Ithaca Police Department
120 East Clinton Street
Ithaca, New York 14850

General Order Number: 345
Title: Police Fleet Crashes & Occupant Safety Restraints

Issuing Authority: Chief John Barber

Effective Date: May 11, 2015

Rescinds/Supersedes: General Order 3045 dated 4/18/2011

Review Date: May 2016

Applicable NYSLEA Standards: 42.1, 42.2, 42.3, 42.4

Number of Pages: 3

I. Purpose

The purpose of this general order is to establish the department's policy regarding the use of occupant safety restraint devices within the police fleet and establish the procedures for the investigation and reporting of motor vehicle crashes involving vehicles that are a part of the Ithaca Police Departments fleet.

II. Policy

A. Occupant Safety Restraints

1. Employees shall drive with due care and regard for the safety of all persons. While operating or riding in any departmental vehicle all members shall use, barring exigent circumstances, all safety devices and restraining systems provided by the vehicle manufacturer for their intended purpose. These devices and systems shall include, but not be limited to:
   
a. Lap Belts
   
b. Shoulder harness
   
c. Passive Restraint Systems (Airbags)

2. No person shall alter, disconnect, remove or render inoperable any safety, restraint device or passive restraint device installed by the vehicle manufacturer.
3. It shall be incumbent upon any member who discovers an inoperable restraint system to report same to his/her supervisor.

4. Any civilian or non-member persons riding in departmental vehicles shall be accountable to section II-A of this order and to the appropriate statutes of the New York State Vehicle & Traffic law.

5. All prisoners shall be transported in departmental vehicles and shall be placed in the appropriate safety/restraint devices provided by the vehicle manufacturer.

B. Police Fleet Crashes

1. All police department vehicle crashes will be reported as herein directed by the involved member immediately.

2. Any officer operating a police vehicle involved in a crash must immediately notify an on duty staff officer.

3. Any staff officer operating a police vehicle involved in a crash must notify the Office of the Chief of Police.

4. A New York State Report Form MV104A and MV104L will be filed in compliance with the New York State Vehicle and Traffic law.

III. Police Fleet Crash Investigation and Reporting Procedures.

A. The involved member shall:

1. Immediately notify, or cause to be notified, the Tompkins County Department of Emergency Response indicating the location, extent of the crash, and whether any emergency services are needed.

2. Notify the on duty staff.

3. Protect and preserve the crash scene.

4. If necessary, arrange to reroute traffic to allow movement of other vehicles.

5. Identify witnesses by securing their names, home address, place of employment, and telephone numbers.
6. If the police vehicle is inoperable, a tow company shall be notified and the vehicle towed to the Ithaca Police Department or a collision repair garage as determined by the IPD Fleet Manager or on duty staff.

7. If requested to do so by competent authority, complete a special report outlining his/her involvement in the traffic crash.

8. Members shall not discuss or make any statements regarding the crash to non-police personnel. Refer all inquiries to the Deputy Chief of Operations.

B. The on duty staff shall:

1. Respond to the scene of the crash and coordinate a thorough investigation.

2. If the crash involves serious physical injury, death, or substantial property damage to either party, make the appropriate notifications to the Deputy Chief of Operations.

3. If needed, may request a Crash Reconstruction Certified Officer to conduct the investigation, completing the MV104A and MV104L (Police Line of Duty Accident form). This request should be made to the Crash Reconstruction Team supervisor, in coordination with the Deputy Chief of Operations.

4. Interview, or cause to be interviewed, all witnesses and gather statements and records of interviews.

5. Obtain photographs of all involved vehicles.