
Traffic Collision Reporting

502.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Mountain View Police Department prepares traffic collision reports in compliance with the California Highway Patrol Collision Investigation Manual (CIM) and as a public service makes traffic collision reports available to the community with some exceptions.

502.2 RESPONSIBILITY

The Traffic Sergeant will be responsible for distribution of the Collision Investigation Manual. The Traffic Sergeant will receive all changes in the state manual and ensure conformity with this policy.

502.3 TRAFFIC COLLISION REPORTING

All Traffic Collision reports taken by members of the Mountain View Police Department shall be forwarded to the Traffic Unit for approval and data entry into the Mountain View Police Department Records Management System. The Traffic Sergeant will be responsible for monthly and quarterly reports on traffic collision statistics to be forwarded to the Special Services Lieutenant, or other persons as required.

502.4 REPORTING SITUATIONS

Community Services Officers (CSO) assigned to FOD will have the primary responsibility for non-injury collision reporting and investigation, and minor injury collision reporting and investigation with Field Supervisor approval.

Motorcycle officers assigned to the Traffic Unit will have the primary responsibility for collision reporting and investigation for collisions involving injury or death. Traffic Officers have primary responsibility for all other collision investigations when no CSO's are available.

When no CSO's or Traffic Officers are available, a patrol officer shall be assigned to respond. Officers will respond to all traffic collision incidents listed below, including those that have occurred on private property:

- (a) Death or injury.
- (b) A hit and run.
- (c) An suspected impairment of the operator due to alcohol or drugs.
- (d) Damage to City vehicles or property.
- (e) Hazardous material spill.
- (f) A disturbance between principals.
- (g) Major traffic congestion as a result of the collision.
- (h) Damage to a vehicle to the extent towing is required. Refer to the Report Writing Manual.

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Response to the scene of a serious or complex accident includes providing emergency services, investigating the accident, preserving evidence and restoring the normal flow of traffic.

The first officer to arrive shall assume the responsibilities of assisting injured parties, requesting additional resources as needed, and protecting the accident scene. The investigating officer will coordinate the collision investigation and restoring the normal traffic flow.

Traffic collisions will be documented in accordance with the guidelines set forth in the Department's Report Writing Manual and the Collision Investigation Manual.

502.4.1 TRAFFIC COLLISIONS INVOLVING CITY VEHICLES

Traffic collision investigation reports shall be taken when a city-owned vehicle is involved in a traffic collision upon a roadway or highway wherein any damage or injury results.

When a traffic collision specifically involves a Police department vehicle, the Traffic Sergeant shall be responsible for investigating the collision. If the Traffic Sergeant is not available, the Field Supervisor will investigate the collision. If neither person is available, any on-duty Sergeant or Watch Commander can investigate the collision. If no supervisory personnel are available, assistance can be requested from the California Highway Patrol or other outside agency to investigate the collision. If a collision involves a Field Supervisor and no other Sergeant or Watch Commander is either available or on duty, assistance can be requested from the California Highway Patrol or other outside agency to investigate the collision. Once the traffic accident report is approved by the Traffic Sergeant, the report will be forwarded to the involved employee's immediate supervisor for review. Outside agency reports should also be forwarded to the employee's immediate supervisor for review. The immediate supervisor will be responsible for completing the Accident Determination memorandum and forwarding the memorandum, copy of the accident report, copy of the 24-Hour Report and any associated documentation (photos, etc.) via the chain of command to the Chief of Police. The involved employee is responsible for completing the City of Mountain View 24-Hour Report and any applicable vehicle damage logs and/or repair work orders.

502.4.2 TRAFFIC COLLISIONS WITH POLICE DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES

When an employee of the Police Department, either on-duty or off-duty, is involved in a traffic collision within the city limits of Mountain View resulting in a serious injury or fatality; the Traffic Unit Sergeant, Field Supervisor or Patrol Lieutenant, may request the California Highway Patrol for assistance.

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

502.4.3 TRAFFIC COLLISIONS WITH OTHER CITY EMPLOYEES OR OFFICIALS

The Traffic Unit Sergeant, Field Supervisor or Patrol Lieutenant may request assistance from the California Highway Patrol for the investigation of any traffic collision involving any City of Mountain View official or employee where a serious injury or fatality has occurred.

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502.4.4 TRAFFIC COLLISIONS ON PRIVATE PROPERTY

In compliance with the Collision Investigation Manual, traffic collision reports shall not be taken for traffic collisions occurring on private property, unless there is a death or injury to any person involved, a hit and run violation, or Vehicle Code violation. Refer to the Report Writing Manual for further details.

502.4.5 TRAFFIC COLLISIONS ON ROADWAYS OR HIGHWAYS

Traffic collision reports shall be taken when they occur on a roadway or highway within the City of Mountain View when there is a death or injury to any persons involved in the collision, or a request by either driver for a traffic collision report.

502.5 NOTIFICATION OF TRAFFIC BUREAU SUPERVISION

During shifts when a traffic officer is not scheduled to work, the Field Supervisor may notify the Traffic Unit to request assistance with traffic collisions meeting the Traffic Unit call-out criteria.

502.5.1 TRAFFIC UNIT CALL-OUT PROCEDURE

A Field Supervisor or Patrol Lieutenant activates the Traffic Unit by contacting the Traffic Sergeant or, in his/her absence, the team member designated by the Traffic Sergeant. That member then is responsible for determining the level of response and making any additional notifications.

As a general rule, two team members will respond under the following circumstances:

- (a) Fatal or anticipated fatal accident.
- (b) Major accidents involving serious injuries.
- (c) Any major collision where the investigation is anticipated to be complicated or lengthy and existing patrol resources are inadequate.

502.6 CITATIONS AT ACCIDENT SCENE

All officers may issue a Notice to Appear at the scene of an accident under any of the following conditions:

- (a) The officer has fulfilled the required training outlined in Vehicle Code § 40600. Note: Officers who graduated from the Basic Police Academy after May 1980 are deemed Vehicle Code § 40600 qualified.
- (b) A violation occurred in the officer's presence.
- (c) The responsible driver is a juvenile.
- (d) The officer observes violations relating to mechanical problems, license or lack of financial responsibility, and there are no additional moving violations to be filed.

If you intend to issue a citation to a juvenile, do so at the scene.

If recommending in the narrative that a complaint be issued to one of the parties, do not issue a separate citation at the scene to that party for other violations present, such as driver's license,

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registration or equipment. These separate violations should be noted in the report and they will be issued at the same time and on the same citation as the accident-causing violation.

Charges involving misdemeanors, not being deemed as a contributing factor to the collision, such as Vehicle Code §§ 20002a and 14601, are only issued through the District Attorney's Office.

Officers who are qualified to issue a Notice to Appear at the scene of a traffic accident should include any other violations along with the primary violation.

Check also to ensure that the person being cited is not in violation of Vehicle Code § 14601. If none of the above circumstances are present but there is sufficient evidence to warrant prosecution of a driver, the investigating officer should:

- Recommend in the report that a Notice to Appear be issued.
- Complete a Suspect Identification Form if the complaint involves a misdemeanor.

If it appears likely that additional charges may be filed at a later date, you should not issue a citation at the scene; instead, wait until all charges can be filed in a single complaint when all the facts are determined.

As an example, if the driver has a suspended license, then recommend a complaint for all violations; do not cite for some (such as mechanical) and then request a complaint on others.