

Maryland-National Capital Park Police
Prince George's County Division

DIVISION DIRECTIVE

TITLE TRAFFIC COLLISION INVESTIGATION			PROCEDURE NUMBER PG428.0
SECTION Operational Procedures	DISTRIBUTION A	EFFECTIVE DATE 06/01/04	REVIEW DATE 06/01/06
REPLACES PG428.0 "Traffic Collision Investigation", issued 02/15/02			
RELATED DIRECTIVES PG430.0, 1500.0	REFERENCES CALEA 1, 61	AUTHORITY Commander Larry M. Brownlee, Sr.- Division Chief	

I. PURPOSE

This directive establishes policy and procedures relating to the investigation and reporting of all motor vehicle traffic collisions.

II. POLICY

It is the Division's policy to document and investigate all traffic collisions meeting the criteria listed in this directive. Collision investigations have six purposes: to assist injured parties, determine traffic law violations, protect the rights of all individuals involved, obtain engineering data, assist in traffic safety education, and notify the Commission of any present or potential traffic way hazard involving engineering design, defects or other deficiencies.

Whenever an accident is investigated, a Motor Vehicle Accident Report (MAARS-Form MSP 1) will be completed when appropriate. Accident reports are prepared in conformance with the provisions of the Maryland Automated Accident Reporting System (MAARS Manual).

III. GENERAL PROCEDURES

- A. One or more officers will be assigned by Communications personnel to respond to the scene of any collision on Commission property or roadways involving:
1. death or injury;
 2. hit and run in progress;
 3. impairment of an operator due to alcohol or drugs;
 4. damage to public vehicles or property;
 5. hazardous materials;
 6. disturbances between principals;

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7. major traffic congestion as a result of a collision; or
 8. damage to vehicles to the extent towing is required.
- B. Officers coming upon or being notified of collisions at any location will immediately notify Communications and follow all other pertinent sections of this directive.
- C. The primary officer assigned to a collision by Communications or a supervisor will be the officer in charge at the collision scene.
- D. Whenever the investigating officer detects a traffic law violation during a collision investigation and evidence exists to satisfy all of the elements of the particular violation, enforcement action may be taken.
- In all fatal collisions **and** all serious injury collisions where death may result, the investigating officer will notify the Prince George's County Police Department to take over the investigation in accordance with the Mutual Aid Agreement.
- E. In the case of civilian collisions occurring on private property, as defined in the MAARS Manual, no reports will be made or investigations conducted.
- F. All patrol vehicles utilized by officers to investigate traffic collisions will be equipped with the following items, at a minimum:
1. first aid kit;
 2. sealed disposable blanket;
 3. fire extinguisher; and
 4. flares.
- G. In accordance with the Mutual Aid Agreement, Prince George's County Police will be notified to investigate any and all collisions involving death or life threatening injury.
1. When a collision reconstruction specialist responds to a collision scene and is to conduct a reconstruction, that officer will be in charge of the collision scene and subsequent investigation.
 2. Whenever a collision reconstruction specialist is requested at a collision scene, pending their arrival, the scene is not to be disturbed or altered in any manner other than for those measures necessary for safety, extrication, rescue and life saving.
 3. A collision reconstruction specialist may utilize other expert and technical assistance during their investigation in those instances where it would be beneficial to the investigation. Requests will be approved by the reconstruction coordinator.

