

SPRINGFIELD POLICE DEPARTMENT

Standard Operating Guideline

Effective Date: 01/23/2020	Supersedes Policy Dated: 08/01/2014	Rescinds:	SOG Number:
Accreditation Index: 81.2.4, 82.2.1, 83.1.1, 83.2.6 ¹			405.5
Part Title: Operations		Chapter Title: Traffic Operations	
Chief of Police:			

Traffic Crash Investigation

I Policy

It is the policy of the Springfield Police Department to respond to traffic crashes to prevent further injury or damage and to conduct an impartial and thorough investigation into the causes of the crash. Where weather or other conditions prevent immediate response, alternative procedures are approved. Investigating officers shall comply with modern professional standards for investigation and reporting of motor vehicle crashes.

II Definitions

LSOC – Leaving the Scene of a Motor Vehicle Crash

III Procedure

1 RESPONSE TO TRAFFIC CRASHES

- 1.1 Department personnel shall respond to all reported motor vehicle crashes involving fatality, injury, LSOC, impairment due to alcohol or drugs, damage to public vehicles or property, hazardous materials, disturbances between involved parties, major traffic congestion, if involved party does not have valid insurance or drivers license, and crashes where towing is required, except private property crashes that do not meet the contained criteria.
- 1.2 Personnel shall ensure that complete and thorough investigations of motor vehicle crashes are conducted.

¹ 5th edition removed from CALEA standard references throughout the document, Policy Change Order 19-017.

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- 1.3 Personnel shall accurately complete all appropriate reports related to traffic crashes.
 - 1.4 Personnel will not be required to respond and investigate or complete a crash report if all the following criteria are met:
 - 1.4.1 No injuries involved to any party.
 - 1.4.2 All vehicles involved are operable and don't need to be towed from the scene.
 - 1.4.3 The crash does not involve damage to any public or private property.
 - 1.4.4 No alcohol/drug-impaired drivers are involved.
 - 1.4.5 No driver leaves or refuses to exchange information with other involved parties.
 - 1.4.6 All drivers have valid proof of insurance.
 - 1.5 If personnel are sent to a crash or come upon a crash that meets the above criteria, they will check to ensure all drivers have a valid operator's license and insurance prior to facilitating the exchange of information for all parties involved.
 - 1.5.1 If any driver does not have a valid operator's license or insurance, then the officer will investigate the crash, complete a Missouri Uniform Crash Report and issue the proper summonses if warranted.
- 2 REPORTING METHODS (CALEA 82.2.1(a) and 83.2.6)
- 2.1 Crash classification decisions and reporting guidelines are pursuant to:
 - 2.1.1 The Missouri State Highway Patrol Accident Investigation Manual, most recent edition and;
 - 2.1.2 The Manual on Classification of Motor Vehicle Traffic Accidents, American National Standard Institute (ANSI), National Safety Council, most recent edition.
 - 2.2 Following the reporting criteria established by the State of Missouri, personnel shall complete a Missouri State Crash Report form for all assigned motor vehicle crashes, including private property crashes that do meet the contained criteria.
 - 2.3 Personnel shall also complete other report forms necessary for each assigned crash. These include but are not limited to:
 - 2.3.1 Incidental Reports;
 - 2.3.2 All forms associated with a DWI arrest;
 - 2.3.3 Vehicle Impound report;
 - 2.3.4 LSOC report;
 - 2.3.5 Criminal Case reports.
- 3 INITIAL RESPONSE
- 3.1 Any on-duty member of the Springfield Police Department may be dispatched as the initial police response to a motor vehicle crash.
 - 3.2 All traffic crashes which do not meet the criteria in section 1.4 of this SOG, will be reported and investigated by police. Even if a crash meets the criteria above, officers

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still have the discretion to investigate and complete an accident report should they feel it is necessary and warranted.

