



GENERAL ORDER OPS-18 COLLISION INVESTIGATION AND REPORTING

EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 13, 2020

This General Order contains the following numbered sections:

- I. POLICY
- II. DEFINITIONS
- III. ACRS PROCEDURES
- IV. STABILIZATION OF COLLISION SCENES
- V. PROPERTY DAMAGE COLLISIONS – VEHICLE NOT DISABLED
- VI. PROPERTY DAMAGE COLLISIONS – VEHICLE DISABLED
- VII. PERSONAL INJURY COLLISION
- VIII. FATAL COLLISIONS
- IX. HIT AND RUN COLLISIONS
- X. NON-HCPD GOVERNMENT VEHICLE COLLISIONS
- XI. SCHOOL BUS COLLISIONS
- XII. HCPD COLLISIONS
- XIII. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES
- XIV. CANCELLATION

I. POLICY

The Howard County Department of Police (HCPD) shall dedicate appropriate resources to the investigation of collisions occurring on the roadways of the County. To the fullest extent possible, the HCPD will collect data identifying the cause of collisions, the existence of motor vehicle violations, and the location of hazardous roadway conditions.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. Automated Crash Reporting System (ACRS): ACRS is the system HCPD utilizes for the investigation and reporting of traffic collisions.
- B. Collision Investigation: A process that requires collision reporting and the collection of evidence necessary to identify collision causes, charging violations of the Maryland Transportation Article, and prepare for a successful prosecution, as appropriate.
 - 1. Off-road collision: Off-road collisions occur when the entire sequence of events occurs off-road on private property, i.e., mall parking lot, in a field, on a non-dedicated public roadway, etc. If a vehicle travels off the roadway and strikes a tree, it is NOT an off-road collision.
 - 2. Traffic collision: The incident must involve a Motor Vehicle in Transport, a loss must occur (Fatal, Personal Injury or Property Damage), and the loss must be unintentional.
- C. Collision Reporting: The gathering of appropriate data and other information necessary to complete required reports or for inclusion in Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) records when no report is required.
- D. Disabled Vehicle: Damage that precludes departure of the motor vehicle from the scene of the crash in its usual daylight-operating manner after simple repairs.
- E. Government Vehicle: A vehicle owned, operated, or leased by any local, state, or federal government agency.
- F. Hazardous Material: Any substance or material classified as hazardous in the "Emergency Handling of Hazardous Materials in Surface Transportation Handbook."

- G. Howard County Government Vehicle: A vehicle owned, operated, or leased by the Howard County Government.
- H. Late Reported Collision: A collision in which all involved parties have left the scene of the collision, and one of the parties contacts the HCPD at a later time to report the collision. The removal of vehicles from the roadway to a safe location to expedite traffic flow or ensure motorist safety does not constitute a late reported collision.
- I. Motor Vehicle in Transport: A motor vehicle is any motorized (mechanically or electrically powered) road vehicle not operated on rails. When applied to motor vehicles, "in-transport" refers to being in motion or on a roadway. Inclusions: motor vehicle in traffic on a highway, driverless motor vehicle in motion, motionless motor vehicle abandoned on a roadway, disabled motor vehicle on a roadway, etc. A parked driverless motor vehicle is not considered a Motor Vehicle in Transport for the purposes of ACRS reporting.

III. ACRS PROCEDURES

- A. Completing ACRS Reports
 - 1. Narratives written on the ACRS report should be brief and factual. In-depth descriptions and additional details should be submitted on the supplement report narrative (HCPD 1220). If a supplement is completed, the officer shall note in his ACRS narrative, "See Related Supplement Report".
 - 2. Narratives for collisions that occur on private property should include where the collision took place, i.e., in a parking lot. Narratives for off-road collisions should describe the collision location, including the address of the property on which the collision occurred if there is an address, i.e., the parking lot of 10300 Little Patuxent Parkway.
 - 3. Members can include photographs of collisions with the ACRS report. All photography taken of crash scenes shall not be attached using the ACRS software. The photography shall be submitted in accordance with General Order OPS-63: Digital Cameras and Images. Officer may attach a .jpeg file in the ACRS software stating, "Photos Taken and Submitted as Evidence" so that the photo box on the ACRS report will be checked indicating photos have been taken.
 - 4. Crash diagrams shall only be drawn using the ACRS drawing tool provided with the program. Officers shall not use external images, i.e., Google Maps, CAD Maps, etc. when diagramming the crash in ACRS.
- B. Supervisor Approval or Rejection of ACRS Reports
 - 1. When a supervisor receives an ACRS report from a patrol officer, the report shall be checked for completeness and accuracy.
 - 2. If there are any errors in the report, the supervisor shall reject the report, and it will be returned to the patrol officer for correction.
- C. The Records Section shall process ACRS reports in accordance with the procedures outlined in General Order ADM-11: Departmental Reporting System.
- D. If there is a need to reopen an approved ACRS report (i.e. record blood alcohol results, change fault of a party involved, etc.), the requesting Officer must:
 - 1. Send an email request to the Computer Operations Section Sergeant requesting the ACRS report be reopened in Delta Plus. The officer's supervisor must be cc'd on the request. The request must include:

