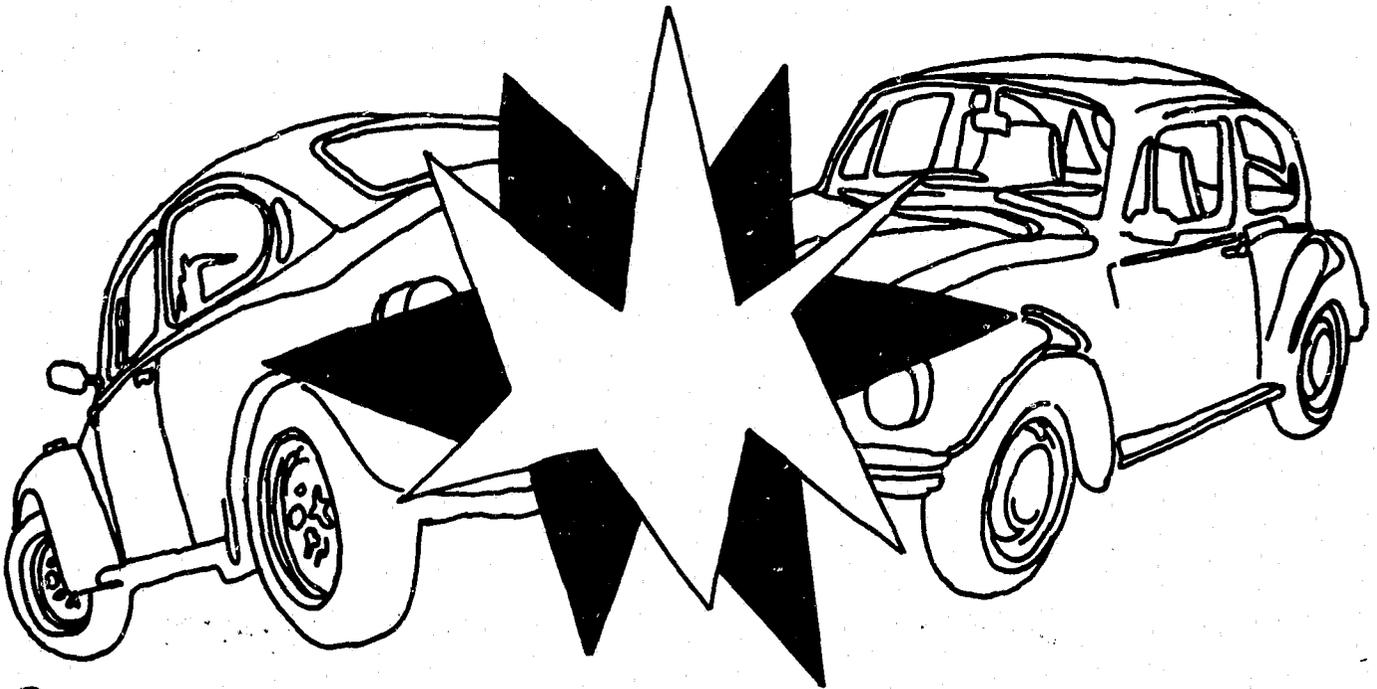


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3

✓ **COLLISION MANAGEMENT
PROCEDURES**

✓ **PART 1
Proceeding to the Scene**



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Aberdeen Police Department
Baltimore County Sheriff's Office
Bowie State College
Brunswick Police Department
Cecil County Sheriff's Office
Coppin State College
Department of General Services
Harford County Sheriff's Office
Md. Center for Public Broadcasting
Mass Transit Administration
Military Department of Maryland
North East Police Department
University of Maryland-Baltimore County Campus

Salisbury, Maryland - 10/6/75-12/2/75

Cambridge Police Department
Centreville Police Department
Chestertown Police Department
Crisfield Police Department
Denton Police Department
Easton Police Department
Federalsburg Police Department
Fruitland Police Department
Hurlock Police Department
Kent County Sheriff's Office
Ocean City Police Department
Pocomoke City Police Department
Queen Anne's County Sheriff's Office
Queenstown Police Department
Rock Hall Police Department
Salisbury Police Department
Salisbury State College
Talbot County Sheriff's Office
University of Baltimore

Prince Georges County - 10/14/75-12/15/75

Armed Forces Police
Bladensburg Police Department
Brentwood Police Department
Calvert County Sheriff's Office
Charles County Sheriff's Office
Cheverly Police Department
GSA-Office of Buildings and Grounds
Hyattsville Police Department
Md. National Capital Park Police
Mt. Rainier Police Department
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COLLISION MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES, PART I:
"PROCEEDING TO THE SCENE"

ABSTRACT

This unit is designed to provide the student with information concerning the safe and efficient manner for proceeding to the scene. It includes what a Maryland police officer should do when a call is received, how to plan the best route to the scene, what code to use when proceeding to the scene, and what to do after arriving at the scene.

BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES

Develop an understanding of the considerations and requirements for:

- Making a safe and expeditious transit to the scene of an accident
- Parking the patrol vehicle at the scene in a safe and efficient manner.

III

COLLISION MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES, I

Proceeding to the Scene

Learning of an Accident

Before you play any part in the investigation of an accident, you must be at the scene. In order to be at the scene of an accident, you must obviously either be there when the accident occurs or get there afterwards. Most often you will be directed to the scene by the radio dispatcher; but sometimes you may be informed of an accident by a passing motorist (who may or may not have witnessed the accident), and occasionally you may happen upon the scene of an accident without having been informed of it at all.

When you receive a radio call, you should be sure to get as much information as available about:

- The time of the accident
- The exact location
- The severity in terms of bodily injury, property damage, and hazards present
- The resulting traffic problems
- Emergency services already summoned, such as ambulances, fire equipment, tow trucks, etc.
- Law enforcement personnel summoned or already at the scene.

Knowing as much as possible about these topics can help you to take your first steps in response to the accident call--that is, to anticipate the probable conditions at the scene and to plan the best route for getting there.

For instance, knowing when the accident happened will not get you to the scene any faster, but it may alert you to the extent of traffic congestion you are likely to meet, depending on the location of the accident and the time of the dispatch. Also, knowing when the accident happened can sometimes give indications about the identity of the motorist (if any) who is responsible for the accident; for example, some streets may be one-way at some times of day but not at other times, or certain lanes may permit right-hand or left-hand turns at some times of day but not at other times.

Knowing where the accident happened is of course the most important consideration for deciding on the best route to the scene.

The severity of the accident, if known, is sometimes relayed to you in coded expressions by the dispatcher; for instance, 10-50 PI is an accident with injuries, and 10-50 F is an accident with a fatality involved. You may assume that if the dispatcher already knows that there have been bodily injuries, an ambulance has been summoned to the scene, and you should not have to summon one yourself.

Anything you can learn about whether emergency vehicles have already been summoned will therefore save you the trouble of making unnecessary calls. This information can also help you decide on your best route, if you remember that that you should not present an obstruction to the emergency equipment which you may encounter on the way.

If the dispatcher has any information about the buildup of traffic congestion at the time of the dispatch, this information can obviously assist you in determining the best route. It can also give you an opportunity to plan for the best division of labor--if yours is a two-man vehicle, or if you are forced to summon additional law-enforcement help. You may, for example, be able to plan the best point at which to detour traffic.

Information on the number of law-enforcement personnel summoned to or already at the scene can aid the formulation of your "game-plan" by allowing you to make an educated estimate of what your own role is likely to be. This may also be important information for you if there is any question of jurisdictional boundaries.

Assuming that you have received all the available pertinent information from the dispatcher (or from any other source), you should:

1. Attempt to visualize the scene and anticipate likely problems
2. Plan your best route.

Anticipating the Situation at the Scene

Saving lives is obviously the most important consideration. But you will usually know from the radio call (or from any other source of information) whether or not it is likely that you will have to give much thought to life-or-death decisions.

Most often, the major part of your effort will be devoted to anticipating the accident's effects on the flow of traffic. Knowing the location (normally busy road?) and the time of day (rush hour?) may help you in making most of your preliminary decisions, such as those involving the best deployment of law-enforcement personnel or the best point(s) to establish detours.

Sometimes, though, other factors may be reported to you which might have abnormal or extraordinary effects on traffic. For instance, the accident may have caused a serious fire, or a dangerous flooding. Electrical wires may be down. Dangerous substances may have been spilled. In such cases preliminary planning is more difficult because it is harder to visualize the scene. But you are obviously better off if you are aware of these conditions before you reach the scene; you will not be taken entirely by surprise, and if you have a good

knowledge of the area you may very well be able to picture what the effects of flooding, for instance, at the point of the accident are likely to be. On the other hand, the spilling of dangerous substances may have had little or no effect on traffic--but perhaps it should have; in this case, you could plan to reroute traffic away from a hazard of which motorists may not be aware.

Planning the Route to the Scene

Bear in mind, any reported or anticipated traffic problems. Beyond that, remember that the shortest route is not always the quickest. To facilitate the choice of the best route, you should have the latest maps and street guides but remember that they are no substitute for personal familiarity with the geography of the area.

There are sometimes special considerations which may help you select your route.

For example, suppose that you have been informed that fire equipment has been summoned. Do you proceed to the accident along the most obvious route or not? To answer this question, you would have to know whether you are:

- Approaching the scene from the same direction as the fire engines
- En route in advance of the fire engines
- Likely to be, in view of the traffic situation, an obstacle to the fire engines.

