


FAIRFAX COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT  GENERAL ORDER	SUBJECT: POLICE VEHICLE CRASHES		NUMBER: 506
	EFFECTIVE DATE: January 9, 2023	REVIEW: January, 2026	
RESPONSIBLE ENTITY: CRIMINAL JUSTICE ACADEMY			<input type="checkbox"/> New Directive <input type="checkbox"/> Replaces: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Revised: 01-19-19
ACCREDITATION STANDARDS	CALEA:	VLEPSC:	

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this General Order is to establish guidelines and requirements whenever County-owned or leased police vehicles are involved in a crash.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Fairfax County Police Department (FCPD) that all County-owned or leased police vehicles involved in a crash are fully investigated and documented. The timely, objective, and thorough investigation of all police vehicle crashes is an essential component of maintaining public trust in police operations. Access to medical treatment shall be provided as quickly as reasonably possible to any individual who complains of injury, has obvious injuries, requests medical attention, or who appears to be unconscious, however, officers may not compel any person, whether in custody or not, to receive medical treatment except in known life-threatening circumstances.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. Crash: Occurs when a County-owned or leased motor vehicle comes into contact with another vehicle, object, or person. Crashes do not include use of the Precision Immobilization Technique, Tactical Vehicle Intercept, or Vehicle Incident as outlined in [FCPD General Order 505](#), Vehicle Stopping Techniques.
- B. Medical Treatment: Any action taken by Emergency Medical Services (EMS), personnel approved by the Fairfax County Police Department’s Office of the Medical Director (OMD), or medical facility personnel, to medically assess an individual or physically mend an injury (e.g., dress a wound, stitches, etc.) resulting from a police vehicle crash.

- C. **Serious Injury:** Any injury which creates a substantial risk of death, prolonged hospitalization, impairment of the functions of any bodily organ or limb, or any injury that attending medical personnel deem to be potentially life-threatening. The Duty Officer shall determine when an injury resulting from a police vehicle crash is to be designated as a serious injury based upon information received from attending medical personnel.

IV. OPERATOR RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. **Notifications:** Any Department employee involved in a crash while operating a County-owned or leased police vehicle shall, if physically able, notify either the Department of Public Safety Communications Center (DPSC) or nearest available on-duty police supervisor in an expeditious manner. Employees shall also submit memorandums to their respective commander detailing the circumstances surrounding the crash.
- B. **Medical Aid:** Sworn officers involved in crashes shall, if physically able, render or summon medical aid to any injured individual involved in the crash.

V. SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. **Response:** Upon notification that a Department employee is involved in a County-owned or leased police vehicle crash, an on-duty sworn supervisor shall respond to investigate the facts and circumstances unless otherwise directed by the Duty Officer or a commander.
- B. **Investigating Supervisors:** Sworn supervisors of equal or greater rank shall investigate crashes that involve supervisors. Where there is no equal or greater ranking officer available, the Duty Officer or affected commander may direct the crash to be investigated by a subordinate commander or supervisor. Review and action taken shall be completed through the involved employee's direct chain of command.
- C. **Crashes With Death or Serious Injury:** Either the Duty Officer or Police Liaison Commander (PLC) shall directly notify the Chief of Police (or appropriate Deputy Chief if unavailable) of any crash involving County-owned or leased police vehicles that results in death or serious injury to any individual.

VI. POLICE VEHICLE CRASH INVESTIGATIONS WITHIN FAIRFAX COUNTY

- A. The Department shall investigate all County-owned or leased police vehicle crashes that occur within the jurisdictional boundaries of Fairfax County, to include the Town of Herndon, Town of Vienna, and Town of Clifton.

