

203.00 - TRAFFIC ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION

203.01 General Information

- (1) A traffic accident is defined as unintentional damage or injury caused by the movement of a vehicle or its load. An officer, employee or dispatcher receiving a report of an accident, by telephone or other means shall:
 - a. Determine if any injuries have occurred.
 - b. Order an ambulance or other necessary equipment.
 - c. Direct parties involved to move their vehicles, if possible from traffic lanes; to expedite traffic flow. Vehicles are not to be moved when the accident involves injury, or if a driver is suspected to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
 - d. Use the guidelines in OMS 203.02 (1) to determine whether a report will be made at the scene of the accident.
- (2) Special Operations Division officers assigned with traffic responsibilities will investigate traffic accident whenever possible. Uniformed officers not on a previous assignment, observing or who are notified of a motor vehicle accident, shall notify the dispatcher of the location and follow the guidelines in OMS 203.02 (1) to determine if a report will be made at the scene of the accident.
- (3) Upon arrival at the scene of an accident, the following steps shall be taken:
 - a. Position the police car so that it does not create any further hazard.
 - b. Protect the accident scene.
 - c. Determine whether injuries have occurred and request an ambulance if necessary. If practical, render first aid. Once an ambulance has responded, injured persons shall not be transported in a police vehicle except on the advice of a paramedic.
 - d. Restore traffic flow as soon as is practical, making sure the roadway is cleared of any hazard.
 - e. When the Fire Department is called to extricate individuals trapped in any manner, the ranking officer of the Fire Department at the scene shall be in complete charge until rescue operations have terminated.
 - f. Give each driver an Accident Information Exchange Form, DPD 338, after completing the space marked investigating officer. Officers shall point out the information on the reverse side of the form regarding towing procedures.
 - g. Determine if a report will be made. If a report is not made, then the subsequent procedure shall be followed:
 1. Verify the validity of vehicle registrations, drivers' license, and insurance requirements.
 2. Advise each driver that, in the event that the damage to any one vehicle or property is later found to exceed the minimum damage criteria established by Statute, a Counter Report should be made by all drivers involved.
 3. On the Daily Activity Log, the officer shall enter the names and license plate numbers of persons involved, as well as a description of the actions taken.
 4. Insure that the vehicles involved do not present a traffic hazard.
- (4) Field Investigation Steps:
 - a. The main emphasis of accident investigation is to determine if there was a violation of the law and if so, to prove each element of the offense.
 - b. Check all vehicle occupants for personal injury and evaluate the physical condition of the drivers. If any driver appears to be under the influence of intoxicating liquor or drugs, the investigation shall proceed as outlined in OMS 204.02.
 - c. Check for hazards at the scene and notify the dispatcher if any repairs are needed.

- d. The scene examination should start where the vehicles came to final rest. Debris and/or broken parts from the vehicles will help locate the key events and indicate the paths of the vehicles involved. Skid marks show position and direction of travel, evasive action or unlawful behavior.
- e. Some evidence in accident investigation is very fragile: pools of gasoline, oil, blood, pieces of broken glass, clothing transfer, on road surfaces. This evidence which can be damaged, altered, destroyed or removed from the scene by a willful or negligent act, must be identified, secured and included on the diagram prior to removal.
- f. Obtain all information required for the Accident Report, including statements from all drivers and witnesses.
- g. In cases where the driver of a vehicle involved in an accident is not the owner and cannot establish his or her relationship with the owner, officers shall clear the vehicle to ascertain if it has been reported stolen. When possible, the owner should be contacted to establish the driver's right to be in possession of the vehicle.
- h. Check vehicles for mechanical soundness of lights, brakes, windshield wipers and other auxiliary safety devices, the operation of which may have affected the accident.
- i. Contact victims at the hospital, if necessary, to obtain further information.

203.02 Reporting Procedure

- (1) Officers will investigate and make a report on any traffic accident in the following situations:
 - a. The damage to the property or vehicle of any one person exceeds the minimum damage criteria established by Statute. When there is a question as to the amount of actual damage, an Accident Report will be made. When accident alert procedures are in effect see OMS 102.05(17) d.
 - b. A personal injury or fatality is involved.
 - c. Denver property, vehicles or on-duty city personnel are involved.
 - d. A driver is suspected to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
 - e. A driver operated his vehicle with drivers' license restraints, had an improperly registered vehicle, or failed to produce proof of insurance. The fact that a driver is cited for having no proof of insurance must be noted on the Accident Report.
 - f. A driver left the scene without fulfilling statutory information requirements. See OMS 203.04.
 - g. Upon request, Denver officers will investigate accidents which fall under the minimum damage criteria established by Statute when:
 - 1. Public vehicles are involved, such as federal, state or other police agencies.
 - 2. Specifically requested to do so by one of the involved parties (C.R.S. §42-4-1606). The department will interpret this provision of the statute to mean that a request to investigate and report an accident must be made at the accident scene.
- (2) Although police officers are not required to make a Traffic Accident Report if the State minimum damage criteria is not met, and none of the criteria in OMS 203.02(1) are present, they shall cite drivers for the accident-causing violation without completing a report following the procedure below.
 - a. Examine the driver's license, registration and insurance information.
 - b. Assure that the Accident Exchange Information form, DPD 338, is completed and exchanged.
 - c. Investigate to ascertain if an accident-causing violation has occurred.
 - d. If there is sufficient evidence to support a violation, a citation will be issued. If a citation is issued, check the "Accident" box on the Uniform Traffic Summons & Complaint/Penalty Assessment Notice.
 - e. Officers will include in their notes, on the reverse side of the City Attorney's copy, the results of their investigation, including:
 - 1. A simple diagram or description of the accident.