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IV. AT-SCENE STABILIZATION ACTIVITIES

- A. It is the responsibility of the first officer(s) at the scene of a traffic collision to position the police vehicle to protect the scene and provide adequate notice to approaching traffic.
- B. Other duties will be carried out as required, including:
 - 1. Administer emergency medical care and provide basic life support
 - 2. Summons necessary fire/rescue assistance
 - 3. Notifying Communications for the containment and removal of any hazardous materials
 - 4. Summons additional police assistance
 - 5. Protect the collision scene
 - 6. Preserve any short lived evidence
 - 7. Establish a safe traffic pattern around the scene
 - 8. Locate witnesses, and
 - 9. Protect and assist fire/rescue personnel.
- C. Officers at the scene will ensure that sufficient precautions are taken to provide for traffic direction and control at and around the collision scene. Officers may request the use of barricades, flares, traffic cones and detours as necessary to accomplish this.
- D. Officers arriving at a collision scene and detecting injured persons will immediately request fire/rescue assistance, if it is not already en route. It is the responsibility of arriving officers to provide basic life support until fire/rescue personnel arrive.
- E. Officers arriving at a collision scene and detecting a fire hazard will immediately request fire/rescue assistance, if it is not already en route. It is the responsibility of arriving officers to provide fire suppression services until fire/rescue personnel arrive.
- F. Officers arriving at a collision scene and detecting a hazardous material will immediately request fire/rescue assistance, if it is not already en route. It is the responsibility of arriving officers to isolate the hazard area and evacuate non-essential personnel. Officers on the scene prior to fire/rescue are also responsible for preliminary hazard identification (spill, leak, fire) and identification of vehicle and container placards.
 - Only properly trained and equipped officers will attempt to enter areas where hazardous materials may be encountered.
- G. The investigating officer will ensure that all property belonging to collision victims transported from the scene is protected from theft or pilferage and is removed for safekeeping if the owner is unable to care for it. Vehicles being towed, where the owner or operator is not present, will be inventoried and all valuables removed (Division Directive 430.0- "Vehicle Impounds"). These valuables, as well as any other property belonging to persons transported from the scene, will be listed on a Property Report and turned over to the Property Specialist.

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V. COLLISION REPORTS AND RECORDS

- A. An investigation will be conducted and a written report will be made of all collisions where an officer responds to the scene and the collision involves:
- *1. Death or life threatening injury
 2. Minor injury
 3. Property damage (other than to involved vehicles)
 4. Property damage hit and run where a striking vehicle description is available
 5. Impairment of a driver due to alcohol or drugs
 6. Damage to any vehicle which necessitates towing, or
 7. Hazardous materials (other than normal vehicle-use fluids).
- * In these instances Prince George's County Police will investigate the collision in accordance with the Mutual Aid Agreement.
- B. Officers responding to or coming upon collisions on park property which do not meet the reporting criteria will advise the operators that it is their responsibility to exchange information required by state law. The officer will then distribute a Vehicle Accident Letter (Form PGCPP 92-01 attached) to all principles involved in the collision.
1. The officer will make a license and registration check of each operator and vehicle involved. Any violations may be cited without conducting a collision investigation.
 2. The officer will ensure that the scene is cleared from the roadway and may remain at the scene to ensure that the information exchange is done peacefully.
 3. Officers will identify owners of damaged property and notify them of damage, providing them with all appropriate information regarding the striking vehicle and operator.
- C. All reportable collisions will be documented on MSP FORM 1 (the MAARS report) utilizing the procedures outlined in the MAARS Instruction and Reference Manual. A Park Police Continuation Report will be used for the narrative continuation and any follow-up investigation or information. In addition to the diagram on MSP FORM 1, a detailed diagram **may** be done on a separate page and attached to the report. Every continuation and attachment page **must** reference the MAARS form report number (upper left corner in red).
- D. No report or investigation is required in instances where the vehicles have been moved from the scene and no death or injury resulted from the collision.

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- E. Collision Reconstruction Reports
 - 1. Reconstruction specialists will complete the reconstruction report in a timely manner. Once completed the supervisor and/or investigator will receive a copy and forward it to Records Management Section with other required reports.
- F. The Park Police Records Section will be the official repository for all MAARS reports and reconstruction reports.
 - 1. All reconstruction reports will be placed in a folder or other container which keeps all of the materials together and secure. These reports will be filed separate from the MAARS reports.
- G. Officers will document any present or potential traffic way hazard involving engineering design, defects or other deficiencies in their report and request that a copy be sent to Risk Management.

