



SACRAMENTO POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDERS



537.04 COLLISION REPORTING 08-12-2026

PURPOSE

The purpose of this order is to establish standards for documenting collisions.

POLICY

It shall be the policy of the Sacramento Police Department (SPD) that employees document collisions as directed in this order.

PROCEDURE

A. DEFINITIONS

1. COLLISION (ACCIDENT) - An unintended event that produces damage or injury involving a vehicle in transport.
2. COLLISION INVESTIGATION - Narrative format that contains headings for Facts, Statements, Opinions and Conclusions, and Recommendations, including subheadings as outlined in the California Highway Patrol (CHP) Collision Investigation Manual.
3. COLLISION REPORT - A shortened narrative format that contains only the Notification, Statements, Summary, Area of Impact, and Cause headings.
4. HIGHWAY - A way or place of whatever nature, publicly maintained and open to the use of the public for purposes of vehicular travel. The term "highway" includes streets, shoulders, and sidewalks (Vehicle Code § 360).
5. CHP 555-03 *Traffic Collision Report* – CHP form used to document collision that involved no more than two (2) uninjured parties.
6. CHP 555 *Traffic Collision Report* – CHP form used to document collision investigations or document collisions that do not meet the criteria for a CHP 555-03.
7. CHP 555 D *Truck/Bus/Haz-Mat Collision Supplement Report* - CHP form that shall be completed if the collision meets the minimum reporting level as outlined in this General Order (GO) and if one or more of the vehicles meets the qualifying criteria outlined in the CHP Collision Investigation Manual.

B. GENERAL

1. Collision documentation shall be in compliance with the California Highway Patrol Collision Investigation Manual (CHP HPM 110.5). All policies of the SPD and the City of Sacramento (City) shall supersede the CHP Collision Investigation Manual in any case in which information conflicts.
2. Collision documentation shall be completed on CHP traffic collision report forms, including preprinted or computerized forms that meet CHP requirements. NOTE: Online reports that will not be transmitted to the CHP may be completed using the Department's Records Management System.
3. Each page of the collision report or investigation report shall contain the same heading information as the face page of the report. This includes:
 - a. The date and time.
 - b. Department's NCIC number (3404).
 - c. Officer badge number.
 - d. Report number.

C. MINIMUM REPORTING LEVEL

1. A collision occurring on or off the highway shall be documented as a Collision Investigation when any of the following conditions apply:
 - a. Any person is fatally injured as a result of the collision.



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- b. Any person is severely injured as a result of the collision, including, but not limited to, internal injuries; broken, dislocated or distorted limbs; severe lacerations; or unconsciousness at (or when taken from) the scene. Severe injury does not include minor lacerations that require no immediate medical attention.
 - c. Any person involved in the collision is transported to the hospital via ambulance.
 - d. The collision is a result of an identifiable driving violation that was not committed in the officer's presence and documentation is required to support prosecution (citation to be issued per § 40600 VC).
 - e. Any party to the collision is in violation of § 20001 VC (Felony Hit-and-Run).
 - f. A collision resulting from a pursuit. Damage or injury resulting from the application of the Pursuit Immobilization Technique, including damage or injury to other vehicles, people, or property, is not reportable as a collision and shall be thoroughly documented in the pursuit offense report.
 - g. Any party to the collision is arrested for a collision-related violation (e.g. evading, hit-and-run, DUI, etc.)
 - h. The collision involves an emergency vehicle.
 - i. The collision involves a vehicle owned, rented, or leased by the City. This includes privately-owned vehicles used by City employees while conducting City business.
2. A collision occurring on or off the highway shall be documented as a Collision Report when any of the following conditions apply and none of the conditions in C.1. are present. Officers may elect to complete a Collision Investigation at their discretion.
- a. Any person suffers other visible injuries or complaint of pain as a result of the collision.
 - (1) Other visible injuries include, but are not limited to, minor lacerations, bruising, black eyes, bloody noses, abrasions, non-visible, and soft tissue injuries.
 - (2) Supervisors and officers should be careful to recognize situations in which complaint of pain and other visible injuries may involve severe nonvisible or internal injury.
 - b. Any party to the collision is in violation of § 20002 VC (Misdemeanor Hit-and-Run), the vehicle's license plate is obtained, and the driver can be identified.
 - c. An involved party is in violation of Vehicle Code §§ 20001- 20002 and the license plate of the hit and run vehicle is obtained, but the identification of the driver is unlikely.
 - d. The officer witnessed the violation that caused the collision and elects to take enforcement action (see also, section M).
 - e. When a driver is found to be unlicensed or the license is suspended/revoked. Citations shall be issued for these violations in accordance with General Order 523.04 (Notice to Appear [Citations]).
3. No collision documentation is necessary when:
- a. None of the criteria in C.1. and C.2. are present. Officers may elect to document these collisions at their discretion.
 - b. The collision occurs on a freeway, including on-ramps and off-ramps. The CHP has jurisdiction in these cases.
4. Citizens wishing to document a collision that does not meet the criteria for dispatch may be referred to the SPD website for an "Online" report or to a public counter for a "Counter Report". Refer to General Order 537.02 (Traffic Citizen Reporting Options).

