



ANDERSON COUNTY
SHERIFF'S OFFICE

GO - 224

GENERAL ORDERS

TRAFFIC COLLISION INVESTIGATION

PURPOSE:

Investigating traffic collisions is the primary responsibility of the **South Carolina Highway Patrol (SCHP)**. Occasionally with supervisor approval, the Traffic Unit will assist SCHP with collision investigation. Whenever a SCHP vehicle is involved in a collision, the Sheriff's Office investigates the incident, regardless of the circumstances or the location of the collision in the County, per **South Carolina Code of Laws §56-5-765**. This policy establishes guidelines for vehicle collision response to achieve the following objectives:

1. Investigation
2. Reporting
3. Collision scene protection
4. Public safety
5. Traffic law enforcement
6. Public education for collision prevention

DEFINITIONS:

Traffic Collision Investigation – Collecting factual information identifying and describing people, roads, and vehicles involved in a collision.

Investigation includes describing results of the collision in terms of damage to vehicles and roadside objects, injuries to people, marks and residue on the road, and final positions of vehicles and bodies. Interpreting factors in terms of road user behavior and, on occasion, attempting to specify the peculiar combination of factors required to produce a particular collision.

Traffic Collision Reporting – Basic data collecting to identify and classify a traffic collision and the persons, vehicles, time/location, planned movements involved, and possible contributing factors, such as traffic law violations.

COLLISION INVESTIGATION:

Most collisions can be adequately investigated and reported by completing the **South Carolina Highway Patrol Uniform Collision Report** form. Other collisions may require more detailed investigation including speed determination, scale diagrams, or collection of data for reconstruction. For this reason, **the Sheriff's Office will only investigate collisions when assistance is requested by SCHP.**

Additionally, the Sheriff's Office will not investigate (*except incidents involving State troopers, their immediate families or other collisions State law mandated*):

1. A collision with a fatality or where the potential of death is high
2. Hit and runs
3. Collisions involving hazardous materials; except those specified by §56-5-765

4. Collisions with driver impairment due to alcohol or drugs
5. Collisions on private property totaling more than \$1000 dollars damage, personal injury, or death

The Sheriff's Office will investigate:

1. Collisions involving Highway Patrol personnel or their immediate family or other collisions, as provide by State law
2. Disturbances resulting from traffic collisions
3. Collisions upon request for assistance from the Highway Patrol
4. Collisions that occur on private property, by request; including those within the city of Pendleton
5. Collisions within the city of Pendleton, per contractual agreement

**FIRST RESPONDER
PROCEDURES:**

The deputy dispatched to a collision scene is responsible for the investigation unless relieved by a superior officer, the South Carolina Highway Patrol or fire department, in the case of hazardous material or fire.

The responding deputy should follow these on-scene procedures:

1. Assess the over-all scene. If needed, request back-up assistance.
2. Initially protect the collision scene by proper placement of your vehicle.
3. Identify and administer aid to injured persons. If medical assistance is required, notify Communications to dispatch EMS.
4. If the scene involves hazardous materials or fire, if not already requested, notify Communications to dispatch the fire department.
5. Establish a safe traffic pattern around the collision. If needed, request additional assistance to reroute traffic.
6. Locate and identify witnesses. Gather witness information, driver information, and vehicle information.
7. Complete South Carolina Traffic Collision Report Form.
8. Note and/or photograph short-lived evidence, such as skid marks and debris.
9. Expedite the removal of vehicles and debris. Request Communications to dispatch the next on-rotation wrecker service.

NOTE: *If a victim cannot take control of their personal property at the scene or the investigating deputy is unable to release property to an authorized person, the deputy is to place valuables in Property and Evidence until they can be turned over to the owner. An inventory of items placed into P&E must be completed.*

In the event of a serious or complicated collision, the investigating deputy is responsible for the following:

1. Interviewing principals and witnesses
2. Examining and recording vehicle damage
3. Examining/recording effects of the collision on roadway
4. Taking measurements

5. Having photographs taken
6. Collecting/preserving evidence
7. Exchanging information among principals
8. Timely submission of all reports within 24-hours

Follow-up activities, if required, include:

1. Collection of off-scene data
2. Obtaining formal statements from witnesses
3. Preparing formal reports for use in court
4. Presenting information to a Collision Reconstructionist

The investigating deputy may obtain assistance from surveyors, mechanics, physicists, physicians, or other specialists needed to complete the investigation.

PATROL VEHICLES – Patrol vehicles are to be equipped with a first aid kit and a fire extinguisher. In addition, traffic enforcement vehicles are to be equipped with measuring tapes, marking crayons or chalk, templates and other equipment as needed.

Deputies investigating collisions will take appropriate enforcement action consistent with State law. Private property collisions will normally not involve traffic law violations, but in other cases citations will be issued when evidence clearly indicates a violation.

TRAFFIC CONTROL:

Deputies responding to a collision scene are to render aid to the injured and restore traffic control using standardized traffic direction signals. If a fire or fire hazard is present, the local fire department is summoned to the scene. The on-scene deputy is to use his/her fire extinguisher, if possible. If hazardous materials are present, the scene is to be evacuated and a perimeter established until such time as properly trained and equipped officials can respond to deal with the hazard. Deputies may use flares, barricades or reflectors to protect the scene and detour traffic.

FORMS:

Collisions are reported on the **South Carolina Traffic Collision Report Form**. However, in cases where the Sheriff's Office investigates a collision with serious injury or death, an incident report is to be completed in addition to the collision report.

Approved by:
John S. Skipper, Jr., Sheriff