



HARFORD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

Agency Vehicle Crashes

Jeffrey R. Gahler,
Sheriff

Distribution:	All Personnel	Index:	ADM 0602
Responsible Unit:	Planning and Research	Rescinds:	ADM 0602 05/18/18
		MD Code:	MD. Code 19-502

Issued:	11/10/21	Reviewed:	10/26/21	Next Review:	10/26/24
----------------	-----------------	------------------	-----------------	---------------------	-----------------

1. Purpose

To provide Harford County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) employees with guidance on the proper procedures to follow when vehicles owned or leased by the HCSO or Harford County are being operated by HCSO personnel and involved in motor vehicle crashes.

2. Policy

All motor vehicle crashes of vehicles owned or leased by the HCSO or Harford County that are operated by HCSO personnel will be reported and investigated.

3. Definitions

MOTOR VEHICLE CRASH: an occurrence involving a motor vehicle that results in damage to property or injury to a person but does not include an occurrence that is caused intentionally.

4. References

- [ADM 0604](#) Crash Preventability
- [ADM 0705](#) Lost or Damaged Equipment
- [OPS 0103](#) Body-Worn Cameras
- [OPS 0104](#) Response to Police-Involved Deaths
- [PER 0207](#) Penalty Assessment Matrix

5. Procedures

A. Required Notifications

1. If the crash involves a citizen fatality, the procedures in [OPS 0104](#) Response to Police-Involved Deaths will be followed.
2. Any crash involving an HCSO or Harford County vehicle will be reported immediately by the employee involved or by another employee should the employee involved be incapacitated.
 - a. Crashes occurring within Harford County will be reported to the precinct in the area of occurrence.
 - b. Crashes occurring outside of Harford County will be reported to the primary law enforcement agency or the State Police Barrack in the area of occurrence and the nearest HCSO precinct.

3. The supervisor on duty at the precinct receiving an initial crash notification will ensure that the involved employee's commander is notified.

B. Division Commander Responsibilities

1. Unless impractical, the Division Commander or designee of the involved employee will respond to all Agency vehicle crashes involving serious injury, a fatality, or significant property damage.
2. The Division Commander or designee will be responsible for notifying the employee's Bureau Commander who will then notify the Colonel and Sheriff.
3. The Division Commander or designee will assign an investigator to supplement allied resources for all crashes occurring outside Harford County.
4. The Division Commander or designee will notify the HCSO Public Information Office.
5. The Division Commander will obtain a "T" control number from the Office of Professional Standards (OPS). The Division Commander will also obtain from OPS the number of previous preventable and non-preventable crashes involving the agency employee in the previous three-year rolling period.

C. Investigations

1. Initial Investigation
 - a. Crashes occurring within Harford County will be investigated by a deputy from the HCSO precinct responsible for the area of occurrence.
 - i. The supervisor will respond to the investigation.
 - ii. If a supervisor is unavailable, the duty officer/watch commander will decide as to the most appropriate deputy to handle the investigation.
 - b. Crashes occurring in Baltimore City will be investigated by the Baltimore Police Department (BPD); upon notification, the employee's supervisor or precinct duty officer will ensure that the BPD has been notified and a request for an investigation is made.
 - c. Crashes occurring outside of Harford County will be investigated by a police department having jurisdiction in the area of occurrence; upon notification, the employee's supervisor or precinct duty officer will ensure the appropriate department has been notified and an investigation requested.
2. For crashes being investigated by an allied agency, employees will obtain all appropriate information from the investigating agency including the agency name and contact information, case number, and investigating officer.
3. For crashes involving deputies or corporals occurring outside of Harford County, supplemental investigations will be completed by a supervisor or deputy senior in rank to the involved employee; deviations from this requirement must be approved by the employee's Division Commander.

4. The HCSO Crash Team will be notified of all serious or fatal crashes involving HCSO vehicles to support the operation by providing the necessary response of an Advanced Crash Investigator (ACI) and/or Crash Reconstructionist (CR).