- a. The HCPD IR number;
 - b. The ACRS report number; and
 - c. The reason for the request to reopen the report.
2. The Computer Operations Section Sergeant will reopen the ACRS report, and the requesting officer will be notified via Delta Plus.
 3. The officer will have five (5) business days to complete the modifications and forward the revised ACRS report to his supervisor for review and/or approval. Any changes made in a re-opened ACRS report shall be documented in the narrative of the ACRS with the date of modification (i.e. Blood results added on 1/29/2020).
- E. Upon receipt of a clarification and/or rejection notification from the Maryland State Police's (MSP) Delta Plus Administration:
1. The Computer Operations Section Sergeant will re-open the ACRS report and include an explanation for the reopening in the notes field. The reopened ACRS report will be sent to the officer.
 2. The officer will have five (5) business days to complete the modifications and forward the revised ACRS report to his supervisor for review and/or approval.

IV. STABILIZATION OF COLLISION SCENES

- A. The first officer to arrive on the scene of a collision will position his vehicle to protect the scene and provide adequate notice to oncoming traffic of the traffic irregularity in accordance with the National Traffic Incident Management Training Program. Other duties of this officer include:¹
1. Identify and provide emergency medical care to any injured parties;²
 2. Request additional assistance from other police officers, auxiliary officers, cadets, the Department of Fire and Rescue Services (DFRS), utility company representatives, or tow truck(s), as needed;
- NOTE: When DFRS is requested, a brief explanation of the nature of the request should be provided to Communications. When injuries are involved, the number of individuals injured and the extent of the injuries should be supplied to Communications.
3. Establish a safe traffic pattern around the collision scene, if possible;
 4. Preserve evidence; and
 5. Locate and identify witnesses to the collision.
- B. The first officer to arrive on the scene will be in charge of the scene. The initial officer dispatched to the collision will be responsible for the investigation and report. A supervisor may assign another officer.³
- C. Supervisors will ensure that sufficient officers are dispatched to the scene of all collisions to provide emergency services, investigate the collision, preserve evidence, and restore the flow of traffic.

¹ CALEA 61.2.2e & 61.2.2g

² CALEA 61.2.2b

³ CALEA 61.2.1 & 61.2.2a

- D. If it appears that the normal traffic pattern will be disrupted for an extended period of time, the area supervisor should notify Communications.
 - 1. If assistance is needed for traffic control, the assigned officer shall request Communications contact the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) Coordinated Highways Action Response Team (CHART) or the Howard County Bureau of Highways, as appropriate. Both agencies can provide temporary traffic control devices and assist in establishing alternate traffic patterns to relieve major traffic congestion.
 - 2. Communications will notify Metro Traffic Control and Pupil Transportation of a major traffic disruption that occurs Monday through Friday during regular business hours.
- E. Members responding to any type of collision should be alert to the potential for fire and hazardous materials exposure. Prior to approaching the scene, members should make an effort to locate hazardous materials placards or conditions that could indicate a potential fire hazard. If a fire hazard is possible, officers shall relay this information to Communications.⁴
- F. The DFRS will have operational control over any scene that involves fire or hazardous materials. The highest-ranking HCPD officer on the scene shall meet with the DFRS on-scene commander to coordinate actions.⁵
- G. If SHA CHART arrives on-scene to assist with traffic direction, the highest-ranking HCPD officer on-scene shall meet with the SHA CHART member to coordinate efforts.
- H. Members will not use flares at the scene of any collision involving the leakage of any flammable material or where any involved vehicle contains hazardous materials.
- I. While directing traffic or while at the scene of the collision, officers will use appropriate devices to include reflective vests, police overhead lights, flares, and cones to protect themselves, the scene, and to alert oncoming traffic. Once the collision scene is cleared, the investigating officer will arrange for the prompt removal of all warning devices and debris.⁶
- J. Tempers of those involved may flare because of a collision. Officers should be alert to disturbances occurring between the occupants of the vehicles. Should an altercation occur, the officer should take the appropriate action, to include criminal charges.