- 3.3 The department personnel first on the scene of a motor vehicle crash shall take steps to ensure that the scene has stabilized.
 - 3.3.1 Personnel shall attempt to ensure that no additional injuries or damage occur.
 - 3.3.1(a) Personnel shall position their police vehicle in such a manner to warn oncoming traffic of the situation and activate emergency lighting system.
 - 3.3.1(b) Personnel first on the scene shall request additional assistance as needed.
- 3.4 Once the scene is protected, the initial on-scene personnel shall check crash victims for injuries.
 - 3.4.1 Personnel shall administer necessary first aid.
 - 3.4.2 Personnel shall request medical assistance if needed, or requested by the victim. In addition, type/extent of injuries should be communicated to Emergency Communications personnel. (CALEA 81.2.4(a))
- 3.5 The first personnel on scene shall be alert for potential hazards.
 - 3.5.1 Personnel shall check for any possible fire hazard. If a fire hazard exists:
 - 3.5.1(a) Personnel shall remove any non-essential people from the scene;
 - 3.5.1(b) Personnel shall request a response to the scene by the Springfield Fire Department.
 - 3.5.2 Personnel shall also be alert for any hazardous materials involved in the crash. Possible hazardous materials can include:
 - 3.5.2(a) Vehicle fluids (gasoline, oil, antifreeze, battery acid, etc.)
 - 3.5.2(b) Hazardous materials being transported in an involved vehicle can be determined by:
 - 3.5.2(b.1) Placards on the side of a truck;
 - 3.5.2(b.2) Shipping papers in the cab of a truck;
 - 3.5.2(b.3) Labels on individual containers inside of a truck;
 - 3.5.2(b.4) Interviewing the truck driver.
 - 3.5.2(c) If it is determined or suspected that hazardous materials are involved in the crash, personnel shall:
 - 3.5.2(c.1) Request a response by the Springfield Fire Department;
 - 3.5.2(c.2) Remove all people from the immediate area of the crash, giving consideration to wind direction;
 - 3.5.2(c.3) Request additional traffic control;
 - 3.5.2(c.4) Request a supervisor. (CALEA 81.2.4(f))

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- 3.5.2(d) Some crashes involve antifreeze/gasoline leakage and other potentially hazardous materials from the vehicle(s).
 - 3.5.2(d.1) Personnel must assess the need for assistance in cleanup considering the type and quantity of the substance. (Consult HazMat Guidebook);
 - 3.5.2(d.2) Any material requiring removal from the scene requires Fire Department response;
 - 3.5.2(d.3) Other spills requiring use of absorbent materials only can be controlled by callout of City of Springfield Service Center staff. Service Center personnel are not qualified to remove hazardous materials.
- 3.5.2(e) If blood/body fluids remain on the scene after departure of medical personnel, the investigating officer may coordinate with the Fire Department to neutralize the blood/body fluids and wash the waste off the roadway.

4 ASSIGNMENT OF CRASH INVESTIGATOR

- 4.1 Every effort shall be made to assign the appropriate personnel to investigate motor vehicle crashes based upon the seriousness of the crash.
- 4.2 Traffic Section Officers shall be the primary investigator unit on the following motor vehicle crash types:
 - 4.2.1 Fatality or probable fatality crashes;
 - 4.2.2 Injury crashes;
- 4.3 If a Traffic Section Officer is not available, the primary investigator unit shall be assigned in the following order:
 - 4.3.1 Patrol Major Crimes Investigator (MCI);
 - 4.3.2 Patrol police officer;
 - 4.3.3 Traffic Section Sergeant;
 - 4.3.4 Patrol Section Sergeant.

