



ALBUQUERQUE POLICE DEPARTMENT
PROCEDURAL ORDERS

SOP 2-46

Effective: 08/03/2022 Review: 08/03/2023 Replaces: 05/09/2019

2-46 RESPONSE TO TRAFFIC CRASHES

Related SOP(s), Form(s), Other Resource(s), and Rescinded Special Order(s):

A. Related SOP(s)

[1-78 Police Service Aide \(PSA\) Program \(Formerly 4-6\)](#)

[2-16 Reports \(Formerly 1-05\)](#)

[2-48 Towing Services](#)

B. Form(s)

None

C. Other Resource(s)

Albuquerque Fire Rescue (AFR) START Triage Categorization Criteria
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)

D. Rescinded Special Order(s)

None

2-46-1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide the procedures to be followed when Albuquerque Police Department (Department) personnel respond to and investigate traffic crashes.

2-46-2 Policy

It is the policy of the Department to respond to and investigate traffic crashes while limiting the impact to the flow of traffic through rapid assessment of personal injury and damage to vehicles and the immediate re-opening of lanes of traffic.

N/A 2-46-3 Definitions

A. Serious Injury Crash

A crash involving serious injuries that could result in death.

B. Traffic Crash

An unintended event resulting in injury or damage, involving one (1) or more motor vehicles.

6 2-46-4 Procedures



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A. Responding to a Reported or Observed Motor Vehicle Crash

1. Department personnel who are the first to respond to the scene shall:
 - a. Position their vehicle in order to protect the vehicle and vehicle occupant(s) and to manage traffic flow in the area of the crash;
 - b. Immediately determine the extent of occupants' injuries;
 - i. If needed, Department personnel shall request for emergency medical services (EMS) personnel to respond.
 - c. Protect the scene of the crash to the greatest extent possible;
 - i. If there is a serious injury crash or fatality, Department personnel shall identify and separate witnesses.
 - ii. Department personnel shall not move involved vehicles nor debris until the investigation is complete.
 - d. Determine whether the crashed vehicle(s) is operational;
 - e. Request for a tow truck to remove vehicles that cannot be removed by the registered owner because it is inoperable or is a hazard, consistent with SOP Towing and Wrecker Services;
 - f. Ensure vehicles and debris are removed from the roadway;
 - i. Once the crash investigation is complete, on-scene Department personnel or personnel with the responding wrecker company shall remove debris from the roadway to limit damage to other motorist's or their vehicles.
 - g. Be responsible for conducting the investigation;
 - h. Submit a Uniform Crash Report, unless otherwise specified in this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP);
 - i. After investigating the crash, take any necessary enforcement action; and
 - j. Request additional assistance from other Department personnel, as needed.
2. Department personnel shall complete a Uniform Crash Report, including a diagram of the crash, through TraCS for all crashes.
3. A Police Service Aide (PSA) may be allowed to complete a Uniform Incident Report on crashes with injuries with the approval of a supervisor, consistent with SOP Police Service Aide Program.

B. Proper Removal of Vehicles Following a Crash

1. If the vehicle is operational, and there are no serious injuries, fatalities or the crash does not involve a driver suspected of driving under the influence, Department personnel shall direct the driver to remove their vehicle from the roadway as quickly and safely as possible.
2. If feasible, Department personnel shall make every effort to maintain the safe and constant flow of traffic around the scene, if the vehicles cannot be removed safely.

C. Freeway Crashes



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1. Emergency Communications Center (ECC) personnel shall dispatch Field Services Bureau (FSB) personnel with a Department-issued equipped with emergency lights to the scene of all crashes on the freeway, if a Metro Traffic Division officer on a motorcycle was initially dispatched to investigate the crash.
2. Department personnel may request for ECC personnel to send New Mexico Department of Transportation (DOT) Courtesy Patrol (Help Truck) personnel, if they are available.

D. Private Property Crashes

1. Department personnel shall only complete Uniform Crash Reports for crashes occurring on private property that involve:
 - a. Serious injury or a fatality;
 - b. A vehicle belonging to the City of Albuquerque or upon request of other governmental agencies;
 - c. The driver is suspected of driving under the influence;
 - d. The driver was driving reckless;
 - e. Hit and run crash investigations with offender information; and
 - f. Crashes where there is extensive damage to private property.
2. If any of the above conditions are not met, ECC personnel shall advise the involved parties to complete a Uniform Crash Report at any Department area command.
3. Department personnel who are flagged down by a community member or who encounter private property crashes shall:
 - a. Ensure the involved parties exchange the necessary information, including, but not limited to the driver's name, vehicle information, and insurance information;
 - b. Advise the involved parties to complete a Uniform Crash Report at any Department area command within five (5) working days; and
 - c. If a Uniform Crash Report is requested by parties in the crash, refer them to the appropriate Department area command.