V. PROPERTY DAMAGE COLLISIONS – VEHICLE NOT DISABLED

- A. For a property damage collision where none of the involved vehicles are disabled, and there are no injuries from the collision, a No Report (NR) disposition may be given. However, an ACRS is required if any of the following factors are present:
 - 1. Hit and run, consistent with Section IX. and OPS-18 Appendix A.
 - 2. Impairment of an operator due to drugs and/or alcohol.
 - 3. Charging of an arrestable motor vehicle violation resulting from a collision
 - 4. Hazardous materials.
 - 5. Collisions involving government vehicles or damage to government property.
 - 6. Collisions involving school buses.

⁴ CALEA 61.2.2c

⁵ CALEA 61.2.2c

⁶ CALEA 61.3.2a

7. When required by a Supervisor.
8. For collisions that result in damage to a third party's property, i.e., utility poles, guardrails, signs, phone/cable boxes, etc., an Exchange of Information form will be given to the owner of the third party property, or representative, i.e., BGE, Comcast, etc. An ACRS will be required if the third party is not present at the scene.
 - a. Investigating officers and supervisors will ensure that damage to third party property is properly noted in the narrative of the ACRS.
 - b. For all damage to State or County property, officers will apply the red damage sticker to the property.
- B. When the officer arrives on the scene of a non-disabling collision and vehicles are still within the travel portion of the roadway, officers shall attempt to clear the roadway as soon as possible in order to restore the normal traffic flow. If possible, the officer shall have the drivers of the involved vehicles move their vehicles to either the shoulder or nearby parking lot if the shoulder is not available.
- C. Officers will ensure that the involved drivers exchange pertinent vehicle and insurance information. Officers shall use the Delta ETIX Program, Information Exchange tab, to exchange the proper information between drivers. The HCPD Form 2009, Exchange of Information, can be used in lieu of the Delta ETIX Program if it is unavailable.
 1. Officers shall conduct a driver's license and vehicle registration checks through the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) database, as well as NCIC wanted checks on all parties involved in the collision.
 2. Officers shall verify, to the extent possible, that all information given is accurate and complete. Every effort should be made to collect and document insurance information.⁷
 3. If the parties involved in the collision has already exchanged information prior to the officer's arrival, the investigating officer shall still conduct the checks stated above and verify the information exchanged is still valid and accurate.
- D. Violation(s) of the Transportation Article⁸
 1. While investigating a property damage collision where the vehicles are operational, the officer may write a citation if sufficient evidence exists to prove that a violation of the Transportation Article contributed to the collision without completing an ACRS.
 2. Violations occurring on private property are special circumstances that require careful examination prior to charging. Officers should consult the Transportation Article regarding the applicability of specific charges in these cases.
- E. If a report is not required, officers will clear the call with an "NR" disposition, followed by the ACRS code for the type of collision. This will be done consistent with training. See Appendix B for the NR codes.

VI. PROPERTY DAMAGE COLLISIONS – VEHICLE DISABLED

- A. An ACRS report shall be written for vehicles that are disabled due to a collision regardless of whether the vehicle is towed by HCPD or the driver of the vehicle, with the following exceptions if there are no injuries:

⁷ CALEA 82.2.1b

⁸ CALEA 61.1.5h

1. Collisions on private property, consistent with OPS-18 Appendix A.
 2. Late reported collision on private property, consistent with OPS-18 Appendix A.
- B. After the collision scene is stabilized consistent with Section IV, the investigating officer shall identify and interview all involved drivers, passengers, and witnesses to determine the circumstances of the collision.⁹
- C. The investigating officer shall examine and record all vehicle damage and physical evidence at the scene for inclusion in the report.¹⁰
1. Officers needing assistance in the interpretation or collection of physical evidence should contact the Traffic Enforcement Section (TES) through their supervisor.
- D. To ensure the proper investigation and reporting of collisions, officers will keep the following equipment in their patrol vehicle:
1. Digital camera; and
 2. Witness statement forms, exchange of information forms, deer tags, and tow report forms.
- NOTE: This equipment is in addition to the equipment outlined in General Order ADM-23, Departmental Vehicle Policy.
- E. Measurements and photographs will be taken when the investigating officer believes they will assist in the investigation and/or the prosecution of motor vehicle charges resulting from the collision.¹¹
- F. Vehicles involved in a disabling collision shall not be left on the side of the highway or an adjacent state or county right-of-way and shall be towed from the scene by a contracted HCPD tow service prior to the officer leaving the scene. Towing of vehicles shall be done in accordance with General Order OPS-28, Traffic Services & Towing Procedures.
- G. All parties involved in a disabling collision will be given an Exchange of Information form, consistent with Section V., paragraph C.
- H. The investigating officer will be responsible for conducting any follow-up investigation that may be needed. This includes but is not limited to:¹²
1. Obtaining witness information and statements from those witnesses who were no longer at the scene.
 2. Obtaining outside technical or expert assistance from physicians, toxicologists, or forensic experts.
 3. Requesting a reconstructing of the collision from a specially trained officer.
 4. Obtaining background information on the parties involved in the collision.
- I. Violation of the Transportation Article
1. While investigating a collision, the officer shall attempt to determine the contributing factors that caused the collision and if there were any violations of the Transportation Article.

