

DIRECTIVE 61.2
TRAFFIC COLLISION / CRASH INVESTIGATION

Issue Date: 06/08/2020	By Order of Chief of Police
Rescinds: (Issue 04/02/2019) Pages: 7	CALEA Standards Referenced: 61.2.1 & 61.2.2

This directive consists of the following sections:

[61.2.1 Crash Scene Response Reporting and Investigation](#)

[61.2.2 Collision / Crash Scene Duties](#)

POLICY AND PROCEDURE:

The goal of the Miami Township Police Department for traffic enforcement is to reduce traffic crashes and increase voluntary compliance with traffic laws. In conjunction with this goal, the Department has traffic crash investigation procedures that provide effective and efficient guidelines for investigation of traffic crashes.

[61.2.1 Crash Scene Response Reporting and Investigation](#)

All crash reports shall be documented on Ohio Traffic Crash Report forms or the Miami Township Private Crash Report as stated in this directive. There shall be no documenting of a traffic crash on a NIBRS report as an incident.

[Death or Injury Crashes](#)

While all crashes require thorough reporting and investigations to whatever extent possible, this requirement is especially important in crashes involving death and serious injuries. Crashes involving fatalities, life threatening or disabling injuries and multiple injured victim crashes shall be fully and completely reported and investigated by an officer trained in crash investigation. Ohio State Highway Patrol may be requested to respond to any traffic crash involving a fatality, life threatening or disabling injury or serious multiple victim crash scenes.

Miami Township Police officers may investigate death or serious injury crashes if Ohio State Highway Patrol is not available. However, officers doing so shall have Traffic Crash Investigation training, Levels 1 & 2.

Miami Township Police officers shall investigate non life threatening injury crashes.

All death or injury crashes shall be reported on Ohio Traffic Crash Report forms.

Property Damage Crashes

Crashes involving property damage only are to be reported and investigated in a thorough and professional manner. In some minor property damage crashes, the focus may be on reporting in lieu of full investigation dependent on the circumstances at the time.

Property damage crashes shall be taken on an OH1 if they occur on a roadway or the crash began on the roadway. Property damage crashes may be reported on a Miami Township Private Property Crash Report, if they occur on private property.

Hit and Run Crashes

Hit and run crashes will be reported and investigated in a thorough and professional manner. Hit and run crashes shall be taken on an OH1 if they occur on a roadway or if there are reported injuries. Hit and run crashes may be reported on a Miami Township Private Property Crash Report, if they occur on private property and no injuries are reported.

Records personnel shall copy all unsolved hit and run crash reports to the Patrol Division Supervisor or their designee who shall assign the hit and run crash for investigation.

Impairment Crashes

Crashes involving impairment due to alcohol and/or drugs shall be reported and investigated in a thorough and professional manner. Officers shall be aware that driver impairment due to alcohol and/or drugs is a factor in many crashes and will be alert to clues or evidence of such impairment when carrying out crash investigations. Officers shall take appropriate enforcement action when impairment evidence is obtained.

In cases of traffic crashes involving impaired drivers, the assigned officer, whenever possible, should attempt to handle both the investigation of the crash and the investigation into violation of OVI laws. If time limits for test samples or other conditions make this impractical, the assigned officer shall advise the shift supervisor who may assign another officer to divide the responsibility for the investigation of the crash and the investigation into the possible violation of OVI laws.

All impairment crashes shall be reported on Ohio Traffic Crash Report forms.

Hazardous Material Crashes

Crashes involving hazardous materials shall be reported and investigated in a thorough and professional manner.

Miami Township officers will advise the Clermont County Department of Public Safety Service (CDPSS) of all accidents involving a spill or leak of hazardous materials. Dispatchers shall notify the Miami Township Fire & EMS for expedited response.

All hazardous material crashes shall be reported on Ohio Traffic Crash Report forms.

Private Property Crashes

Private property crashes are to be reported and investigated in a thorough and professional manner. In some minor private property crashes, the focus may be on reporting in lieu of full investigation dependent on the circumstances at the time.

Officers dispatched to handle a private property traffic crash may utilize the Miami Township Private Property Crash Report only in cases stated in this directive and only in cases where no injuries have occurred.

