

# POLICE DEPARTMENT HANOVER PARK, ILLINOIS



DIRECTIVE: 359-T

REFERENCE STANDARDS: 61.1.5k 61.2.1 61.2.2 61.2.3  
61.2.4 83.1.1

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SUBJECT: Investigation and Reporting of Traffic Accidents

PURPOSE: It is the policy of the Hanover Park Police Department to respond to traffic accidents to prevent further injury or damage and to conduct an impartial and thorough investigation into the causes of the accident. Where weather or other conditions prevent immediate response, alternative procedures are approved. Investigating officers shall comply with modern professional standards for investigation and reporting of motor vehicle accidents.

## I. Procedure

### A. RESPONSE TO TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS (61.2.2)

1. Departmental personnel shall respond to reported motor vehicle accidents including:
  - a. Fatality accidents;
  - b. Injury accidents;
  - c. Non-injury accidents and;
  - d. Private property accidents that meet the contained criteria;
  - e. Accidents involving drivers impaired by alcohol and/or drugs;
  - f. Hit and run accidents;
  - g. Accidents that create major traffic congestion;
  - h. Accidents involving hazardous materials;
  - i. Accident involving city and other governmental vehicles/property;
  - j. Accidents resulting in disturbances between involved drivers;
  - k. Accidents requiring the towing of one or more vehicles.
2. Personnel shall ensure that complete and thorough investigations of motor vehicle accidents are conducted.
3. Personnel shall accurately complete all appropriate reports related to traffic accidents.

### B. REPORTING METHODS

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**POLICE OPERATIONS MANUAL**

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**VILLAGE OF HANOVER PARK**

**Rescinds: 076-P & 070-P**

**Auth:**

1. Following the reporting criteria established by the Illinois Department of Transportation, Division of Traffic Safety, personnel shall complete an Illinois Traffic Crash Report form for all assigned motor vehicle accidents.
2. Reportable accidents occurring on private property shall be reported on an Illinois Traffic Crash Report form.
3. Personnel shall also complete other report forms necessary for each assigned accident. These include but are not limited to:
  - a. Incident/Offense Reports;
  - b. All forms associated with a D.U.I. arrest;
  - c. Vehicle Tow report;
4. DuPage Communications Center (DuComm)
  - a. Upon receipt of a call reporting a motor vehicle accident, the DuComm telecommunicator will inquire with the caller the following:
    - 1) The exact location where the incident occurred;
    - 2) Whether or not any person is injured;
    - 3) Whether or not the vehicles involved can be safely relocated off of the roadway;
    - 4) If the caller is one of the parties involved in the accident;
    - 5) If the incident is determined to have occurred within the Department's jurisdiction, dispatch an officer to investigate the accident.
  - b. Whenever an uninvolved third party reports an accident or the telecommunicator is unsure how to process the call, an officer will be dispatched to the scene.
  - c. After reviewing the information regarding the accident and the availability of police resources, the on-duty supervisor may instruct DuComm to have all parties drive to the station for reporting.
5. Responsibilities of Police Desk Personnel
  - a. Upon receipt of a call reporting a motor vehicle accident, Police Desk Personnel will determine the following:
    - 1) The exact location where the accident occurred.;
    - 2) Whether or not any person is injured;
    - 3) Whether or not the vehicles involved can be safely driven from the scene.
  - b. Based upon the information received, Police Desk Personnel will determine whether the accident meets the criteria for an Illinois Traffic Crash Report SR1050 or Traffic Incident Report, Appendix A, and take the following action:
    - 1) For the Traffic Incident Report, request the parties involved to drive to the Police Department, providing necessary directions.

- 2) For Illinois Traffic Crash Report SR1050, transfer the call to DuComm and request the telecommunicator dispatch an officer to the scene.
- c. Whenever a citizen comes into the Police Department to report a motor vehicle accident, Police Desk Personnel will inquire the exact location where the accident occurred to determine jurisdiction.
- d. If the accident occurred within the Department's jurisdiction, the Police Desk Personnel will begin to obtain the necessary information to complete the motor vehicle accident report after notifying DU-COMM to generate a dispatch sheet.

