

208.00 - FREEWAY TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS**208.01 General Procedures - Freeway Accidents**

- (1) Respond to the scene as soon as possible. If you are not close, request the dispatcher to send another car that may be in the vicinity. Avoid using the red light and siren unless necessary for personal safety.
- (2) Request immediate assistance as need determines.
- (3) The initial function of a police officer at the scene of an accident is to determine injuries, effect rescue, and to summon an ambulance if necessary. Give concise instructions for the best route to reach the scene if possible. Wreckers and ambulances should be promptly called to the scene when needed.
 - a. The most critical phase of accident investigation on the freeway is to minimize immediate hazards by the prompt removal of vehicles and other obstructions from the roadway.
 - b. Officers may request a contract tow via police radio for any hazards on the freeway system.]
 - c. If it can be accomplished safely, determine the POI and record other significant evidence. Vehicles and other obstructions should be removed from the traveled portion of the roadway as soon as possible.
 - d. Officers shall reference on accident reports the location of all accidents on the freeways in accordance with the procedures outlined in the State of Colorado Investigating Officer's Traffic Accident Reporting Manual.]
 - e. The blocking of traffic for taking of photographs shall be limited to the more serious accidents.
 - f. A body should not be removed from an accident on the freeway until the Medical Examiner has given consent, except under circumstances outlined in OMS 203.03(6).
- (4) Summon the Fire Department to flush gasoline or other flammable liquids from the freeway, if in the officer's discretion there is quantity enough to present a hazard. Motor oil and fuel oil should be sanded. Flushing with water will not remove this hazard. Notify the dispatcher to request sand from the State Department of Highways.]
- (5) If more debris is spilled on the freeway than normal facilities can handle, assistance shall be requested from the State Highway Maintenance Division. Specify the type and amount of equipment needed.]
- (6) Drivers of wreckers, if their services are required, are responsible to promptly and satisfactorily clean the accident scene. Any person who removes a wrecked vehicle from the freeway must clear all the debris.]
- (7) Completing the accident report on the freeway shall be instituted only after the scene has been made safe from further accidents. Vehicles and drivers should be moved to a safe area before the report is written.
- (8) If the first car arriving at the scene of an accident does not have reporting responsibility and if the accident is relatively minor and movable, the officer should note the POI, if it can be accomplished safely, and cause the involved vehicles to be removed from the roadway to a safe area. This information should be given to the officer having reporting responsibility.
- (9) Isolation of a lane of traffic or of the entire freeway should be resorted to only if immediate hazards warrant.]
 - a. Use extreme caution in slowing or stopping traffic.
 - b. The accident scene must be neutralized as soon as possible, both for the benefit of those involved in the accident and for those freeway users who may be approaching the scene.]
 - c. A police unit with all warning equipment should be utilized at accident scenes, especially at night.
 - d. Fuses in sufficient quantity should be utilized, particularly at night to alert approaching traffic of any hazard at the scene.
 1. Fuses should be employed, if possible, at a point well in advance of where traffic begins to form single lanes when approaching on accident scene.
 2. Highway cars normally carry a supply of fuses.

208.02 Other Freeway Procedures

- (1) When stopping another vehicle, inspecting an unattended vehicle, or rendering assistance to a disabled motorist, the patrol vehicle should be parked well to the rear of the other vehicle with emergency light in operation and, if possible, all four wheels of the patrol vehicle should be off the traveled portion of the roadway.
- (2) When on routine patrol, the patrol vehicle should be operated at a legal speed. If the patrol must be at less than a normal speed and traffic tends to "build up" behind the patrol vehicle, the officer should pull over, stop, and let the traffic pass; accelerate their speed to a point nearer or slightly above the maximum; or wave the following vehicles around the patrol vehicle.
- (3) Officers should stop and investigate every vehicle which is stopped on the freeway, if possible, when not on other assignment.
- (4) Officers will consider any pedestrian violator on the freeway or system as presenting an imminent danger for the pedestrian or motorists and shall vigorously enforce laws prohibiting hitchhiking or pedestrians on the freeway. Officers will make certain that all pedestrians are removed from the highway without delay see OMS 205.06(3).
- (5) Debris or other objects observed on the freeway which may affect the efficient and safe movement of traffic should be removed.
- (6) Operating at speeds in excess of the maximum speed limit is not advisable when responding to accidents, particularly if the accident is of a property damage nature and the road is not obstructed.
- (7) Officers should avoid standing between the front of their patrol vehicle and the rear of a vehicle which they have stopped or are investigating.