5 ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- 5.1 The primary officer assigned to investigate a motor vehicle crash shall request additional resources as needed to safely and accurately complete the assignment.
- 5.2 Situations which might require additional resources:
 - 5.2.1 Fatality crashes;
 - 5.2.2 Major injury crashes;
 - 5.2.3 And/or crashes involving extreme traffic congestion.
- 5.3 Resources available are:

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- 5.3.1 Additional personnel to provide traffic direction/control:
 - 5.3.1(a) Traffic Section personnel;
 - 5.3.1(b) Patrol Section personnel;
 - 5.3.1(c) Personnel from another agency (MSHP, GCSO, etc.).
- 5.3.2 Specialized equipment/personnel to complete measurements, photographing, and other activities.
- 5.3.3 Information may be relayed to local media to inform citizens about congestion and approximately how long the condition will continue.
- 5.3.4 Barricades and other warning devices:
 - 5.3.4(a) Springfield City Service Center/Street Department (city maintained roads);
 - 5.3.4(b) Missouri State Highway Department (state maintained roads);
 - 5.3.4(c) Private vendors (with commander approval).

6 CRASH INVESTIGATION (CALEA 83.2.6)

- 6.1 Department personnel shall complete a thorough and accurate investigation of assigned, reportable motor vehicle crashes.
- 6.2 A reportable motor vehicle crash is an unintentional event, occurring on a traffic way, involving a motor vehicle in transport which causes death, injury, or property damage.
- 6.3 Assigned personnel should complete a Missouri Uniform Crash Report form as the primary report document for motor vehicle crashes.
- 6.4 The Missouri Uniform Crash Report form shall be completed in accordance with the most recent edition of the "Missouri Uniform Crash Report Preparation Manual."
- 6.5 Information that cannot be included on the report form shall be recorded on the appropriate departmental report form(s).
- 6.6 Assigned personnel shall ensure that all drivers involved in motor vehicle crashes, that are capable of doing so, exchange information with each other. This information should include the other driver's:
 - 6.6.1 Name;
 - 6.6.2 Vehicle owner's name;
 - 6.6.3 Vehicle license number;
 - 6.6.4 Vehicle information;
 - 6.6.5 Vehicle insurance information.
- 6.7 All drivers involved in the crash, that are capable of receiving the information, shall be supplied with the police report number, the time of the report, location of the crash and the investigating officer's name with contact telephone.

7 INVESTIGATION AT A MOTOR VEHICLE CRASH SCENE

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- 7.1 Assigned personnel shall use all available information and resources to complete the investigation.
 - 7.2 Assigned personnel shall attempt to separate involved drivers before questioning them about the crash.
 - 7.3 Assigned personnel shall attempt to locate unbiased witnesses to the crash.
 - 7.3.1 Passengers in a vehicle involved in the crash should not be considered to be unbiased. However, officers may still document any statement given by a passenger, if pertinent to the investigation.
 - 7.3.2 Witnesses should be interviewed and their information should be noted.
 - 7.3.3 Witnesses' names, addresses, and daytime phone numbers should be obtained and recorded on the crash report form.
 - 7.4 Assigned personnel shall evaluate physical evidence at the scene to support or discredit the involved persons' claims.
 - 7.4.1 The approximate area of impact should be determined if possible. Officers should pay particular attention to tire marks, scuffs, gouges, and debris. If applicable, measurements/photographs should be taken.
 - 7.4.2 The damage, location and amount, on all involved vehicles should be assessed.
 - 7.4.3 The conditions of the area of the crash should be described.
 - 7.4.4 The road conditions (wet, dry, icy, etc.)
 - 7.4.5 The condition of traffic control devices.
 - 7.4.6 The terrain of the area.
 - 7.4.7 The presence of obstacles to the drivers' vision.
 - 7.5 Officers should create a diagram of the scene. (CALEA 83.2.6)
 - 7.6 If applicable, assigned personnel shall check the condition of the vehicles involved.
 - 7.6.1 Press brake pedal to check travel and firmness.
 - 7.6.2 Check for vision obscuring articles within the vehicle (other occupant, ice, snow, frost, load, etc.)
 - 7.6.3 Check for functioning windshield wipers.
 - 7.6.4 Check the condition of the vehicle's tires.
 - 7.6.5 Check for functioning vehicle lights.
 - 7.7 Assigned personnel shall monitor the drivers and determine any unusual conditions.
 - 7.7.1 Personnel shall be alert for signs of impairment due to alcohol and/or drugs.
 - 7.7.2 Check for any physical limitations of the drivers.
 - 7.7.3 Check for any signs that a minor injury may be more serious.
- 8 MOTOR VEHICLE CRASH VICTIM'S PROPERTY**
- 8.1 Investigating personnel shall be responsible for the security of crash victim's property at the scene if the victim is unable to care for it.