2. The defendant's statement.
 3. A description of the weather and street conditions.
 4. The names of other drivers or independent witnesses to be subpoenaed.
 5. Any other information the officer deems necessary.
 6. A note must be made at the top, reverse side, of the City Attorney's copy that an accident report was not completed, due to an insufficient amount of property damage.
- f. Nothing in this procedure precludes an officer from completing a traffic accident report when called to the scene of a minimal property damage accident.
- g. When accident alert procedures are in effect. See OMS 102.05(17) d.
- (3) When it is determined that a report will be made, the officer will complete the State of Colorado Traffic Accident Report, Form DR-2447, following the instructions contained in the State of Colorado Investigating Officer's Traffic Accident Reporting Manual, subject to procedures and modifications contained in the Department's Operations Manual and pertinent directives. All information required from Overlays A and B must be included on the accident report. The following boxes on the State of Colorado Traffic Accident Report, Form DR-2447 will have information, which is agency specific to the Denver Police Department.
- a. County: Enter "Denver"
 - b. County #: Enter "01"
 - c. Detail: Enter reporting officer's detail number and car assignment. (Example: 2-232)
 - d. Agency Code: This box is used to indicate a hit and run accident; an incomplete accident report; or, a hit and run accident report which would be an early case closure.
 1. If the report is a hit and run, enter "H&R" in the agency code box.
 - a. All reports marked "H&R" will be accompanied by a Traffic Case Summary, DPD 347, which explains the circumstances of the incomplete report.
 - b. If the incomplete report involves any vehicle owned, operated, or leased by the Denver Police Department, enter "H&R-DPD" in the agency code box.
 - c. If the incomplete report involves any vehicle owned or operated by the Denver Fire Department, enter "H&R-FIRE" in the agency code box.
 2. If the report is incomplete, enter "INC" in the agency code box.
 - a. All reports marked "INC" will be accompanied by a Traffic Case Summary, DPD 347, which explains the circumstances of the incomplete report.
 - b. If the incomplete report involves any vehicle owned, operated, or leased by the Denver Police Department enter "INC-DPD" in the agency code box.
 - c. If the incomplete report involves any vehicle owned or operated by the Denver Fire Department, enter "INC-FIRE" in the agency code box.
 3. If the report meets the requirements for an early case closure, enter "ECC."
 4. The criteria for "ECC" are:
 - a. Based on their investigation, the investigating officer will determine if there is sufficient information and evidence to file charges against an identifiable suspect. The investigating officer must first thoroughly check the accident scene and surrounding area and contact neighbors for possible information. Insufficient evidence would include:
 1. The victim does not have a complete license plate number of the suspect vehicle, or
 2. The victim does not have a partial license plate number of the suspect vehicle and the make, style, and color of the suspect vehicle, or
 3. The suspect driver is unknown to the victim or to a witness, or

4. No witness (present or not present) can identify the suspect or provide the license plate number of the suspect vehicle.
- b. If the investigating officer determines there is insufficient evidence forthcoming to file charges, the officer will inform the complainant that the report will be filed without further action, unless evidence becomes available later. The officer will give the complainant a Citizen Notification Card, DPD 233A, instructing the complainant to contact the Traffic Investigations Bureau in the event the complainant obtains additional information.
- c. The officer will then complete the accident report, form 2447, and after describing the accident, he will write in the body of the report, "This report will be carried as closed unless additional information is obtained."
- d. The officer will turn the report in for supervisory approval and forward to the Records Section for filing.
- e. The officer will not fill out a traffic case summary.
- f. If the early case closure involves any vehicle owned, operated, or leased by the Denver Police Department, enter "ECC-DPD" in the agency code box.
- g. If the early case closure involves any vehicle owned or operated by the Denver Fire Department, enter "ECC-FIRE" in the agency code box.
- e. District Number: Enter the District or Bureau number of the reporting officer, followed by the precinct of occurrence.

District/Bureau Number Assigned To:

- 1 District 1
- 2 District 2
- 3 District 3
- 4 District 4
- 5 District 5
- 6 District 6
- 7 Highway / HazMat Units
- 8 Selective Enforcement Unit/Motorcycle Enforcement Units
- 9 Accident Cars, DUI Cars & Traffic Investigations Bureau
- 10 DIA Police Bureau, METRO/SWAT, Gang Bureau, Vice and all others not listed
- f. Driver Name: If an officer does not have **complete** information on an involved driver, the information available will be listed in a Traffic Case Summary, DPD 347, and the word "Unknown" will be placed in the driver's last name box. Complete information includes last name, first name, street address, city, state, zip, driver license number, state, sex, and DOB.
- g. Approved by: **Print** approving supervisor's last name.
- h. I.D.#: Enter the 5 digit badge number of the approving supervisor.
- i. Date: Enter the date the report was approved.
- j. Describe Accident: Use the following format to describe the accident factually and concisely.
 1. Traffic Unit #1 (name), traveling (direction), on (street), at a stated speed of (mph), (describe action/violation) and struck (or was struck by), Traffic Unit #2 (name), traveling (direction), on (street), at a stated speed of (mph).

2. Another paragraph will be added to describe the actions of the Traffic Units after the impact. Accident reports that do not follow the outlined format of DPD procedures, department modifications or modifications made to the State of Colorado Investigating Officer's Traffic Accident Reporting Manual (11/05), will be returned to the reporting officer's commander for correction.
 3. Include drivers' statements in the body of the report.
 4. All locations will be complete, indicating the type of thoroughfare and the direction.
 5. Witnesses' names and addresses will be listed in the body of the report along with a brief statement of their observations.
- k. Diagram Section: The diagram section is used to present a pictorial description of the narrative portion of the report.
1. Diagrams are required for the following types of accidents:
 - a. Fatal accidents
 - b. Injury accidents
 1. Evident non-incapacitating: Injury is evident to observers at the scene, but is not incapacitating or fatal. Examples include bruises, lumps, and lacerations.
 2. Evident incapacitating: Any injury, other than a fatal injury, that prevents the injured person from walking, driving or normally continuing the activities the person was capable of performing before the injury. Examples include severe lacerations, broken limbs, and skull, chest, or abdominal injuries.
 - c. Hit-and-Run accidents
 - d. Accidents involving city vehicles, city property, or on-duty city employees.
 - e. Accidents involving a DUI, DUID, or DWAI.
 - f. Incomplete Reports
 2. The diagram will be drawn with a traffic template.
 3. Measurements will be included in the diagram on all fatal and injury accidents, or anytime measurements are necessary to prove the elements of the offense.
 - a. The measurements indicating point of impact shall be included on the diagram unless the following circumstances exist:
 1. The vehicles were moved and the drivers are unable to pinpoint where the collision occurred and
 2. There are no other witnesses present and
 3. There is a lack of physical evidence showing the location of impact.
 - b. The measurements indicating the length of the paths of difficulty shall be included on the diagram. Paths of difficulty include:
 1. Skid marks
 2. Scuff marks
 - c. If measurements cannot be taken, it shall be noted in the accident diagram with an explanation. See OMS 208.01(3)c. and 208.01(8).
- l. Insurance information: If a city-owned vehicle is involved, use the three blocks provided for insurance information to write in "Government vehicle, self-insured municipality."
- m. Officers will provide to every driver and the owner(s) of the damaged property involved in an accident the Accident Victim Information Sheet, DPD 599.

