

# Hamden Police Department General Orders

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**Policy Number:** 021-001

**Effective Date:** December 23, 2014

**Section:** Traffic Administration

**Rescinds:** November 26, 2012

Investigations

**Approved By:** Police Commission

**Title:** Accident Investigation

**Approval Date:** December 10, 2014

## PURPOSE

To establish procedures to be followed by department personnel in responding to and investigating motor vehicle accidents in the Town of Hamden.

## POLICY

The Hamden Police Department will respond to and investigate all traffic accidents reported at the time of their occurrence, whether on public or private property, involving death or injury, damage to public vehicles or property, hit and run, impairment of an operator due to alcohol or drugs, hazardous materials, disturbances between principals, major traffic congestion as a result of the accident or damage to vehicles to the extent towing is required.

Late reported accidents will be investigated if the accident involved or resulted in:

1. Death.
2. Injuries requiring medical attention.
3. Damage to the property of any one individual in excess of \$1,000
4. Evading Responsibility.
5. A school bus.

If none of the above criteria are met or cannot be substantiated or the complainant cannot supply enough information so that a police accident report can be completed, no investigation or report will be made. The complainant may be afforded the opportunity to complete and forward to the Motor Vehicle Department a copy of an Operator's Report of Motor Vehicle Accident. The complainant may also complete a voluntary traffic statement which shall be assigned a department case number and filed in the Records Division of the Department.

## Procedures

- A. Responsibilities of the Dispatcher.

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1. Upon receiving a report of a traffic accident, the dispatcher will obtain the following information from the reporting party:
  - a. Location of the accident.
  - b. The existence and extent of any injuries.
  - c. Any hazards that may be present.
  - d. Name and call back number of the reporting person.
  - e. If an evading is involved, obtain available information regarding the description of the vehicle, its direction of travel and any apparent damage.
2. Will dispatch the necessary police, fire and emergency medical units as required.
3. Dispatchers will designate a specific officer the responsibility of investigating the accident and being in charge at the scene. When a traffic unit is available, that unit shall be assigned the investigation.

### **B. Responsibilities of the Investigating Officer.**

1. The officer assigned to investigate the accident will respond in accordance with Department Policy on responses.
2. Upon arrival, the investigating officer will:
  - a. Safeguard the scene to prevent any further harm, utilizing the patrol vehicle, road flares and safety cones.
  - b. Account for all injured parties and administer first aid and provide basic life support until the arrival of emergency medical personnel.
  - c. Request the Fire Department in cases of vehicle fires and or extinguish the fire with available equipment.
  - d. Identify, locate and interview the operators of all vehicles involved.
  - e. Notify the supervisor in the event of any serious or fatal injuries.
  - f. Determine if additional police units are needed for traffic control, protecting the scene or assisting the investigation.
  - g. Request any special equipment.
  - h. If the roadway is obstructed, establish traffic patterns around the scene to re-establish the flow of traffic.
  - i. Note and mark the positions of the involved vehicles and make arrangements to have the vehicles removed and note any damage done to the roadway.
  - j. Obtain the names and statements of witnesses.
  - k. Ensure the necessary measurements are obtained.
  - l. Collect and preserve any evidence.

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- m. Ensure that property belonging to accident victims is protected from theft and is removed to a place of safe keeping if the owner is unable to care for it.
- n. At the conclusion of the investigation, take the appropriate enforcement action consistent with the elements of the violation.
- o. Complete the required State Accident Form.
- p. In accidents involving fatal or potentially fatal injuries, the initially assigned patrol officer will assist the Traffic Division with the above mentioned duties until relieved by the supervisor in charge of the scene.
- q. Insure that essential information is exchanged between the parties involved.

### C. Responsibilities of the On Scene Supervisor.

- 1. Serious injury, fatal, or potentially fatal accidents require immediate notification of the Division Commander.
- 2. Preserve and evaluate the conditions at the scene.
- 3. Assign a member of the Traffic Division or an appropriate accident investigator.
- 4. Photos and measurements shall be taken by accident investigator and/or ID personnel.
- 5. Assign additional personnel, as needed, to assist in traffic control and maintaining safety at the scene.

### D. Responsibility of the Assigned Secondary Units.

- 1. Assist the investigating officer in safeguarding and clearing the scene.
- 2. Perform the necessary tasks as assigned by the supervisor at the scene

### E. Responsibility of the Traffic Unit at Fatal or Serious Injury Accidents.

- 1. The Traffic Division will have the primary responsibility for the investigation of all motor vehicle accidents involving fatal or potentially fatal injuries.
- 2. In addition to the specific responsibilities outline in Section 2 of this G.O., the traffic division will also be responsible for the following duties when conducting fatal or serious injury accident investigations:

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- a. Completing a final scale diagram.
- b. Obtaining driving records of all operators involved.
- c. Accident Reconstruction.
- d. Obtaining roadway lighting conditions, if necessary.
- e. Applying for a search and seizure warrant for involved vehicles or for medical records of any of the operators if necessary for the investigation.
- f. Accompanying the Maintenance Section to inspect the involved vehicles, taking photos and retaining evidence as needed.
- g. Completing all required reports as needed.
- h. Photograph the scene and vehicles involved.
- i. Make sure that all photographs are properly numbered and recorded.
- j. Submit a report giving a brief description of each photo taken.