Crashes Involving Township Owned Vehicles or Property

All traffic crashes involving any township owned vehicle or property shall be reported. The employee operating the vehicle involved will immediately notify the shift supervisor, who will respond to the scene.

The shift supervisor will determine what agency will handle the report and investigation.

- In the event the traffic crash has resulted in a serious injury or may result in a fatality, the shift supervisor shall request Ohio State Highway Patrol to investigate the traffic crash.
- In the event the Ohio State Highway Patrol is unable to conduct the investigation, the supervisor will notify a Traffic Safety Unit member, if available, to conduct the investigation.
- The shift supervisor shall make notification in accordance with the department procedure on notification.

When a township vehicle is involved in a traffic crash and as a result of the investigation conducted it is determined that the operator of the township vehicle committed a violation of law which resulted in the accident, the investigating officer shall take the appropriate enforcement action.

When an officer is involved in a traffic crash which occurs while he is engaged in performing his official duties and is reported to the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, records personnel shall send a letter of Official Duties Certification along with a copy of the accident report to the Registrar of Motor Vehicles. The letter certifies that the officer was performing official duties when the traffic crash occurred and is signed by the Chief of Police.

Township owned vehicle crashes shall be taken on an OH1 if they occur on a roadway. Township owned vehicle crashes may be reported on a Miami Township Private Property Crash Report, if they occur on private property and there are no injuries.

Follow Up Investigations

Follow up investigation of a traffic crash is the responsibility of the reporting officer. If the traffic crash requires additional investigation the following duties will be completed on an as needed basis.

- As needed, the investigating officer shall collect off-scene data relating to the actions and attitudes of the operators of the vehicles to ensure a thorough investigation of underlying causes of the crash.
- Vehicle Safety Inspection.
- Obtaining recorded formal witness statements.
- Reconstruction of the crash scene and/or consultation with expert and/or technical personnel.
 - Should additional expert and/or technical assistance beyond the capabilities of the department's personnel be required, the investigating officer shall arrange for such assistance. Should such services require a payment for services rendered, the investigating officer must first have an approved purchase order for utilization of such services.

61.2.2 Collision / Crash Scene Duties

Miami Township police personnel will respond to all reported traffic crashes according to the following protocol.

On a reported crash, a department Traffic Safety Unit (TSU), if available, will respond to investigate. Should a TSU member be unavailable, the district patrol unit will respond to investigate. Should the TSU member and district patrol unit be unavailable, the shift supervisor may use alternate resources to handle the traffic crash.

If dispatched as a life threatening or fatal crash or if on the officers' arrival the crash is found to involve a life-threatening injury or fatality, the dispatched officer will notify the on-duty supervisor who may request Ohio State Highway Patrol respond to investigate.

Officers shall respond to all reported traffic crashes in the following manner, unless specific circumstances exist that justify response of another nature.

- Death, Injury, Unknown Injury and/or Entrapment - Emergency Response
- Hit and Run - Urgent Response if the Hit and Run Just Occurred, Routine Response if the Hit and Run Occurred at an Unknown Time.
- Impairment Crashes - Urgent Response
- Damage to Public Vehicles or Property – Urgent Response
- Hazardous Materials – Emergency Response
- Disturbances Between Principals – Urgent Response
- Major Traffic Congestion - Urgent Response
- Damage to Extent Towing is Required – Urgent Response

- Property Damage & Vehicle off Roadway – Routine Response
- Minor Non-Injury Crashes – Routine Response

During times of inclement weather, when road conditions are such that this department receives reports of numerous accidents, or during other emergency situations, the shift supervisor shall prioritize response by officers to crash scenes. Priority will be given to crashes with reported injuries; second priority shall be to crashes with suspected injuries; third priority shall be to any crash blocking traffic on the interstate, a state highway or a county road; fourth priority shall be to all other crash types and locations.

The shift supervisor shall notify the Clermont County Department of Public Safety Services (CDPSS) that persons calling to report traffic crashes will be serviced based upon the priority listing above and that there could be a delay of unknown minutes or hours to handle their request. Persons involved in non-injury crashes and requiring a routine response are to be encouraged to exchange personal, vehicle and insurance information and both parties should report to the police department on the following day with the involved vehicle to file a traffic crash report.