- (4) When making a traffic accident report, officers have the responsibility of determining any violation and initiating appropriate court action.
- a. When a driver is cited for an accident causing violation on the Uniform Traffic Summons & Complaint/Penalty Assessment Notice, the officer will mark the "Accident" box and the "Significant Property Damage" box if the resulting damage to any vehicle or property of another person is moderate or extreme (damage severity code "2" or "3"). If an injury/death has occurred as a result of the accident, the "Personal Injury/Death" box will also be marked.
 - b. If the elements of an offense are lacking, and the officer is unable to obtain evidence sufficient to support a charge, none should be filed. Under these circumstances, the officer shall include in the body of the report the reason no citation is issued, i.e., "No citation issued due to conflicting statements, lack of witnesses and/or physical evidence".
 - c. List all witnesses, including the other driver(s) on the back of the City Attorney's Copy.
 - d. Enter the issuing officer's correct bureau number on the space titled "BUR" on the Summons and Complaint/Penalty Assessment Notice. See OMS 203.02(3) f.
- (5) Upon review and approval by a supervisor, completed reports shall be delivered to the Records Section. If citations have been issued, they will be stapled to the corresponding Accident Report. **THE OFFICER MUST TURN IN ALL ACCIDENT REPORTS BEFORE THE OFFICER GOES OFF DUTY.** NOTE: If a supervisor's printed last and badge number are not on the report, the Records Section will send the report back to the appropriate District/Bureau commander for approval.
- (6) All suspects arrested for traffic charges such as DUI or hit-and-run shall be taken to the Traffic Investigations Bureau with the appropriate reports. See OMS 204.05.
- (7) Accidents involving snowmobiles:
- a. The operator or owner of any snowmobile involved in an accident resulting in death, injury or property damage is required to notify the law enforcement agency having jurisdiction. C.R.S. §33-14-115.
 - b. The operator or owner of the snowmobile is further required to report the accident, within forty-eight (48) hours, to the Denver Office of the Colorado Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation on a report form furnished by the Division. Officers will advise such owner or operator that they are required to report the accident to the Division. Supplies of the "Snowmobile Notice of Accident" report will be maintained in the Traffic Investigations Bureau.
 - c. In the event a police report is generated by members of the department (Motor Vehicle Accident Report or Non-Traffic Accident Report), a copy of the completed report will be sent to the office of the Division Chief of Special Operations. That copy will then be forwarded to the Colorado Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation.
- (8) Accidents Involving Railway Trains and R.T.D. Light Rail.
- a. Traffic accidents involving a train or a light rail train and a motor vehicle will be investigated and reported as a motor vehicle accident.
 - b. Collisions involving a train or light rail train and a bicycle or pedestrian will be investigated and reported as a non-traffic accident.

203.03 Fatal and Serious Bodily Injury Accidents

- (1) The investigation of a fatal accident follows the same procedure as an ordinary traffic accident, except that an Offense/Incident Report must be made in addition to the Accident Report. Great care should be exercised in preserving all physical evidence. Upon an officers' arrival at the scene of a fatal accident, or one in which serious injuries have occurred the dispatcher shall immediately be notified to contact the Traffic Investigations Bureau detectives.
- a. A Traffic Investigations Bureau detective or supervisor will contact the on-scene officer and based upon the information obtained one of the following will take place:
 1. The officer will be instructed to handle the accident, or
 2. The officer will be requested to hold the scene until TIB personnel can respond to the hospital and follow up on the victim's condition, or

3. The officer will be requested to hold the scene and TIB personnel will respond to the scene and to assume control of the accident.
 - b. The following are some of the criteria used by TIB personnel in determining when they will respond to a scene:
 1. Fatality to anyone involved in the accident
 2. Serious Bodily Injury to anyone involved in the accident
 - a. Serious Bodily Injuries include:
 1. An injury with a substantial risk of death, or
 2. A substantial risk of serious, permanent disfigurement, or
 3. A substantial risk of protracted loss or impairment of the function of any body part or organ of the body, or
 4. Severe lacerations, or
 5. Fractured or broken bones (except for bones of the finger, hand, wrist, ankle, or foot), or
 6. Distorted limbs, or
 7. Internal injuries, or
 8. Burns of the second or third degree
 3. If the victim is unconscious or unresponsive
 4. The age of the victim
 5. The medical history of the victim, if known
- (2) At the scene of a traffic accident involving death or serious injury, the Traffic Investigations detective or ranking officer from the Traffic Investigations Bureau is in complete charge of the investigation, regardless of the rank of officers present from other divisions or bureaus.
 - (3) All witnesses will be asked to make written statements in their own handwriting. Detectives will review these statements and, if information regarding cause of the accident is missing, ask the witnesses to include their observations concerning the missing information in their statement before releasing them.
 - (4) Officers shall not search the body of a deceased person under any circumstances. The Medical Examiner will make the search. If the deceased has expressed a desire to donate all or part of their body to medical research; the Coroner's Office will make the necessary notifications after determining the true identity of the deceased. Criminal investigation and prosecutions will not be hampered by the donation.
 - (5) Denver Health Medical Center paramedics may make a determination of death. At the direction of the Traffic Investigations Bureau detectives paramedics may remove the body and deliver it to the Morgue at DHMC.
 - (6) The Traffic Investigations detective, their supervisory or command officers are authorized to direct the removal of a body or bodies from the scene of a fatal automobile accident by DHMC Ambulance or other City contracted ambulance prior to the arrival of the Medical Examiner when it is apparent that the death was caused by the automobile accident and there is no evidence which may tend to indicate foul play or that death was caused by some other agent. The exception is the accident caused by an apparent heart attack suffered by the driver.
 - (7) The Traffic Investigations detective, prior to authorizing removal will notify the Medical Examiner of this action. The detective will respond to the Morgue as quickly as possible to confer with the Medical Examiner to determine identification and complete the investigation.
 - (8) The Denver Health Medical Center paramedics will not remove any deceased person in the same ambulance with injured parties. Injured persons are to be transported first and another ambulance sent for the deceased.
 - (9) When several persons are injured, officers requesting ambulances will use care in determining how many ambulances will be needed. Officers are requested to attempt to determine if injured persons are stretcher cases or are sit up cases and indicate this to the dispatcher.