⁹ CALEA 61.2.1

¹⁰ CALEA 61.2.1 & 83.2.6

¹¹ CALEA 61.2.2d

¹² CALEA 61.2.1

2. Whenever the investigating officer determines that sufficient evidence exists to prove that a violation of the Transportation Article contributed to a property damage collision where a vehicle is disabled, charges should be filed.

J. Supervisor Responsibilities

1. Review the ACRS report for accuracy consistent with Section III.
2. Verify completeness of the Tow Report(s) (HCPD 2006), assure any owner notifications are forwarded to the appropriate patrol office for mailing (if owner not notified on scene), and send it to the Records Section.
3. All Voluntary Statement forms (HCPD 2111) are sent to the Records Section.

VII. PERSONAL INJURY COLLISIONS

- A. An ACRS report shall be written for any collision that results in injury to any party involved, consistent with OPS-18 Appendix A.
- B. Late reported personal injury collisions that involve only minor injuries should be reported on an incident report.
- C. After the collision scene is stabilized consistent with Section IV, the investigating officer shall identify and interview all involved drivers, passengers, and witnesses to determine the circumstances of the collision. If involved parties are transported to the hospital, and the investigating officer could not conduct an interview on the scene, the investigating officer shall follow-up with an interview at the hospital.¹³
- D. Photographs shall be taken of the scene of any personal injury collision. Officers shall take photographs of, but not limited to, damage to all vehicles and property, injuries to any involved party, and overall scene photographs.
- E. All parties involved in a personal injury collision will be given an Exchange of Information form, consistent with Section V., paragraph C.
- F. Vehicles involved in a personal injury collision shall not be left on the side of the highway or an adjacent state or county right-of-way and shall be towed from the scene by a contracted HCPD tow service prior to the officer leaving the scene. Towing of vehicles shall be done in accordance with General Order OPS-28, Traffic Services & Towing Procedures.
- G. Collect any personal property of value that is left in the vehicle by the subject transported to an emergency facility. If permission is granted by the vehicle operator, personal property may be given to a designated person and will be noted as such in the police report. Otherwise, the property shall be placed in the Property Room in accordance with Department policy. This will include an inventory of the vehicle as required by General Order OPS-28, Traffic Services & Towing Procedures.¹⁴
- H. Completion of the primary report, evidence collection including any photographs, witness statements, and trial preparation for collisions not investigated by TES will rest with the patrol member investigating the collision.

¹³ CALEA 61.2.2d

¹⁴ CALEA 61.2.2f

- I. Violations of the Transportation Article
 - 1. While investigating a collision, the officer shall attempt to determine the contributing factors that caused the collision and if there were any violations of the Transportation Article.
 - 2. Whenever the investigating officer determines that sufficient evidence exists to prove that a violation of the Transportation Article contributed to a personal injury collision, charges shall be filed unless it serves no public interest and approved by a supervisor.
- J. Supervisory Responsibilities
 - 1. For personal injury collisions that result in an extended closure of a roadway, the area supervisor shall respond to the scene, take command, and make notification consistent with Section IV.
 - 2. Review the ACRS report for accuracy consistent with Section III.
 - 3. Verify completeness of the Tow Report(s) (HCPD 2006), assure any owner notifications are forwarded to the appropriate patrol office for mailing (if owner not notified on scene), and send it to the Records Section.
 - 4. All Voluntary Statement forms (HCPD 2111) are sent to the Records Section.
- K. Traffic Enforcement Section Investigative Responsibilities
 - 1. Collisions where on-scene Emergency Medical Service (EMS) personnel classify a patient as having "Priority One – Life Threatening" injuries from the collision, the area supervisor shall respond to the scene and contact the TES supervisor. The TES supervisor will determine if a TES investigator will respond and assume the investigation.
 - 2. The supervisor will notify a TES supervisor about any personal injury collision stemming from a vehicle pursuit. A TES supervisor will determine if an investigator will respond.

VIII. FATAL COLLISIONS

- A. TES shall investigate all fatal or potentially fatal collisions which occur in Howard County that are handled by the Howard County Police Department.
- B. Officers shall ensure that all vehicles involved in a fatal or potentially fatal collision remain in their final resting place. Patrol officers will protect the collision scene and all physical evidence until relieved by the TES personnel.
- C. Officers shall separate witnesses, collect their contact information, and ask them to fill out a Volunteer Statement form.
- D. If an at-fault driver is transported to the hospital, an officer shall accompany the at-fault driver to the hospital until further direction is given from TES.
- E. All officers on the scene of a fatal or potentially fatal collision shall complete a supplemental report detailing their actions at the scene and what they observed. This supplemental report shall be turned in by the end of the officer's shift. A supplemental report is not required if the officer has no relevant information, i.e., only conducted traffic direction, took no statements, or made no observations.
- F. The TES will assume investigation responsibility for all collisions initially handled by Patrol when an involved party dies from injuries received in the collision.

