
Traffic Crash Response and Reporting

501.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The policy provides guidelines for responding to and investigating traffic crashes.

501.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Beloit Police Department to respond to traffic crashes and render or summon aid to injured victims as needed. The Department will investigate and prepare reports according to the established minimum reporting requirements with the goal of reducing the occurrence of crashes by attempting to identify the cause of the crash and through enforcing applicable laws. Unless restricted by law, traffic crash reports will be made available to the public through an electronic means approved by the Department. Investigating officer's shall ensure they provide involved parties with the information necessary to obtain such reports, including filling out Department issued contact cards. The Department website shall also provide the public with contact information to assist in obtaining copies of crash reports.

501.3 RESPONSE

Upon arriving at the scene, the responding member should assess the need for additional resources and summon assistance as appropriate. Generally, the member initially dispatched to the scene will be responsible for the investigation and report, if required, unless responsibility is reassigned by a supervisor.

A supervisor should be called to the scene when the incident:

- (a) Is within the jurisdiction of this department and there is:
 - 1. A life-threatening injury.
 - 2. A fatality.
 - 3. A City vehicle involved.
 - 4. A City official or employee involved.
 - 5. An on- or off-duty member of this department involved.
- (b) Is within another jurisdiction and there is:
 - 1. A City of Beloit Police Department vehicle involved.
 - 2. An on-duty member of this department involved.

501.3.1 MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

Upon arriving at the scene, the responding member should consider and appropriately address:

- (a) Traffic direction and control.
- (b) Proper placement of emergency vehicles, cones, roadway flares, or other devices if available to provide protection for members, the public, and the scene.
- (c) First aid for any injured parties if it can be done safely.

Beloit Police Department

WI LE Policy Manual

Traffic Crash Response and Reporting

- (d) The potential for involvement of hazardous materials.
- (e) The need for additional support as necessary (e.g., traffic control, emergency medical services, fire department, hazardous materials response, tow vehicles).
- (f) Clearance and cleanup of the roadway.

501.3.2 INVESTIGATOR RESPONSIBILITIES

If a traffic crash involves a fatality, a member of the Special Operations Division (SOD) should be assigned to conduct a 24-hour background investigation on the victim to include the victim's activities, locations, and contacts within the preceding 24 hours of the fatal crash. The initial investigating officer shall ensure all information obtained regarding the victims prior activities are documented and conveyed to the assigned investigator or, if not assigned to the SOD, completed by the investigating officer.

501.3.3 COMMUNITY SERVICE OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

Community Service Officers (CSO)'s may be assigned to assist with traffic control in a variety of circumstances, such as special events or accident scenes. CSO's shall ensure that when performing these duties they are wearing high visibility vests in conformity with Policy 500 (Traffic Function & Responsibility) and follow the direction of the officer in charge or supervisor to ensure efficient use of resources. If involved in a vehicle tow, CSO's shall ensure they follow Policy 502 (Vehicle Towing).

501.4 NOTIFICATION

If a traffic crash involves a life-threatening injury or fatality, the responding officer shall notify a supervisor or, if unavailable, the Shift Commander. The Shift Commander may request a specialized traffic investigator and/or other appropriate investigative personnel to investigate the incident. The Shift Commander will ensure notification is made to the Patrol Captain, who shall ensure notification is made to the Chief of Police in accordance with the Major Incident Notification Policy.

501.4.1 NOTIFICATION OF FAMILY

In the event of a life-threatening injury or fatality, the supervisor responsible for the incident should ensure notification of the victim's immediate family or coordinate such notification with any investigating members of the Special Operations Division, the Medical Examiner, or another suitable person. Notification should be made as soon as practicable following positive identification of the victim.

The identity of any person seriously injured or deceased in a traffic crash should not be released until notification is made to the victim's immediate family.