- (10) In order to assist in positively identifying the deceased and to maintain the chain of evidence, the Traffic Investigations Bureau detective at the scene will obtain the right index fingerprint of the deceased before the body is removed.
- (11) The Traffic Investigations Bureau detective assigned the fatal accident investigation will ensure that the State of Colorado Fatal Traffic Accident Supplemental report (DR 2447A) is completed and forwarded to the State.

203.04 Hit and Run Accident Investigation

- (1) Scene Investigation:
 - a. If possible, officers shall immediately obtain and broadcast a description of the suspect vehicle and its occupant(s).
 - b. Officers shall interview witnesses, concentrating on those who can identify the driver and vehicle, and who can relate the facts of the accident.
 - c. The scene shall be examined for physical evidence.
 - d. The neighborhood shall be canvassed for additional witnesses.
 - e. If a license plate number for the suspect vehicle is obtained, the plate number and listing should be documented on the Traffic Case Summary, DPD 347, but not on the Accident Report.
 - f. Officers shall make every reasonable effort to locate the suspect vehicle.
 - g. In cases where the driver has fled on foot and left the vehicle at the scene, complete the description of the vehicle in the appropriate spaces on the incident report form.
- (2) Suspect Vehicles:
Officers who observe a vehicle which they suspect might have been involved in a Hit and Run accident shall ascertain whether the vehicle is currently wanted. If not, a Damaged Car Memo, DPD 244, shall be completed and forwarded to the Traffic Investigations Bureau.
- (3) Recovered or Impounded Vehicles:
Officers shall complete a Damaged Car Memo, DPD 244, for any vehicle that is recovered or impounded which appears to have fresh damage.
- (4) Protection of Evidence:
If a vehicle being impounded for Hit and Run requires laboratory examination, the Crime Laboratory will be summoned to the scene. If Crime Lab personnel are unable to respond, the tow driver shall be advised to protect the vehicle so that evidence will not be damaged. The tow slip, DPD 224, shall be marked "Hold for Prints". This information will be noted in the Traffic Case Summary.
- (5) Processing of Evidence:
 - a. All evidence found at the scene of a Hit and Run Accident shall be properly marked and identified, then taken to the Property Bureau and processed according to the procedures established in OMS 106.02(1)a. The fact that evidence was placed in the Property Bureau, including the Invoice Number, will be noted in the Traffic Case Summary.
 - b. In serious Hit and Run Auto-Pedestrian Accidents, Traffic Investigations Bureau detectives shall be notified. The victim's clothing shall be retained and processed as evidence.
- (6) Arrest of Violator:
 - a. When suspected hit and run drivers are apprehended, they shall be taken to the Traffic Investigations Bureau prior to being charged or jailed. If the suspects are combative, they shall be placed in the holding cell in the D.U.I. room on B-1. At no time shall any suspect be left unattended in the holding cell. The investigator shall be notified of the suspect's location and demeanor.
 - b. The completed accident report will include the identity of the suspect driver and suspect vehicle description prior to obtaining a case number. A Traffic Case Summary, DPD 347, with details of the investigation and arrest will be completed and attached to the original accident report.
- (7) Early Case Closure - Hit and Run

- a. Based on their investigation, the investigating officer shall determine if there is sufficient information and evidence to file charges against an identifiable suspect. The investigating officer must first thoroughly check the accident scene and surrounding area and contact neighbors for possible information.
- b. If the investigating officer determines there is insufficient evidence forthcoming to file charges, the officer will inform the complainant that the report will be filed without further action, unless evidence becomes available at a later date. The officer will give the complainant a Citizen Notification Card, DPD 233A, instructing the complainant to contact the Traffic Investigations Bureau in the event the complainant obtains additional information.
- c. The officer will then complete the accident report, DPD 447HR, and after describing the accident, he will write in the body of the report, "This report will be carried as closed unless additional information is obtained." All sections on the back of the accident report must be completed. The officer will not mark the incomplete box on the accident report.
- d. The report will be turned in for supervisory approval and forwarded to Records Section for filing.
- e. The officer will not fill out a traffic case summary.

203.05 Reporting Accidents Involving Hit and Run, DUI, or Drivers' License Restrictions

Investigating and reporting procedures for such accidents are the same as outlined in the general accident procedures with these modifications:

- (1) DUI cases require a Sobriety Examination Report, DPD 243, and a Miranda Advisement, DPD 369. These reports are in the DUI packet in the DUI Room. Procedures to follow from this point are outlined in OMS 204.02.
- (2) Hit and Run investigations require that a Traffic Case Summary, DPD 347, be prepared. If an arrest is made, this report and the Accident Report must be hand-carried to the TIB with the prisoner.
- (3) Accidents involving persons operating motor vehicles in violation of license restraints, such as Driving under Suspension, Denial, Revocation, or Cancellation will be handled as outlined in OMS 204.10.

203.06 Private Property Accidents (also see OMS 102.05 (17)c)

- (1) If necessary, in compliance with OMS 102.05 (17) c, the Communications Bureau will dispatch an officer.
- (2) An Accident Report shall be made by each officer dispatched to the scene of a private property accident. When an officer observes an accident or is notified of an accident by any means, they will complete the necessary reports whenever there is an injury, fatality, hit and run, or alcohol involvement is indicated.
- (3) In addition to the State statutes regarding hit and run, and D.U.I. cases a Denver police officer may cite the violators involved in private property accidents with violating the following ordinances:
 - a. Reckless Driving - RMC 54 -126
 - b. Drag Racing - RMC 54 – 159
 - c. Careless Driving - RMC 54-158 (*should be included with the charge of Drag Racing)
 - d. Violations of any other traffic ordinance, such as unsafe backing or speeding, must be charged only as careless driving. The listed ordinances are the only ordinances interpreted as being applicable to private property accidents.
- (4) The rules of issuing traffic citations on private property are the same as those applying to City property. The violations must either be witnessed by the officer or, in the case of an accident; the officer must have probable cause to believe the violation did in fact occur.

203.07 Counter Reports

- (1) A counter report is advisable if there has been a time delay in reporting.]