G. Supervisor Responsibilities

1. The area supervisor shall respond to the scene and take command unless relieved by the Watch Commander or TES supervisor.
2. The supervisor shall make notification to the Communications Division consistent with Section IV, in regard to extended road closures.
3. The supervisor will notify the on-duty or on-call TES supervisor. The TES supervisor will authorize the call-out of the TES members for fatal collisions.
4. The supervisor shall evaluate the circumstances and ascertain what resources will be needed to effectively manage the scene, i.e., State Highways Administration, County Roads, etc.
5. The supervisor will verify all supplemental reports from officers on the scene are turned in, reviewed, and sent to TES by the end of shift.

H. Watch Commander Responsibilities

1. The Watch Commander may take command of the scene of a fatal collision from the area supervisor.
2. The Watch Commander will notify the Public Information Officer (PIO) of the fatal collision and what roadways will be closed as a result of the investigation.
3. Once the TES supervisor or Traffic Management Division Commander is on the scene, the Watch Commander will coordinate with TES for the dissemination of information to the PIO.

I. Traffic Enforcement Section Investigative Responsibilities

1. Members of TES may use Forensic Mapping to document the collision scene to aid in the creation of scale diagram when it would benefit the investigation or when directed by the TES Supervisor.
2. Members of the Forensic Services Section (FSS) should be consulted in those cases where physical evidence from a collision must be packaged and submitted to a laboratory for analysis. The Crime Scene Technician who processes a traffic scene for evidence will complete an incident report detailing the actions taken, including a list and disposition of any evidence, if photographs were taken, and any measurements taken.¹⁵
3. The primary TES investigator assigned to a fatal collision will:
 - a. When the family of the victim resides in Howard County, be responsible for ensuring that the appropriate Patrol supervisor is notified to arrange for personal notification to the family of the victim. The notification will be documented on a supplement by the officer making the notification and forwarded to the primary TES investigator before the end of the officer's shift.
 - b. When the victim resides outside of Howard County, be responsible for ensuring that notification is made to the family of the victim by a law enforcement agency in the jurisdiction in which the next of kin reside.
 - c. Ensure that the Watch Commander is made aware of the circumstances involved in the collision.

¹⁵ CALEA 83.2.6

4. The TES Supervisor or the Traffic Management Division Commander will forward the appropriate collision information, when available, to the PIO. The PIO will evaluate the information for release to media outlets after consultation with the TES Supervisor or Traffic Management Division Commander.
5. The TES will forward the completed ACRS for any fatal collision involving a HCPD or County Vehicle to County Risk Management and the involved officers Supervisor.

IX. HIT AND RUN COLLISION INVESTIGATIONS

- A. An ACRS report will not be completed on a Hit and Run property damage only collisions unless there is identifiable suspect information, consistent with Appendix A.
- B. If there is no identifiable suspect information at the time of the incident, the officer will provide the victim of the hit and run with an "NR" case number. If suspect information is developed at a later time, the officer shall notify his supervisor to change the case number from "NR" to "Report to Follow" and complete an ACRS report. The officer's supervisor shall email the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Unit of the Records Section to notify them of the change in the case status for UCR reporting.
- C. Once the officer has secured the scene and treated any injured persons, he should begin to collect as much information as possible about the suspect and vehicle for broadcast by Communications.
- D. The investigating officer or his supervisor should establish a perimeter, if possible, and attempt to locate the suspect vehicle.
- E. If the tag number of the suspect vehicle is obtained and the suspect lives in Howard County, the investigating officer will arrange for the beat officer to go to the residence. If the tag number shows the suspect lives outside of Howard County, the investigating officer will, as soon as possible, coordinate with that jurisdiction to locate the vehicle.
- F. In hit and run collisions resulting in death or serious bodily injury that creates a substantial risk of death, a Yellow Alert may be issued if there is enough descriptive information about the missing suspect's vehicle, including any information about the vehicle's registration plate, to assist in the suspect's apprehension.
 1. The Watch Commander will contact the Maryland State Police (MSP) Headquarters Duty Officer to provide the necessary information. The Watch Commander shall also notify an HCPD Communications Division supervisor to prepare for a possible increase in 911 calls.
 2. Once the missing suspect or vehicle is located, the Watch Commander shall immediately notify the MSP Headquarters Duty Officer.
 3. The alert is self-canceling if the missing suspect or vehicle has not been located within 24 hours.