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- 8.2 If a victim is transported from the scene, personnel shall attempt to have small items of value transported with the victim. These may include but are not limited to:
 - 8.2.1 Wallets, billfolds, purses;
 - 8.2.2 Checkbooks;
 - 8.2.3 Jewelry;
 - 8.2.4 Items possibly containing cash (bank bags, etc.)
 - 8.2.5 Prescription drugs.
- 8.3 Items of value may be released to family members of the victim or can be logged into the property room marked for release.
- 8.4 If a custody tow is required for the victim's vehicle, personnel shall complete an inventory of the vehicle and record the contents on a Crime Inquiry and Inspection Report/Authorization to Tow form DOR-4569. (CALEA 83.2.6)

9 TOWING OF VEHICLES INVOLVED IN A MOTOR VEHICLE CRASH

- 9.1 Assigned personnel shall be responsible for ensuring that vehicles involved in a crash are removed from the scene in a timely manner.
- 9.2 Personnel shall attempt to honor any request made by a crash victim in regards to their personal preference for the removal of their vehicle from a crash scene by a towing service. Consideration should be given to:
 - 9.2.1 Response time of the towing service;
 - 9.2.2 Existing traffic congestion, and;
 - 9.2.3 Number of calls-for-service holding.
- 9.3 If a victim has no preference for a towing company, personnel shall have the victim select a tow service from the City-approved rotation tow list.
- 9.4 If a victim is incapacitated and cannot select a tow service, the custody tow services shall tow their vehicle.
- 9.5 If there is the possibility of felony charges being filed on a driver (Second Degree Assault, Manslaughter, etc.), a custody tow must be used and a "HOLD" placed on the vehicle. All vehicles involved in a fatality crash should be towed with a "HOLD" placed on the vehicle and a copy of the tow form sent to the Traffic Section.

10 CLEARING OF DEBRIS FROM A CRASH SCENE

- 10.1 Personnel shall ensure that all potentially harmful debris is removed from the crash scene.
- 10.2 If a tow company is called to remove a vehicle from the scene, assigned personnel shall ensure that the tow truck operator removes all debris.
- 10.3 If no tow company is needed at the scene, assigned personnel shall request the appropriate agency be notified to remove the debris.

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- 10.3.1 On a city-maintained roadway and/or right-of-way, the City Service Center shall be requested.
- 10.3.2 On a state-maintained roadway and/or right-of-way, the State Highway Department shall be requested.
- 10.4 Debris at the scene in LSOC incidents that possibly came from the suspect vehicle may be collected as evidence.
 - 10.4.1 Debris collected as evidence should be of such nature that it could be used to match with the suspect vehicle. Articles such as dirt, fluids, etc. should not be collected.
 - 10.4.2 Debris collected as evidence shall be handled in the same manner as all evidentiary items.
- 10.5 If a small amount of debris exists and personnel responsible for removing it have not arrived by the time the officer completes the crash investigation, the officer should attempt to remove the debris out of the roadway (to the curb line, on the parkway, etc.).