- (2) A counter report or on-line report will **NOT** be made for any Hit and Run traffic accident.
- (3) The District Attorney will not accept cases where an officer did not visit the scene of the accident to establish venue. This also pertains to hit and run private property accidents when the person was advised to return to the scene of the accident.
- (4) All officers and district station clerks are to inform the citizen that NO further action will be undertaken when a counter report has been filed.
- (5) These reports are to be identified by the words "Counter Report", with the date and time marked in the lower right portion of the Accident Report. The precinct number of occurrence shall also be entered in the proper box.
- (6) Officers taking or assisting in completing counter reports shall not sign the accident report form.
- (7) All counter reports will be stamped with the date and time the report was made at the station. When a citizen takes the report from the station to complete, the officer will stamp the report with the date and the time the report was given to the citizen. This procedure is necessary to assist in hit and run investigations.
- (8) Counter reports are confidential and will not be released at a later date. Citizens should be advised to make a copy for their records when they make the report.
- (9) Traffic accidents may be too numerous for reasonable response in inclement weather. The station clerk or an officer at the district station shall assist citizens in making an accident report at the substation or at headquarters without returning to the accident scene. Per OMS 102.05 (17) d. The report is to be stamped "Counter Report" and no further action taken.
- (10) Any time that a counter report for an automobile accident would be indicated or recommended it shall be the policy of the police department to also offer the option of an internet report. Internet reports may be accessed via the World Wide Web at <http://www.denvergov.org/Police>. Counter reports of internet reporting shall not be considered a substitute, when the Operations Manual Policy and Procedure mandates or recommends a police response. Internet reporting is strictly an option and not an alternative for those situations where citizens prefer to appear in person to complete a counter report. Officers will not discourage citizens from appearing at a police facility to complete an accident counter report.

203.08 Accidents Involving Police Equipment and Personnel

- (1) When a vehicle assigned to the Denver Police Department is involved in a traffic accident, the report will be classified as: "Police Equipment" accident report.
 - a. A traffic accident report shall not be made if a police vehicle equipped with push bumpers causes unintentional damage to a disabled vehicle being pushed. A supervisor shall respond to the scene to assess the damage. The involved officer will write a letter explaining the circumstances of the damage and forward it through the chain of command to the Civil Liability Bureau.
 - b. A traffic accident report shall be made if any damage or injury results from a collision involving a disabled vehicle being pushed by a police unit equipped with push bumpers and a person or other object. See OMS 203.02 (10).
- (2) All accidents involving police equipment shall be reported and investigated.
 - a. Officers involved in motor vehicle accidents while driving police equipment shall remain at the scene or within close proximity until the arrival of investigation officers, unless exigent circumstances prevent compliance with this section. The vehicles involved in the accident will not be moved unless they present a safety hazard or there is an exigent reason.
 - b. A supervisor will respond to the scene to ensure proper investigation procedures are followed and required notifications are made. The involved officer's supervisor will also respond, when practical.
 - c. The Commander of the Traffic Investigations Bureau (T.I.B.) shall be notified of ALL police equipment accidents. The State of Colorado Traffic Accident Report, form (DR2447), and all accompanying paperwork will be forwarded to the Commander of T.I.B. See OMS 203.08 (6).

- d. District/Bureau commanders or their designee will ensure that within three (3) business days of an accident involving a police vehicle, the vehicle is taken to the Police Garage Facility for the completion of an inspection outlining necessary repairs. This written repair/damage estimate including the estimated cost of repairs will be immediately forwarded by the Police Garage to the Risk Management Bureau for insurance purposes.
- (3) Accident reports involving police equipment shall be complete.
- a. Police equipment reports shall contain vehicle unit numbers and license plate numbers.
 - b. Officer's home address shall be shown as the address of the station they are assigned to.
 - c. Officer's home phone numbers shall not be shown on the report.
 - d. The report shall include the other person's insurance company and policy number when available
 - e. Insurance coverage for the police vehicle will be shown in the insurance information blocks as: "A Government Vehicle, self insured municipality". This is a mandatory entry to comply with the Colorado Financial Responsibility Law. See OMS 208.08 (12).
 - f. All police equipment accidents will have "DPD" entered in the agency code box on the accident report.
- (4) Traffic charges will be placed at the time of the investigation under the following circumstances:
- a. The other driver is obviously in violation of the law. Charges are subject to the approval of the officer in charge of the investigation.
 - b. The driver of the police equipment is a CSA employee and is obviously in violation of the law.
- (5) Traffic Investigations Bureau detectives will respond to all police equipment accidents where damage, injury or death occurs as a result of the accident. Police equipment accidents involving fixed objects or single vehicle accidents with no injuries will be handled by the officer's supervisor.
- a. The Traffic Investigations Bureau detective or ranking officer from the Traffic Investigations Bureau is in complete charge of the investigation, regardless of the rank of officers present from other divisions or bureaus. The TIB detective will advise the involved officer's supervisor that the initial investigation indicates the officer may be at fault or is not at fault in the accident in accordance with procedures for Post Accident Testing.
 - b. Traffic Investigations Bureau detectives will process the scene in accordance with bureau procedures, including measurements, photographs, statements and completing the appropriate sections of the Police Vehicle Accident Data Sheet, DPD 299.
- (6) Command or supervisory personnel have the following responsibilities when responding to a fixed object or single vehicle accident:
- a. Determine if Traffic Investigations Bureau detectives are required. If supervisors or command officers at the scene of an accident deem it necessary for Traffic Investigations detectives to respond, they will notify T.I.B. and a detective will respond.
 - b. Supervise the accident investigation and approve the accident report. Determine if the criteria for Post Accident Testing (XO94) exists and if so, process the officer through the testing process in accordance with XO94. See OMS 503.01(16).
 - c. Determine appropriate charges in accordance with paragraph (4) of this section.
 - d. Complete the first section of the Police Vehicle Accident Data Sheet, DPD 299, including the XO94 Criteria box.
 - e. Take photographs pictures of the damaged vehicles and / or property.
 - f. Ensure that statements are taken from all drivers and witnesses.
 - g. Send the entire package containing all of the original documents, to include: the accident report, data sheet, statements, photos and other pertinent documents (i.e. DUI) to the Commander of the Traffic Investigations Bureau. Forward copies to the officer's chain of command.
- (7) Traffic Investigations Bureau detectives will not respond to the following police equipment accidents:

- a. Auto – Fixed objects
- b. One car accidents
- c. Unexplained minor damage
- d. Traffic accidents involving other City agency vehicles unless there are serious injuries or death involved, or extenuating circumstances that indicate photos and measurements are to be taken.
- e. Accidents occurring during a driver's training exercise, within the area designated as a driver's training facility, unless there are serious injuries or death involved, or other extenuating circumstances that indicate photos and measurements be taken. A non-Traffic Accident Report will be prepared. Injuries will be reported on a Work Injury Report, ADM – 4. These reports will be forwarded to the Police Garage. **A Colorado Traffic Accident Report (DR 2447) will not be completed.** Criteria for Post Accident Testing in accordance with XO 94 must be considered and testing completed if the criteria are met.