X. NON-HCPD GOVERNMENT VEHICLE COLLISIONS

- A. An ACRS report shall be completed for all Government vehicles involved in a collision, regardless of the severity.
- B. After the collision scene is stabilized, the investigating officer shall identify and interview all involved drivers, passengers, and witnesses to determine the circumstances of the collision. Written statements shall be obtained from all witnesses for collisions involving Government vehicles.

- C. For vehicle collisions involving a Howard County Government Employee operating a Howard County Government vehicle at the time of the collision, including Howard County Fire and Rescue vehicles owned by Volunteer Fire Company's, the investigating officer shall not use the Howard County Government Employee's, or Volunteer Fire Fighters, personal address or phone number for the Information Exchange form and ACRS report.
 - 1. The investigating officer shall use the Howard County Risk Management address (6751 Columbia Gateway Drive, Box 303, Columbia, MD 21046) and phone number (410-313-6390), in place of the Howard County Government Employee's personal address and phone number on the Information Exchange form and ACRS.
 - 2. A Howard County Government Employee operating their personal vehicle at the time of the collision will have their personal information recorded in the Information Exchange form and ACRS.
- D. The dispatched officer will handle property damage collisions involving other County Government vehicles and county contracted vehicles unless a supervisor requests the assistance of the TES.
- E. If an employee operating a County Government vehicle or County Government contracted vehicle is determined to be at fault in a collision, the Watch Commander shall review the collision to determine if the placement of charges is appropriate.
 - 1. If the collision is handled by the TES, the Commander of the Traffic Management Division will review the report.
 - 2. Special consideration should be given to the circumstances often confronted by County employees during difficult or adverse driving circumstances (e.g., plowing snow or operating equipment and/or vehicles in a work area, etc.). The placement of charges may serve no valid community interest in these circumstances.
- F. Supervisor Responsibilities
 - 1. Review the ACRS report for accuracy consistent with Section III.
 - 2. Verify completeness of the Tow Report(s) (HCPD 2006), assure any owner notifications are forwarded to the appropriate patrol office for mailing (if owner not notified on scene), and send it to the Records Section
 - 3. All Voluntary Statement forms (HCPD 2111) are sent to the Records Section.
 - 4. The Supervisor will ensure a copy of the ACRS report is forwarded to the Office of Risk Management by the end of the shift. If extenuating circumstances exist, the Watch Commander can grant an extension to the end of the next business day.
- G. Traffic Enforcement Section Investigative Responsibilities
 - 1. The TES will investigate all serious personal injury or extensive property damage collisions involving Non-HCPD Howard County Government vehicles.
 - 2. The TES will investigate all emergency response collisions, involving any Non-HCPD Howard County Government vehicle, regardless of the seriousness or extent of property damage. For single vehicle collisions involving minor damage to the vehicle or property, the area supervisor shall consult with the TES supervisor for a TES response and investigation when specialized investigative techniques are not required. The final determination on whether TES responds and assumes investigation of the collision rests with the Watch commander.

3. The TES will forward the completed ACRS for any Non-HCPD Howard County Government vehicle collision they investigate to County Risk Management.
4. All other Non-HCPD Howard County Government vehicle collisions will be investigated by the Patrol officer, unless the cause of the collision cannot be determined and the Watch Commander requests TES.

XI. SCHOOL BUS COLLISIONS

- A. An ACRS report is required for all collisions involving a school bus.
- B. The first officer to arrive on the scene will assess the seriousness of the collision and request that Communications relay this information to the Board of Education, Pupil Transportation Office.
- C. Any school bus collision where there is an injury to children, the on-scene officer will verify with Pupil Transportation Office that parents or guardians have been notified of the collision.
- D. Supervisor Responsibilities
 1. A supervisor shall respond to all personal injury collisions involving a school bus.
 2. The supervisor will notify a TES supervisor for personal injury collisions and/or collisions that may have resulted from a mechanical failure of the school bus. A TES supervisor will determine if an investigator(s) and/or a Commercial Motor Vehicle (CMV) Inspector will respond.
 3. If the collision involves personal injury that requires transport of the victim(s) to a medical facility, the supervisor shall assess the need for additional resources. This may include assigning an officer or supervisor to the hospital to coordinate with the hospital, parents, and the Department.