Beloit Police Department

WI LE Policy Manual

Traffic Crash Response and Reporting

501.5 MINIMUM REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

A crash report shall be taken and investigated when:

- (a) The crash originated or terminated on a traffic way, or public or private premises as outlined within Wis. Stat. § 346.66, and involved at least one motor vehicle in transport and resulted in any of the following (Wis. Stat. § 346.70):
 - 1. Injury or fatality of a person
 - 2. Total damage to one person's property that is reasonably believed to be \$1,000 or more
 - 3. Damage to government-owned property that is reasonably believed to be \$200 or more, except to government-owned vehicles, which is \$1,000 or more
- (b) Hit and run crash of an occupied vehicle
- (c) Hit and run crash of an unoccupied vehicle in which evidence exists that could aid in identifying the involved vehicle or offender.

Appropriate investigative reports shall be filed in addition to the crash reports as outlined in this policy or as needed in order to memorialize investigative findings and create a case management that shall be reviewed by the Shift Commander.

Motor vehicle crashes that do not meet the above criteria are considered non-reportable. Drivers involved in non-reportable accidents should be directed to the self-report form on the Wisconsin DOT website. Officers should retain sufficient information to complete the WisDOT report form should it later be determined that the crash involved injuries or property damage that meet the state criteria of a reportable crash.

501.5.1 POLICE DEPARTMENT VEHICLE INVOLVED

A traffic crash report shall be taken when any police department vehicle is involved in a traffic crash that results in property damage or injury. The member involved should immediately notify a supervisor or the Shift Commander, who shall request either the Wisconsin State Patrol or the Rock County Sheriff Department conduct the investigation and complete the crash report.

Whenever there is damage to a police department vehicle, a vehicle damage summary report shall be completed and forwarded to the Shift Commander, who shall ensure copies are disseminated to the Vehicle Maintenance Officer and Risk Manager. The original shall be forwarded to the Inspector or designee. The traffic investigator or supervisor at the scene should ensure appropriate photographs are taken of the scene and vehicle damage.

501.5.2 OTHER CITY VEHICLE INVOLVED

A traffic crash report shall be taken when any City of Beloit (City) vehicle is involved in a traffic crash that results in property damage or injury.

If another City department vehicle is involved in a traffic crash, the investigating officer shall notify the Shift Commander who shall notify the on-duty supervisor from the involved department and request they respond to the scene to address, at the appropriate time, any internal investigative needs or requirements of their department. The investigating officer and supervisor

Beloit Police Department

WI LE Policy Manual

Traffic Crash Response and Reporting

shall cooperate with other department supervisors in providing necessary information, within legal parameters, to accomplish this task.

Police department members should investigate accidents involving other City-owned vehicles and file all required crash reports except when the City-owned vehicle is operated by a City department or division head or current elected or appointed official as denoted below. In these instances, the officer shall notify the Shift Commander who shall request either the Wisconsin State Patrol or the Rock County Sheriff Department conduct the investigation and complete the traffic crash report. The Shift Commander shall also notify the Chief of Police as soon as practicable.

Employees/Persons subject this policy include:

- (a) A member of the City Council
- (b) A member of the Police and Fire Commission
- (c) Any employee of the City Manager's Office
- (d) Any employee of the City Attorney's Office
- (e) An employee of the Human Resources Department
- (f) An employee of the Municipal Court
- (g) Community Development Director, Director of Community and Housing Services, Director of Planning and Building Services, Director of the Beloit Housing Authority
- (h) Economic Development Director, Executive Director of the Downtown Beloit Association
- (i) Finance & Administrative Services Director, City Clerk-Treasurer, Director of Accounting/Purchasing, Risk Manager
- (j) Fire Chief, Assistant Fire Chief, and Deputy Fire Chief
- (k) Information Technology Director, Assistant Director of Information Technology
- (l) Library Director
- (m) Municipal Court Judge
- (n) Public Works Director, Assistant City Engineer, City Engineer, Director of Operations, Director of Parks and Recreation, Director of Transit, and Director of Water Resources

501.5.3 TRAFFIC CRASHES INVOLVING DIPLOMATIC OR CONSULAR CONTACTS

When a member of this department investigates or receives a report of a traffic crash in which the operator of any vehicle involved in the crash displays a driver's license issued by the U.S. Department of State (DOS) or the person claims immunity or privilege under 22 USC § 254a through 22 USC § 258a, with respect to the operator's violation of any state traffic law or any local traffic law enacted by any local authority in accordance with Wis. Stat. § 349.06, the department member shall do the following (Wis. Stat. § 346.70(4)(i)):

- (a) As soon as practicable, contact the DOS Office of Foreign Missions (OFM) Diplomatic Security Command Center, Diplomatic Motor Vehicle Office to verify the status and immunity, if any, of the driver claiming diplomatic immunity.