11 LSOC INVESTIGATIONS

- 11.1 An LSOC shall be handled in the same manner as other motor vehicle crashes, with some additional investigation necessary.
- 11.2 As soon as possible, after arriving at the scene of a hit and run crash, personnel shall relay information about the suspect vehicle to other personnel. Personnel should determine and relay:
 - 11.2.1 Suspect vehicle description and possible damage from the crash;
 - 11.2.2 Suspect vehicle direction of travel;
 - 11.2.3 Number and description of suspect vehicle occupants, if available;
 - 11.2.4 Probable cause on the suspect vehicle.
- 11.3 Personnel assigned to the initial investigation should make every reasonable attempt to locate the LSOC suspect/vehicle.
 - 11.3.1 If the suspect vehicle is located the investigating personnel shall mark the appropriate boxes on the report form.
 - 11.3.2 If the suspect vehicle is not located, the investigating personnel shall complete a Leaving the Scene of an Accident Report.
- 11.4 If the initial investigating officer determines that there is sufficient evidence for follow up, (i.e. witness that can identify suspect, suspect vehicle license information, or other suspect identifying information), the officer may advise the victim that a LSOC investigator will be contacting them.

12 CITIZEN CRASH REPORTS

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- 12.1 Citizens may obtain a Citizen Crash Report, SPD Form # 94-SP-0139 from HQ or SDS records personnel. The report is also available on the SPD website. Officers are encouraged to have these reports available to hand out to citizens when appropriate. This may be done in a number of situations.
 - 12.1.1 Citizen Crash Reports may be completed when the department was not notified at the time the crash occurred.
 - 12.1.2 Citizens will be advised to complete a Citizen Crash Report when their crash meets the following criteria:
 - 12.1.2(a) No injuries involved to any party.
 - 12.1.2(b) All vehicles involved are operable and don't need to be towed from the scene.
 - 12.1.2(c) The crash does not involve damage to any public or private property.
 - 12.1.2(d) No alcohol/drug-impaired drivers are involved.
 - 12.1.2(e) No driver leaves or refuses to exchange information with other involved parties.
 - 12.1.2(f) All drivers have valid proof of insurance.

13 PRIVATE PROPERTY MOTOR VEHICLE CRASHES

- 13.1 Under certain circumstances personnel will be assigned to investigate private property motor vehicle crashes. These conditions are:
 - 13.1.1 The crash is an injury crash;
 - 13.1.2 A suspected alcohol/drug-impaired driver is involved;
 - 13.1.3 It is a LSOC and sufficient evidence exists to facilitate a follow-up investigation;
 - 13.1.4 A government owned vehicle is involved;
 - 13.1.5 Exceptional circumstances exist including:
 - 13.1.5(a) Motor vehicle driven into a building;
 - 13.1.5(b) Public utilities are left damaged or interrupted, as determined by a supervisor;
 - 13.1.5(c) As otherwise determined by a supervisor or commander.

14 MOTOR VEHICLE CRASH FOLLOW UP INVESTIGATION

- 14.1 All fatality crashes shall be assigned to a Traffic Section officer for follow up investigation.
- 14.2 Follow up assignment of injury/non-injury crashes:
 - 14.2.1 Traffic Section officers assigned to the initial investigation shall be responsible for any follow up that is necessary.
 - 14.2.2 Patrol Section officers will be responsible for follow up investigation on crashes they initially investigate, where extensive follow up is not indicated. Patrol

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supervisors can determine whether or not additional investigation is needed and forward the case to the Traffic Section for follow up if appropriate.

14.2.3 Follow-up investigation of DWI-related assaults will be assigned to a Traffic Section corporal.²

14.3 Follow up on an LSOC shall be handled by a LSOC investigator after the initial investigator's efforts to identify/locate the suspect.

