that results in a fatality, the investigating officer must notify his/her immediate supervisor. That supervisor, whether it is a Sergeant or Master Patrol Officer, will notify the Sector lieutenant or Operations duty officer, who will make any necessary secondary notifications.

- [The Sector lieutenant or the Operations duty officer will call
- [The Traffic Safety Unit Sergeant, who will contact the Traffic Investigators
- [Patrol Captain (north or south)

Property Damage – Officers must complete a Traffic Collision Report in the event of **injuries or damages** in excess of the minimum damage threshold as identified by the Washington State Patrol (can be found in WAC 446-85-010). The department will notify officers of any changes in the minimum damage threshold via department training bulletin.

- [In the event there are no injuries and the damage to the vehicle is less than the WSP minimum damage threshold, citizens will be advised to complete a State Collision Report form.
- [If a citizen insists that a report be taken, the officer on scene will complete a collision form
- [If the minimum damage threshold as established by the Washington State Patrol changes, department personnel will be notified via a department training bulletin

Hit and Run – The majority of hit and run collision reports involve minor vehicle damage with little, if any, information to pursue. These collision reports will be filed primarily for insurance purposes. The following criteria will be used to determine which hit and run collisions will be followed up by Traffic Collision Investigators.

- 1.) The collision report contains enough information to allow investigators to successfully identify the suspect(s); or
- 2.) The collision encompasses extensive disabling damage to the victim's vehicle; or
- 3.) The collision involves an injury to a pedestrian, driver or passenger.

An officer who is detailed to a collision and takes a collision report that meets any one of these criteria must submit with the report, a detailed written statement

from the victim and any witnesses. The report shall include whether or not a witness can identify the suspect.

Hit and Run collisions where no one is able to identify the suspect driver will still be assigned to the Traffic Investigations Unit. However the investigators will only contact the victim to explain that absence any new information, leading to the positive identity of the suspect, their case will be closed. Collision reports that do not contain a statement from the officer as to whether a witness can identify the suspect will be returned to the officer for clarification.

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26.03 OFFICER-INVOLVED TRAFFIC COLLISIONS

In order to have consistent review and comment on documents, the following procedures will apply:

An on-duty supervisor will respond to all officer-involved collisions.

Categories of officer-involved collisions:

Officer-involved collisions will be divided into two categories:

Category One: Traffic collisions with serious damage, injury, or complaint of injury.

- Collisions of this type require a call-out of the Traffic Detectives.
- The Traffic Safety Unit Sergeant will need to be notified.
- The patrol officer will conduct the on-scene investigation and prepare the initial report, even if a Traffic Detective responds to the incident.
- The Department will conduct concurrent investigations on all Category 1 collisions involving police vehicles that occur outside of the city.
- Photographs will be taken to document the incident.
- Vehicle/Equipment Notification Reports will *not* be used for officer-involved collisions falling into this category.

Category Two: Traffic collisions with minor damage and no injury

- Collisions of this type should be investigated by officers with Basic Collision Investigation training or better.
- An on-duty supervisor will respond to the scene and make the determination that the collision falls within the parameters of this category.
- Photographs will be taken to document the incident.
- **The Investigations Sergeant need not be notified in this instance.**
- Vehicle/Equipment Notification Reports *may* be used for officer-involved collisions falling into this category if certain criteria are met (see Vehicle/Equipment Notification section below).

Circumstances requiring a Washington State Traffic Collision Report:

Without exception, a Washington State Traffic Collision report will be completed for the following:

- Any officer-involved Category One collision,

- Any officer-involved collision with another vehicle (regardless of damage threshold), or
- Any officer-involved collision with a vehicle or other object where the damage meets or exceeds the minimum threshold as designated by the Washington State Patrol (found in WAC 446-85-010)

Officers taking these reports must ensure that the "On-Duty" box is checked if the officer was operating a police vehicle and on duty at the time of the collision.

These reports will be forwarded to the Office of Professional Standards through the normal report process for administrative review.

Circumstances in which a Vehicle/Equipment Notification Report is acceptable instead of a Washington State Traffic Collision Report:

- Incidents or collisions involving damage to City vehicles that do not meet any of the above noted criteria for completing a Washington State Traffic Collision report shall be documented only by use of the Vehicle/Equipment Notification Report.
- Primarily, these situations will involve police vehicle collisions with minimal damage (below the WSP threshold) that involve contact with an object other than another vehicle.
- If documenting a collision or damage to a city vehicle on a Vehicle/Equipment Notification Report, do not complete a Traffic Collision report.
- If the incident involves a collision and the damage threshold as set by the Washington State Patrol has been met a Traffic Collision Report shall be completed, not a Vehicle/Equipment Notification Report.
- An on-duty supervisor shall respond to the scene and make the determination as to whether the damage to the vehicle does or does not warrant a Traffic Collision report that would require a case number. If there is any doubt as to whether or not the damage threshold has been met, a Traffic Collision report shall be completed instead of a Vehicle/Equipment Notification Report.
 - The Collision Report will not be turned in to Records, but will be forwarded to the Traffic Sergeant until a damage estimate is obtained by the City of Everett Motor Vehicles Department.
 - If, after obtaining the damage estimate, it is discovered that the WSP damage threshold has not been met, a Vehicle/ Equipment Notification Report will be completed immediately and the original Traffic Collision report will be destroyed and any case number cancelled.
 - If the damage estimate does exceed the WSP damage threshold, then the Traffic Sergeant will approve and turn the original Traffic Collision report in to Records.

Damage to other City equipment:

Damage to other City equipment assigned to personnel will be documented using the Vehicle/Equipment Notification Report.

- The officer is required to complete the top portion of the Vehicle/Equipment Notification Report.
- The officer will not obtain a case number; an incident number will suffice for reference.
- Photographs will be taken to document the incident.
- In cases when the Vehicle/Equipment Notification Report is used, the officer, supervisor, and all witnesses will be required to document the incident.
- The Vehicle/Equipment Notification Report will also be used for damaged or lost equipment, such as computers, radios, etc.
- The completed Vehicle/Equipment Notification Report will be routed through the chain of command to the appropriate Deputy Chief who will determine if an O.P.S. review is needed, or to authorize repair or replacement of the damaged or lost item.
- *Nothing in this section will preclude a more formal investigation if deemed necessary by the on-scene supervisor.*

Officers Involved in Collisions:

- *Do not move the vehicles.* If it is imperative that the vehicles be moved, mark *all four tires on each* of the vehicles involved.
- Officers involved in a collision are to complete a "Witness Statement" PD-04 6/97.
- Use "Supplemental Statement Form" PD-282 8/88 for additional pages.
- The involved officer will diagram the collision, using a "Supplemental Diagram" (PD-203 11/84), or on the "Intersection Collision Diagram" (PD-29) *Only the Officer's narrative will go on the statement forms.* The officer should not put any narrative regarding the collision on the page with the diagram. The only information on the diagram is the collision location, the vehicles involved, and the actual diagram of the collision.