Beloit Police Department

WI LE Policy Manual

Traffic Crash Response and Reporting

- (b) Within 10 days after the date of the crash, forward a copy of the crash report, at no charge, to the DOS OFM Diplomatic Motor Vehicle Office.

501.6 INVESTIGATION

When a traffic crash meets minimum reporting requirements the investigation should include, at a minimum:

- (a) Identification and interview of all involved parties.
- (b) Identification and interview of any witnesses.
- (c) A determination of whether a violation of law has occurred and the appropriate enforcement action.
- (d) Identification and protection of items of apparent evidentiary value.
- (e) Documentation of the incident as necessary (e.g., statements, measurements, photographs, collection of evidence, reporting) on the appropriate forms.

501.6.1 INVESTIGATION BY OUTSIDE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY

The on-duty Shift Commander shall request that the Wisconsin State Patrol, Rock County Sheriff, or other outside law enforcement agency if related to an officer-involved death or critical incident, investigate and complete a traffic crash investigation when any traffic crash resulting in property damage or injury occurs within the jurisdiction of the Beloit Police Department and involves:

- (a) An on- or off-duty sworn or civilian member of the Department.
- (b) An on- or off-duty City department or division head or currently elected or appointed official as denoted in this policy.

501.7 ENFORCEMENT ACTION

After a thorough investigation in which physical evidence or independent witness statements indicate that a violation of a traffic law contributed to the crash, authorized members should issue a municipal citation or arrest the offending driver, as appropriate.

More serious violations, such as driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol, vehicular manslaughter, or other felonies, shall be enforced. If a driver who is subject to enforcement action is admitted to a hospital, a supervisor shall be contacted to determine the best enforcement option.

501.8 REPORTS

Department members shall utilize the written or automated report forms approved by WisDOT in TraCs as required for the reporting of traffic crashes. All such reports shall be forwarded to the Shift Commander for review, approval, and forwarding to the Records Bureau for submittal and dissemination.

501.8.1 REPORT MODIFICATION

A change or modification of a written report that alters a material fact in the report may be made only by the member who prepared the report and only prior to its approval and distribution. Once

Beloit Police Department

WI LE Policy Manual

Traffic Crash Response and Reporting

a report has been approved and distributed, corrections shall only be made by way of filing an amended report in TraCs. An amended report may be made by any authorized member.

If the modification is to add a fatality, a Wisconsin Motor Vehicle Fatal Accident Supplement Form shall be completed and a Transaction Information for the Management of Enforcement (TIME) administrative message sent to Motor Vehicle Fatality Reporting. A fatality is any injury received in a traffic crash that results in death within 30 days of the crash.

501.8.2 PATROL CAPTAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities of the Patrol Captain include but are not limited to:

- (a) Ensuring the monthly and quarterly reports on traffic crash information and statistics are forwarded to the Inspector or designee or other persons as required.
- (b) Review and analysis of traffic crash data to determine selective enforcement activities.
- (c) Traffic direction and control procedures.
- (d) Traffic crash and reporting procedures that include, at a minimum, protocol for the following crash conditions:
 1. Death or injury
 2. Hit and run
 3. Property damage only
 4. Damage to public vehicles or property
 5. Hazardous materials
 6. Occurrences on private property

501.8.3 RECORDS BUREAU RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities of the Records Bureau include but are not limited to:

- (a) Forward the original written or automated format WisDOT report form for all reportable accidents to WisDOT within 10 days of the date of the crash (Wis. Stat. § 346.70(4)(a)).
- (b) Forward a copy of the WisDOT report form to the governing body where the crash occurred (Wis. Stat. § 346.70(4)(h)) in the event Department members file a crash report during a mutual aid event.