

## 5.04 COLLISION INVESTIGATION AND REPORTING

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# COLLISION INVESTIGATION AND REPORTING

POLICY & PROCEDURE NO. <b>5.04</b>	SECTION <b>TRAFFIC</b>	PAGES: 4	ISSUE DATE: December 18, 2023
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Chief Nathan C. Hagglund			

## I. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND GUIDELINES

Due to an ever-increasing number of vehicles and drivers, traffic collisions will remain an unfortunate reality for the general population. The police impact and attempt to mitigate this problem in a variety of ways from traffic enforcement to collision reconstruction. One of the primary responsibilities assigned to the police is to investigate and report all significant traffic collisions within their jurisdiction.

## II. POLICY

Officers who are dispatched to, or come upon, a motor vehicle collision within the Town of West Brookfield shall investigate the circumstances surrounding the collision and file a Commonwealth of Massachusetts Motor Vehicle Crash Report. If the collision causes serious bodily injury or death a collision reconstruction shall be performed by a qualified collision reconstructionist.

## III. DEFINITIONS

### IV. PROCEDURES

The Public Safety Communications Center (C8) shall dispatch an officer to all collisions reported to the police department. Officers shall respond to, investigate, and file a report on all collisions they are dispatched to by C8 or come upon during the course of their duties. If a specialized investigation and report is required for a collision due to death, serious injury, hazardous material, or any other specialized response, the responding officer shall still be responsible for conducting a preliminary investigation and filing the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Motor Vehicle Crash Report. Collisions requiring at least a preliminary investigation and report include, but are not limited to: **[61.2.1(A,B)]**

1. Collisions involving department members;
2. Collisions involving town vehicles;
3. Collisions involving death or injury;
4. Collisions involving property damage
5. Hit and run collisions;
6. Collisions involving impairment due to alcohol or drugs;
7. Collisions involving hazardous materials; and
8. Collisions occurring on private property.

The initial officer shall be in charge of a collision scene unless relieved by a supervisor. Officers responding to the scene of a collision shall position their cruisers in a manner that protects the collision scene and shall take appropriate traffic control measures to maintain evidence and facilitate the movement of traffic to the extent possible. Responding officers shall survey the scene to identify fire hazards, hazardous materials, injured persons, and any other safety or medical issues. The West Brookfield Fire Department shall be notified of any fire hazards, hazardous materials, and C8 shall dispatch an ambulance for injured parties at the scene. The Fire Department and or EMS shall have primary responsibility in these areas, however, the officers on scene shall provide medical attention consistent with their level of training and ensure that a safe distance is kept from any potential hazard they are not capable of addressing. **[61.2.2(A,B,C,D,F)]**

Once the scene is safe and injured persons have been cared for, the initial officer shall be responsible for collecting information from all

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individuals involved in the collision and any witnesses. Additional officers on scene may collect information to assist the initial officer. Any property belonging to a collision victim should be left in their control or, in the event they are transported to the hospital, property may be secured in their vehicle. **[61.2.2(E,K)]**

Minor collision scenes generally only require the response of one officer. Additional officers may be requested by the initial car if needed. Collisions involving hit and runs, impairment of an operator due to alcohol or drugs, the involvement of hazardous materials, a disturbance between the principal involved parties, or major traffic congestion as the result of the collision require the officer will request additional officers and/or mutual aid officers to respond. Collisions involving death, serious injury or damage to town owned vehicles or property require the notification of a supervisor. Vehicles that are damaged to the extent that towing is required shall be towed by the police duty tow. Tow requests in such instances shall be made by an officer on scene. **[61.2.2(G,H,I,J,L)]**

Some crashes, particularly those involving serious injury or death, require a detailed investigation utilizing special skills beyond that of the normal patrol officer. When the severity and circumstances of a collision require such a detailed investigation, the officer after speaking with a supervisor shall seek assistance from the CEMLEC Accident Reconstruction Unit. **[83.1.1]**

### **FOLLOW-UP INVESTIGATIONS**

Officers shall perform follow-up investigations in support of ongoing or anticipated criminal prosecutions whenever necessary. Follow-up investigations may include collecting information not available at the scene, obtaining additional statements from witnesses and involved participants, and/or preparing formal reports to support criminal charges. The CEMLEC Accident Reconstruction Unit may perform, or assist in performing, elements of a follow-up investigation as needed. **[61.2.1(C)]**

### **COLLISION ANALYSIS AND RECONSTRUCTION INVESTIGATIONS**

Officers that have specialized training in collision reconstruction and analysis may be able to determine:

1. The speed of a vehicle from roadway marks, vehicle damage, or a vehicle's airbag control module;
2. The movements of a vehicle and/or body in a collision;

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3. Positions of vehicles and/or pedestrians at and prior to impact;
4. The seating of specific occupants within a vehicle;
5. The effect of roadway conditions and design on the collision; and
6. Energy losses and momentum exchanges.

A supervisor or designee shall insure that the supervisor of the CEMLEC Accident Reconstruction Unit is notified about any collisions involving death or a life-threatening injury. The supervisor of the unit will confer with the supervisor or designee to determine the appropriate response to the situation. If the supervisor of the unit is not available, the supervisor or designee shall contact the Chief of Police.

If it is determined that a member, or members, of the CEMLEC Accident Reconstruction Unit are responding to the scene of a serious collision, the scene should be secured and left undisturbed. It is important that items in any way related to the collision are not moved, cleaned up, or altered to the extent possible.

### **REPORTING [83.2.6]**

When an officer trained in collision reconstruction responds to a traffic collision scene he/she will be responsible for processing the scene and shall submit a detailed report of the investigation as soon as possible. The report shall include:

1. The location of the crash and department incident number;
2. The names of the victim(s), if known;
3. The name of the suspect(s), if known;
5. The actions taken at the scene, including visual records, measurements, and a listing and disposition of physical evidence recovered;
6. The name of the laboratory if any evidence was sent to for analysis; and
7. Any determinations made by the investigating reconstruction officer.