5-05/010.00 - Traffic Collision Response Team

The Traffic Collision Response Team is comprised of highly trained traffic investigators with the expertise to conduct in-depth and extensive collision investigations. The Traffic Services Detail shall be notified and respond to investigate any traffic collision, pursuit, Code 9 – surveillance mode, and/or Code 3 operation which involves a Department vehicle or Department on-duty employee when the incident results in the death or death-imminent status of any person.

The Traffic Services Detail shall be notified and evaluate the need to respond and investigate any traffic collision which meets the following criteria:

- Involves a Department vehicle or Department on-duty employee when the collision results in complaint of pain, injury (to any person involved in the collision), substantial property damage or any collision which results from a pursuit, Code 9 – surveillance mode, and/or Code 3 operation; and
- Involves a contract city vehicle or non-Department county vehicle when the collision results in serious injury or substantial property damage.

If a Traffic Services Detail supervisor determines that there is a need to respond, a Traffic Collision Response Team shall be dispatched to the scene.

For purposes of this policy, any collision which results from a pursuit, Code 9, surveillance mode, and/or Code 3 Operation includes, but is not limited to:

- Department vehicle involved;
- Suspect vehicle involved; and
- Third-party motorists involved as a direct result of the pursuit and/or Code 3 Operation.

Traffic Collision Response Team Responsibilities

Incidents occurring in a contract city and meeting the Traffic Services Detail response criteria shall have a Traffic Collision Response Team assigned to investigate the incident and perform the following:

- Assume functional supervision of the investigation and assist the handling station/unit personnel in completing the Traffic Collision Investigation Report (CHP-555);
- Complete a Collision/Incident Analysis Report for the Executive Risk Review Committee;
- Maintain a complete package of information for each case investigated by the Traffic Collision Response Team;
- Assume functional supervision of Department resources at the traffic collision scene;
- Assist with County Claims Administrator regarding “early or accelerated” claim settlements where it is determined that the Department driver was at fault; and
- Assist with claim settlements regarding traffic collisions that involve Department members.

When a collision occurs that meets the Traffic Services Detail's response criteria in an unincorporated county area or in a city not policed by the Department, a Traffic Collision Response Team will respond to act as the Department's liaison with the agency having jurisdiction.

The Traffic Collision Response Team is also available to assist units, upon request, with the investigation of

other serious injury traffic collisions. A watch commander or traffic supervisor may request the Traffic Collision Response Team whenever:

- Collision reconstruction expertise is needed to support felony-level criminal charges;
- Technical expertise is needed for traffic collisions involving commercial vehicles or hazardous materials; and
- A high level of technical expertise is needed to assist supervisory personnel with their administrative review of any on- or off-duty employee-related traffic collision.

The Traffic Collision Response Team can be contacted by telephone through Traffic Services Detail during normal business hours. During non-business hours and on weekends, the Traffic Collision Response Team on-call Investigator can be contacted through the Sheriff's Headquarters Bureau.

For collisions or incidents involving Department motorcycles, the Traffic Collision Response Team shall notify the Department Motorcycle sergeant assigned to the Motorcycle Training Unit. The Motorcycle Training Unit sergeant shall evaluate the need to respond to assist in evaluation of the incident or collision. The Motorcycle Training Unit sergeant shall prepare a memo to the concerned unit commander, evaluating the incident based on performance, training, and applicable Department motorcycle policy.

Unit Commander's and Watch Commander's Responsibilities

The unit commander or watch commander shall immediately notify Traffic Services Detail and the station/unit traffic supervisor whenever the following circumstances exist:

- A Department vehicle or on-duty mileage permittee vehicle is involved in a traffic collision which results in complaint of pain, injury, death (to any person involved in the collision), substantial property damage or any collision which results from a pursuit, Code 9, surveillance mode, and/or Code 3 Operation;
- A Department on-duty employee is involved as a pedestrian in a traffic collision which results in serious injury or death to any party;
- Any county Department on-duty employee is involved in a traffic collision in a contract city which results in serious injury or death to any party;
- A contract city vehicle is involved in a traffic collision which results in substantial property damage; and
- A traffic collision occurs that results in a fatality or any person involved is in death-imminent status, regardless of Department, county, or contract city involvement.

This notification shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Location of collision;
- Date and time of the collision;
- The name and employee number of the deputy responsible for the initial report;
- The name and employee number for the supervisor at the scene;
- Number, nature, and severity of all injuries suffered;
- Number of parties involved; and
- A brief synopsis of the events.

Traffic collision cases which are handled by Traffic Services Detail are subject to review by the Executive Risk

Review Committee. For that reason, unit commanders and watch commanders shall not complete the "Conclusion" and "Findings and Recommendations" sections of the Supervisor's Report of Damage to County Vehicle or Permittee's Vehicle, SHR-257, until after the Executive Risk Review Committee has evaluated the case.

Immediate Supervisor/Field Sergeant's Responsibilities

When the Traffic Collision Response Team is called, the on-scene supervisor shall ensure that the scene is protected similar to a homicide scene (i.e., nothing is changed unless necessary for the preservation and protection of human life) and that involved vehicles are not moved within or from the collision scene prior to the arrival of the Traffic Collision Response Team. While the Traffic Collision Response Team is en route, the on-scene supervisor shall also ensure the following:

- Assigned units contain the traffic collision scene, which may involve setting up traffic cones and barricades;
- If exigent circumstances require the moving of the vehicles, the point of rest, area of impact, and all evidence shall be photographed, properly marked and secured. The assigned unit shall be directed to take measurements sufficient for a factual diagram;
- Nothing shall be removed from or moved within the involved vehicles, including Department-issued and personal items;
- The assigned unit shall remain at the scene until the Traffic Collision Response Team completes the initial investigation; and
- When the involved parties are not able to remain at the scene until the Traffic Collision Response Team arrives, the assigned deputy will obtain the necessary statements from the involved parties, witnesses, and fire personnel.

Unit Responsibilities

When a traffic collision meets the Traffic Services Detail notification requirements, the reporting unit remains primarily responsible for handling the investigation and the incident. When a Traffic Collision Response Team arrives, it will assume the functional supervision of the incident and assist unit personnel as necessary in their investigation. Traffic Services Detail may, at their discretion and on a case-by-case basis, assume the responsibility for the investigation or parts thereof. The reporting unit shall assign, at minimum, one deputy who has successfully completed a Basic Traffic Collision Investigation Course which is approved by the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) to complete the initial traffic collision report (CHP 555). The unit shall also perform the following:

- Prepare and complete all required traffic collision report forms inclusive of the factual diagram and make the necessary notifications;
- Forward the completed traffic collision package (CHP 555, SH-R-257, SH-R-665 supervisor 's comprehensive memorandum) to Traffic Services Detail within five days of the collision; and
- Maintain the primary responsibility for enforcing penal code and vehicle code sections and effecting all arrests as deemed necessary.

Executive Risk Review Committee

Incidents investigated by the Traffic Collision Response Team are reviewed by the Executive Risk Review

Committee (5-09/434.20).