### C. INITIAL RESPONSE

1. Any on-duty member of the Hanover Park Police Department may be dispatched as the initial police response to a motor vehicle accident. Any department member may happen upon an accident prior to it being reported to DuComm Communications.
2. All traffic accidents can be reported and investigated by police. Officers shall not advise parties that theirs is a "non-reportable" accident.
  - a. If damage is extremely minor and if the parties involved ask if they can just exchange information officers can advise them to do so if:
    - 1) Both drivers possess a valid driver's license,
    - 2) Both have valid proof of insurance, or
    - 3) The Illinois Traffic Crash Report guidelines for use of the "long form" do not apply.
3. The departmental personnel first on the scene of a motor vehicle accident shall take steps to ensure that the scene is being protected. (61.2.3e)
  - a. Personnel shall attempt to ensure that neither additional injuries nor damage occur.
    - 1) Personnel shall position their marked vehicle in such a manner to warn oncoming traffic of the situation and activate emergency lighting system.
    - 2) Personnel first on the scene shall request additional assistance as needed to protect the accident scene from further injury/damage.
4. Once the scene is protected, the initial on-scene personnel shall check accident victims for injuries. (61.2.3b)
  - a. Personnel shall administer necessary first aid.
  - b. Personnel shall request medical assistance if needed, or requested by the victim.
5. The first personnel on scene shall be alert for potential hazards. (61.2.3c)
  - a. Personnel shall check for any possible fire hazard. If a fire hazard exist:

- 1) Personnel shall remove any non-essential people from the scene;
- 2) Personnel shall request a response to the scene by the fire department of jurisdiction.
- b. Personnel shall also be alert for any hazardous materials involved in the accident. Possible hazardous materials can include:
  - 1) Vehicle fluids (gasoline, oil, antifreeze, battery acid, etc.)
  - 2) Materials being transported in an involved vehicle. Types of materials being transported may be determined by:
    - (a) Placards on the side of a truck;
    - (b) Shipping papers in the cab of a truck;
    - (c) Labels on individual containers inside of a truck
    - (d) Interviewing the truck driver.
  - 3) If it is determined or suspected that hazardous materials are involved in the accident personnel shall:
    - (a) Request a response by the Hanover Park Fire Department;
    - (b) Remove all people from the immediate area of the accident, giving consideration to wind direction;
    - (c) Request additional traffic control;
    - (d) Request a supervisor.

**D. ASSIGNMENT OF ACCIDENT INVESTIGATOR (83.1.1)**

Every effort shall be made to assign the appropriate personnel to investigate motor vehicle accidents based upon the seriousness of the accident. (61.2.3a)

1. The primary officer assigned to investigate a motor vehicle accident shall request additional resources as needed to safely and accurately complete the assignment. Some of the situations and resources are as follows:
  - a. Fatality accident (83.1.1)
    - 1) Immediate notification to the on-duty patrol supervisor for activation of notifications and assignments to include a call-in for sworn personnel specifically trained in serious/fatal motor vehicle collisions if one is not on duty;
    - 2) The on-duty patrol supervisor will be responsible for notification to the Sergeant of the Strategic Enforcement and Prevention Unit who will make the determination as to the activation of the DuPage County Reconstruction Team, (DuCART). In the event the SEP Sergeant is unavailable, the Lieutenant of Patrol will made the determination.
    - 3) Additional personnel for traffic control (see below);
    - 4) Specialized equipment/personnel to complete measurements, photographing, and other activities.
2. Extreme traffic congestion
  - a. Additional personnel to provide traffic direction/control:
    - 1) Patrol Section personnel;

- 2) Personnel from another agency;
- 3) Information relayed to local radio stations and other media to inform citizens about the congestion and approximately how long the condition will continue.

E. ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION

Department personnel shall complete a thorough and accurate investigation of assigned, reportable motor vehicle accidents. (61.2.1)

1. A reportable motor vehicle accident is an unintentional event, occurring on a traffic way, involving a motor vehicle in transport that causes death, injury and/or property damage.
2. Assigned personnel should complete an Illinois Traffic Crash Report SR1050 form as the primary report document for motor vehicle accidents.
3. The Illinois Traffic Crash Report SR1050 form shall be completed in accordance with the "Illinois Traffic Crash Report SR1050 Preparation Manual."
4. Information that cannot be included on the report form shall be recorded on the appropriate departmental report form(s).
5. Assigned personnel shall ensure that all drivers involved in motor vehicle accidents and are capable of doing so exchange information with each other. This information should include the other driver's:
  - a. Vehicle owner's name;
  - b. Vehicle license number;
  - c. Vehicle information;
  - d. Vehicle insurance information.
6. All drivers involved in the accident and are capable of receiving the information shall be supplied with the police report number, the time of the report and the location.

F. GATHERING INFORMATION AT A MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENT SCENE

Assigned personnel shall use all available information and resources to complete the investigation. (61.2.3d)

1. Assigned personnel shall attempt to separate involved drivers before questioning them about the accident.
2. Involved drivers who become involved in a disturbance should be separated as long as officer safety is not compromised.

3. Assigned personnel shall attempt to locate unbiased witnesses to the accident.
  - a. Passengers in a vehicle involved in the accident should not be considered to be unbiased.
  - b. Witnesses should be interviewed and their information should be noted.
  - c. Witnesses' names, addresses, and day time phone numbers should be obtained and recorded on the accident report form.
4. Assigned personnel shall evaluate physical evidence at the scene to support or discredit the involved persons' claims.
  - a. The approximate point of impact should be determined if possible.
  - b. The damage, location and amount, on all involved vehicles should be assessed.
5. The conditions of the area of the accident should be documented.
  - a. The road conditions (wet, dry, icy, etc.).
  - b. The condition of traffic control devices.
  - c. The terrain of the area.
  - d. The presence of obstacles to the drivers' vision.
6. If applicable, assigned personnel shall check the condition of the vehicles involved to include but not restricted to:
  - a. Check the brake capacity of the vehicles.
  - b. Check for vision obscuring articles with in the vehicle (other occupant, ice, snow, frost, load, etc.).
  - c. Check for functioning windshield wipers.
  - d. Check the condition of the vehicles tires.
  - e. Check for functioning vehicle lights.
7. Assigned personnel shall monitor the drivers and determine any unusual conditions.
  - a. Personnel shall be alert for signs of impairment due to alcohol and/or drugs.
  - b. Check for any physical limitations of the drivers.
  - c. Check for any signs that a minor injury may be more serious.

**G. MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENT VICTIMS PROPERTY**

Investigating personnel shall be responsible for the security of accident victim's property at the scene if the victim is unable to care for it. (61.2.3f)

1. If a victim is transported from the scene, personnel shall attempt to have small items of value transported with the victim. These may include but are not limited to:
  - a. Wallets, billfolds, purses;
  - b. Check books;
  - c. Jewelry;
  - d. Items possibly containing cash (bank bags, etc.)

- e. Prescription drugs.
- 2. Items of value may be released to family members of the victim.

#### H. TOWING OF VEHICLES INVOLVED IN A MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENT

Assigned personnel shall be responsible for ensuring that vehicles involved in an accident are removed from the scene in a timely manner.

- 1. Personnel shall attempt to honor any request made by an accident victim in regards to their personal preference for the removal of their vehicle from an accident scene by a towing service. Consideration should be given to:
  - a. Response time of the towing service;
  - b. Existing traffic congestion, and;
  - c. Number of calls-for-service holding.
- 2. If a victim has no preference for a towing company, personnel shall have DuComm Communications contact the next on-call tow service from the Village approved tow rotation list.
- 3. If a victim is incapacitated and cannot select a tow service their vehicle may be towed by the Village approved tow company.
- 4. If a driver of a vehicle involved in an accident is arrested, the person's vehicle may be towed by the Village approved tow company.

#### I. CLEARING OF DEBRIS FROM AN ACCIDENT SCENE

Personnel shall ensure that all potentially harmful debris is removed from the accident scene.

