



Peoria Police Department Policy and Procedure Manual

Policy 6.02

Traffic Collision Investigation



I. POLICY

It is the policy of the Peoria Police Department to efficiently investigate traffic collisions in a standard, impartial, and timely manner.

II. PROCEDURE

- A. The Peoria Police Department shall investigate all reportable traffic collisions involving death or injury, property damage, and those collisions involving an impaired driver, a hit and run, or hazardous materials, occurring upon the City of Peoria's streets. Collisions are investigated to obtain evidence of traffic violations in a manner, which may allow a complaint against violators, and to obtain precise data concerning traffic collisions within the city, which may be utilized by the city, county or state. (61.2.1.a through f)
1. Reportable Traffic Collision: A reportable traffic collision is defined as an incident that includes one or more occurrences of injury, death, or damage, which is not the direct result of a cataclysm, and is in excess of one thousand dollars, involving one or more motor vehicles in transport upon a trafficway, or an unstable situation that originated upon a trafficway.
 2. Patrol Required Documents/Forms: The following equipment/paperwork shall be carried in all marked police vehicles: (41.1.4.f) (41.3.2)
 - a. State Traffic Collision Forms.
 - b. Diagram sheets.
 - c. Measurement sheets.
 - d. Traffic Control Device keys (optional)
 - e. Roadway marking device.
 - f. Tow sheets.
 - g. Court Bond Schedules for City and Justice of the Peace (JP) Court.
 - h. Collision Exchange Forms.
 - i. Vehicle Liability Release.
 - j. Department of Transportation (DOT) Re-Examination Forms.
 - k. DOT License Withdrawals.
 - l. Citations.
 - m. Warnings/Repair Orders.
 - n. Field Sobriety Test (FST) Sheets.
 - o. Vehicle Red Tags.
 - p. Vehicle Complaint Forms.

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q. State Bus/Truck Collision Form.

3. Officers will be sent to roadway collisions, which involve any one or more of the following:

- a. Death or injury. (61.2.2 a)
- b. Hit and run. (61.2.2 b)
- c. Impairment of an operator by alcohol or drugs. (61.2.2 c)
- d. Damage to government vehicles or property. (61.2.2 d)
- e. Hazardous materials. (61.2.2 e)
- f. Disturbance between principals. (61.2.2 f)
- g. Major traffic congestion as a result of the collision. (61.2.2.g)
- h. Damage to vehicle to the extent towing is required. (61.2.2.h)
- i. Meets the requirements as defined in Section A.1.

4. There is no time limit as to when a citizen may file a traffic collision report, whether in person, at the Peoria Police Department, or elsewhere. In these cases, officers will not investigate the crime scene, and will complete the collision report for insurance purposes only, unless sufficient information is available to warrant additional investigation. If the citizen is reporting a hit and run collision, which is a criminal act, and this collision occurred within the past 24 hours, the officer shall investigate the collision by going to the scene and looking at the roadway as well as the victim's vehicle.

B. Private Property Collisions

1. Officers will not respond to private property traffic collisions unless they involve serious injury or death, a crime, or hazardous materials. (61.2.1.f)
2. If the above listed criterion is not met, but a citizen insists an officer respond, a sworn on-duty supervisor shall determine if officer response is appropriate.

C. State Traffic Collision Report Form

1. The State Traffic Collision Report Form will be completed under the following circumstances.
 - a. A reportable collision is investigated.
 - b. A private property collision occurs in which severe injury or death occurs.
 - c. In a private property hit and run case in which there is a suspect or investigative lead and the victim desires prosecution.
 - d. In a private property collision which involves a crime.
2. The State Traffic Collision Form will be accomplished as directed in the most recent instruction manual.
3. Any associated supplement forms will be completed when required, i.e. Bus/Truck Collision Form.
4. Sergeants shall conduct the initial review of all traffic collision reports completed by personnel assigned to their supervision. (82.2.4)
 - a. Initial reviews shall ensure that reports are submitted in a timely manner and contain complete and accurate information.