Or suppose that there has been a hit-and-run accident. Do you have a chance of spotting or apprehending the offender? To answer this question you would have to know:

- The time of the accident
- The most likely escape routes.

Or suppose you consider it valuable to approach the scene along the same route as one or more of the drivers involved. You might wish to see for yourself what the driver encountered in the areas of:

- Visibility (buildings, trees, weather conditions)
- Road conditions
- Confusing or faulty traffic signs and signals.

In each case, of course, your choice of a route will depend on how urgently you need to reach the scene of the accident.

Proceeding to the Scene (Maryland Codes)

If you are dispatched to the scene of an accident by a "Code 3" radio call, there is a minimum of urgency involved. Obey all traffic laws and signals.

"Code 1" permits you to be an emergency vehicle and to proceed to the scene with "reasonable" speed, having due regard for the safety of others. In Maryland, an emergency vehicle must have both auditory and visual signals, such as flashing or revolving lights and a siren.

Receiving a "Code 1" call, you should activate the flasher lights, but it is NOT necessary to activate the siren continuously; the siren should be used for short periods, as a warning. For instance, since you may proceed past stop signs or red traffic signals, use the siren when approaching such intersections. Or use it to clear traffic to the side of the road, or to force a path through backed-up lanes of traffic. Continuous use of the siren may give you a false sense of security, or cause unnecessary alarm among motorists in the area.

In addition, "reasonable" speed allows you to be observant en route. For instance, in the case of a hit-and-run accident, you should be alert to suspicious vehicles leaving the scene, and attempt to note the model and license number when possible. (A "suspicious vehicle" may be one traveling excessively fast, or bearing signs of recent damage.)

In the immediate vicinity of the accident, try to note any conditions which may have contributed to the accident - conditions, for instance of low visibility caused by haze, smoke or fog, road conditions, obstacles arising from construction work, etc., or problems with traffic control devices. Report to the dispatcher any hazards you may notice enroute.

Typically, a "Code 2" response will permit you to reach the scene sufficiently promptly to:

- Administer any necessary first aid
- Prevent possibly valuable witnesses from leaving
- Prevent collusion between the parties involved.

Be sure to note the legal requirements for manner of transit. Follow the departmental policy vs. the law especially if it is more restrictive.

Remember that warning signals must meet the definition of the law: Motor Vehicle Laws of Maryland: Article 66 1/2 [Driver Liability: 11-106, 12-218-c (1) - (d)].

Arrival at the Scene

Your first concern should be proper parking. First, decide whether the scene of the accident itself should be protected. If so, the patrol car and its flasher lights (and perhaps flares) may be useful for protecting the scene. It is easier to see a patrol vehicle than an officer in the roadway and an injured pedestrian.

If protective parking is not required, your next concern should be the traffic flow. Park so as to interfere as little as possible. In normal conditions, the recommended minimum distance between the patrol car and the accident is 50 ft. At night, try to park so that your headlamps illuminate the scene of the accident without blinding oncoming motorists. Always leave your car's warning lights activated.

Imprudent parking can have two obvious drawbacks: it may leave the patrol car dangerously exposed to being struck by passing vehicles, and it may cause or encourage other official vehicles to park in similarly dangerous ways. Careless parking will create a hazard by arousing the curiosity of passers-by.

Notify the dispatcher of your arrival. Also, before leaving the patrol car,

try to foresee whether additional help will have to be summoned; this can save you the time which may be lost by walking back and forth between the accident and the radio.

Before leaving the vehicle or becoming involved in on-going situations the patrolman should determine the need for (and summon) any emergency assistance.

1. Many officers now carry handitalkies
2. The vehicle may be too far from the scene so the officer would have to leave the vehicle
3. There may be a chance of saving a life before the call could be dispatched

Do not turn your back to oncoming traffic.

Directions: Circle the letter of the one item which best completes the following statements.

1. When you receive a radio call, you should:
 - a. get as much information about the accident as possible
 - b. call all the emergency equipment available
 - c. proceed without requesting relevant information
 - d. both a and b.

2. When you receive a Code 1 call, you should proceed to the scene:
 - a. without urgency obeying all traffic laws and signals
 - b. using both auditory and visual signals continuously
 - c. using revolving lights continuously and the siren when approaching intersections
 - d. none of the above.

3. When protective parking is not required park your car:
 - a. 50 feet from the accident
 - b. so that your headlights illuminate the scene (at night)
 - c. with your warning lights activated
 - d. all of the above.

Turn to the next page to check your answers.

KEY

1. a. get as much information about the accident as possible.
(See page III - 2.)
2. c. using revolving lights continuously and the siren when
approaching intersections,
(See pages III - 7 to III - 9.)
3. d. all of the above.
(See page III - 10, second paragraph.)

END