15 MOTOR VEHICLE CRASH FOLLOW UP PROCEDURES

15.1 Upon receipt of notification that an officer is assigned to follow up on a motor vehicle crash, the officer should:

15.1.1 Ensure their supervisor is aware of the circumstances surrounding the event;

15.1.2 Positive identification should be obtained if at all possible;

15.1.3 If a fatality, next of kin shall be notified as soon as possible;

15.1.4 Complete STARS (Statewide Traffic Accident Reporting System) within 24 hours of notification of death and media release;

15.1.5 Review available reports;

15.1.6 Obtain information from officers involved in the investigation;

15.1.7 Ensure all potential witnesses have been contacted/interviewed;

15.1.8 Review evidence and/or collect additional evidence;

15.1.9 Locate and interview suspect;

15.1.10 Obtain and serve search warrant for vehicle inspection, medical records and any other items of evidentiary value. (Subpoena may be used for medical records;)

15.1.11 Complete scale diagram if necessary;

15.1.12 Complete additional reports and Criminal Case Report;

15.1.13 Supervisory review;

15.1.14 Complete criminal history and driving history of suspect(s);

15.1.15 Present to prosecutor's office for filing/decline to file charges.

16 THE ENFORCEMENT DECISION FOLLOWING INVESTIGATION

16.1 Immediate enforcement applied.

16.1.1 Only when clear evidence exists of a violation of ordinance or state statute.

16.1.2 Decision to effect custodial arrest must be in compliance with SOG 101.4, Use of Discretion.

16.1.3 When not in conflict with any of the provisions of section 16.2.

16.2 No Summons to be Issued.

16.2.1 A summons shall not be issued at the time of the investigation if:

² Section 14.2.3 revised to change the follow up investigator, Policy Change Order 19-017.

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- 16.2.1(a) The driver has been admitted to the hospital;
 - 16.2.1(a.1) A summons may be issued upon release from the hospital.
 - 16.2.1(b) A possibility of felony charges being filed at a later time exists (e.g. 2nd Degree Assault, Manslaughter);
 - 16.2.1(c) The driver is an on-duty Police Department employee. These may be issued following an internal investigation;
 - 16.2.1(d) More follow up investigation is required;
 - 16.2.1(e) It has been determined that no violation of a statute or ordinance has occurred.
- 16.3 Exceptional circumstances
- 16.3.1 Issue summonses to both parties if investigation indicates that both have violated ordinance or statute.
 - 16.3.2 Decline to issue summonses to either party if investigation fails to provide clear evidence of violation of ordinance or statute.
 - 16.3.2(a) Reasons should be clear, articulated and written into the report.
 - 16.3.2(b) Supervisors should review closely and ensure reporting is clear and complete.
- 16.4 Summons information shall not be listed on the Missouri Uniform Crash Report.
- 16.5 Under no circumstances shall an officer advise a party that the reason they are issuing a summons is because the Department policy requires them to. Department policy never requires the issuance of a summons when it is inappropriate or legally unjustifiable to do so, and, in such cases, officers shall not issue a summons.
- 16.6 If an officer determines that a summons has been issued in error during the on-scene crash investigation process, the officer should void the summons as provided in SOG 405.3, Traffic Enforcement Procedures.
- 17 CALL OUT OF OFF-DUTY TRAFFIC INVESTIGATORS (CALEA 83.1.1)
- 17.1 Traffic Section personnel have specialized investigation skills that may be called upon to investigate fatal, potentially fatal, and unusual circumstances.
 - 17.2 The Traffic Section Commander should be contacted in all circumstances to make a determination on the call out of off-duty Traffic Section personnel.
 - 17.2.1 Some of the criteria used in determining if Traffic Section personnel should be called out are:
 - 17.2.1(a) A fatality with the potential of felony charges;
 - 17.2.1(b) Unusual circumstances as determined by the Traffic Section Commander.
- 18 NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES

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18.1 Personnel assigned to investigate a confirmed fatality crash shall notify their immediate supervisor. The supervisor shall ensure that other department personnel are notified including:

18.1.1 The Patrol Watch Commander, if on duty;

18.1.2 The Traffic Section Commander;

18.1.3 The commander notified shall be responsible for the remaining chain of command notification.

IV Attachments