E. Hit and Run Crashes

1. The investigating officer shall be responsible for hit and run follow-up investigations when:
 - a. The hit and run vehicle is registered within City of Albuquerque limits; and
 - b. Until all developed leads for the investigation have been exhausted.
2. Hit and run follow-up investigations shall be coordinated by Hit and Run Unit personnel.



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- a. The Hit and Run Unit officer shall review and reassign cases back to sworn personnel when additional information is available and enforcement action or follow-up investigation can be done.
- b. The Hit and Run Unit officer shall coordinate follow-up investigations for vehicles registered outside of the City of Albuquerque.

F. Crashes Involving City Vehicles

1. If available, on-duty Metro Traffic Division sworn personnel shall investigate all crashes with injuries in a City-owned vehicle.
2. Metro Traffic Division sworn personnel shall investigate non-injury crashes involving City-owned vehicles, if available, and during their normal working hours.
3. If a Traffic Division Officer is unavailable, a FSB supervisor shall respond to the scene and ensure a proper investigation is completed.

G. Crashes Involving Vehicles from Other Government Agencies

Department personnel shall treat the investigations of crashes involving vehicles from other government agencies the same way as investigations for any other crash.

H. Fatal and Serious Injury Crash Investigations

1. Metro Traffic Division sworn personnel are responsible for fatal and serious injury crash investigations.
 - a. During their normal working hours, Metro Traffic Division sworn personnel shall be dispatched to all fatal and serious injury crashes.
 - b. During non-duty hours, Metro Traffic Division sworn personnel shall be on-call for all fatal and serious injury crashes.
 - c. It shall be the responsibility of the on-duty FSB supervisor to contact the on-call Metro Traffic Division supervisor to provide details of the crash.
2. Metro Traffic Division sworn personnel shall assume responsibility for the scene and for the investigation when they arrive on scene for fatal and serious injury crashes.
3. All Department personnel at the scene of a fatal or serious injury crash shall complete a Supplemental Crash Report describing their actions while on-scene.
4. Department personnel shall provide the Supplemental Crash Report to the investigating officer before the end of their shift (refer to SOP Reports for sanction classifications and additional duties).
5. Metro Traffic Division sworn personnel shall have case responsibility and be on-call for all fatal and serious injury crashes investigated by the Department.

N/A



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- a. Fatal and serious injury crashes that are the result of a police action shall be investigated by the Multi-Agency Fatal Call-Out Team, which includes the Metro Traffic Division Fatal Team.

6. Call-out Procedures

- a. FSB sworn personnel, or when available, Metro Traffic Division sworn personnel shall respond to crashes involving a serious injury.
- b. If the occupant of the vehicle is transported to a medical facility as based on Albuquerque Fire Rescue's (AFR) START Triage Categorization Criteria, FSB personnel shall follow the ambulance to the medical facility to obtain the patient's status.
- c. The on-scene FSB supervisor shall secure the scene until it is determined that the patient is in stable condition.
- d. If the occupant of the vehicle succumbs to a serious injury, either at the scene or the medical facility, the on-scene FSB supervisor shall request for ECC personnel to contact the on-call Metro Traffic Division supervisor.
- e. The on-scene FSB supervisor shall ensure that a Crime Scene Specialist (CSS) is requested and responds to the scene.
- f. The on-call Metro Traffic Division supervisor shall notify the on-call Metro Traffic Division Fatal Team to respond to the scene with all necessary equipment.
- g. The on-call Metro Traffic Division supervisor shall become the Incident Commander (IC) for the call-out.
- h. FSB personnel shall assist with security of the scene while Metro Traffic Division sworn personnel completes the investigation.

7. Metro Traffic Division sworn personnel shall complete in-custody fatal crash reports in ten (10) working days and complete all other fatal crash reports in sixty (60) working days.

I. Crashes that Occur During Inclement Weather

1. During inclement weather conditions, sworn supervisors shall be authorized to suspend normal crash investigation procedures for crashes involving minor damage, such as when both vehicles are drivable.
2. ECC personnel or a sworn supervisor shall notify crash victims when weather conditions necessitate the suspension of crash investigations.
3. Department personnel shall inform involved parties that they may obtain a copy of or complete a Uniform Crash Report at the law enforcement center or any Department area command.