D. COLLISION REPORT DOCUMENTATION

1. All collisions that meet reporting requirements shall be documented in a complete and accurate police report and submitted in accordance with General Order 340.01 (Report Quality Control Review).
2. Collisions shall be documented using the required reporting software. Officers shall log in and check their reporting software queue for rejected collision reports at least once during their regular duty shift. If corrections are needed, officers shall make the required corrections and resubmit the report in accordance with GO 340.01.
3. Collisions shall be documented either on the CHP 555, CHP 555-03 or CHP 555 D form. NOTE: One



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CHP 555 D form shall be completed for each qualifying vehicle involved and be included on the last page(s) of the traffic collision report or investigation.

4. Community Service Officers (CSOs) shall only assist with the reporting of Collision Investigations involving fatal or severe injuries (GBI) with approval of the district sergeant in which the collision occurred.
5. Absent the exceptions outlined in this GO, traffic collision reports should be completed using either the "long form" or the "short form," based on the minimum reporting criteria below:

Investigation (Long Narrative)		Report (Short Narrative)
CHP 555 Regular Form	▪ Fatal or severe injury. ▪ Citation for driving violation not committed in officer's presence. ▪ Hit and run when plate and driver can be identified. ▪ Collision as a result of a pursuit. ▪ Party arrested for collision-related violation (DUI, Evading, H&R, etc.). ▪ Emergency vehicle involved. ▪ City vehicle involved.	▪ Visible or compliant of pain injury. ▪ Hit and run with plate but driver can't be identified. ▪ Citation for driving violation witnessed by officer. Citation for license violations not witnessed by officer.
CHP 555-03 (PDO Form)	None of the above	Any of the above except No Injury or two (2) parties maximum

E. SKETCHES & FACTUAL DIAGRAMMS

1. Sketches should be completed for all Collision Investigations and Reports in which the officer can accurately depict the movement of the parties up to impact.
2. Factual diagrams shall only be included with a Collision Investigation and may be completed at the officer's discretion.
3. Sketches and factual diagrams need not be to scale but shall be proportional and professional in appearance. Sketch and Factual Diagram symbols shall be used as outlined in the CHP Collision Investigation Manual.

F. JURISDICTIONAL UNCERTAINTY

1. If the jurisdiction of a collision is unknown or in dispute and the collision meets the minimum reporting level, the collision shall be documented by SPD officers or community service officers.
2. Collisions known or later found to be outside the Department's jurisdiction shall be labeled "Courtesy Report" in the Special Conditions box. The name of the responsible agency should be included in the Special Conditions box.
3. When a courtesy report is taken, officers shall complete the report but shall omit the NCIC and Officer ID numbers from all pages of the report.
4. The Records Division shall send a copy to the agency having jurisdiction. No copy shall be sent to the CHP Information Management Division or City Traffic Engineering.

G. CITY VEHICLE COLLISION INVESTIGATION

1. Employees involved in a collision while on duty shall notify the SPD Communications Center. Upon notice, Communications shall generate a call for service and notify the watch commander. The watch commander will send an email to spdvehiclecollision@pd.cityofsacramento.org with details on the collision for required command and risk notifications.
2. Crime Scene Investigators (CSI) shall be requested to take photographs of all collisions involving a City vehicle. If CSI is unavailable, photographs shall be taken by the district sergeant.