- 1. If a tow company is called to remove a vehicle from the scene, assigned personnel shall ensure that the tow truck operator removes all debris.
- 2. If no tow company is needed at the scene, assigned personnel shall request the appropriate agency be notified to remove the debris.
  - a. On a Village-maintained roadway and/or right-of-way, the Public Works Department shall be requested.
  - b. On a state-maintained roadway and/or right-of-way, the State Highway Department shall be requested.
- 3. If the accident involved is a hit and run accident, debris at the scene, which possibly came from the suspect vehicle, may be collected as evidence.

- a. Debris collected as evidence should be of such nature that it could be used to match with the suspect vehicle. Articles such as dirt, fluids, etc. should not be collected.
  - b. Debris collected as evidence shall be handled in the same manner as all evidentiary items.
4. If a small amount of debris exist and personnel responsible for removing it have not arrived by the time the officer completes the accident investigation the officer should attempt to remove the debris out of the roadway (to the curb line, on the parkway, etc.).

**J. HIT AND RUN ACCIDENTS**

Personnel assigned to investigate Hit and Run accidents shall handle these in the same manner as other motor vehicle accidents and complete some additional tasks.

1. As soon as possible, after arriving at the scene of a hit and run accident, personnel shall relay information about the suspect vehicle to other personnel. Personnel should determine and relay:
  - a. Suspect vehicle description;
  - b. Suspect vehicle direction of travel;
  - c. Damage on the suspect vehicle;
  - d. Number and description of suspect vehicle occupants, if available.
2. Personnel assigned to the initial investigation should make every reasonable attempt to locate the hit and run suspect/vehicle.
3. Victims of a hit and run accident shall be referred to the investigating officer for follow-up information.

**K. WALK-IN ACCIDENT REPORTS**

Citizens may make reports on motor vehicle accidents in person at the Hanover Park Police Department. This may be done in a number of situations.

1. Walk-in reports may be completed when the department was not notified at the time the accident occurred.
2. During a Traffic Emergency Status citizens shall be advised to complete walk-in reports on all non-injury accidents when vehicles involved are operational and no driver is impaired due to alcohol or drugs.
3. Walk-in accident reports will be reported on the departmental Traffic Incident Report form or SR1050 as appropriate.

**L. PRIVATE PROPERTY MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENTS**

Under certain circumstances personnel will be assigned to investigate private property motor vehicle accidents. (61.2.1f) These conditions are:



1. The accident is an injury accident;
2. A suspected alcohol/drug-impaired driver is involved;
3. It is a hit and run accident and sufficient evidence exist to facilitate a follow-up investigation;
4. A government owned vehicle is involved;
5. Exceptional circumstances exist including: (61.2.1)
  - a. Motor vehicle driven into a building;
  - b. Public utilities are left damaged or interrupted, as determined by a supervisor;
  - c. As otherwise determined by a supervisor.

**M. MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENT FOLLOW UP INVESTIGATION**

Follow up investigations shall be conducted on certain types of accidents in support of ongoing or anticipated criminal prosecution. (61.2.4)

1. Follow up investigation on fatality accidents shall be conducted by:
  - a. Any sworn officer who has completed advanced accident investigation courses; or
  - b. A detective assigned for such investigation.
2. Follow up on serious injury accidents shall be handled by:
  - a. Patrol Section personnel assigned to the initial investigation. (Example: Patrol shall complete the follow up on a D.U.I. where a blood sample was taken rather than a breath sample.);
  - b. Patrol personnel that may have a special expertise and are needed.
3. Follow up on hit and run accidents may be handled by the Investigative Bureau after the initial investigating officer efforts failed to identify/locate the suspect.

**N. TRAFFIC EMERGENCY STATUS**

Under circumstances that greatly affect the department's ability to respond to motor vehicle accidents a traffic emergency status may be declared.

1. An emergency status may be declared by the Lieutenant of Patrol or the on-duty patrol supervisor if the Lieutenant is not available.
2. Factors to be considered when deciding to declare an emergency status are:
  - a. Existing weather conditions (snow, ice, storm, etc.);
  - b. Number of non-injury accidents being worked and/or holding;
  - c. Availability of resources to handle the accidents.

