

**TITLE: TRAFFIC CRASH
INVESTIGATION AND ENFORCEMENT**

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this directive is to establish guidelines regarding the responsibilities and duties of members of the Santa Fe Police Department as they apply to traffic crash investigations and enforcement.

DISCUSSION

Traffic accident investigations along with other law enforcement functions within the City of Santa Fe are primarily the responsibilities of the Santa Fe City Police Department.

POLICY

It is the policy of the Santa Fe Police Department to investigate motor vehicle crashes that occur upon the dedicated streets of the City of Santa Fe, crashes on private property in which structural damage occurs, and all crashes which persons are injured. This Directive will serve as guidance to officers and Public Safety Aides in investigating and reporting crashes involving motor vehicles.

RESPONSE REQUIRED

64.1.01 Officers are required to respond to the scene of a crash, including those on private property, which occur within the City limits of Santa Fe, any time one or more of the following conditions exist:

- A.** Death or injury;
- B.** Hit and run;

- C.** Impairment of an operator due to alcohol and/or drugs;
- D.** Damage to vehicles or property in an amount that exceeds \$500.00;
- E.** Damage to City vehicles or property;
- F.** A disturbance between principals (drivers, passengers, and/or witnesses);
- G.** Major traffic congestion resulting from the crash;
- H.** Any crash that involves hazardous materials:
 - 1.** Refer to the Directive entitled “Hazardous Materials Emergency Response”.
- I.** Crashes involving vehicles that are property of other law enforcement agencies, when our Department is requested to handle the investigation.

64.1.02 Public Safety Aides shall be assigned (when available) to respond to private property crashes in which there are no injuries, structural or vehicular damage is less than \$500.00, or need to effect an arrest. If any of these situations apply, an officer shall be assigned to handle the crash.

64.1.03 Persons who are involved in crashes that leave the scene and fail to report the crash within one hour shall be advised to obtain an After the Fact Crash Report Form from the Records Section, or to proceed to the Santa Fe Police Department to report the crash.

- A.** No officer will be dispatched unless there are extenuating circumstances. Response by an officer must be approved by a field commander or supervisor based upon the criteria set forth in the After-the Fact section of this Directive.
- B.** After ascertaining “after the fact” motor vehicle crashes have occurred, Emergency Dispatch personnel shall:
 - 1.** Have driver(s) pick-up a after the fact/Financial Responsibility Form from the Records Section; or
 - 2.** If driver(s) request, we will mail a form to them. If the call is received during regular business hours (0800 - 1700 Monday - Friday), the call will be transferred to the

Records Section so that they may handle the request; or

3. Records clerk(s) will record the name and address of the driver(s) and mail a form to them; and
4. Records personnel, when they receive a telephone call, or when a driver walks in, will contact the dispatch personnel for a case number, attach the number as such, and request that the "after the fact" report is placed into an E.I.C. status.
5. If such an instance should occur that an officer/Public Safety Aide in the field is contacted regarding an "after the fact" crash, the officer only needs to hand out the proper form to the driver and advise them to file such claim with their respective insurance.
6. Any driver requesting information on the other driver through a license plate number will be directed to their insurance company to obtain such information.

CRASH REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

64.1.04 Roadway Crashes

- A.** Uniform Accident Reports (UAR) are required in the following situations:
1. Total damage to vehicles and/or property exceeds \$500.00;
 2. There are visible injuries or the complaint of injuries, regardless of the amount of damage.
 3. Hit and run crashes;
 4. A City vehicle is involved in the crash;
 5. When one or more drivers are arrested for Driving Under the Influence of Intoxicating Liquor or Drugs.
 6. A UAR shall be completed any time an officer issues a citation related to any factors that contributed to the crash.
 7. When directed to do so by a commander or supervisor.

- B.** Offense/Incident Report Forms (O/I) may be used to document roadway crash investigations under the following circumstances:

1. Crashes in which total damage to vehicles and property does not exceed \$500.00, no injuries are reported, but one or more parties' requests that a report be completed.
2. Hit and run crashes in which both parties leave the scene, no injuries are involved, total damage does not exceed \$500.00, there is insufficient information to conduct an investigation, and no enforcement action (directly relating to the cause of the crash) is to be taken.
3. When road and weather conditions are so severe that there is a high probability of further crashes occurring, proper investigation is hampered, no enforcement action (directly relating to the crash is to be taken), and the on-duty commander or supervisor issues an order to use the O/I form.
4. When directed to do so by a commander or supervisor and no enforcement action (directly relating to the cause of the crash) is to be taken.