- B. **Collection of Evidence:** Photographs shall be taken of all injuries and crash scenes and, along with any audio/video recordings relevant to the crash, shall be preserved by the investigative authority and maintained with the case file. Involved police vehicles shall not be moved or tampered without approval of the investigative authority unless an emergency or hazardous situation exists.
- C. Crashes within Fairfax County and the Town of Herndon, Town of Vienna, and Town of Clifton shall be investigated and documented as follows:
1. **Death or Serious Injury to any Individual:** The Major Crime Bureau's (MCB) Crash Reconstruction Unit (CRU) shall have investigatory authority with assistance from the MCB as needed. Investigations shall be in accordance with [FCPD Standard Operating Procedure \(SOP\) 12-045](#) and shall include a bifurcated criminal investigation and Internal Affairs Bureau (IAB) administrative investigation.
 - a. **Documentation:** The [Vehicle Crash Notification Form](#) shall be completed and submitted promptly by the investigating supervisor. Additional documentation shall include the following:
 - (1) Public property crashes (including hit and runs) shall be in a crash report in the current Traffic Records Electronic Data System (TREDS).
 - (2) Private property crashes (including hit and runs) shall be in an incident report via the Non-DMV Reportable Crash Template in the current Records Management System (RMS).
 - (3) Administrative investigation in the current Internal Affairs RMS.
 - b. **Documentation Review:** The IAB commander shall review the administrative investigation and forward it to the appropriate commander. On-duty supervisors shall review and forward investigative reports to their commander for review and action.
 2. **Medical Treatment for Non-Serious Injuries Either at a Medical Facility or Provided on Scene by Emergency Medical Services Personnel or Refusal of Medical Treatment for Reported Injuries:** An on-duty supervisor shall have investigatory authority with assistance from CRU as needed. Investigations shall consist of an administrative investigation and appropriate documentation in the current RMS.

- a. **Documentation:** The [Vehicle Crash Notification Form](#) shall be completed and submitted promptly by the investigating supervisor. Additional documentation shall include the following:
 - (1) Public Property Crashes (Including Hit and Run): A crash report in the current Traffic Records Electronic Data System (TREDS).
 - (2) Private Property Crashes (Including Hit and Run): An incident report via the Non-DMV Reportable Crash Template in the current RMS.
 - (3) Administrative investigation in the current Internal Affairs RMS.
 - b. **Documentation Review:** On-duty supervisors shall review and forward crash incident and administrative investigation reports to their commander for review and dissemination. Completed administrative investigations shall be forwarded to division commanders for review and action.
3. **No Reported or Observed Injuries:** An on-duty supervisor shall have investigative authority with assistance from CRU as needed. Investigations shall consist of an administrative investigation and appropriate documentation in the current RMS.
- a. **Documentation:** Documentation shall be as follows:
 - (1) Public Property Crashes (Including Hit and Run) with Total Property Damage in Excess of \$1500: A crash report in the current Traffic Records Electronic Data System (TREDS).
 - (2) Public property Crashes (Including Hit and Run) with Total Property Damage Less than \$1500 and Private Property (Including Hit and Run): The [Vehicle Crash Notification Form](#) shall be completed and submitted promptly by the investigating supervisor.
 - (3) Administrative investigation in the current Internal Affairs RMS.
 - b. **Documentation Review:** On-duty supervisors shall review and forward crash incident and administrative investigation reports to their commander for review and dissemination. Completed administrative investigations shall be forwarded to division commanders for review and action.

VII. POLICE VEHICLE CRASHES OUTSIDE OF FAIRFAX COUNTY

- A. Supervisors who investigate police vehicle crashes that occur outside of Fairfax County shall obtain copies of any available documentation from the investigating jurisdiction and include it in the administrative investigation case file.
- B. Police vehicle crashes that occur outside of the jurisdictional boundaries of Fairfax County shall be investigated as follows:
 - 1. **Death or Serious Injury to any Individual:** IAB shall have investigatory authority in cooperation with the jurisdiction investigating the crash. Investigations shall be in accordance with [FCPD Standard Operating Procedure \(SOP\) 12-045](#) and shall include an IAB administrative investigation and appropriate documentation in the current RMS.
 - a. **Documentation:** The [Vehicle Crash Notification Form](#) shall be completed and submitted promptly by the investigating supervisor. Additional documentation shall include the following:
 - (1) An incident report via the Non-DMV Reportable Crash Template in the current RMS.
 - (2) Administrative investigation in the current IAB RMS.
 - b. **Documentation Review:** The IAB commander shall review the administrative investigation, along with any photographs, video, and/or audio recordings and forward them to the appropriate commander.
 - 2. **All Other Police Vehicle Crashes:** An on-duty supervisor as assigned by the Duty Officer or appropriate commander shall have investigatory authority in cooperation with the jurisdiction investigating the crash. Investigations shall include an IAB administrative investigation and appropriate documentation in the current RMS.
 - a. **Documentation:** Documentation shall be as follows:
 - (1) The [Vehicle Crash Notification Form](#) shall be completed and submitted promptly by the investigating supervisor.
 - (2) Administrative investigation in the current IAB RMS.
 - b. **Documentation Review:** The investigating authority shall review and forward the administrative investigation, along with any photographs,

video, and/or audio recordings, to their appropriate commander for review and dissemination.

