



# MIDDLETON POLICE DEPARTMENT

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POLICY  
**6.2.07**

SUBJECT: **Accident Reporting & Scene Procedures**

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[WILEAG \(5th Ed.\) Standards: 6.2.7](#) (6.2.7.1, 6.2.7.2, 6.2.7.3, 6.2.7.4, 6.2.7.5, 6.2.7.5, 6.2.7.6); [6.2.8](#) (6.2.8.1, 6.2.8.2, 6.2.8.3, 6.2.8.4, 6.2.8.5)

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## Definitions

**Traffic Accidents** occur when a vehicle collides with any other vehicle, object, or person resulting in death, injury, or property damage of any nature. A traffic accident can occur upon highways, park roads and driveways, and upon all premises held out to the public for use of their motor vehicles (whether such premises are publicly or privately owned and whether or not a fee is charged for use thereof). A collision occurring on property not held out to the public for use of their motor vehicles or involving only snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles, vehicles propelled by human power or drawn by animals does not constitute a traffic accident.

**Reportable** means an accident resulting in **injury** to or **death** of any person, any damage to state or other government-owned property (except a state or other government-owned vehicle) to an apparent extent of \$200 or more, or total damage to property owned by any one person or to a state or other government-owned vehicle to an apparent extent of **\$1,000** or more [[346.70\(1\)](#)].

**Injury** means injury to a person of a physical nature resulting in death or the need of first aid or attention by a physician or surgeon, whether or not first aid or medical or surgical treatment was actually received.

## Traffic Accident Investigation

Traffic Accident Investigation means the collection of factual information identifying and describing people, roads, and vehicles involved describing the results of the accident in terms of damage to vehicles and roadside objects, injuries to people, marks and residue on the road, and final positions of vehicles and bodies; interpretation of these facts in terms of behavior of road users involved; and, sometimes an attempt to specify the peculiar combination of factors required to produce that particular accident. A traffic accident investigation, in addition to an accident report, should include photographs, measurements, diagram, written or oral statements from the principals and witnesses, and collection of relevant physical evidence.

It is the policy of the department to conduct a traffic accident investigation for all traffic accidents involving:

- A. Death or incapacitating injury
- B. Hit and Run to attended vehicle or pedestrian
- C. Impairment due to alcohol or drugs
- D. Hazardous materials

### **Traffic Accident Reporting**

Traffic Accident Reporting means the basic data collections to identify and classify a traffic accident and the person, vehicles, time/location, and planned movements involved, and possible contributing factors such as traffic law violations. Beyond basic documentation, the degree of the investigation should be commensurate with the seriousness of the accident.

It is the policy of the department to complete an accident report for all "reportable" traffic accidents, and for all "non-reportable" traffic accidents upon the timely request of a principal. The department will not routinely complete an Accident Report in cases involving untimely reports of "non-reportable" traffic accidents if the principals have fulfilled their statutory duties, except when the principals appear together at the department with the unrepaired vehicles involved, in all other cases the State self-report form should be given to the principals.

Accidents are documented in three ways. **Non-Reportable** – Use TRACS non-reportable accident report. **Reportable** – Use the TRACS accident report (DT4000) as a stand alone document or complete a thorough **Traffic Accident Investigation** – Use the TRACS accident report (DT4000) and investigative narrative reports. If you are not taking statements, measurements, and photographs, you are just doing a report, not an investigation. If you are just doing a report, there is no requirement to dictate a narrative – let the TRACS Accident (DT4000) and UTC stand on their own.

#### ***Government Property Damage Tags***

When there is **accident related damage to State or County property** (or a spill requiring government cleanup) on an Interstate (IH), US Highway (USH), State Highway (STH), or County Highway (CTH) a Property Damage Tag (Yellow Tag), should be completed (only one per accident). Attach a portion of the tag to the damaged property, submit the other portion with the accident report, and enter the 6 digit tag number in the "Govt Damage Tag #" field on the accident report. The Records Bureau should send the Yellow Tag and a copy of the accident report to the county highway office. Tags are free and are shipped free from WisDot.

### **Officer Response to Traffic Accident Scene**

The number of officers dispatched is contingent on the nature of the reported accident. Accidents involving injuries, blockage, or impairment will generally have two or more officers assigned. Only units assigned by the Communications Center or approved by the Shift Commander may make an emergency response to an injury accident or other emergency situation (see [6.1.03 Emergency Vehicle Operation](#)).

Generally, officers should respond to the scene of all traffic accidents. However, officer response may be influenced by the workload and by the availability of officers. If the immediate demand for police service exceeds the capabilities of the department, the Shift Commander (OIC) may direct the dispatcher to instruct the principals reporting the accident to exchange all pertinent information and, in the case of a "reportable" traffic accident, to obtain and complete a "[Drivers Report of Accident](#)" form. An officer response to the accident scene is required in cases involving:

- A. Death or injury
- B. Hit and Run
- C. Operator impairment due to alcohol or drugs
- D. Hazardous material
- E. Disturbance between principals
- F. Major traffic congestion
- G. Damage to vehicles to the extent towing is required
- H. Any accident in which a City of Middleton vehicle is involved
- I. Occurrences on private property when any of the above apply.

### **Crash Scene Procedures**

An officer's responsibilities at the scene of a traffic accident include:

- A. Providing basic life support/emergency medical care and fire suppression services until properly relieved;
- B. Summoning ambulance and/or additional assistance (e.g. officers, extrication, tow trucks, etc.);
- C. Protecting the accident scene;
- D. Preserving and collecting evidence;
- E. Establishing a safe traffic pattern around the scene;
- F. Locating witnesses and recording accident information;
- G. Take statements from persons involved
- H. Expediting the removal from the roadway of vehicles, persons, and debris; and
- I. Whenever the investigating officer detects a violation of traffic law, whether or not it occurs in the officer's presence, and when evidence exists to satisfy all the elements of that particular offense, enforcement action should be taken for "reportable" accidents. (Officers may use discretion for minor "non-reportable" accidents). On private property only traffic laws relating to Reckless Driving, Hit and Run, Accident Reporting, and Operating While Under the Influence of Intoxicants or Drugs may be enforced.

In the case of hazardous material incidents, officers should isolate the hazard area, remain at a safe distance upwind and uphill, and evacuate nonessential personnel. The police department is responsible for preliminary hazard identification (spill, leak, fire), and identification of vehicle and container placards. Only properly trained and equipped department personnel should attempt to enter areas where hazardous materials may be encountered.

In the case of property damage only accidents, whenever possible and/or practical, motorists and/or the police should immediately remove the vehicles involved from traffic lanes, to eliminate unnecessary blockage.

When in the course of an officer's duties, the officer observes an item of apparent value exposed to jeopardy and the owner, authorized operator, or someone on their behalf is not present at the scene or capable of arranging safekeeping, the officer may take reasonable steps to diminish the risk. Possible actions include notifying a tow service driver before a vehicle is removed, locking a car's door, locking the item in the car glove box or trunk, or removing the item for storage in the property room under its own inventory number.

The security of vehicles (and contents) towed from an accident scene are the responsibility of the towing service.

At the scene of an accident, the ranking officer, or among officers of equal rank the senior officer, has the prerogative of command.

Also see [6.2.06 OWI](#) for procedures for intoxicated drivers involved in injury accidents.