- C.** Private Property/After the Fact Forms may be used to document roadway crash investigations under the following circumstances:

1. Crashes in which both parties leave the scene and fail to report within one hour;
2. Total damage to vehicles and property does not exceed \$500.00;
3. No visible injuries or complaints of injury are involved;
4. No enforcement action of any type can be taken.
5. When complainants arrive at the Police Station to file a crash report and paragraphs 1 through 4 of this section apply.

64.1.05 Private Property Crashes

- A.** Uniform Accident Reports (UAR) are required in the following situations:

1. There are visible injuries or the complaint of injuries, irregardless of the amount of damage.
 2. When one or more drivers are arrested for Driving Under the Influence of Intoxicating Liquor or Drugs since the Traffic Safety Bureau, Department of Motor Vehicles, and State Highway Department mandate that a UAR be completed any time an officer issues a citation related to any factors that contributed to the crash.
 3. When there is damage to any structure.
 4. When directed to do so by a commander or supervisor.
- B. Offense/Incident Report Forms (O/I) may be used to document private property crash investigations under the following circumstances:**
1. Crashes in which total damage to vehicles and property exceeds \$500.00, no injuries are reported, but one or more parties requests a report be completed, and approval is granted by a commander/supervisor.
 2. When directed to do so by a commander or supervisor and no enforcement action (directly relating to the cause of the crash) is to be taken.
- C. Private Property/After the Fact Forms may be used to document all private property crash investigations under the following circumstances:**
1. Total damage to vehicles and property does not exceed \$500.00, if in excess of \$500.00, when approved by a commander/supervisor;
 2. No visible injuries or complaints of injury are involved;
 3. No enforcement action, to include arrest, is to be taken;
 4. No structural damage is reported as a result of the crash.
5. When complainants arrive at the Police Station to file a crash report and paragraphs 1 thru 4 of this section apply.
 6. When handled by a public safety aide and paragraphs 1 through 5 of this section apply.
- 64.1.06 After the Fact Crashes**
- A. Uniform Accident Reports (UAR) are required in the following situations:**
1. There are visible injuries or the complaint of injuries, irregardless of the amount of damage, if reported within one hour of the crash.
 2. When one or more drivers are arrested for Driving Under the Influence of Intoxicating Liquor or Drugs.
 3. The Traffic Safety Bureau, Department of Motor Vehicles, and State Highway Department mandate that a UAR be completed any time an officer issues a citation related to any factors that contributed to the crash.
 4. When directed by a commander/supervisor.
- B. Offense/Incident Report Forms (O/I) may be used to document after the fact crash investigations under the following circumstances:**
1. Crashes in which total damage to vehicles and property does not exceed \$500.00, no injuries are reported, but one or more parties requests a report be completed.
 2. When directed to do so by a commander or supervisor and no enforcement action (directly relating to the cause of the crash) is to be taken.
- C. Private Property/After the Fact Forms may be used to document after the fact crash investigations under the following circumstances:**
1. Crashes in which both parties leave the scene and fail to report within one hour;
 2. Total damage to vehicles and property does not exceed \$500.00 (if on the roadway);