XII. HCPD VEHICLE COLLISIONS

- A. Howard County Police Departmental Collisions in Howard County
 1. A supervisor shall respond to any collision involving a Howard County Police vehicle in Howard County and investigate the collision.
 2. Vehicles involved in Howard County Police Departmental collisions will remain in their final resting place until the investigating supervisor authorizes their removal. If it is a minor collision and the vehicle's position could create substantial risk or hazard, the vehicle may only be moved after pictures have been taken by a supervisor.
 3. All vehicles and property involved or alleged to be involved in a collision will be photographed, even if there is no obvious damage. To capture an accurate depiction of the vehicle or property, photographs should be taken from different angles and distances.
 4. When requested, patrol officers will assist the investigating supervisor in the collection of evidence, including but not limited to photographs, measurements, and witness statements.
 5. Supervisors shall request an IAD control number within 48 hours of the collision, unless an extension is granted by the Watch/Division Commander or the District/Bureau Commander.

6. For single vehicle HCPD vehicle collisions where an ACRS report would be required under this General Order, those which cause superficial damage, i.e. scratches to paint or rim, with no third-party damage, require an IAD control number but may be closed in accordance with General Order ADM-02, Internal Investigations.
7. Howard County Police Departmental Collision with a Deer:
 - a. A Howard County Police Departmental collision with a deer with no injuries and no damage to a third party's property may be NR'd. The involved member shall submit an internal memorandum detailing the collision, Howard County Property and Vehicle Damage Form (HC Form RM-2) through the chain of command to the member's District/Bureau Commander. A copy of the HC Form RM-2 shall be sent to County Risk Management, the Quartermaster and the Internal Affairs Division.
 - b. A Howard County Police Departmental collision with a deer with no injuries but with damage to a third party's property requires an ACRS report. The involved member shall submit an internal memorandum detailing the collision, the ACRS, and HC Form RM-2 through the chain of command to the member's District/Bureau Commander. A copy of the ACRS and HC Form RM-2 shall be sent to County Risk Management, and a copy of the HC Form RM-2 shall be sent to the Quartermaster and the Internal Affairs Division.
 - c. A Howard County Police Departmental collision with a deer resulting in a personal injury requires an ACRS report. The involved member shall submit an internal memorandum detailing the collision, the ACRS, HC Form RM-2, and a Howard County Employee Incident/Injury Report Form (HC Form RM-1) through the chain of command to the member's District/Bureau Commander. The HC Form RM-1, the ACRS, and RM-2 shall be sent to the County Risk Management Office. The RM-2 shall be sent to the Quartermaster and the Internal Affairs Division.
 - d. An Internal Affairs Division (IAD) control number is not required for a Howard County Police Departmental collision with a deer unless it is determined that the member's operation of the vehicle contributed to the collision and was negligent or in violation of the law or HCPD policy.
8. Collisions Involving Parked or Unattended Howard County Police Department Vehicles
 - a. The supervisor does not need to acquire an IAD control number unless the vehicle was parked or placed in a manner that contributed to the collision.
 - b. The following forms shall be completed:¹⁶
 - i. An ACRS report and once completed sent to the County Risk Management Office.
 - ii. Howard County Property Loss/Damage Report (HC Form RM-2) and forwarded to the County Risk Management Office, the Quartermaster, and the Internal Affairs Division.
 - iii. If there was an injury, a Howard County Employee Incident/Injury Report (HC Form RM-1) shall also be completed if applicable and forwarded to the County Risk Management Office.
 - c. Refer to Section V., Paragraph A., Property Damage Collisions, for collisions resulting in third-party damage.

¹⁶ CALEA 82.2.1b

- d. Appropriate disciplinary and training measures shall be utilized if the operator's placement of the vehicle contributed to the accident.
 - i. The investigating officer will, after supervisory approval, submit a copy of the completed collision investigation to the involved officer's Commander, who will then make a disposition in the case in accordance with General Order ADM-02, Internal Investigations.
 - ii. The investigating officer's supervisor will ensure a copy of the ACRS and HC Form RM-2 is forwarded to the County Risk Management Office by the end of the shift. If extenuating circumstances exist, the Watch Commander can grant an extension to the end of the next business day.
- e. The TES or the investigating supervisor will notify the Computer Operations Section when investigating a Howard County Police Departmental collision with significant damage to the vehicle so that the MDC may be checked in accordance with General Order ADM-38, Mobile Data Computer Procedures.
- f. An internal memorandum detailing the incident must be submitted by the member through his chain of command to the Deputy Chief of the member's respective command.

B. Howard County Police Departmental Collisions Outside of Howard County

- 1. The involved member, when possible, will notify Communications of the collision location and any injuries. Communications will notify the appropriate jurisdiction of the collision and the Watch Commander of the circumstances.
- 2. An on-duty HCPD supervisor will respond to the collision scene when practical.
- 3. All vehicles shall remain in their final resting place until the investigating agency authorizes their removal.
- 4. The HCPD Supervisor or the involved member will request that the investigating officer photograph the collision scene. If the investigating officer cannot photograph the collision scene, the involved member or HCPD Supervisor will photograph all vehicles and property involved or alleged to be involved in the collision even though damage may not be observed or evident.
- 5. The HCPD Supervisor who responds to the scene or, in the case where an HCPD Supervisor did not respond to the scene, the involved member's supervisor, will ensure that a copy of the ACRS is obtained. The report will then be forwarded to the involved member's Commander, who will then make a disposition in the case in accordance with General Order ADM-02, Internal Investigations.

