

**21UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT**  
**POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

No. 230

Supersedes: 89-3-63.1.2A

Effective: April 3, 2006

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Dated: November 20, 1989

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**TRAFFIC CRASH INVESTIGATIONS INVOLVING TOWNSHIP VEHICLES**

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I. **PURPOSE:** To provide guidelines by which all traffic crashes are investigated when the vehicle involved is owned or insured by Upper Merion Township, or when the person involved is an on-duty Upper Merion Township employee.

II. **POLICY:** The Upper Merion Township Police Department will conduct a complete and thorough investigation of all reportable traffic crashes when the vehicle involved is owned or insured by Upper Merion Township, or when the person involved is an on-duty Upper Merion Township employee. The Upper Merion Township Police department shall conduct a complete and thorough investigation of all non-reportable traffic crashes when the person involved is an on-duty police department employee, or when the vehicle involved is a vehicle assigned to the Police Department, or when directed to conduct an investigation by a Command Officer or the Traffic Safety Unit Sergeant.

III. **CROSS-REF:** Policy #210, TRAFFIC CRASH INVESTIGATIONS

IV. **DEFINITIONS:**

COMMAND OFFICER: An Upper Merion Township police officer holding the rank of lieutenant or above.

PATROL SUPERVISOR: A sergeant, corporal or acting corporal in charge of the shift on duty.

TRAFFIC SAFETY OFFICER: A police officer with specialized traffic crash investigation training and assigned to the Traffic Safety Unit.

**PATROL OFFICER/ACCIDENT INVESTIGATOR:** A patrol officer with specialized traffic crash investigation training.

**INVESTIGATING OFFICER:** The officer assigned to gather the information, conduct the investigation, complete the proper reports, determine cause and place responsibility for the traffic crash.

**REPORTABLE TRAFFIC CRASH:** A traffic crash involving injury or death to any person, or damage to a vehicle to the extent that the vehicle cannot be driven under its own power without causing further damage and, therefore, requires towing. For the purpose of this policy, a reportable traffic crash also includes any crash which is likely to result in any court action involving Upper Merion Township or a township employee.

**NON-REPORTABLE TRAFFIC CRASH:** A traffic crash not involving injury or death to any person, or the towing of any involved vehicle.

**TOWNSHIP VEHICLE:** A vehicle owned or insured by Upper Merion Township not including school district vehicles. Lafayette ambulances and fire department vehicles should be considered township vehicles.

V. **RESPONSIBILITIES:**

A. **COMMAND OFFICER:**

1. To authorize assignment of a Traffic Safety Unit officer to investigate reportable traffic crashes when no Traffic Safety Unit officer is on duty.
2. To investigate or designate an investigator for reportable traffic crashes when the involved police officer holds the rank of sergeant or above.

B. **TRAFFIC SAFETY UNIT SUPERVISOR:**

1. To investigate reportable traffic crashes when the involved police officer holds a rank below sergeant.
2. To authorize assignment of a Traffic Safety Unit officer to investigate reportable traffic crashes when no Traffic Safety Unit officer is on duty.
3. To review all traffic crashes involving township owned or insured vehicles, and/or all traffic crashes involving a township employee while on duty.

C. **PATROL SUPERVISOR:**

1. To investigate non-reportable traffic crashes within Upper Merion Township when a Traffic Safety Unit officer is not on duty.
2. To complete and submit a Supervisor's Incident Report for any traffic crash within twenty-four (24) hours of the crash.

3. To respond to non-reportable traffic crashes in a contiguous jurisdiction, either investigate the crash or recommend a Command Officer, Traffic Safety Unit Supervisor, or Traffic Safety Unit Officer be called to respond.

D. TRAFFIC SAFETY UNIT OFFICER:

1. When on duty, to investigate all reportable traffic crashes involving a township vehicle or an on-duty township employee who is **not** a police officer.
2. When on duty, to investigate all non-reportable traffic crashes involving any township vehicle or any on-duty township employee whether police or civilian.
3. To act at the direction of a Command Officer or Traffic Safety Unit Supervisor or Patrol Supervisor.

E. PATROL OFFICER/ACCIDENT INVESTIGATOR:

1. To act at the direction of a Traffic Safety Unit investigating officer, Command Officer or Traffic Safety Unit Sergeant.

F. ON-DUTY POLICE DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEE INVOLVED IN A TRAFFIC CRASH:

1. Without delay, notify immediate supervisor.
2. Notify the Police Communications Center to initiate an incident report.
3. Submit a detailed memorandum describing the traffic crash to the immediate supervisor within twenty-four (24) hours of the crash, when possible.
4. If injured, report personally to the Township Administration Office as soon as possible to complete necessary workman's compensation and/or insurance forms.
5. If injured, submit a medical report from the attending doctor as soon as possible.

G. TOWNSHIP VEHICLE MAINTENANCE PERSONNEL:

1. Inspect damaged township vehicles and submit a written damage estimate within twenty-four (24) hours of the first normal working day after the traffic crash has been reported to the employee's supervisor.

VI. **PROCEDURES:**

- A. The investigating officer will conduct a complete and thorough investigation including, when appropriate, measurements and vehicle inspection. Photographs shall be taken and diagrams completed on all traffic crashes involving township vehicles or on-duty township employees.

- B. Reportable traffic crashes outside Upper Merion Township, but in a contiguous jurisdiction, shall be handled as follows:
  - 1. The designated investigating officer will respond and investigate as if the traffic crash had occurred in Upper Merion Township.
  - 2. The designated investigating shall cooperate with the investigating authority from the other jurisdiction.
  
- C. Non-reportable traffic crashes outside Upper Merion Township, but in a contiguous jurisdiction, shall be handled as follows:
  - 1. A Patrol Supervisor will respond and either investigate the traffic crash or recommend a Command Officer, Traffic Safety Unit Supervisor or Traffic Safety Unit Officer be called to respond.
  
- D. Reportable and non-reportable traffic crashes outside Upper Merion Township, but in a jurisdiction not contiguous to Upper Merion Township, shall be handled as follows:
  - 1. Authorization from a Command Officer or the Traffic Safety Unit Supervisor is necessary prior to response.

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_

DATED: \_\_\_\_\_

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_

DATED: \_\_\_\_\_

TO BE REVIEWED: ANNUALLY

DISTRIBUTION: All police officers  
 All civilian employees  
 Township Manager  
 File