3. No visible injuries or complaints of injury are involved;
 4. No enforcement action of any type can be taken.
 5. When complainants arrive at the Police Station to file a crash report and paragraphs 1 through 4 of this section apply.
- 64.1.07 Motor Vehicle Fatalities/Major Injury Motor Vehicle Crashes**
- A. Position your police vehicle, utilizing the vehicle's emergency lights, to protect the crash scene, to include any 'short lived' evidence and divert the flow of traffic safely away from the scene.
 1. The use of special equipment, i.e., flares, reflectors, barricades, traffic cones, crime scene tape, etc., to route traffic by the MOST expedient and safest route around the scene should be determined and implemented.
 - B. The BACKUP OFFICER and/or a Public Service Aide will be responsible for traffic control at the scene.
 1. In ALL cases, the officer conducting traffic control shall wear his/her reflective safety vest.
 - C. Enter the immediate crash scene to view the victim(s), if it is safe to do so.
 - D. Determine if any of the crash victims are dead or dying.
 - E. If an ambulance is not already present at the scene, summon an ambulance and administer the appropriate first aid procedures. Record the time the ambulance was requested.
 - F. In ALL instances where first aid is required prior to the ambulance's arrival, the officer shall perform ONLY that level of aid for which he/she has been trained and certified in.
 - G. If CPR is necessary, the officer will perform CPR as needed and will do so with the CPR mask provided by the Santa Fe Police Department.
 - H. Notify the On-Duty Patrol Commander of the situation, if not already present.
 - I. It shall be the On-Duty Patrol Commander's responsibility to notify the On-Call Traffic Commander, if the situation so requires it.
 - J. Record the names and ambulance number of the ambulance crew present at the scene, if any.
 - K. Exclude ALL persons, including police personnel who DO NOT have an official function at THE SCENE.
 1. Be careful not to chase off witnesses or the suspect, who may still be present.
 2. If it is NECESSARY for a Doctor or Clergyman to enter the scene, they are to be escorted by an officer, in and out of the scene, and cautioned about touching or moving anything.
 - L. If the other vehicle/driver has fled the scene, initiate an "All Points Bulletin."
 - M. Attempt to identify the entire crash scene and areas that may include evidence.
 - N. Officers at the scene also should inspect the scene for fire hazards and possible hazardous materials spills, so that the proper procedures may be initiated to deal with these additional hazards. If any fire or fire hazards exist, notify the Santa Fe Fire Department. If a hazardous materials spill exists, refer to the Standard Procedure 40.1 "Hazardous Materials."
 - O. Secure and protect the scene, by establishing a perimeter using isolation and physical barriers such as ropes, cones, crime scene tape and other equipment as necessary.
 - P. In the event major traffic congestion results from the crash, position traffic control personnel in locations to re-route all traffic.
 - Q. Request Emergency Dispatch Personnel call the local radio stations to deter traffic into the area.
 - R. Request additional officers if needed to protect the crash scene.
 - S. Locate, identify and isolate any witnesses at the scene for Investigating Officer, to prevent the witnesses from talking to each other.

- T. Attempt to obtain the victim's name and personal information.
 - U. Stand by for Investigation Officers to arrive at the scene.
 - V. Upon the arrival of the Investigation Officer, brief him/her on all information and what has occurred to this point.
 - W. Once the Investigation Officer is on the scene, the crash scene and the traffic crash investigation becomes the responsibility of the Investigating Officer. ALL interviewing of witnesses, collection of evidence, photographing and removal of any vehicles, persons and/or debris will be his/her responsibility. This includes, yet is not limited to, any follow-up investigation, issuance of citations and any arrests that need to be made.
 - X. With the approval of the On-Duty Patrol Commander, assist the Investigation Officers as necessary.
 - Y. Prepare a complete, accurate and detailed report of all observations and actions by you.
 - Z. All police personnel, regardless of rank, who had entered the crash scene and/or have had any official involvement with the investigation, are required to submit a detailed supplemental report, at the direction of the On-Duty Patrol Commander or the Commander in charge of the scene.
- 64.1.08 Hit and Run Motor Vehicle Crashes
(Property Damage)**
- A. The scene shall be inspected for any fire hazards and/or possible hazardous materials spills, so that the proper procedures may be initiated to deal with these additional hazards. If any fire or fire hazards exist, notify the Santa Fe Fire Department. If a hazardous materials spill exists, refer to the Standard Procedure 40.1 entitled Hazardous Materials.
 - B. Position your police vehicle, utilizing the vehicle's emergency lights, to protect the crash scene, to include any 'short lived' evidence and divert the flow of traffic safely away from the scene.
 - C. After determining the most expedient and safest route around the scene, the officer should use special equipment, i.e., flares, reflectors, barricades, traffic cones, crime scene tape, etc., if necessary to route the traffic around this scene.
 - D. The assigned officer is responsible for:
 1. Administering emergency medical care and providing basic life support.
 2. Summoning an ambulance and/or additional assistance, i.e., officers, rescue squad, tow trucks, etc.
 3. Protecting the crash scene.
 4. Preserving 'short lived' evidence.
 5. Establishing a safe traffic pattern around the accident scene.
 6. Locating any witnesses and recording crash information.
 7. Expediting the removal of any vehicles, persons and/or debris from the roadway.
 - E. The BACKUP OFFICER will be responsible for traffic control at the scene. If a Public Safety Aide (PSA) is assigned for traffic control and the BACKUP OFFICER is not needed, the BACKUP OFFICER shall return to service.
 - F. Contact the parties involved in the crash and ascertain if medical attention and/or assistance is necessary. If so, summon an ambulance and administer appropriate first aid procedures. Record the time the ambulance was requested.
 - G. In ALL instances where first aid is required prior to the ambulance's arrival, the officer shall perform ONLY that level of aid for which he/she has been trained and certified in.
 - H. Obtain the following information:
 1. Driver's name(s) and driver's license information.
 2. Vehicle(s) information, to include the vehicle registration and proof of liability insurance.