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3. Collisions between a City vehicle and a privately-owned vehicle or on private property that do not meet the definition of a collision shall be documented on a General Offense, Traffic Information Report.
4. When available, officers assigned to the Traffic Section shall have primary responsibility for investigating reportable City vehicle collisions and shall complete the entire investigation.
5. If officers assigned to the Traffic Section are unavailable, officers assigned to patrol may investigate City vehicle collisions.
 - a. Officers shall complete a Collision Investigation, excluding the Primary Collision Factor, Associated Collision Factor, and Opinions and Conclusions. Area of Impact shall be included if it can be determined.
 - b. Officers who have completed a class in Intermediate Traffic Accident Investigation (this course is required for Traffic Officers) may complete the entire investigation.
 - c. When an arrest is made as the result of a collision (e.g., DUI, evading, etc.), officers shall complete the entire investigation due to criminal filing timelines.
6. Sworn peace officers entered as parties to a collision shall be identified at a minimum by first and last name, driver license number, business address, and business phone number.

H. CITY VEHICLE COLLISION DISPOSITION

1. All City vehicle Collision Investigations shall be routed to the Major Collision Investigation Unit (MCIU) for review or completion prior to being routed to the Records Division unless an arrest is made as the result of a collision as noted above in Section G. 5. c.
2. Upon MCIU review of the investigation, if it is determined that department personnel have committed a violation of the law, the completed report shall:
 - a. Be reviewed by the Traffic Lieutenant, Metro Captain, and employee's Division Commander.
 - b. If it is determined that the case will be submitted to the District Attorney's office, it shall be hand delivered and presented to the appropriate Deputy District Attorney.
 - c. If it is determined that a citation will be issued, it shall be signed by the Traffic Lieutenant.
3. Upon conclusion of the investigation, if it is determined that City employees or contractors have committed a violation of the law, the completed report shall be approved by a traffic supervisor.
4. Officers shall obtain supervisory approval prior to generating a citation to accompany a traffic collision report involving City employees or contractors.
5. Officers shall not issue citations to any City employee at the scene of the collision when they were operating a City vehicle.

I. SACRAMENTO DRIVER'S REPORT OF ACCIDENT

1. Department personnel involved in a collision while driving a SPD vehicle shall ensure that a City of Sacramento Driver's Report of Accident (Form RM 2) form is completed by the end of watch and submitted for approval.
2. If a collision report was taken, employees shall complete the first section of the form (first 5 lines) and include a brief description of the collision on the back of Form RM 2. The description should be brief (e.g. city vehicle backed into a tree, city vehicle was rear ended, etc.) and not contain any opinions, observations, or determinations of who was at fault.
3. Collisions involving two Departmental vehicles or City owned property may be documented solely on a Form RM 2 if:
 - a. Injury does not occur.
 - b. Privately owned vehicles are not involved.
 - c. Code-3 driving is not involved.
 - d. The Department vehicle sustains moderate or less damage (as defined in the CHP Collision Manual).
4. If a collision report was NOT taken, the Form RM 2 form shall be completely filled out and include a sketch and detailed description of how the collision occurred.
5. Supervisors may direct the officer to complete a collision investigation when the collision cannot be



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adequately documented on Form RM 2.

J. COLLISIONS INVOLVING TRAINS OR LIGHT RAIL

1. Collisions involving either a train or bicyclist on a highway or a train and motor vehicle (on or off a highway) are considered vehicle collisions and shall be documented pursuant to the minimum reporting level in section C.
2. All other incidents involving trains (e.g. derailment, struck pedestrian, etc.) shall be documented in a General Offense Traffic Information Report.
3. Officers shall not issue a traffic citation or request a driver's license of the train operator or any of their crew members when a train has been involved in a collision or violation.

