

Traffic Accident Response and Reporting

501.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The public safety responsibilities of law enforcement include responding to traffic accidents, providing aid and assistance, documentation of the incident and identification of criminal activity. The Louisville Police Department prepares traffic accident reports in compliance with CRS § 42-4-1606 and as a public service makes traffic accident information available to the public.

501.2 CALL RESPONSE

Officers should respond without delay when dispatched to a traffic accident. A traffic accident with injuries reported may include an emergency response if the officer reasonably believes such a response is appropriate.

501.2.1 RESPONSE CONSIDERATIONS

An officer responding to and upon arrival at an accident, should consider the following:

- a. The most appropriate route to the incident
- b. Proper placement of the emergency vehicle to provide protection for officers and the scene
- c. Potential for involvement of hazardous materials
- d. Additional support that may be necessary (e.g., traffic control, medical aid, HAZMAT, ambulance, and towing of vehicles)
- e. Providing first aid to any injured parties if it can be done safely, and obtaining medical assistance as necessary
- f. Traffic control and protection of the scene
- g. Clearance of the roadway

501.3 ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION

Investigation of traffic collisions should include, at minimum, the following:

- a. Identification and interview of all involved parties
- b. Identification and interview of any witnesses
- c. Determination if any crime has occurred and taking appropriate enforcement action
- d. Identification and protection of items of apparent evidentiary value
- e. Documentation of the incident as necessary (e.g., statements, measurements, photographs, collection of evidence and reporting) on appropriate report forms

501.3.1 TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS ON PUBLIC ROADWAYS

Traffic Accident Response and Reporting

- a. Officers will respond to, investigate and complete the appropriate report forms for traffic accidents which occur on public roadways that involve one or more of the following:
 1. Damage to property over \$1000;
 2. Injury to or death of a person as a result of the movement of a motor vehicle;
 3. Drugs and/or alcohol suspected;
 4. No proof of insurance;
 5. Involvement of government or police department vehicles;
 6. Or upon request of any involved person, or directed by a supervisor.

501.3.2 TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS ON PRIVATE PROPERTY

- a. Officers respond to and investigate traffic accidents occurring on private property when it is known that any of the following circumstances exist:
 1. Extensive property damage occurred;
 2. Injury or death resulted from the accident;
 3. Hit-and-run occurred with suspect or follow-up information available;
 4. Drugs and/or alcohol suspected;
 5. A physical altercation or a refusal by one or more drivers to provide necessary information to another involved party occurred;
 6. A related criminal or serious traffic violation occurred;
 7. Involvement of government or police department vehicles;
 8. Or upon request of any involved person, or directed by a supervisor.

501.4 TAKING ENFORCEMENT ACTION

After a thorough investigation in which physical evidence or independent witness statements indicate that a violation of Colorado law led to the accident, officers should issue a traffic citation or a misdemeanor citation to the offending driver. Officers may arrest a person when there is probable cause to believe that an offense was committed by the person to be arrested (CRS § 16-3-102).

Incidents involving more serious violations, such as driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol, vehicular manslaughter or other felonies, shall be enforced immediately. If a driver subject to enforcement is admitted to a hospital, a supervisor shall be contacted to determine the best enforcement option.

501.5 TRAFFIC ACCIDENT REPORTING

501.5.1 OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

Department members shall utilize forms approved by the Department of Revenue, Motor Vehicle Division (CRS § 42-4-1608) for the reporting of traffic accidents. All traffic accident reports taken by members of this department shall be forwarded to the on-duty supervisor for approval and data entry into the records management system.

501.5.2 OPERATIONS DIVISION COMMANDER RESPONSIBILITIES

Traffic Accident Response and Reporting

The Operations Division Commander will be responsible for:

- a. Monthly and quarterly reports on traffic accident statistics, to be forwarded to the Operations Division Commander or other persons as required.
- b. Forwarding the traffic accident report to the Department of Revenue, Motor Vehicle Division within five days of receiving information regarding the accident or upon the completion of the investigation if the accident did not involve injury or death and the property damage is reasonably believed to be no more than \$1,000 (CRS § 42-4-1606).
- c. Obtaining all updates in the Colorado Traffic Accident Reporting Manual, distribution of the manual and updates and ensuring conformity with this policy.

501.5.3 MODIFICATIONS TO TRAFFIC ACCIDENT REPORTS

A change or modification of a written report that alters a material fact in the report may be made only by the person who prepared the report. A written supplemental report may be made by any authorized employee.

501.6 REPORTING SITUATIONS

501.6.1 TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS INVOLVING CITY VEHICLES

Traffic accident investigation reports shall be taken when a City-owned vehicle is involved in a traffic accident on a roadway or highway, wherein any damage or injury results. A general information report may be taken in lieu of a traffic accident report at the direction of a supervisor when the accident occurs on private property or does not involve another vehicle. Whenever there is damage to a City vehicle, a vehicle damage report shall be completed and forwarded to the appropriate Division Commander.

Photographs of the accident scene and vehicle damage shall be taken at the discretion of the traffic investigator or any supervisor.

501.6.2 INJURY OR FATALITY TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS WITH POLICE DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES

When an employee of this department, either on- or off-duty, is involved in a traffic accident within the jurisdiction of the Louisville Police Department and it results in a serious injury or fatality, the Operations Division Commander or the Shift Supervisor should request the Colorado State Patrol (CSP) or other outside agency to complete an investigation and report.

501.6.3 TRAFFIC COLLISIONS WITH OTHER CITY EMPLOYEES OR OFFICIALS

The Operations Division Commander or Shift Supervisor may request assistance from the CSP or other outside agency for the investigation of any traffic accident involving any City official or employee where a serious injury or fatality has occurred.

501.6.4 TRAFFIC COLLISIONS INVOLVING INJURED ANIMALS

Traffic Accident Response and Reporting

Department members should refer to the Animal Control Policy when a traffic accident involves disposition of an injured animal.

501.7 ACCIDENT ALERT

When an accident alert is in effect, officers will generally not respond to non-injury accidents where vehicles are not disabled and alcohol and/or drugs are not suspected. Citizens may be directed to exchange information and file a counter report at a later time.

501.8 REQUEST FOR RE-EXAMINATION

If during an accident investigation an officer believes that an individual may be an unsafe driver or their ability to operate a motor vehicle safely is impaired because of a physical or medical condition, the officer may submit a request for driver license re-examination to the Colorado Department of Revenue.

501.9 NOTIFICATION OF OPERATIONS DIVISION COMMANDER

In the event of a serious injury or death-related traffic accident, the Shift Supervisor shall notify the Operations Division Commander to relate the circumstances of the traffic accident and seek assistance from the Operations Division Commander. In the absence of a Operations Division Commander, the Shift Supervisor or any supervisor may assign investigators or request assistance from Colorado State Patrol Trooper officer to investigate the traffic accident.

501.10 NOTIFICATION OF NEXT OF KIN

If a traffic accident causes a life-threatening injury or fatality, the supervisor responsible for the incident should ensure notification of the victim's next of kin and coordinate such notification with the Coroner's office. Notification should be made as soon as practicable following positive identification of the victim.

The identity of any person seriously injured or deceased in a traffic accident should not be released until notification is made to the victim's next of kin.

