3-09/070.40 - Mechanical Damage/Defect (Non-Collision) to Department Vehicles

Mechanical damage or defect is defined as any damage/defect to any part of the vehicle that renders it unusable, exclusive of defective routine maintenance items. The term "unusable" would apply to any defect which could affect the safe operation of the vehicle or cause further damage to it due to continued operation, e.g., overheated engine, defective transmission, etc.

When an employee determines that a Department vehicle has mechanical damage/defects, whether it occurs during operation or is discovered prior to operation, he shall, in addition to completing a Driver's Vehicle Condition Report (DS20-MD91), submit an SH-AD-32A detailing how the damage/defect occurred or was discovered.

Defective routine maintenance items require submission of Form DS20-MD91 only. Examples of routine maintenance items are fan belts, hoses, batteries, etc., which have deteriorated due to normal wear.

A supervisor shall review the memorandum and, if appropriate, inspect the vehicle. If the vehicle is assigned to patrol, he should consult with the mechanic assigned to the unit/station to fully assess the damage or defect. Vehicles assigned to other units can be taken to either a Station mechanic or to the Internal Services Department’s automotive shops.

The supervisor shall then complete a Supervisor's Report of Damage to County Vehicle or Permittee's Vehicle (SH-R-257). The terminology "mechanical damage" shall be used to describe the damage/defect and the report shall indicate a conclusion as to whether it was the result of "negligent" or "non-negligent" handling, operation or procedure. The completed report shall be submitted to the watch commander/operations lieutenant.

The watch commander/operations lieutenant, following review of the supervisor's report, shall indicate in the conclusion portion of the report that the damage was either "negligent mechanical damage" or "non-negligent mechanical damage." This finding must be hand-written or typed under the conclusion category of the watch commander's/operations lieutenant's review, as there is no corresponding check-off category listed.

When the finding is "negligent mechanical damage," the watch commander/operations lieutenant shall cause an immediate investigation to be conducted to determine the extent to which abuse or negligence was a factor and the identity of the person responsible.