D. Required Information and Reports


1. A Motor Vehicle Crash Report (MVAR) prepared in the Automated Crash Reporting System (ACRS) will be completed for all motor vehicle crashes, as defined above, involving a HCSO vehicle in Maryland.
 - a. Damage to an Agency vehicle not attributed to a motor vehicle crash or criminal act will be reported in accordance with the provisions of HCSO policy [ADM 0705](#) Lost or Damaged Equipment.
 - i. A criminal investigation will be conducted when there is damage as a result of an intentional act committed by a suspect or suspect's vehicle against the County.
 - b. The follow-up investigator of an HCSO vehicle crash occurring outside of Harford County will obtain a copy of the motor vehicle crash report completed by the department conducting the initial investigation.
 - c. A supplemental detailed crash diagram is required when an HCSO vehicle crash that involves death, injury, or unusual circumstances is initially investigated by the HCSO.
 - d. Photographs will be taken in every case of damage to HCSO vehicles.
 - e. The shift supervisor or duty officer will complete the Harford County Supervisor's Incident Report and email a copy to the "Dep-Property Damage" Distribution List prior to the end of the work shift.
 - f. A HCSO Driver and Witness Statement ([SO-020](#)), will be obtained from the witnesses and drivers of other vehicles involved in an Agency vehicle crash investigated by the HCSO.
 - g. The involved employee will complete a Driver's/Witness Statement ([SO-020](#)) for any Agency vehicle crash requiring an MVAR.
 - h. An Employee's Report of Incident ([SO-016](#)) will be submitted, prior to the end of the work shift, by the employee involved or by another employee should the employee involved be incapacitated.
2. An **Incident Report** will be required for all incidents involving Agency vehicles that do not fall under the definition of a motor vehicle crash **unless the incident is a minor one without intent or negligence (e.g., nail in the vehicle's tire, etc.)**.
 - a. The **Incident Report** will be required to provide sufficient information to explain how the incident occurred and will provide at a minimum the identifying information of the parties involved in the incident.
 - b. No Employee's Report of Incident ([SO-016](#)), or Driver's/Witness Statement ([SO-020](#)) are required if the incident is not defined as a crash.

- E. A detailed crash investigation (contained within the records management system (RMS)) will include:
1. Approved copy of the ACRS Report;
 2. All driver's license records;
 3. All vehicle's registration records;
 4. Supervisor's Incident Report (SIR);
 5. HCSO employee driver statement (SO-020);
 6. Other vehicle/property owner or witness statement;
 7. Employee's Report of Incident (SO-016);
 8. Supplemental reports;
 9. Photographs of damage and entire scene;
 10. License and registration information for all drivers and vehicles;
 11. Provide documentation as to whether the vehicle was equipped with an in-car camera and/or the deputy was equipped with a body-worn camera, and verification(s) that the video(s) was successfully downloaded; and
 12. A crash review is completed in the RMS by each supervisor in the affected member's chain of command.

F. Report Flow for Completed Investigations

1. All completed crash investigation files will be reviewed by the respective supervisors in the affected member's chain of command for accuracy.
2. Supervisors and Division Commanders will evaluate each agency crash to determine preventability using the guidelines established in policy ADM 0604 Crash Preventability.
3. The employee's Division Commander will be notified when each supervisor in the chain of command has provided an endorsement in the RMS, to include preventability and any recommended disciplinary action.
4. The Division Commander will review the crash investigation files in the RMS and prepare an endorsement via Memorandum (SO-212) to include preventability and any recommended disciplinary action, if warranted. The Division Commander will discuss with the Bureau Commander the potential for disciplinary action.
5. If disciplinary action is warranted, the Division Commander will reference PER 0207 Penalty Assessment Matrix and follow the procedures established to handle the disciplinary process.

6. The Division Commander will notify the Crash Review Committee of the crash investigation files in the RMS by sharing the assessment of the crash with the Crash Review Committee Chairman.
7. At the conclusion of the Crash Review Committee process, the OPS will be notified of the Crash Review Committee's findings.
8. All documents relating to disciplinary action will be handled by the OPS and the Human Resources Manager in accordance with established policy.

Approved

JEFFREY R. GAHLER
SHERIFF
DATE 11/8/2021