

# Motor Vehicle Collisions

**Index Code:** 1906

**Effective Date:** 10/01/02 (Revised 03/10/16)

## **I. Purpose**

The purpose of this directive is to provide deputies with guidelines for responding to, and investigating, motor vehicle collisions.

## **II. Policy**

It is the policy of the Office of the Sheriff that a uniformed deputy will respond to all known or reported motor vehicle collisions. The closest available deputy will be dispatched, regardless of assignment. Responsibility for conducting the investigation will be assigned after the scene has been stabilized.

## **III. Investigative Responsibility**

### **A. Traffic Accident Specialist**

1. A Traffic Accident Specialist, when available, will assist with the investigation of motor vehicle collisions resulting in a fatality, or injuries to any party that can reasonably be presumed incompatible with life. The Traffic Accident Specialist will decide whether to assist with the investigation after considering the information relayed from the scene. In cases where a Traffic Accident Specialist does not respond, or is not available, the responsibility for the investigation rests with the deputy at the scene.

2. A Traffic Accident Specialist, when available, will assist with the investigation of departmental accidents resulting in a fatality, serious personal injury, or excessive property damage,

### **B. Field Operations Division**

1. In cases of motor vehicle collisions not meeting the criteria set forth above, the deputy assigned to the patrol sector where the collision occurred is responsible for the investigation and report, and is in charge of the accident scene, unless relieved by a supervisor or a Traffic Accident Specialist.

2. If the deputy responsible for the patrol sector where the collision occurred is not available, the nearest and/or next available deputy will be dispatched to assume the

responsibility. Supervisors have the authority to assign responsibility, as well as assume responsibility for the investigation themselves.

## **IV. Initial Response**

A. Motor vehicle collisions meeting any of the following conditions will receive priority:

1. Death or serious injury
2. Hit and run
3. Impairment of the operator due to alcohol or drugs
4. Damage to public vehicles or property
5. Hazardous materials
6. Disturbances between principles
7. Major traffic congestion
8. Vehicle(s) requiring towing

However, it is emphasized that deputies will respond to all motor vehicle collisions that are known or reported.

B. Supervisors may authorize alternative responses to minor property damage collisions during periods of intensely inclement weather, personnel shortages, or high volumes of calls for service. However, deputies will eventually respond to any motor vehicle collision upon the request of a driver or vehicle owner.

## **V. First Deputy On The Scene**

### **A. All Collisions**

The first deputy on the scene of a motor vehicle collision is responsible for the following:

1. Secure and protect the scene
2. Administer emergency medical care
3. Summons additional assistance
4. Preserve short lived evidence
5. Establish an alternative traffic pattern
6. Locate witnesses
7. Record pertinent information
8. Help expedite the removal of persons, vehicles, and debris

Flares, traffic cones, and emergency vehicles will be used as necessary to help protect the