(8) Traffic accidents occurring outside the city limits of Denver involving on duty officers.

- a. On duty officers involved in traffic accidents outside the City limits, shall notify the local law enforcement agency and request an investigation be completed for the incident. In addition, officers shall notify the Communications Bureau as soon as possible. This applies whether the vehicle is the property of the city, state, federal government, privately owned, rented or leased, provided that the vehicle is being used by the officer while on duty in an official capacity.
- b. Discretionary authority to send Traffic Investigations Bureau detectives to the scene of a police equipment accident outside the City limits lies with a supervisor, or the Commander of the Traffic Investigations Bureau.
- c. Officers shall return to their offices and report the accident to their supervisory or command officers as soon as possible. In the event Traffic Investigations Bureau detectives did not respond to the accident scene, the supervisory or command officer will notify TIB of the accident.
- d. It will be the responsibility of the Traffic Investigations Bureau detectives to request copies of all necessary reports from the law enforcement agency investigating the incident.

(9) Accidents occurring in Denver involving outside police agencies.

- a. When outside police agency vehicles and personnel are involved in traffic accidents while on emergency runs within the City and County of Denver, the Traffic Investigations Bureau will be notified and will respond for photographs and follow-up investigation.

If a driver of a non-police vehicle is obviously in violation of the law, charges will be placed at the scene, subject to the approval of the Traffic Investigations Bureau detective. In all other cases, the report will be presented to the City Attorney's Office by the Traffic Investigations detective for determination of appropriate charges.
- b. When the outside police agency's vehicle was NOT on an emergency run, the investigation and report shall be completed by uniformed officers. Traffic Investigations detectives will not respond to the scene unless assistance is requested. If a driver of a non-police vehicle is obviously in violation of the law, charges will be placed at the scene. All other reports will be marked "INC" in the Agency Code box and sent to the Traffic Investigations Bureau. Traffic Investigations Bureau detectives will then present the reports to the City Attorney's Office for determination of appropriate charges.

(10) When an off duty Denver Police officer, driving his private vehicle is involved in a traffic accident occurring within the City limits, and the State's minimum damage criteria is met, and at least one of the criteria in OMS 203.02 (1) is present, the officer shall notify the dispatcher and request that an on duty officer be sent to the scene to review the circumstances and determine appropriate charges.

(11) The Colorado Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) requires municipalities and other governmental entities to certify financial responsibility.

- a. This is accomplished by complying with the requirement contained in OMS 203.08 (3) e. Insurance coverage will be shown in the insurance information blocks on the Traffic Accident Report (DR2447). Write in: "A Government Vehicle, self insured municipality". This is a mandatory entry on all accident reports involving police equipment.

- b. In the event insurance information is omitted from the Traffic Accident Report the officer involved or their supervisor will be required to complete a DR2301. See OMS 109.02 (3).
1. The State of Colorado Report of Motor Vehicle Accident (DR2301) is mostly self explanatory and requests much of the same information that is on the Traffic Accident Report (DR2447).
 2. In section #1, entitled: Your Information, complete all blocks in their entirety. The officer's bureau or district address is acceptable. In the block asking for the owner's name, write in "City and County of Denver", 303 E. Colfax #675, Denver, Colorado, 80204.
 3. In the block below section #1, next to: self insured, write in: "City and County of Denver".
 4. In the Insurance section, complete the name of the policy holder as: "Government Vehicle owned by the City and County of Denver, a self insured municipality"
- c. Complete the other party's and/or the property owner information, which ever applies.
- d. Failure to comply with this section will generate a warning letter from the DMV to the officer listed as the driver on the accident report. This warning letter must not be ignored.
- e. If a warning letter is received, answer the questions asked and return the letter to the DMV. In response to the question concerning the insurance carrier, write in: "Government Vehicle owned by the City and County of Denver, a self –insured municipality" see C.R.S. §42-7-302. Disregard policy numbers and effective dates.
- f. Failure to comply with these reporting requirements may ultimately cause a suspension of the officer's driver's license.
- (12) Traffic Investigations Bureau detectives will collect information stored in the Sensing and Diagnostic Module using the Crash Data Retrieval tool (CDR) in police vehicles that are equipped with this feature and when the accident consist of any of the following:
- a. May have been the fault of the employee and the accident involves a fatality.
 - b. May have been the fault of the employee and any individual was injured severely enough to receive medical treatment immediately away from the scene of the accident.
 - c. May have been the fault of the employee and the accident resulted in disabling damage to any vehicle or equipment; (Note: "disabling damage" for a vehicle accident is defined as precluding the departure of the vehicle from the scene of an accident in its usual manner).
 - d. The investigator suspects the involved officer has violated any department policy related to driving or operating the police vehicle, including any suspected violation of traffic laws.
 - e. The airbag in the police vehicle was deployed.
 - f. A current list of CDR equipped vehicles will be maintained in the Traffic Investigations Bureau sergeant's office. If the police equipment is on the list, detectives who are trained in the operation of CDR will respond to the scene and collect the stored information. If a trained detective is not available or it cannot be determined if the police vehicle is on the CDR list, the police vehicle will be towed to the car pound and the data will be recovered as soon as it is practical.
 - g. In order to prevent unnecessary inconvenience to citizens, any non-police vehicle involved will be subject to CDR download only when the criteria of (12) a, b, or c of this section are met. If the investigator determines that the citizen is at fault under those same conditions, the vehicle will be towed to the pound and a warrant will be secured.
 - h. In order to best preserve the information that is written to the SDM certain procedures must be followed.
 1. The vehicle ignition switch will be turned to the off position before it is loaded onto a tow truck, which will prevent contamination of the preserved information. This step will be completed just prior to towing. Do not alter the condition of the ignition switch until after investigators have inspected the vehicle. In cases where the vehicle is drivable, do not allow the tow driver to start or drive the vehicle to facilitate the tow. The ignition key should accompany the vehicle to the car pound.