VI. COMMISSION VEHICLE COLLISIONS

- A. Collisions Involving Division Vehicles
 - 1. Whenever a Division employee is involved in a traffic or non-traffic collision, the employee will immediately notify the Communications Section and provide the following information:
 - a. The exact location of the collision.
 - b. The severity of the collision - property damage or personal injury.
 - c. Any assistance required - fire/rescue, etc.
 - 2. The involved employee will take necessary steps to safeguard the collision scene until an investigator and/or supervisor arrives and will not move the involved vehicles until instructed to do so by either the investigator or supervisory personnel.
 - 3. Upon notification of the collision, the Communications Section will immediately request fire/rescue services as necessary and notify the involved employee's immediate supervisor and the Operations Duty Officer, if on-duty.
 - 4. When the collision occurs off Commission property, the dispatcher will notify the appropriate police agency.
 - 5. If the collision occurs within the jurisdiction of the Commission, the officer's immediate supervisor will be the primary investigator of the collision. The

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employee's supervisor if not available will be replaced by another available field operations supervisor who will respond to the scene and be responsible for the preparation of the Commander's Report and the Report of Investigation which will include a narrative statement of facts and a report of findings. Non-traffic collisions that do not meet the criteria for reporting on a MAARS report will be documented on an Incident Report. The investigating supervisor will be responsible for completing the Report of Investigation within seven (7) days and making a recommendation of action to the Chief, Park Police Division.

6. If the collision occurs off Commission property the collision will be investigated by the appropriate police agency. The Park Police supervisor assigned to investigate the collision for Departmental reasons may assist the primary police agency's collision investigator as appropriate. The Park Police supervisor/investigator at the scene will obtain the automobile insurance information from all non-Commission drivers involved in the collision. That information and the other agency's case information will be documented on an Incident Report. If the other agency determines a non-traffic collision does not meet the criteria for a MAARS report, and declines to investigate, the Park Police supervisor/investigator will document the details of the collision on the Incident Report. The investigating supervisor will submit a Commander's Report and Incident Report. The investigating supervisor will be responsible for completing the Report of Investigation within seven (7) days and making a recommendation of action to the Chief, Park Police Division.
 - The investigating supervisor will be responsible for obtaining a copy of the other agency's police report (MAARS).
7. Photographs will be taken of all collisions involving Division vehicles. Photographs will be taken of the entire collision scene and its surroundings as well as areas damaged on property and vehicles as well as other pertinent items.
8. In collisions involving death or life threatening injury, on or off park property, Prince George's County Police will be the primary investigating authority according to the Mutual Aid Agreement. In collisions involving significant property damage, off park property Prince George's County Police will investigate, on park property Park Police will investigate. In all cases a collision reconstruction specialist may be requested to respond to the scene of the collision and assist the supervisor with their investigation.
9. In all incidents that are not defined as traffic collisions in the Maryland Automated Accident Report System Manual (MAARS) "no loss, damage or

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injury has occurred”, the investigating supervisor shall submit the following reports with an Incident Reporting Number (IRN) or CCN and disseminate as described in Appendix 1:

- a. Miscellaneous Incident Report (MIR)
- b. Photographs
- c. MCI Worker’s Compensation Report
- d. Commander’s Report
- e. Officer’s Statement
- f. Witness Statements
- g. Supervisor’s Memo (Report of Investigation) - See Appendix 2

10. In all motor vehicle collisions meeting the MAARS criteria of an accident defined as: “loss must occur (injury or property damage) and the loss must not be intentional”, the investigating supervisor shall submit the following with a IRN or CCN on all items:

- a. Miscellaneous Incident Report (MIR)
- b. Photographs
- c. MCI Worker’s Compensation Report
- d. Commander’s Report
- e. Officer’s Statement
- f. Witness Statements
- g. Report of Investigation Memo (from investigating supervisor)
- h. MAARS Report
- i. Three (3) damage estimates
- j. Mechanical Evaluation Form
- k. Any other documentation - See Appendix 2

Should any of the listed documents not be applicable, an explanation should be stated in the Report of Investigation.