- b. Traffic collision reports completed by the Traffic Services Section (TSS) will be reviewed by the Traffic Sergeant.
5. All traffic collisions will be investigated and reported in accordance with the Instruction Manual and Glossary for the Arizona Traffic Collision Report, which is published by the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT), Traffic Records Branch.

D. On Scene Consideration

1. The initial officer who responds to investigate traffic collisions will: (61.2.3 a.)
 - a. Provide a safe traffic pattern around the scene for the purpose of protecting those involved in the traffic collision as well as those approaching it.
 - b. Identify injured persons and summon the assistance of paramedics, fire suppression, or additional officers, if required. (61.2.3.b)
 - c. Administer first aid, if required. (61.2.3.b)
 - d. Identify any hazardous materials that may be involved, and isolate any areas of contamination to insure public safety. Only properly trained and equipped officers will enter areas where hazardous materials may be encountered. (61.2.3 c)
 - e. Provide for initial fire suppression, if required. (61.2.3.c)
 - f. Preserve evidence and protect the collision scene. (61.2.3.e)
 - g. Locate witnesses and record necessary information concerning the collision. (61.2.3.d)
 - h. Expedite the removal of vehicles, persons, and debris from the roadway.
 - i. Ensure the property at the scene is protected from theft and is removed to a place of safekeeping if the responsible party is unable to care for it. If a vehicle is to be removed for safekeeping, the vehicle shall be inventoried by an officer. To ensure that the owner's interest is protected, all containers located during a vehicle inventory shall be opened and their contents accounted for. (61.2.3.f)
2. Scene Responsibility: The initial officer dispatched to the collision is deemed to be in charge of the scene unless that officer is relieved by a superior officer. If the officer is relieved, he is responsible for the investigation, while the supervisor is responsible for the scene. (61.2.3. a)
3. The officer conducting the collision investigation will be responsible for ensuring the following is accomplished: (61.2.3.d)
 - a. The interviewing of witnesses and principals.
 - b. The examining and recording of vehicle damage and the effects of the collision on the roadway.
 - c. Taking required measurements.
 - d. Taking photographs as appropriate.
 - e. Collecting and preserving evidence, as appropriate.
 - f. Ensuring the exchange of information among involved parties.
 - g. Expedite the removal of vehicles and debris from the roadway.
 - h. If the traffic collision occurs on the trafficway, the officer shall complete a State Collision Report and issue citation(s) if a driver does not produce evidence of vehicle insurance, regardless of the damage amount.

4. Traffic Services Notification: When investigating collisions where a level one (life threatening) injury has occurred, the Traffic Services Section (TSS) Supervisor will be notified. Based upon the information provided the Supervisor may have a member or members of TSS respond to the scene. TSS may take over the investigation, or assist Patrol officers with the investigation, depending upon the circumstances. In the event of a fatal collision, TSS shall take disposition.
 5. Reports Forwarded to TSS: Under the following conditions, collision reports will be forwarded to the Traffic Services Section for follow-up: (61.2.4)
 - a. Delayed fatal collisions (where death occurs within thirty days from the date of the collision.)
 - b. Officer involved traffic collisions where an injury is reported.
 - c. Serious injury traffic collisions where criminal charges are likely, i.e. DUI, reckless driving. TSS will be responsible for gathering additional data, as needed, for coordinating expert or technical assistance and for preparing formal reports to support criminal charges.
- E. Hit and Run Cases (61.2.1.c)
1. Misdemeanor: Misdemeanor hit and run cases will be initially investigated by the responding officer and will be handled the same as other collision cases.
 - a. If the hit and run has just occurred, responding officers will check the area for the suspect vehicle.
 - b. If there is a suspect or a lead in the case, the investigating officer will attempt to locate the vehicle and contact any witnesses, suspects, or investigative leads.
 - c. If the case is not cleared by the initial investigating officer, the report will be forwarded to the TSS Sergeant. The TSS Sergeant will review the case and if necessary, return the case to the investigating officer for follow-up. (61.2.4)
 2. Felony: Felony hit and run cases in which minor injuries are sustained will be investigated by the responding officer using the same procedures listed in paragraph 1.
 3. Felony with Injury: In felony hit and run cases in which severe injuries are sustained, the TSS Supervisor will be notified. Based upon the information provided, the Supervisor may have a member or members of TSS respond to the scene. TSS may take over the investigation, or assist Patrol officers with the investigation, depending upon the circumstances.
 4. Written Reports: The following forms should be completed on Hit and Run Cases:
 - a. The State Accident Form along with either the standard four page Narrative Report or the Short Form should be completed on all Felony Hit and Run Cases.
 - b. The State Accident Form along with the standard four page Narrative Report should be completed on any case with identifiable suspects and/or solid leads that will be submitted to TSS for follow-up
 - c. Hit and Run Cases involving no injuries or minor injuries, in which there are no suspects, leads, or witnesses, only the State Accident Form must be completed.
 - d. In some Hit and Run Cases, an officer may receive investigative information, but not enough to warrant follow-up. These cases should be documented on the State Accident Form and accompanied by the additional "Persons Identification" page only.
 - e. If a suspect is later identified and the standard Narrative Report or Short Form has not been completed, the appropriate form(s) will be completed by the officer receiving the information.
- F. Civil and Criminal Complaints