C. Traffic Enforcement Section Investigative Responsibilities

- 1. The TES will investigate all serious personal injury or extensive property damage collisions involving any HCPD vehicle operating in non-emergency mode in Howard County.
- 2. The TES will investigate all emergency response collisions, involving a HCPD vehicle, regardless of the seriousness or extent of property damage. For single vehicle collisions involving minor damage to the vehicle or property, the area supervisor shall consult with the TES supervisor for a TES response and investigation when specialized investigative techniques are not required. The final determination on whether TES responds and assumes investigation of the collision rests with the Watch commander.

3. The TES will forward the completed ACRS to Risk Management and the officers Supervisor of any HCPD vehicle collisions they investigate.
 4. All other HCPD vehicle collisions will be investigated by the area supervisor, unless the cause of the collision cannot be determined and the Watch Commander requests TES.
- D. Report Review for all Howard County Police Departmental Collisions
1. All departmental collisions will be documented according to this policy.
 2. The review process may stop at the Captain/Bureau Commander level for all collisions that do not involve:
 - a. Personal injury to any party.
 - b. Major damage to any vehicle.
 - c. Repeated offenses by the member.
 - d. Concerns warranting further review.
 3. Completed review packets with appropriate Division/Bureau Commander endorsements will be forwarded to the Internal Affairs Division. The Internal Affairs Commander may forward collisions reports above the Captain level based on his recommendation.

XIII. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

- A. Officers are prohibited from investigating any collision where their role would present a clear conflict of interest. Officers uncertain about their ability to provide objectivity or avoid any conflict of interest should consult with their supervisor.
1. Supervisors will reassign case responsibility as appropriate.
 2. This restriction does not apply to situations where a supervisor is investigating a Howard County Police Departmental collision, TES managed investigations, or when an investigation has been specifically assigned by a supervisor.
- B. Collisions Involving Deer
1. If the operator of the striking vehicle is present, a deceased deer becomes the property of that operator.
 2. The operator of the vehicle may waive his claim to the deer and give the deer to anyone that he chooses.
 3. The investigating officer will complete a deer tag whenever the operator claims the deer or when the operator waives his claim to the deer and gives the deer to someone else. The portion of the deer tag to be returned to the Department of Natural Resources will be submitted to the Records Section.
 4. If the operator of the striking vehicle does not want the deer and does not want to give the deer to someone else, the officer shall request Communications notify the appropriate agency for removal of the remains. The State Highway Administration should be contacted if the collision occurred on a State road or Howard County Animal Control should be contacted if the collision occurred on a county road.

5. When the operator of the striking vehicle is not present, the officer will request that Communications make notification to the appropriate agency as outlined in the previous section.
6. Officers are prohibited from giving away or taking possession of a deer without the permission of the operator of the striking vehicle. The operator of the striking vehicle will have sole authority to designate to whom the deer will be given.

C. Collisions with Domestic Animals

1. The investigating officer will attempt to determine the animal owner's name, address, and phone number.
2. Contact the owner of the animal as soon as possible for treatment or disposal as the animal's status dictates.
3. Provide the owner of the animal with the name, address, phone number, and vehicle registration information of the driver and owner of the striking vehicle, if known.
4. If the owner of the domesticated animal cannot be determined, the investigating officer shall request Communications contact Animal Control for treatment or removal of the animal.

D. Howard County Police Department Member Collision in Privately-owned Vehicle

1. Whenever a member is driving a privately-owned vehicle in Howard County and is involved in a collision, the area supervisor will respond and investigate the collision.
2. The supervisor will maintain responsibility for any required documentation and report writing.

E. Adverse Weather Conditions

1. When adverse weather conditions cause an unusually high number of collisions, the Watch Commander may suspend the reporting requirements for property damage collisions where the vehicle is disabled, if there is no third-party damage and the property owner can be located.
2. Before giving a "No Report" disposition for the type of collisions listed above, the investigating officer shall verify driver's license, registration and insurance information, and make sure the roadway is clear of vehicles.
3. This reporting suspension does not apply to those collisions required to be reported under the Maryland Transportation Article, i.e., Personal Injury Collisions, Fatal Collisions, and Government vehicles.

XIV. CANCELLATION

This General Order cancels and replaces General Order OPS-18: Collision Investigation and Reporting, dated July 2, 2013.

Authority:


Lisa D. Myers
Chief of Police