11. All reports written by this Division will be completed by the investigating supervisor. The completion of these reports will not be delegated to a subordinate.
12. Sergeants will be the primary investigating supervisors for all Division accidents, with lieutenants as a secondary option when no sergeants are available. This includes accidents involving civilian, support operations, and management personnel. Accidents involving lieutenants and above will be investigated by sergeants.
13. If there is a serious violation of misconduct noted by the investigating supervisor, a Complaint Concerning Police Practices will be submitted pursuant to Division Directive PG1500.0 - “LEOBR”. The Complaint Concerning Police Practices along with the Report of Investigation and other paperwork will be

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forwarded to the Chief, Park Police Division.

- a. Internal Affairs Section will be notified immediately by the senior duty officer in these instances. Internal Affairs will respond and initiate an investigation into the alleged misconduct.

B. Collisions Involving Other Commission Vehicles

1. When officers investigate a traffic or a non-traffic collision involving vehicles owned by the Commission occurring on Commission property, the following procedures will be followed:
 - a. Complete a MAARS report for each traffic collision involving a motor vehicle owned by the Commission, where there is personal injury or damage to property; **OR**
 - b. Complete an Incident report for each non-traffic collision involving a motor vehicle owned by the Commission, where the collision can be classified as a non-traffic collision, there is no personal injury and damage is confined to Commission-owned vehicles or property.

Examples:

- * A Commission truck runs off Sligo Parkway and strikes a tree. MAARS report submitted.
- * A Commission truck backs into a light pole at the Glenridge Maintenance Yard parking lot and there is damage to the pole or the truck only. Incident report submitted.
- * A Commission vehicle strikes a parked motor vehicle while driving through the Fairland Athletic area parking lot. MAARS report submitted.

2. The investigating officer will observe the following special instructions when completing the MAARS report:
 - a. Indicate ownership of the Commission vehicle as M-NCPPC and include the Division or unit to which the vehicle is assigned.
 - b. Include the automobile insurance information from the drivers of all non-Commission vehicles involved. Enter self-insured for the Commission vehicle.
2. Collisions occurring off of Commission property will be handled by the Prince George's County Police Department or the appropriate police agency. Officers from this Division will respond to these collisions and document the collision on an MIR for Risk Management. Officers will include the other party's information

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such as: owner/operator name and passenger's names, addresses, phone numbers, date of births, vehicle registration (VIN and license plate numbers), and insurance information. Officers will give the other party the Incident Reporting Number (IRN) or CCN and Risk Management's phone number prior to leaving the scene. The officer will also make arrangements to get a copy of the MAARS report from the investigating agency and turn this report into Records Management.

C. Damage To Park Police Vehicles

1. Officers upon discovering damage to a Park Police cruiser/vehicle shall, as soon as possible, initiate the following actions:
 - a. Notify their immediate supervisor and submit a detailed memorandum relating all circumstances surrounding such damage.
 - b. The immediate supervisor shall ensure that a MIR and Commander's Report are completed, and that photographs of the damage are taken. The immediate supervisor, if appropriate, will respond to the scene of the incident.
 - c. After investigating the circumstances surrounding such damage, the immediate supervisor shall report his/her findings, in memorandum form, indicating whether the affected officer or employee has violated any Division Directives, Merit Rules, Rules & Regulations, General Orders, and/or acted in a negligent manner.
2. The officer's memorandum, a copy of the Commander's Report, a copy of the MIR, all photographs, and the immediate supervisor's memorandum shall then be forwarded through the chain of command to the appropriate Area Operations Assistant Chief within seven (7) days of the incident. The Area Operations Assistant Chief will then determine if additional action is warranted.

