

BLOOMINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

TRAFFIC CRASH INVESTIGATION

Reviewed by: Lt. Paul Williams	Effective Date: February 28, 2020
Authorized by: Chief Dan Donath	Revision Date: February 28, 2020

PURPOSE

The policy of the Bloomington Police Department is to investigate traffic crashes in the City of Bloomington. The purpose of the following guideline is to maintain a standard and consistent procedure for traffic crash reporting by the members of the Bloomington Police Department. The authority to investigate traffic crashes is stated in the Illinois Vehicle Code, Chapter 625, sections 11-401 and 11-407.

PROCEDURE

Traffic crash reports will be completed and submitted using the iyeTek electronic crash reporting system.

REPORTING ACCIDENT

1. A Bloomington police officer, Community Service Officer (CSO), or dispatcher receiving a report of a traffic crash by telephone or other means shall:
 - a. Attempt to determine injuries.
 - b. Request an ambulance or other necessary equipment if applicable.
2. Officers who observe, or are notified by the public, of a motor vehicle crash, shall notify the dispatcher of the location and conduct the investigation, unless otherwise directed. An on-duty police supervisor will respond to all accidents involving a Bloomington Police vehicle. In rare situations, a Vice Unit car may be involved in a crash. In order to maintain the integrity of a covert investigation, this directive may be altered. The supervisor in charge of the covert operation will later provide the Chief of Police with a memo detailing the circumstances surrounding the accident involving the covert vehicle.
3. The supervisor shall determine the need for traffic crash reconstruction.
4. An accident report shall be made by an officer or CSO, then submitted and approved by a supervisor.
5. All traffic crash reports shall be submitted at the end of the officer's tour of duty. If further investigation is to be done the officer will notify the shift commander. At a minimum, the face sheet of the crash report will be completed.
6. The reporting officer or CSO shall provide each involved driver with a completed pre-printed LexisNexis e-crash exchange of information card. The officer or CSO shall place the crash report number, their name, date of crash, other involved parties' names, agency name, and the number of days until the report will be available on this card.

AT SCENE INVESTIGATION

Upon arrival at the scene of an accident, the responding officer will:

1. Park the police vehicle in a conspicuous place, legally if possible, but in any event not to be, or create, a hazard.
2. Determine injuries, summon an ambulance if needed and render first aid if practical. Injured persons will not be transported in a police vehicle unless authorized by a shift commander.
3. Protect injured persons, damaged vehicles, personal property and locate the area of impact if possible.
4. Move vehicles from traffic lanes and restore normal traffic flow as soon as possible.
5. Investigate hit and run crashes.
6. Call for additional assistance as needed.
7. When fire equipment is called to extricate persons, the ranking officer of the Fire Department at the scene shall be in charge of that operation until such rescue has been terminated.
8. In situations where there is a disturbance between the involved parties the officer shall, attempt to separate those involved and take the appropriate law enforcement action required to resolve the situation. Officers are reminded to take into consideration that the subjects may be emotionally charged due to the accident itself.

Field Investigation Steps

1. Locate drivers of all vehicles involved.
2. Locate all witnesses.
3. Obtain statements of drivers and witnesses.
4. Compare statements and evaluate.
5. Officers shall complete electronic crash reports when:
 - a. All drivers are insured and damage is estimated at \$1500.00 or more.
 - b. Both drivers do not have insurance and damage is estimated at \$500.00 or more.
6. Observe drivers for physical conditions, including personal injury sustained in the accident. If the driver appears to be under the influence of intoxicating liquors or drugs, the investigating officer shall investigate and arrest if probable cause for DUI is present.
7. Note the physical conditions at the scene. Check the scene for hazards and defects in the road, lighting, signs, signals, etc. Hazards or defects present shall immediately be reported to the proper departments.
8. Officers shall determine if the driver of the vehicle is either the owner or has legal authority to be in possession of the vehicle and issue citations as appropriate.
9. The scene should be cleared of debris.
10. Officers shall determine if any mechanical failures or deficiencies contributed to the accident and, if so, issue citations. Examples of a mechanical deficiency include, but are not limited to: inoperable windshield wipers, inoperable headlights, obstructed windshields etc.
11. Victims should be contacted at the hospital if necessary, to obtain further information.