1. Motorist Detention: An officer that investigates a traffic collision may stop and detain a person, as is reasonably necessary, to investigate an actual or suspected violation of any traffic law committed in the officer's presence. The investigating officer may serve a copy of the traffic complaint for any alleged civil or criminal traffic violation. (Arizona Revised Statutes (ARS) § 13-3883.A.3).
2. Arrest: An officer may arrest a person if he has probable cause to believe that the person to be arrested has been involved in a traffic collision and violated any criminal section of Title 28, and that such violation occurred prior to or immediately following such traffic collision. (ARS § 13-3883.B).
3. An officer may stop and detain a person, as is reasonably necessary, to investigate an actual or suspected violation of Title 28, and to serve a copy of the traffic complaint for any alleged civil or criminal violation of this title. (ARS § 28-1074).
4. Citations: Officers should issue citations for any violations for which caused or contributed to the collision.
5. Time Requirements: Officers investigating a collision have one hundred and eighty (180) days to issue a civil complaint, and one year to issue a misdemeanor complaint to a violator.

G. Traffic Control

1. At the scene of a traffic collision, the supervisor or ranking officer will be responsible for traffic direction that will protect officers and facilitate the orderly flow of traffic. (61.3.2.a)
2. Employees investigating or assisting with the investigation of a collision will wear a reflective vest at all times when in the roadway. (61.3.2.g)
3. At fire scenes, a supervisor or ranking officer will coordinate any traffic direction plan with the Fire Department supervisor. (61.3.2.c)
4. During periods of adverse weather or road conditions, a supervisor may terminate the scene investigation if in the judgment of the supervisor, to continue the investigation would place officers or the public in a position of danger. (61.3.2.d) (61.2.2)
 - a. Officers may use manual operation of traffic control devices if in the officer's judgment, manual operations would be safer for officers and the public. (61.3.2.e)
 - b. Use of temporary traffic control devices can be utilized during special traffic operations such as: (61.3.2.f)
 - (1) Driving Under the Influence (DUI) checkpoints (61.1.10)
 - (2) Roadblocks (i.e., traffic cones, barricades, or flare pattern)
 - (3) Traffic operations, when in the judgment of a supervisor, such signs will facilitate officers and public safety. Any temporary signs will be in accordance with applicable state statutes and city ordinances.

- H. Uniform Hand Signals: Officers directing or controlling traffic will wear a reflective traffic vest. The use of a whistle is optional and the use of a flashlight is mandatory during time of darkness. The Uniform Hand Signals used shall be those taught at a certified police academy. (61.3.2.b)

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