- C. Investigating authorities shall directly respond to police vehicle crashes involving on duty employees that occur in the following jurisdictions outside of Fairfax County:
 - 1. **Commonwealth of Virginia:** Arlington County, Loudoun County, Prince William County, City of Alexandria, City of Fairfax, City of Falls Church.
 - 2. **State of Maryland:** Montgomery County, Prince George's County.
 - 3. **District of Columbia**
- D. With Duty Officer approval and in limited cases that involve minor crashes, direct response by an investigative authority may not be required. Investigating authorities may utilize information and reports from the investigating jurisdiction, telephone interviews, statements and interviews from employees, and other reasonable investigation techniques in lieu of direct response to the scene. All acquired documentation from the investigating jurisdiction shall be included in the administrative investigation file.
- E. Where a crash does not meet that jurisdiction's reporting requirements, an on-scene crash investigation and written report should be requested by the investigative authority as a professional courtesy.

VIII. DEPARTMENT-LEASED VEHICLE CRASHES

- A. Department-leased vehicle crashes that occur within or outside of the jurisdictional boundaries of Fairfax County shall require the investigating authority to contact the renting agency to determine what repair facility the vehicle should be delivered to.
- B. Towing and storage of Department-leased vehicles involved in a crash shall be as follows:
 - 1. Where the vehicle is to be towed, the closest available Fairfax County contracted towing service shall be used. The vehicle shall be towed to the repair facility designated by the rental agency, or, if that agency is unavailable, to the nearest police facility until the agency can be notified and arrange for removal to a repair facility of their choice.

2. If the vehicle can be driven, it should be returned to the operator's station or assignment location.

C. Repair and replacement arrangements of Department-leased vehicles involved in a crash shall be as follows:

1. Where the investigative authority believes the Department employee is at fault or fault cannot be determined, they shall obtain two repair estimates through the Resource Management Bureau (RMB) vehicle coordinator. Both estimates shall be provided to the rental agency who may then provide a replacement vehicle. Copies of the estimates shall be forwarded to the Financial Resources Division of the Administrative Support Bureau.
2. Where the investigating authority determines the Department employee is not at fault, the vehicle shall be taken to the repair facility designated by the rental agency. Disputes as to liability for damages shall be referred to the Fairfax County Risk Management Division for resolution.

IX. CRUISER CRASH INQUIRIES

With command approval, county-owned or leased police vehicle crashes occurring within and outside of the jurisdictional boundaries of Fairfax County may be documented as an inquiry when all of the following criteria is met, 1) damage is limited to county property only, 2) there are no injuries involved, 3) there are no readily apparent acts of misconduct or aggravating circumstances, and 4) the crash does not involve another member of the community (vehicle, property, or person). If any of the above criteria are discovered to exist during the inquiry, the crash shall be documented in accordance with the applicable section of this General Order.

A. **Documentation:** Documentation shall be as follows:

1. The [Vehicle Crash Notification Form](#) shall be completed and submitted promptly by the investigating supervisor.
2. Cruiser Crash Inquiry in the current IAB RMS, with attached photographs of the damaged cruiser and any object(s) struck. Investigating supervisors shall include estimates from DVS as applicable, involved or witness officer statements, ICV/BWC footage and other videos, and provide email notification with a synopsis of events, photos, and repair estimate (if applicable) to DOFRiskManagement@fairfaxcounty.gov.

B. **Documentation Review:** The investigating authority shall review and forward the cruiser crash inquiry, along with any photographs, video, and/or audio recordings, to their appropriate commander for review and dissemination.

X. LEGAL REFERENCES

A. [Va. Code Ann. § 46.2-373](#); Report by law-enforcement officer investigating accident.

General Order 506 becomes effective on the above date and rescinds all previous rules and regulations pertaining to the subjects.

ISSUED BY:

APPROVED BY:



Chief of Police



County Executive