



Ithaca Police Department

120 East Clinton Street
Ithaca, New York 14850

General Order Number: 501

Motor Vehicle Crash Investigation Procedures

Issuing Authority: Chief John Barber

Effective Date: May 11, 2105

Rescinds/Supersedes: All previously issued directives

Review Date: May 2016

Applicable NYSLEA Standards: 8.1; 8.5; 47.7

Number of Pages: 5

I. Purpose

The purpose of this directive is to establish the protocols and procedures for the investigations of motor vehicle crashes occurring within the City of Ithaca.

II. Definition

A motor vehicle crash is any event involving a motor vehicle as defined in Section 125 of the Vehicle and Traffic Law that results in death, injury and/or property damage attributable directly or indirectly to the motion of a motor vehicle or its load.

III. Policy

- A. Police Accident Report forms (MV-104A, MV-104C, MV-104F, MV-104L, MV-104S, and MV-104EN) will be completed in accordance with directions set forth in the current Department of Motor Vehicles Police Accident Report Manual, and Truck and Bus Supplemental Police Accident Report Manual, copies of which are available to each member.
- B. Police Accident Report forms may be generated by using the department's Traffic and Criminal Software (TraCS) system or manually, if TraCS is not available.
- C. Officers will assure that injured persons are cared for and that proper identification information is provided to operators.

IV. Procedures

A. When dispatched to the scene of a motor vehicle crash, officers will proceed to the scene without delay, and will:

1. Safeguard the scene from traffic flow and care for injured, if any.
2. Request Fire Department, ambulance or tow truck response, when needed.
3. Interview drivers and witnesses and obtain statements.
4. Check drivers for valid operator's license, registration and insurance coverage.
5. Take enforcement action when evidence and/or statements indicating that traffic violations have occurred.
6. Supply drivers with accident information exchange slips.
7. Complete a Police Accident Report MV-104A, using the current series and supplements, MV-104C, MV104F, MV104L and MV 104S, if needed.
8. Secure property as necessary and have it stored per current directives.
9. Supply operators with the case number for the Police Accident Report.

B. Supervisors will review the MV-104A report (and any related reports) for accuracy and completeness and forward the entire report to the Records Unit for distribution.

V. Special Situations

A. Fatal or life threatening injury crashes.

1. In addition to the procedures outlined in Article IV-A of this directive, the investigating officer will notify the on duty staff, who will:

- a) Respond to the scene and direct the investigation
- b) Notify the Deputy Chief of Operations
- c) Notify the Lieutenant of the Investigations Division to obtain assistance in securing statements from witnesses, etc.
- d) Notify the Crash Investigation Team Supervisor
 - 1) The Crash Investigation Team Supervisor, in conjunction with the Deputy Chief of Operations, will determine if the team is to be deployed.
 - 2) If the Crash Investigation Team is deployed, they will be responsible for reconstruction of the crash.
- e) Request an Evidence Technician to respond to secure photographs and collect evidence, in coordination with the Crash Investigation Team.

2. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Fatality Analysis Reporting System requires additional data when investigating a fatal accident. This data is to be collected during the investigation of any fatal automobile accident. The following additional information is to be recorded in the crash description/officer's notes or on a separate piece of paper:

- a) Posted speed limit
- b) Roadway surface type (i.e., concreted, blacktop)
- c) Number of lanes on roadway
- d) Roadway flow, that is:
 - i. One way
 - ii. Two way, individual lanes
 - iii. Divided highway median
 - iv. Divided highway guide rail
 - v. Divided highway other barrier

- e) Emergency medical services involved
- f) Initial point of impact on the vehicles
- g) Name and address of all involved

3. All fatal crashes will require an MV-104EN "Early Notification of a Fatal Accident" form to be faxed within 24 hours to the NYS DMV. Instructions and fax number are on the form.

B. Hit and Run Crashes

- 1. Members of the Ithaca Police Department will investigate hit and run crashes and complete a Police Accident Report.
- 2. Efforts to investigate the hit and run crash will be documented in a Spillman incident report, to include the elimination of all possible solvability factors, if applicable.

C. Commercial Vehicle and Bus Crashes

- 1. The Vehicle and Traffic Law requires police agencies to report crashes involving certain trucks, tractor-trailers and buses to the NYS DMV. This information is reported on a "Truck and Bus Supplemental Police Accident Report," form MV-104S.
- 2. Form MV-104S is to be completed only if the following criteria apply:
 - a) The crash involved a qualifying vehicle, as listed below:
 - 1) Any commercial truck having a Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) or Gross Combined Weight Rating (GCWR) > 10,000 lbs.; or
 - 2) Any vehicle displaying a hazardous materials (Haz Mat) placard; or
 - 3) A bus designed to carry nine (9) or more persons, including the driver.

b) The crash ALSO had one of the following events occur:

- 1) At least one vehicle was towed/transported from the scene (other than for a flat tire); or
- 2) At least one person sustained fatal injuries; or
- 3) At least one person was transported for immediate medical treatment.

D. Crashes involving vehicles transporting hazardous materials.

1. Immediately notify the Department of Emergency Response (911 Center) of the presence of hazardous materials.
2. Establish a safe perimeter.
 - a) Wind direction, type of material (if readily known) composition of material (liquid, gas, granular etc.) need to be considered in determining perimeter.
 - b) Evacuation may be necessary.
3. Notify NYS Department of Environmental Conservation.
4. Notify NYS Department of Transportation, Ithaca DPW or the Tompkins County Highway Department.

E. Bicycle Accidents – Not Involving Motor Vehicles

1. All bicycle accidents will be thoroughly investigated.
2. An MV-104C will be completed when there is a fatality or serious physical injury.