3. When an emergency status is in effect, citizens reporting motor vehicle accidents will be instructed to make a walk in accident report if the following conditions exist:
  - a. All vehicles involved are drivable;
  - b. The accident is a non-injury;
  - c. No alcohol/drug-impaired driver is involved.
4. The on-duty supervisor who declares the emergency status shall monitor conditions and return the department's response to normal as soon as conditions allow. If the person who declares the emergency status ends their tour of duty before the status can be returned to normal, that person is responsible for relaying the status information to an on-coming supervisor.

**O. THE ENFORCEMENT DECISION FOLLOWING INVESTIGATION (61.1.5k)**

1. Immediate enforcement is applied:
  - a. Only when clear evidence exists of a violation of ordinance or state statute violation;
  - b. Decision to effect custodial arrest must be in compliance with existing policy;
  - c. When not in conflict with any provision of 2 below.
2. Delayed enforcement is applied:
  - a. The driver has been admitted to the hospital-until release from the hospital;
  - b. A possibility of felony charges being filed at a later time;
  - c. More follow-up investigation is required.
3. Exceptional circumstances
  - a. Issue citations to both parties if investigation indicates that both have violated an ordinance or statute;
  - b. Decline to issue citations to either party if investigation fails to provide clear evidence of violation of ordinance or statute.
    - 1) Reasons should be clear, articulable and written into the report.
    - 2) Supervisors should review closely and insure reporting is clear and complete.

**P. CALL OUT OF OFF-DUTY TRAFFIC COLLISION SPECIALISTS**

Various sworn police personnel have received specialized investigation skills that should be called upon to investigate fatal, potentially fatal and some serious injury accidents.

1. Patrol Section personnel should be the primary investigators on such serious accidents.

2. The Strategic Enforcement and Prevention Unit Sergeant should be contacted in all circumstances to make a determination on the call out of off-duty Traffic Collision Specialists.
3. If the Strategic Enforcement and Prevention Unit Sergeant is unavailable, the on-duty patrol supervisor will make notification to the Lieutenant of Patrol.
4. The DuPage County Accident Reconstruction Team, (DuCART), is a specialized task force used to conduct technical investigation of crash investigation. The criteria for task force activation requires one or more of the following factors:
  - a. One or more fatalities
  - b. Personal injury where probability of death is great, and/or criminal charges are likely
  - c. Involvement of an emergency vehicle with serious injuries, or other mitigating factors
  - d. A request by a member agency because the crash is complicated or unusual and it requires technical accident reconstruction
5. The DuPage County Accident Reconstruction Team is available for activation for crash investigation in both DuPage and Cook counties. Activation of DuCART will be made at the direction of the Strategic Enforcement and Prevention Unit Sergeant. In the event the SEP Sergeant is unavailable, the decision to activate DuCART will be made by the Lieutenant of Patrol.

**Q. NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES**

Personnel assigned to investigate a confirmed fatality accident shall respond as directed by the on-duty patrol supervisor. The supervisor shall insure that other departmental personnel are notified including, at a minimum:

1. The Lieutenant of Patrol;
2. The Deputy Chief of Operations;
3. The Chief of Police.

**R. REPORT FORMS**

1. Traffic Incident Report  
The Department's Traffic Incident Report is for documentation purposes only. This form is to be utilized when the accident being reported does not meet the standards established by the State of Illinois. Those standards are as follows:
  - a. Property damage only where the damage to any one unit involved is less than \$500; and

- b. All parties involved currently possess valid automobile insurance coverage and drivers licenses; and
- c. No traffic citations will be issued.
- d. Motorists involved will be issued a "Traffic Accidents and Your Responsibilities" pamphlet (Appendix B) for completion to exchange with the other party for the purpose of supplying insurance information.

2. Illinois Traffic Crash Report SR1050

Mandatory reporting form for any motor vehicle collision occurring within the State of Illinois that meets the requirements on reporting. The form is to be completed in its entirety. This includes both a diagram and a narrative. All applicable shaded and non-shaded areas on the report will be filled in.