End of Document

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APPENDIX 1

1. **Miscellaneous Incident Report (M.I.R.)** - original to the Records Management Section, and a copy with the report package to Division Chief, through the chain of command.
2. **Polaroids, digital and/or 35mm photographs depicting the damage and accident scene-** Even though photographs may not be available at the time of the report submission, they will be acknowledged in the body of the report. They will be submitted with the report package and then returned to the Records Management Section after all applicable reviews have been completed.
3. **Worker's Compensation** - Immediate Supervisor's shall contact the third party administrator, Managed Care Innovations (MCI) within 24 hours of an injury/accident. They will provide a fax number for their duty station in which they will receive the MCI Workers Compensation Report by fax within 48 hours. In the event that an employee is treated and released from a medical facility, the physician's instructions and facility documentation should also be submitted. Copies should be sent to Office of the Division Chief Management Services, Records Management and original should be included in the report package. This form must be completed even where no injury is claimed by the employee. In these instances the phrase "for the record only" should be advised to the claims taker over the phone.
4. **Commander's Report** - Original in log book with a copy to all stations, Assistant Chief of the involved employee, and the Division Chief. A copy will also be provided in the report package.
5. **Officer's Memorandum** - Officers statement relating the facts of the accident. The original to be placed in the report package.
6. **Witness Statement's** - Relating to the facts of the accident. The original to be placed in the report package.
7. **Report of Investigation** - Investigating supervisor, submitted through their chain of command with the report package when it is determined that there is no fault on the part of the officer/employee or there is a minor violation of Division policies. This must include all facts and findings of the investigation and is a lead document to the report package. If the investigating supervisor determines that a Complaint Concerning Police Practices, under LEOBR, should be filed then the investigative report package would go directly to the Chief, Park Police Division.
8. **Maryland Automated Accident Report System (MAARS)** - when applicable. If written by this Division, original will be sent to the Records Management Section with a copy provided in the report package. If written by another police agency the investigating supervisor will secure a copy of the MAARS report from that police agency, send a copy to Records Management Section and include a copy in the report package.
9. **Damage Estimates** - Three (3) damage estimates for the police vehicle involved in the collision. Originals placed in the report package. Copies to Randall Maintenance Supervisor.

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- 10. Mechanical Evaluation Form (PGPP Form 4/92)** - Top portion completed by the investigative supervisor; bottom portion completed by the Garage Supervisor. Original placed in report package, with a copy to Records Management Section.

- 11. Other Documentation** - i.e. mechanical checks, etc. pertinent to the review of the incident. Should any forms or reports not be needed, state same in the Report of Investigation.

APPENDIX 2 - Checklist

1. In all incidents that are not traffic accidents by the Maryland Automated Accident Report System (MAARS) definition of an accident, “no loss, damage or injury has occurred”, the investigating supervisor shall submit the following reports with an Incident Reporting Number (IRN) or CCN and disseminate as described in this appendix:
 - Miscellaneous Incident Report (MIR)
 - Photographs
 - MCI Workers Compensation Report
 - Commanders Report
 - Officers Written Statement
 - Witnesses Written Statement(s)
 - Supervisors Memorandum

2. In all motor vehicle accidents involving any property damage or personal injury meeting the criteria of an accident defined as, “loss must occur, injury and/or property damage, and the loss must not be intentional”, the investigating supervisor shall submit the following with a IRN or CCN on all items:
 - Miscellaneous Incident Report (MIR)
 - Photographs
 - MCI Workers Compensation Report
 - Commanders Report
 - Officers Written Statement
 - Witnesses Statement(s)
 - Maryland Automated Accident Report System (MAARS) Form
 - Three (3) damage estimates for police vehicle
 - Mechanical Evaluation Form
 - Any other pertinent information
 - Report of Investigation Memorandum from Investigating Supervisor

Should any of the above documents not be applicable, an explanation should be stated in the Report of Investigation.