3. The hit and run vehicle's and/or driver's information and present location, if known.
 4. Passenger's name(s) and personal information.
 5. Determine if the damages are over or under \$500.00
 6. Description of the crash.
- I. Initiate an "All Points Bulletin" for the hit and run vehicle and/or driver.
 - J. Attempt to locate and identify witnesses, if any. If witnesses are found, an oral and/or handwritten statement shall be obtained from each witness.
 - K. If a license plate number was obtained for the hit and run vehicle, a check shall be made through NCIC for an wants and through the Department of Motor Vehicles for the current registered owner's name, personal information and vehicle information.
 - L. If the vehicle(s) have NOT been moved since the crash occurred, a sketch of the crash scene will be made containing all pertinent information, i.e., reference points, the position of the vehicle(s) involved, skid marks, etc., to include measurements.
 1. This will be done in all cases, EXCEPT when doing so would create a greater hazard to the safety of the public, the parties involved or the officer, i.e., rush hour traffic, heavy fog, slick and icy road conditions, etc. Under those conditions, the officer's primary concern will be to remove the vehicle(s) from the roadway and THEN continue with the crash investigation.
 - M. If a vehicle was abandoned at the scene by the hit and run driver, said vehicle shall be impounded.
 - N. For Towing and Wrecker Services refer to Directive 50.1.
 - O. Determine if there are any violations of the City of Santa Fe Traffic Code and take the appropriate enforcement action for each.
 - P. In all cases, leave a business card with the handling officer's name and case number.
 - Q. Prior to leaving the crash scene, ensure the roadway is free of any debris or safety hazards that were created by the crash. If clean up is needed, make the necessary requests to have it corrected, i.e., the wrecker service if a vehicle was towed, the City Streets Division, Fire Department, etc.
 - R. A check of the hit and run driver's residence, if known and local, will be made or any other possible local locations where the hit and run driver may have fled.
 - S. If the hit and run driver is located, the appropriate enforcement action will be taken. If the hit and run driver's vehicle was impounded, the driver/owner shall be given the yellow copy of the Vehicle Impound Form.
 - T. If the hit and run driver is not located, a Hit and Run Crash Notification Letter shall be mailed to the current registered owner, by certified mail, at the address listed on the registration return. If the hit and run vehicle was impounded, a Vehicle Impoundment Letter and the yellow copy of the Vehicle Impoundment Form shall also be mailed with the above-certified letter.
 - U. If a certified letter is mailed, the certified letter number shall be noted in the narrative portion of the report and a copy of the letter(s) shall be attached to the report.
 - V. Upon receiving the Certified Letter Return Receipt Card, a supplemental report shall be completed, noting the date the letter was received and the person's name who signed for the Certified Letter. The Return Receipt Card will then be attached to the supplemental report. If the entire letter is sent back as 'Undeliverable', a supplemental report shall be completed and the letter attached to the supplemental report.
 - W. Prepare a complete, accurate and detailed report of all observations and actions by you.
- 64.1.09 Miscellaneous**
- A. Situations in which the drivers remove their vehicles from a roadway to a parking lot or other safe area, will not constitute "after the fact" crashes.

- B. Crashes in which a vehicle leaves a roadway and strikes a vehicle/object on private property is considered a roadway crash.
- C. Cases where a vehicle is used to intentionally cause damage will not be investigated as a crash, but as a criminal act.
- E. The Santa Fe City Ordinances governing moving traffic violations will be the official guide for appropriate enforcement action.
- F. All citations issued will be in accordance with New Mexico State Law, City Ordinances, and regulations outlined in the Patrol Procedures Manual.

AIRCRAFT CRASHES

64.1.10 The National Transportation Safety Board, has the ultimate jurisdiction IN ALL CRASHES involving aircraft. The NTSB may delegate this authority to the Federal Aviation Administration

- A. Notify the On-Duty Patrol Commander of the situation, if not already present.
- B. The scene shall be inspected for any fire hazards and/or possible hazardous materials spills, so that the proper procedures may be initiated to deal with these additional hazards. If any fire or fire hazards exist, notify the Santa Fe Fire Department. If a hazardous materials spill exists, refer to the Standard Procedure entitled Hazardous Materials.”
- C. At the request of airport personnel, the officer will:
 - 1. Provide security for the crash scene.
 - 2. Provide crowd control at the crash scene.
 - 3. Prevent looting at the crash scene.
 - 4. Supervisors at the Scene should concentrate their security efforts in and around the access gates and the ramp area.
 - 5. Supervisors at the scene shall be responsible for designating and establishing a “press perimeter”, to allow media access that does not interfere with ongoing emergency operation.

