



Cambridge Police Department

NEW POLICY # 603

Effective Date: December 30, 2002

Policy and Procedures
Procedure 2002-11

MOTOR VEHICLE CRASHES INVOLVING POLICE VEHICLES

I. Purpose

This Policy and Procedure will:

- A. State departmental policy regarding the investigation and review of motor vehicle crashes involving department vehicles.
- B. Define motor vehicle crashes.
- C. Describe the responsibilities of the Department's Vehicle Crash Review Board.
- D. Describe the responsibilities of officers and other personnel involved in a motor vehicle crash with a department vehicle.
- E. Describe the responsibilities of the supervisor responding to a scene of a police motor vehicle crash.
- F. Describe the responsibilities the Commanding Officer.

II. Policy

- A. Motor Vehicle crashes involving department vehicles present serious potential risks to department personnel and the public as well as considerable financial loss due to injury, loss of manpower, vehicle damage, and possible tort liability. Therefore, a motor vehicle crash review process has been established for evaluating crashes involving departmental motor vehicles in order to determine cause and to institute corrective and preventive actions, where possible.

III. Definitions

- A. **Motor Vehicle Crash:** For the purposes of this policy, a motor vehicle crash is any collision of a vehicle – owned by or assigned to the Cambridge Police Department with another vehicle, stationary object, bicycle, or person that results in property damage or personal injury.
- B. **A Preventable Crash** is any crash involving police department personnel and a police vehicle which results in property damage and/or personal injury, regardless of who was injured, what property was damaged, to

what extent or where it occurred, in which the employee failed to exercise every reasonable precaution to prevent the crash.

- C.** A **Non-Preventable Crash** is any crash where it is determined that no other action or techniques by the operator could have prevented the crash.

IV. Composition and Responsibilities of the Crash Review Board

- A.** The Cambridge Police Department's Crash Review Board will normally consist of three Operations Division Deputy Superintendents and a Motor Vehicle Crash Investigator.
- B.** The Cambridge Police Department's Crash Review Board will meet monthly. If there are no incidents to review, this Board will not be required to meet.
- C.** A Deputy Superintendent as designated by the Superintendent of Operations will chair the Board.
- D.** The Board has the authority to call members of this Department to testify or to provide written statements necessary for the Board's review.
- E.** The Board members will review the following in order to make its determination:
 - 1. Crash reports
 - 2. Supervisor's testimony/reports
 - 3. Crash Investigation reports
 - 4. Witness statements
 - 5. Photographs
- F.** The Crash Review Board will review each crash involving a department member and vehicle and will submit a finding of preventable or non-preventable. The report will include recommendations through the Operations Division Superintendent to the Commissioner by the Board on measures to be taken.
 - 1. In Preventable crashes, recommendations will include but not be limited to the following:
 - a. Counseling;
 - b. Letter of reprimand to the officer's file;
 - c. If the officer has had a previous preventable crash, the Board may recommend driver's school attendance, loss of driving privileges for Department owned vehicles; and/or
 - c. Suspension and/or a combination of above.
 - 2. The Board will submit a copy of the documents considered and the report of the findings of the board to the Superintendent of Operations. These reports will be submitted to the Commissioner for review.
 - 3. Copies of all reports will be submitted to Traffic Accident Records for filing.

V. Responsibilities of Officers Involved in a Motor Vehicle Crash

- A. Unless incapacitated, officers are responsible for notifying ECC of motor vehicle crashes immediately. Communications will notify the on-duty patrol supervisor and the supervisor will normally respond to the scene of the accident both within the City of Cambridge and outside the City of Cambridge, except where the crash occurs out of state.
- B. Officers may be required to submit reports and cooperate with the crash investigation. All required reports must be submitted by the end of the tour of duty unless the officer is incapacitated. **If the officer is incapacitated, the responding supervisor will submit a Supplemental Report on behalf of the officer involved in the Motor Vehicle Crash explaining the circumstances surrounding the crash.**
- C. Where there has been contact with a police motor vehicle and a pedestrian or another car, but this contact does not result in damage or personal injury, the officer will call for a supervisor and the supervisor will respond. The officer should submit a Supplemental Report explaining the circumstances surrounding this incident and photographs will be taken to document the lack of damage to the vehicles or objects.

VI. Responsibilities of Supervisor

- A. Supervisors will be responsible for ensuring that an investigation of the Motor Vehicle Crash is conducted by persons with appropriate traffic investigation training.
- B. Supervisors will ensure that photographs are taken of the crash scene, damage and/or injuries.
- C. Supervisors will notify Quality Control where there is serious bodily injury or death or allegations of criminal misconduct on the part of the Department employee.
- D. The supervisor will prepare a report within 24 hours of the crash occurrence. The report should include the following information:
 - 1. Details of events involved in and contributory to the crash.
 - 2. Statements of witnesses.
 - 3. Names and insurance information on involved drivers and others involved in the crash, and the nature/seriousness of injuries an/or property damage.
 - 4. A statement as to whether the member's crash was "preventable" or "non-preventable," with documentation supporting those conclusions.
 - 5. Any recommendation that would help prevent similar crashes in the future.

- E.** Supervisors will review the crash reports for completeness and will ensure that all reports are submitted by the end of the tour of duty and forwarded to the Shift Commander for review.

VII. Responsibilities of the Commanding Officer

- A.** The Commanding Officer will review all reports and, if misconduct is alleged or suspected, will initiate an Investigation.
- B.** The Commanding Officer will forward copies of the reports to the Superintendent of Operations and the Accident Review Board.

Police Commissioner