2. Factory certified investigators will download the information from the SDM and complete a written report of their findings. This report will be included with the case information that is forwarded to the Commander of the Traffic Investigations Bureau.

203.09 Accident Review/Pursuit Review

- (1) All police vehicle accidents, pursuits, incidents of eluding, and accidents that may have met the criteria for Post Accident Testing as specified in Mayor's Executive Order 94, but not test was conducted shall be reviewed by the Commander of the officer(s) involved according to the procedures established in this section. See OMS 203.08(2).
- (2) Accident Review Procedures.
 - a. Responsibilities of the Traffic Investigations Bureau Commander (TIB):
 1. Compile a case file containing all reports, statements and other documents relating to the accident, including Police Vehicle Data Sheet, and Post Accident Drug and Alcohol Testing, DPD 667, if XO 94 criteria box is checked "yes" on data sheet. If a review of the Accident Data Sheet, DPD 299, indicates the criteria for post accident testing may have existed, but no test was completed, the accident review will include the request for XO94 procedures.
 2. Maintain a case numbering and data base record system for police fleet accidents. Review the database quarterly and prepare a quarterly report for the Chief of Police to include; accident violations, accident patterns, suggestions for training and other information as requested.
 3. Assure that all documents, statements and reports are identified with the case number assigned to that accident.
 4. Transmit a copy of the complete case file to the appropriate commanding officer.
 5. Maintain a filing system for the original Accident Case file.
 6. Maintain a case tracking system utilizing the Accident Case Number.
 7. Maintain the Officers Driver History File and update officer's driving record.
 8. Upon receipt of a case, TIB will log the case in and send the case to the appropriate Commander for review and appropriate action. The case file shall include a copy of the officers Drivers History Record.
 9. TIB personnel shall monitor the progress of each accident case and ensure its timely completion.
 - b. Responsibilities of the Internal Affairs Bureau Commander (IAB):
 1. Assign an IAB case number to those cases found preventable by the officer's commander.
 2. Process those accidents found preventable in accordance with standard IAB complaint procedures. Process the XO94 cases in accordance with standard IAB complaint procedures.
 3. Send a copy of the completed Police Vehicle Data Sheet, DPD 299, to the Traffic Investigations Bureau to update the Police Fleet Accident Data File.
 4. IAB personnel and the Police Academy will coordinate the scheduling of Remedial Driver Training and monitor the attendance and progress of the officers ordered to attend according to the following directions:
 5. IAB will immediately notify the Academy of the need to send an officer through Remedial Drivers Training.
 6. IAB will maintain the letters of notification and the letter indicating completion of the course in the officer's file.
 - c. Police Academy Responsibilities:

1. The Academy will schedule the remedial driver training within thirty (30) days from the time that they are notified by IAB.
 2. The Academy will send a letter notifying IAB, the officer, and the officer's command of the training date.
 3. After the training is complete the Academy will send a letter to IAB indicating that the training was completed. If an officer fails to appear on the scheduled date of training IAB will be notified.
 4. The academy will maintain training records on remedial driving classes indicating who provided the training, what the training consisted of, and how the officer performed.
 5. IAB will maintain in the officer's file, the letters of notification and the letter indicating completion of the course.
- d. Responsibilities of Commanders:
1. The Commander of personnel involved in a police fleet traffic accident, or his designee, will, after thoroughly reviewing the case file, classify the accident as preventable or not preventable.
 - a. Preventable: Accident was principally caused by driving actions in violation of traffic laws and/or department policy or contributed to by poor defensive driving practices.
 - b. Non-preventable: Unavoidable accident, proper defensive techniques were practiced.
 2. If the accident is found to be preventable, the Commander shall take into consideration the severity of the accident (severity of injuries and damage) when assessing preventable points: The Commander will then determine the primary cause, if applicable and relevant to the accident being reviewed.
 3. When the consideration of the accident is complete, the Commander shall report his findings on the Police Vehicle Accident Data Sheet, DPD 299, and shall make the following point assessment:
 - a. Accident Classification
 Non-Preventable - 0 points
 Preventable - 0 to 5 points, in addition to any points assessed for the primary cause, taking into consideration mitigating and/or aggravating circumstances surrounding the accident.
 - b. Primary Cause
 Violation of Department Emergency Driving Policy - 6 points. See OMS 112.08. Traffic violations will be assessed that number of points consistent with the penalty point schedule in state statute and used by the State Motor Vehicle Division to assess points against a driving record.
 FOR EXAMPLE:
 Reckless Driving - 8 points Careless Driving - 4 points Unlawful Backing, etc. - 2 points
 4. If the accident has been found to be non-preventable, the Commander will forward the completed DPD 299 through the chain of command to the Internal Affairs Bureau.
 5. If the accident is found to be preventable the Commander will:
 - a. Obtain an IAB case number.
 - b. Proceed in accordance with the provisions contained in OMS 503.02 except those provisions which by their very nature may have no application.
 - c. Check the involved officer's prior department driving record and apply the points assigned in the current accident case to those points accumulated by the officer over the previous two-year period (24 months).

- d. Apply this point total to the Departmental Accident Point classification:
 - 1-4 points: Oral Reprimand
 - 5-9 points: Written Reprimand
 - 10-15 points: A fine of one to five days
 - 16-20 points: Suspension from three to ten days without pay and Remedial Driver's Training.
 - 21 or more points: Suspension for a minimum of five days without pay or more stringent action as appropriate, and Remedial Driver's Training. Commanders may, at any time, recommend Remedial Driver's Training in addition to any other disciplinary recommendation prescribed.
- e. Officers, who have been involved in two (2) or more preventable accidents within the previous two-year period (24 months), shall be required to attend remedial training. However, Commanders may, at any time, recommend Remedial Driver's Training in addition to any other disciplinary recommendation prescribed.
- f. The Commander shall review all the pertinent facts and make a penalty recommendation on DPD 299. Penalties specified in the Accident Point Classification table shall be the minimum penalties recommended. Flagrant violations, extreme damage and/or injuries may result in more severe disciplinary recommendations.
- g. Driving schools shall be provided by the department and may be either a defensive driving course or an emergency driving and maneuvering course.
- h. Accidents involving Career Service employees will be reviewed in the same manner as Civil Service employees. Accidents found to be preventable will be processed according to Career Service Authority Rules and Regulations.