D. Responding to Aircraft Crashes/Incidents

- 1. In the event of an aircraft incident, the Santa Fe Airport, Air Traffic Controller will contact the Santa Fe Police Department and or the Santa Fe Fire Department via the 800 radio system or by telephone. Should contact be made by radio, the “George” Channel will be the initial channel of communication. The “fire dispatcher” will then determine the “primary” radio channel to be used during the incident. All emergency responders will use the designated channel. This will include the Police, Fire, Air Traffic controllers and airport staff. (Radio operators will monitor channel “G” daily between the hours of 07:00am and 9:00pm for emergency airport traffic and periodic “radio checks”). The fire dispatcher will designate the appropriate emergency channel. Normally, Fire deploys on “Santa Fe TAC”, and switches to “State Fire” upon arrival at the Airport Tower.

E. At Scene Responsibilities

- 1. Commanders/officers arriving first at the scene will report to the airport gate, which is situated between the Tower and the Santa Fe Air Center building. Gate cards are needed in order to enter the Airport ramp and taxiways. Gate 1, near the Sate GSD building ia also accessible with code 6344#.
- 2. At this point, police personnel will make contact with the air traffic controller who will give specific instructions to the officer. The officer(s) WILL NOT enter the fenced airport ramp area without clearance from the tower, or airport personnel.
- 3. Communications between the officers and tower should be kept to a minimum and the following is suggested dialog:
 - PD “Santa Fe tower this is PD unit # _____ requesting a clearance and instructions to proceed to the crash/incident site.
 - Tower will respond with detailed instructions.

- The officer will respond by using the following dialog: “roger, affirmative, negative or tower please repeat instructions”.
- The officer should clearly understand all tower instructions before proceeding onto the airport ramp, taxi-ways or runways. ALL MOVEMENTS WHILE ON THE TARMAC WILL BE CLEARED THROUGH THE CONTROL TOWER AND ONCE ON THE TARMAC “EMERGENCY LIGHTS” WILL BE ENGAGED. The emergency lights will remain on for the duration of the incident and any time the police unit is in the fenced airport area.

F. Airport Hours

1. Between the hours of 7:00am and 9:00pm the Santa Fe Municipal Airport is a “controlled airport” with FAA contract controllers, however after 9:00pm the airport is an “uncontrolled airport”.
2. Incidents after 9:00pm may require an officer to enter the airport, and for obvious reasons extreme caution must be used. Officers should be on high alert status for incoming and out going aircraft.

NOTE: AIRCRAFT HAVE TOTAL RIGHT OF WAY WHILE ON OR APPROACHING THE AIRPORT.

3. Should an aircraft crash or incident occur after hours, the airport manager or a designee should be contacted. If the airport manager is not available and the crash is of such magnitude that the Airport should be closed, the FAA Flight Service Station (1-800-525-9963) should be alerted. The call should come from the “Incident Commander” at the scene and the commander should be prepared to justify his or her request.
4. Albuquerque Flight Services will need the following information:
 - What Department is placing the call.
 - Registration number on the aircraft, number located on tail of airplane.

- Make and model of plane, located inside of plane.
- Operator of the aircraft.
- Nature of aircraft business. Example: Business trip, pleasure, airtaxi, etc.
- Brief description of crash and or witnesses.
- Damage to aircraft.
- Number of occupants and type of injuries.
- Names and addresses of pilot and crew members.
- Location of occurrence, city, town and state.
- Date and time of occurrence.
- Name of person making the call.

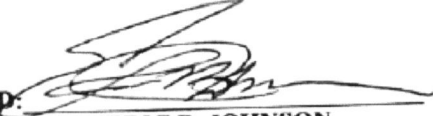
G. Ramps

1. Airport ramps or “Airplane Parking Areas” are designated by a “Double Yellow” line. Officers may not go beyond this point without tower clearance. Movement within this area is not restricted but will be limited. Officers in this area are to use caution as many aircraft use this area for storage and colliding with parked aircraft is a high possibility.

H. General Information

1. Command post(s) will be set at the direction of the Airport Manager. The command post will be established in cooperation with all “Emergency Responders.” The Airport will be solely responsible for releasing information regarding injuries or casualties. Any press briefings will be conducted by the Airport Manager or designee. All duties related directly to the airport incident, will be conducted by the Airport Manager or designee. These duties include airport building security and any other incident related occurrences.

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APPROVED: 
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