FORMAT

1. In the event of a "hit and run" traffic crash, the officer will record all available information and check the box marked Hit/Run Report. Under no circumstances shall persons be instructed to report to the front desk for a crash report unless a traffic crash alert is in effect.
2. Out of state drivers involved in traffic crashes may be issued a citation the same as Illinois residents.
3. Officers shall not indicate that charges are "pending or incomplete" when they are unable to determine the violation(s) in such situations as both drivers having the green light, both drivers claiming the other changed lanes, etc. These cases should be carried as "no charges due to conflicting statements and lack of physical evidence" and recorded as such in the body of the report. The members of the Bloomington Police Department do not find fault at the traffic crash scene; however, they do write tickets for violation(s) of the traffic law which they find at the traffic crash scene or through later investigation.
4. In general, traffic crash reports may be taken at the front desk when all drivers involved are present. A supervisor may authorize a report to be taken at the front desk when a driver is hospitalized, or the accident is a hit-and-run and there is no information on the skip driver.

PRIVATE PROPERTY TRAFFIC CRASH INVESTIGATION

1. Officers will be dispatched on private property traffic crashes. Under the following conditions, a report shall be taken:
 - a. Complaint of personal injury.
 - b. Driving Under the Influence.
 - c. Leaving the scene of an accident.
 - d. Both drivers are insured and damage is estimated at \$1500.00 or more.
 - e. Either driver is uninsured and damages are estimated at \$500.00 or more.
 - f. Any of the involved parties request that a report be taken.
2. If none of the above-mentioned circumstances have occurred, the responding officer will inform the drivers of the vehicles involved that a report will not be necessary for our department, and none will be taken.
3. The officer will inform the drivers to contact their insurance companies to settle any claim.

FATAL OR NEAR FATAL TRAFFIC CRASHES

1. The investigation of a fatal or near fatal injury traffic crash does not follow the same procedure as an ordinary traffic crash investigation. The responding officer shall complete a traffic crash report.
2. Care should be exercised in preserving all physical evidence at the scene until needed evidence has been collected and measurements and photographs are taken.
3. Officers arriving at the scene of a fatal or near fatal traffic crash will notify the Shift Commander. The Shift Commander will notify the Traffic Crash Reconstructionist. The appropriate officers and staff are listed in SOP 1.08.
4. If there are crash investigators on duty at the time of the accident, one should be sent to the scene. The scene should be completely preserved. Vehicles, debris and all other items involved in the traffic crash, other than injured persons, should be secured in their place until released by the investigator in charge.
5. Formal statements should be taken from all persons involved in the traffic crash and from witnesses to the traffic crash. This should be done as soon as possible as directed by the Traffic Crash Reconstructionist or detective.

6. Ambulance attendants at the traffic crash scene will make the determination to transport an injured person.
7. The authority to remove deceased persons at the scene of fatal vehicle accidents rests with the Coroner only. The Bloomington Police Department will not authorize the removal of any deceased person.
8. The body of the deceased person at the scene of an accident will not be searched for identification. Identification of the deceased will be made later by the Coroner.
9. Appropriate measure(s) will be taken to preserve the dignity of deceased persons at the scene. Examples of appropriate measures may be, but are not limited to, using police or fire department vehicles to obstruct views, using available tarps or setting a perimeter large enough to shield the scene from public view.
10. When practical, an on-duty supervisor should respond to the scene and take responsibility.
11. When the scene is released by investigators, the on-duty supervisor shall ensure the roadway is cleaned up. The on-duty supervisor may request the contracted towing service to clean debris from the roadway. The on-duty supervisor may also request the fire department to spray water on the roadway to remove liquid debris from the roadway.