K. SCHOOL BUS COLLISIONS

1. A school bus includes any of the following vehicles when transporting any K-12 school pupil to or from a public or private school or to or from a school-related activity.
 - a. School bus (as defined in Vehicle Code § 545).
 - b. School pupil activity bus (as defined in Vehicle Code § 546).
 - c. Youth bus (as defined in Vehicle Code § 680).
 - d. Public transit bus or para-transit vehicle (as defined in § 336 VC).
2. School buses do not include public transit vehicles that transport pupils along with members of the general public.
3. School bus collisions occurring within the City limits are the responsibility of the CHP when:
 - a. A collision between a vehicle and a pupil or school bus driver crossing the street when the school bus's flashing red lights are required to be on, pursuant to Vehicle Code § 22112.
 - b. An injury to a school bus passenger as a result of acceleration, deceleration, or other movement of the bus.
4. Collisions involving any of the above-described vehicles with no pupils aboard shall be handled by the SPD based on the minimum reporting level in section C.

L. BICYCLE COLLISIONS

1. A bicycle is a device upon which any person may ride, propelled exclusively by human power through a belt, chain, or gears and having one or more wheels (Vehicle Code § 231).
2. Vehicle Code § 21200 requires bicycle riders to obey the same rules of the road (Division 11) as the driver of a vehicle, except when the nature of the rule could not apply to a bicycle.
3. Collisions involving bicycles are reportable if they occur on a highway and meet the minimum reporting requirements in section C.

M. ENFORCING THE VEHICLE CODE

1. All enforcement actions shall be substantiated by the facts or statements provided. The elements of the violation and identification of the responsible person shall be clearly addressed in the report.
2. All citations issued in connection with a collision shall be submitted with the report.
3. Officers taking enforcement action for infractions (including license violations) not committed in their presence shall:
 - a. Complete a citation.
 - b. Write "Collision" or "Accident" in the violator's signature box.
 - c. Use the Sacramento Traffic Court calendar to set the court date. The court date should be assigned based on the date the report was approved by a supervisor. NOTE: Approving supervisors shall ensure that the court date is set based on the review date.
 - d. Not provide a copy of the citation to the violator.
4. Officers taking enforcement action for infractions (including license violations) committed in their presence may issue a citation to the violator at the scene using the normal citation procedure.
5. When a misdemeanor hit-and-run suspect has been positively identified, three enforcement options are available:



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- a. Cite and release using the normal citation procedure. Set the court date using the Sacramento County Traffic Court calendar.
 - b. Prepare a citation and set the court date as instructed above. Write "COLLISION" or "ACCIDENT" in the violator's signature box. **Do not provide a copy of the citation to the violator.**
 - c. Book the violator into jail according to Department policy.
6. When a felony hit-and-run suspect has been positively identified, two enforcement options are available.
- a. Book the violator into jail according to Department policy. This shall be the preferred method unless the person cannot be cleared for incarceration within a reasonable time.
 - b. Submit report with "Reco" in the Special Conditions box. The MCIU will prepare a felony warrant request.

N. SPECIAL CONDITIONS

1. RECO – Additional follow up is needed to determine the cause of the collision or which party is responsible, a felony warrant request is being sought, or monitoring of a seriously injured person is requested.
2. CIT #_____ - A citation has been issued. Include the citation number.
3. CITY EQUIP #_____ - A City owned vehicle was involved. Include the vehicle number.
4. ON DUTY EMER VEH - An on-duty peace officer or firefighter was involved in the collision while operating a government-owned vehicle. Also, place "On Duty Emer. Veh." over the driver's name.
5. DUI - The collision involved a DUI driver.
6. BOOKED - A subject was booked as a result of the collision.
7. PP - The collision occurred on private property.
8. LATE RPT - The collision was a late report (defined in the CHP Collision Investigation Manual).
9. CITY PROP - Property owned by the City of Sacramento (excluding vehicles) was damaged.
10. GOVT - A government owned vehicle (excluding City vehicles) was involved in the collision.
11. PUB UTIL - Public utility property or vehicles were damaged in the collision (e.g., PG&E, etc.).
12. 550- It is suspected that the collision was staged. Do not write "Staged Collision" anywhere in the report.
13. COURTESY RPT - The collision occurred outside the City limits (indicate the responsible agency).
14. FATAL - A death resulted from the collision or within 30 days of the collision.
15. PRELIM - The investigation will take longer than 15 working days.
16. HAZMAT - A vehicle displaying a hazardous materials placard was involved in the collision.