(3) Pursuit Review/Eluding

- a. All pursuits and eluding incidents will be subject to a review process that will be conducted by the Bureau/District Commander, or his designee, of the officer(s) involved in the pursuit.
- b. The process will be initiated when the pursuit manager completes a Vehicular Pursuit Report, DPD 453, or the officer completes an Eluding, No Pursuit Report, DPD 616. The original copy of either report, any pertinent statements, and copies of any other related reports shall be forwarded to the Commander of the Traffic Investigations Bureau. TIB will have the responsibility of compiling a case file that will include a copy of the radio tape for all pursuits. A copy of the case file will be forwarded to the Internal Affairs Bureau where it will be logged in and sent to the Bureau/District Commander of the officer(s) involved.
 - 1. The Traffic Investigations Bureau will be responsible for assigning a sequential pursuit case number to each case and will track all appropriate statistics concerning police pursuits.
 - 2. All original documents will be maintained on file in TIB.
- c. The Bureau/District Commander will review the pursuit or eluding case file documents including the tape recorded radio transmission of the pursuit.
- d. At the completion of the Commander's review, the report will conclude with classification into one of the following:
 - 1. IN POLICY - The pursuit was conducted in compliance with department policies and procedures.
 - 2. FURTHER INVESTIGATION RECOMMENDED - A possible violation of department policy or procedure has been detected by the Bureau/District Commander.
- e. The Bureau/District Commander will conduct any further investigation necessary and forward the pursuit case file with his Findings and Recommendations through the chain of command to the Chief of Police via the Internal Affairs Bureau:

1. In all cases in which the Bureau/District Commander's conclusion is a possible violation and FURTHER INVESTIGATION RECOMMENDED, the Internal Affairs Bureau will assign an IAB complaint log number to the case and process it in accordance with standard Internal Affairs Bureau complaint procedures. See OMS 503.02.
 2. In all cases in which the pursuit is deemed to be within policy, the case will be returned to IAB with finding and IAB will close the case.
- (4) The Chief of Police shall have final departmental authority and responsibility for disciplinary and corrective action. See Sections C5.73-1 and C5.73-2 of the Denver City Charter.

203.10 Accidents Involving Fire Equipment, Ambulances, and other City Vehicles

- (1) Traffic Investigations Bureau detectives will not respond to minor injury or property damage only accidents involving Denver Fire Department equipment, Denver Health Medical Center ambulances, Parking Control vehicles, Sheriff vehicles, District Attorney vehicles, County Court Marshal vehicles, or Public Works vehicles involved in snow removal, street maintenance or signal light repair, unless requested by a supervisory officer at the scene. Traffic Investigations Bureau detectives will respond and assist the investigating officer with measurements and photographs, if necessary, and will only assume responsibility for the investigation if it is determined to meet the criteria specified in OMS 203.03(1).
- (2) Accidents involving City owned vehicles shall be handled in accordance with OMS 203.00, subject to the following conditions:
 - a. If a driver of a privately owned vehicle is involved in an accident with a City owned vehicle and is at fault, appropriate charges will be placed by the investigating officer at the time of the report.
 - b. Traffic Investigations Bureau detectives will respond to all accidents involving any Denver Fire Department vehicle, Denver Health Medical Center ambulance, or any private ambulance, using emergency equipment, except in the following situations:
 1. Auto-Fixed Objects.
 2. One-car Accidents.
 3. Unexplained minor damage.
 - c. If a Denver Fire Fighter operating a Denver Fire Department vehicle is involved in a minor injury or property damage only accident (including damage to another vehicle), and the Fire Fighter is at fault or is the cause of the accident, an accident report will be made. The investigating officer will mark the report "INC-FIRE" and will write "Charges Pending" in the "Primary Violation" box. The investigating officer is not required to complete a Traffic Case Summary in this instance but shall indicate in the narrative section that the accident involved a Denver Fire Department vehicle. The report will be turned in for approval and sent to the Records Section via Inter-Departmental mail.
 - d. In all cases when the driver on any other City owned vehicle is at fault or is the cause of an accident, the investigating officer will mark the report "INC" in the Agency Code box, and will write "Charges Pending" in the "Primary Violation" box. The investigating officer is not required to complete a Traffic Case Summary in this instance. The report will be turned in for approval and sent to the Records Section via Inter-Departmental mail. Records Section personnel will process the report like any other incomplete report and forward copies to TIB. Traffic Investigations Bureau detectives will present the case to the City Attorney's Office for determination of appropriate charges.
 - e. When any City owned vehicle is identified as the suspect vehicle in a hit and run accident, the reporting officer shall notify TIB immediately. The Commander of the Traffic Investigations Bureau or his designee shall determine if detectives will respond to assist with the investigation. In all instances where the Traffic Investigations Bureau detectives do not respond, the completed accident report and traffic case summary shall be hand carried to the TIB for processing.

1. When the suspect vehicle belongs to the Denver Police Department, the Commander of the Traffic Investigations Bureau or his designee shall notify IAB as soon as practical.

f. Also see OMS 203.02(1) c. and g.

203.11 Jurisdictional Disputes Re: Accidents

(1) When an accident occurs on or near a Denver City and County boundary line, the responsibility to investigate and report the accident rests with the police agency having jurisdiction where the first harmful event occurs.

a. The first harmful event is defined as the first point of injury or damage in the sequence of events in a traffic accident. A traffic violation is not, in and of itself, considered to be a harmful event.

b. Appropriate traffic charges will be placed at the scene.

(2) When a jurisdictional dispute arises at the scene of an accident, on or near a Denver boundary line, which cannot be resolved by the Denver Police Department officers and other police agencies at the scene, and it appears a report will not be made by any other agency, the accident report will be made by the Denver Police officer and appropriate traffic charges will be placed at the scene.

203.12 Accidents Involving Utility Installations

(1) Officers shall treat damage to installations located on City property as a criminal incident, if evidence at the scene indicates malicious intent. Officers shall follow the prescribed procedures of the applicable City Ordinance or State Statute violation. Such installations shall include those owned or operated by the Public Service Company, Mountain States Telephone Company, Regional Transportation District, Western Union, Denver Water Board or any City agency, as well as such objects as trees, shrubs, etc.

(2) Reporting officers shall refrain from including personal opinion statements regarding visibility of lights, approval of barricades or any feature of the installation, but shall accurately describe such scenes as observed by them upon arrival. Statements of principals or witnesses should be included, as in all accidents.