### **F. Professional or Technical Assistance.**

1. Professional or technical assistance in accident reconstruction will be available consistent with investigatory needs with the approval of the Chief of Police.

### **G. Responsibilities of the Police Maintenance Division.**

1. The Maintenance Division will provide a detailed report on the condition of all vehicles impounded in serious or fatal injury accidents.

### **H. Special Circumstances.**

1. Evading motor vehicle accident resulting in minor property damage, where there is no information available on the evading vehicle, will be reported on a standard case incident report.
2. Accidents involving mopeds will be reported on a State Accident Report and will be assigned a complaint number.
3. Incidents involving bicycles or similar devices colliding with any object or person other than a motor vehicle will be reported on a standard case incident reports and will be assigned a complaint case incident report.
4. Motor vehicle accidents on private property, will include a case number and the Hamden Police Private Property Accident Form will be utilized under the following circumstances:
  - i. The motor vehicle accident only involves property damage,

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- ii. The motor vehicle accident **does not** require a State Collision Report Form (PR-1) by statute (C. G. S. 14-108a). (Collisions requiring a PR-1 are those in which any person is killed or injured or in which damage to the property of any one individual in excess of one thousand dollars is sustained), and
- iii. The accident **does not** involve a violation of any of the following Connecticut General Statutes:
  - 14-218a Traveling Unreasonably Fast
  - 14-219 Speeding (in parking lot for 10 or more cars)
  - 14-222 Reckless Driving (in parking lot for 10 or more cars)
  - 14-224 Evading Responsibility
  - 14-225 Evading Responsibility In Operation Of Other Vehicles
  - 14-227a Operation Under Influence (in parking lot for 10 or more cars).
- iv. *Drivers license, Insurance and Registration should be verified for validity prior to leaving the scene.*

***The original (top) page of the Hamden Private Property Accident form will be retained in the Hamden Police Department's Accident Report file. The duplicate copies will be provided to each operator involved in the collision.***

### I. Towing of Motor Vehicles.

1. Under normal circumstances, the drivers of the involved vehicles may request any wrecker that can respond within 20 minutes.
2. If the driver has no specific request, the rotation list will be followed.
3. If the wreckers requested do not respond within 20 minutes, a rotation wrecker will be called.
4. If a wrecker from the rotation list does not respond within 20 minutes, the next rotation wrecker will be called.
5. In a fatal accident or anticipated fatal accident investigations, the investigating officer will ensure that the vehicles are towed and that the service towing the vehicle is on the rotation list of the department and can properly secure the vehicles as evidence.

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6. The investigating officer will ensure that the Maintenance Division of the department is notified of the towed vehicle's location, the case number and the investigating officer.

### J. Reporting Procedures.

1. All motor vehicle accident investigations will be reported on a State Accident Report Form or as specified in procedure 9, Special Circumstances, of this General Order.
2. If a Motor Vehicle Accident Report has to be supplemented, a case incident report will be submitted. In addition to the supplemented information, the following information must be supplied. The entire report need not be repeated. If additional narrative space is needed, a second page case incident report will be used.
  - a. Date of accident.
  - b. Day of week.
  - c. Time.
  - d. Number killed.
  - e. Number injured.
  - f. Number of vehicles involved.
  - g. Police case number.
  - h. City or town.
  - i. Accident occurred on.
3. Vehicles involved in the accident are to be placed on the front page of the accident report only if contact was made by the vehicles. In the event a vehicle was involved in an accident but no contact was made, describe the vehicle, along with the operators' name, address and DOB in the narrative.
4. In the event a parked vehicle, unoccupied, is involved in the accident, the following will be done:
  - a. If the vehicle is legally parked, DO NOT put in operator. Write in "Parked Vehicle" in the operator's name section and complete the registered owner section as required.
  - b. Illegally parked vehicles will require the operator's name and driver information, and it should be cited in the narrative of the report if the illegal parking was contributing factor in the accident.
5. Officers will normally complete and submit the police accident report prior to the completion of their shift.

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6. Exceptions may be accidents involving evading vehicles, or accidents involving lengthy or complex investigations.
7. Officers will complete accident reports prior to going off duty, if they will be off the next day.
8. Exceptions will be authorized by a supervisor only.
9. Officers investigating a fatal accident or anticipated fatality will submit a preliminary police accident report prior to completing his tour of duty.
10. Every fatal accident will have an investigating officer and supervisor assigned.

### **K. Accident Investigation Equipment.**

1. Each cruiser will be equipped with a cruiser equipment checklist.
2. The checklist will be completed by the officer at the beginning of each tour of duty and forwarded to the Traffic Division when items are missing.
3. To ensure the efficient completion of accident reports each officer will carry the following supplemental equipment:
  - a. Accident Report Pad.
  - b. Crayon or Chalk Marker.
  - c. Ruler, Straight Edge or Accident Template.

### **L. Fatal or serious Injury Accidents During Non-Operation Hours of the Traffic Division.**

1. When a fatal or serious injury accident occurs during off hours of the Traffic Division, the Desk Supervisor shall contact the Patrol Division Deputy Chief who will notify the Traffic Supervisor who will assign an investigator(s) to the case.