The CDPSS or shift supervisor shall also notify the media of this information when they inquire as to road and traffic conditions or in the case of an emergency, the department PIO shall notify the media.

Miami Township personnel shall not take traffic crash reports over the telephone.

Collision Scene Duties

Officer in Charge of Scene

The officer originally dispatched to the scene of a traffic crash will investigate the traffic crash, unless otherwise directed by the shift supervisor or the seriousness of the crash is such that the Ohio State Highway Patrol is called to investigate. The officer handling the report and investigation of a traffic crash will oversee the traffic crash scene and any follow-up or supplemental investigation.

The officer in charge of a scene shall access the scene on arrival and do the following as needed:

- Request additional assistance as needed.
- Request utility company assistance if warranted by damage or disruption of utility services.
- Establish traffic control to facilitate the flow of traffic around the crash scene.
- Request tow service to facilitate the removal of vehicles blocking traffic flow.

Should the Ohio State Highway Patrol investigate a traffic crash in Miami Township, personnel are expected to cooperate constructively and efficiently with the Ohio State Highway Patrol personnel in charge of the scene.

Identifying and Dealing with Injured Persons

The first officer on the scene of a traffic crash shall request Emergency Medical Services if an injury is observed or claimed. The officer will render what emergency medical aid they trained and able to perform until EMS arrival.

Identifying and Dealing with Fire Hazards and/or Hazardous Materials

The first officer on the scene of a traffic crash shall request the Fire Department if their response is warranted by fire, a fire hazard or if hazardous material is involved.

Should a vehicle fire be observed the officer will when practical attempt to control the fire with equipment maintained in the police vehicle pending the arrival of the fire department.

Miami Township officers will advise the CDPSS of all crashes involving a spill or leak of hazardous materials. Dispatchers shall notify the Miami Township Fire & EMS for expedited response.

Officers should use caution approaching the scene of these crashes and keep a safe distance. The officer should attempt to identify the substance by using the 'Emergency Response Guidebook' located in the police vehicle.

- Speaking to the driver and/or reviewing the driver's paperwork are not to be done if there is any change of contamination of the driver and/or the paperwork.
- The officer shall not enter the 'hot zone' nor should the driver exit the 'hot zone' until proper decontamination procedures have been followed.
- If the potential for contamination of the area is apparent, the officer will immediately notify the shift supervisor, move persons to a safe distance and begin setting a perimeter.

Collecting Information

Reporting and investigation of a traffic crash will require the reporting officer to completely and accurately fill out the appropriate report forms. Ohio Traffic Crash forms shall be completed in accordance with guidelines set forth by the State of Ohio Department of Highway Safety Traffic Procedure Manual. The Miami Township Police Department Private Property Crash Report shall be used and completely and accurately filled out when applicable.

The investigating officer shall interview all operators, passengers and witnesses to determine the chain-of-events leading up to the traffic crash. The officer shall list all operators, occupants and witnesses on the appropriate crash report form and take written statements as required.

The investigating officer shall record the point of impact, areas of damage on vehicle, and damage to other property, if applicable.

The investigating officer shall note any defects to the roadway or other road conditions, skid marks, obstruction to signs or other pertinent information.

The investigating officer may take measurements as needed for future reconstruction of the crash or further analysis of the crash cause.

The investigating officer shall take photographs and/or use the in-car video/body camera to record the crash scene and any associated evidence.

Protecting the Collision Scene

The investigating officer shall protect and preserve the crash scene and any evidence as needed.

Controlling Property Belonging to Collision Victims

The officer in charge of the crash scene shall ensure that property belonging to crash victims is protected should the victim be unable to take control of or care for the property.

When the vehicle is towed at the request of the operator/owner, the security of property will be the responsibility of the tow company.

When the vehicle is towed as a result of police department impoundment, the vehicle will be inventoried as part of completion of the Towed Vehicle Report form.

Negotiable instruments and/or cash in excess of \$25.00 found in a vehicle being inventoried for a police tow shall be processed into the property room to be held for safe keeping, unless such item can be immediately retrieved by the owner or responsible person.