

Traffic Collision Reporting

502.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Orange County Sheriff-Coroner Department prepares traffic collision reports in compliance with the California Highway Patrol Collision Investigation Manual (CIM) and makes traffic collision reports available in accordance with Vehicle Code § 20012.

502.2 TRAFFIC COLLISION REPORTING

All traffic collision reports taken by Members of this Department shall be forwarded to the Regional Traffic Bureau for approval. Upon approval, all reports are submitted to the Records Bureau for data entry into the Records Management System.

Reports involving Sheriff's Department Members or Department assigned vehicles (County owned or leased) shall be submitted to the S.A.F.E. Division for data entry into the TCRB database. The S.A.F.E. Division shall be responsible for quarterly reports on traffic collision statistics to be forwarded to Executive Command.

502.3 REPORTING SITUATIONS

502.3.1 TRAFFIC COLLISIONS INVOLVING DEPARTMENT VEHICLES

Traffic collision investigation reports shall be taken when a Department assigned vehicle (CHP 555) or watercraft (DBW VAR-1) is involved in a traffic collision upon a roadway, highway or waterway wherein any damage or injury results.

An information report may be taken in lieu of a traffic collision report (CHP 555) at the direction of a supervisor when:

1. The collision occurs on private property or
2. Does not involve another vehicle or
3. Results in no vehicular or property damage

Whenever there is damage to a Department assigned vehicle, a Vehicle Collision/Incident Report (aka: damage to county property) shall be completed by the Member and submitted to his/her immediate supervisor.

Driver Responsibility:

1. Report the collision immediately to his/her direct supervisor or Department Commander.
2. Report the collision to the law enforcement agency having traffic investigation and enforcement responsibilities.
 - (a) If the collision occurs within a jurisdiction where the Sheriff's Department has complete traffic responsibility and the collision results in injury to any party involved, the California Highway Patrol shall investigate the collision.

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- (b) A Sheriff's sergeant and an appropriate area unit shall be sent to assist in the investigation in cases not requiring CHP assistance at the direction of the Department Commander. The involved Member shall not write the traffic collision report (CHP 555).
 - (c) Any collision that occurs on private property will be reported to the responsible law enforcement agency.
3. Deputies shall make no comments or statements to anyone except the investigating officer and the Sheriff's sergeant.
4. Submit a County Vehicle Collision/Incident Report. Include DR# on upper right-hand corner.

Supervisor Responsibility:

1. A Sergeant or Supervisor shall respond to all traffic collisions involving Sheriff's Department vehicles. It is the responsibility of that supervisor to ensure that a complete investigation at the scene is conducted. These responsibilities are:
 - (a) That the deputy/Sheriff's Member makes no comment or statements except to the investigating officer.
 - (b) That all names of involved parties, witnesses, injured persons, and investigating officers are obtained.
 - (c) That physical evidence is collected; length of skid marks are measured, damage is noted, photographs taken, etc.
 - (d) Determine, if possible, who was at fault and what violations occurred (Vehicle Code, Department Rules and Regulation, and/or Department Policy, etc.).
 - (e) That the Department's case number is obtained from the investigating agency and our Department's case number is furnished to the investigating officer.
 - (f) Determine the appropriate action to be taken as to:
 1. Disposition of the involved Sheriff's vehicle
 2. Completion of the Worker's Compensation forms as required.
 3. Completion of the report by the deputy/Sheriff's Member, including the County Vehicle Collision Incident Report. This report is to be completed by the driver of the involved vehicle.
 4. Department Commander is notified of the situation and of the action taken.
2. The supervisor shall complete a Supervisor Synopsis for Member Involved Collision report (this report can be found in the Department intranet document center). This report shall include the supervisor's opinion as to whether the collision was preventable or non-preventable. The Supervisor Synopsis report, County of Orange Vehicle Collision/Incident Report, and the traffic collision report (CHP 555) shall be forwarded through the supervisor's chain of command for approval.

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502.3.2 TRAFFIC COLLISIONS WITH SHERIFF DEPARTMENT MEMBERS

When a Member of this Department, on-duty or off-duty, is involved in a traffic collision within Sheriff's Department jurisdiction resulting in a serious injury or fatality, or the collision is suspected to be the result of impairment, the Department Commander shall notify the California Highway Patrol for assistance.

The term serious injury is defined as any injury that may result in a fatality.

502.3.3 TRAFFIC COLLISIONS WITH OTHER COUNTY OR CITY MEMBERS OR OFFICIALS

The Department Commander may request assistance from the California Highway Patrol for the investigation of any traffic collision involving any county official, contract-city official or Member where a serious injury or fatality has occurred.

502.3.4 TRAFFIC COLLISIONS ON PRIVATE PROPERTY

A traffic collision report shall not be taken for traffic collisions involving the public that occur on private property unless there is a death or injury to any person involved, a hit-and-run violation, or Vehicle Code violation. An Information Report may be taken at the discretion of any supervisor.

502.3.5 TRAFFIC COLLISIONS ON ROADWAYS OR HIGHWAYS

Traffic collision reports shall be taken when they occur on a roadway or highway where the Sheriff's Department has complete traffic responsibility under any of the following circumstances:

1. When there is a death or injury to any persons involved in the collision.
2. When there is an identifiable violation of the Vehicle Code.
3. When a report is requested by any involved driver.

502.3.6 TRAFFIC COLLISIONS AND PURSUIT INTERVENTION TECHNIQUE

If the suspect is successfully "pitted" and crashes as a result of the maneuver, an accident report is not necessary. This aspect of the policy is because the PIT maneuver is an intentional act and therefore does not qualify as a reportable traffic accident.

If the suspect crashes into a third party, a patrol unit, or other property and causes damage, then a traffic collision report (CHP 555) is required.

502.3.7 PURSUIT RELATED TRAFFIC COLLISIONS

1. If **any** injury or non-injury collision occurs during the course of a pursuit initiated or commanded by Department personnel where a Department vehicle or pursued vehicle is involved in a collision, the collision shall be investigated by the local agency having jurisdiction where the collision occurred. If the collision occurs in the unincorporated areas of Orange County or in areas where OCSD has jurisdiction for traffic accident investigation (Contract Cities), the collision will be investigated by the CHP.
 - (a) If the collision only involves the suspect vehicle and/or a Department vehicle and no occupied third party vehicles are involved, and the collision is minor in nature with property damage only, the Department Commander shall make a

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determination of whether or not to have the collision investigated by the CHP or OCSD personnel if the collision occurs in an area where OCSD has jurisdiction for traffic accident investigation.

2. In the event a death or injury occurs as a result of the collision to individuals in the suspect vehicle, the deputy in the Department vehicle, or any other person, the collision shall be investigated by the local agency having jurisdiction where the collision occurred. If the collision occurs in the unincorporated areas of Orange County or in areas where OCSD has jurisdiction for traffic accident investigation (Contract Cities), the collision shall be investigated by the CHP.
 - (a) If a fatal collision does not require a response from the CHP Multi-Disciplinary Accident Investigation Team (M.A.I.T.) or the local agencies equivalent, then the assistance of the Orange County Sheriff's Department Major Accident Investigation Team (M.A.I.T.) may be requested via the Department Commander. The M.A.I.T. response shall be a minimum of two (2) Members who will assist with mapping only. All identification and documentation of evidence will be conducted by the CHP or local agency.

502.4 REPORTING SITUATIONS

In the event of serious injury or death related traffic collision, the Department Commander shall notify the Traffic Bureau Supervisor to relate the circumstances of the traffic collision and seek assistance from the Traffic Bureau or M.A.R.T. Team.