



**Baltimore County Sheriff's Office  
Towson, Maryland**

**Sheriff  
R. Jay Fisher**

**General Order**

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**Subject:  
Departmental Accidents**

**Effective Date  
03/22/10**

**Number  
B-5**

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this directive is intended to define a departmental accident/collision and set forth procedures for the proper reporting of same.

**Contents:**

- I. Definitions**
- II. Policy**
- III. Accidents/Collisions**
- IV. Appendix**

**I. Definitions**

- A. Accident/Collision** - An unintentional event that produces injury or damage, involving vehicle(s) in transport.
- B. MAARS** - Maryland Automated Accident Reporting System.

**II. Policy**

It is the policy of the Baltimore County Sheriff's Office to encourage its members to be professional, courteous, defensive drivers. In the event of an accident/collision the member will render aid, request assistance as needed and promptly notify supervision so that an investigation may be conducted.

**III. Accidents/Collisions**

- A. Immediately upon being involved in an accident/collision the member shall:**
  - 1.** Render aid to injured persons if required.
  - 2.** Contact the 911 Center for dispatch of Baltimore County Police if the departmental occurred in Baltimore County and resulted in injury or more than slight damage to the office vehicle, another vehicle or a fixed object. Upon arrival, request Officer complete a MAARS report.
  - 3.** Notify his/her supervisor of the departmental, regardless of member's location or duty status. If the accident/collision occurs after normal working hours contact the Night Commander.

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4. Ensure that digital photographs are taken. If the departmental involved a fixed object resulting in slight damage, no MAARS report is necessary.
5. Do not move any vehicles involved in an accident/collision resulting in injury or more than slight damage unless there is a safety risk or extreme disruption of traffic.
6. If the departmental occurred outside Baltimore County and resulted in injury, damage to an Office vehicle, another vehicle or a fixed object, the member shall:
  - a. Contact the appropriate agency.
  - b. Contact member's supervisor or Night Commander.
  - c. Request that photographs be taken and a MAARS report completed by responding law enforcement officer.
  - d. Request that copies of photographs and MAARS report be forwarded to the Captain.
  - e. Arrange for towing, if necessary by contacting VOM at 410-887-3925.
  - f. **EXCEPTION:** If an Office vehicle strikes a fixed object and there is no damage to the fixed object and slight damage to the Office vehicle, the member need not contact the appropriate agency. He/she shall notify his/her supervisor of the incident.
7. In the event prisoners in transport are injured request sufficient Police personnel are made available to safely secure the scene and guard any hospitalized prisoners until members of this Agency can respond and assume control.
8. Draw an SD number. Complete Event Report Form 10 and Equipment Loss/Damage Report Form 21 as soon as possible. Off Duty departmental accidents will be handled in the same manner. Forward reporting to immediate supervisor.

**B. Member's supervisor/Night Commander shall:**

1. Respond to the scene and take charge until Baltimore County Police or investigating agency are on scene and assume responsibility for investigation. If the member involved in the departmental has not done so, request investigating agency complete a MAARS report.
2. Ensure medical attention has been ordered for injured persons.

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3. If the involved member is injured, direct at least one Deputy to remain with the involved member to ensure his/her personal safety and wellbeing and notify the Undersheriff.
4. Attempt to secure scene and locate witnesses until Baltimore County Police or investigating agency are on scene.
5. If the involved member was injured and taken to an emergency facility, assign a Deputy/supervisor to the emergency facility to act as a liaison between emergency facility staff and the Sheriff's Office.
6. If prisoners are present on scene or injured ensure sufficient Police Officers are made available to secure the scene and maintain custody at the hospital. Arrange for Deputies to respond and assume responsibility for prisoners.
7. Conduct a preliminary investigation. In the event the responding officer refuses to complete a MAARS report, the supervisor/Night Commander must complete a thorough investigation and ensure all pertinent information is included in his/her Administrative Report Form 125.
8. Ensure digital photographs are taken of any vehicle damage, property damage, or injury and the location of the departmental.
9. Render command assistance to the assigned investigator(s).
10. Arrange for towing, if necessary by contacting VOM at 410-887-3925.
11. Complete an Administrative Report Form 125 with the results of your preliminary investigation as soon as possible. Obtain a copy of the MAARS report if completed. Review member's reporting for accuracy and completeness. The supervisor is not to make a finding of negligence on the Form 21. Negligence will be determined by the Captain. Forward Administrative Report, MAARS report and member's reporting via official channels to the Captain.

C. The Operations Lieutenant shall:

1. Review all reporting for accuracy and completeness.
2. Forward the MAARS report, if applicable, and Event Report to Baltimore County and State of Maryland Claims departments.
3. If necessary, have the damaged vehicle sent to the repair shop at Gilroy within 48 hours or 2 business days for inspection.
4. If repairs are required contact repair shop designated by Gilroy shop and schedule appointment for repairs.

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5. Forward reporting to the Captain.

D. The Captain shall:

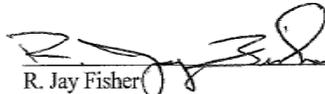
1. Review all reporting for accuracy and completeness.
2. Utilizing the Collision Preventability Criteria in the Appendix and all reporting, determine if the accident/collision is preventable or non-preventable.
3. Complete an Administrative Report Fmm 125 with the results of investigation and recommendation, and forward with all reporting via official channels to the Sheriff.

**IV. Appendix**

Baltimore County Sheriffs Office Collision Preventability Criteria

**Rescissions**

Remove from manuals/files and rescind:  
General Order 4.7.2, Subsection 6, Accident Investigation

  
R. Jay Fisher  
Sheriff

**BALTIMORE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE  
COLLISION PREVENTABILITY CRITERIA**

The following criteria are to be used for the determination of collision preventability in accordance with the guidelines set in General Order B-4 Agency Vehicle Operation. The criteria are not designed to cover every conceivable collision situation. Instead, the criteria are to be viewed as guides, which apply to the most common aspects of the principle types of collisions. Also, the criteria are designed to show the concept of preventability; that is, that drivers are expected to drive defensively at all times, anticipate hazardous driving situations and take every reasonable action to prevent a collision.

**CRITERIA**

**I. Struck in the rear of vehicle by another vehicle is preventable if the:**

- A.** Driver made a sudden stop, failing to anticipate existing conditions causing the sudden stop.
- B.** Driver made a sudden stop to park, back, etc., without having made the proper signal.
- C.** Driver rolled back into another vehicle while starting on a grade.
- D.** Driver failed to set the parking brake and put the transmission in "Park".

**II. Struck while parked is preventable if the:**

- A.** Driver left the vehicle parked in an illegal or hazardous position after the emergency was over and the driver could have reasonably moved the vehicle to a safe and legal parking position.
- B.** Driver parked the vehicle in an illegal/hazardous position in a non-emergency situation.

**III. Striking other vehicle in the rear is preventable if the:**

- A.** Driver failed to maintain a safe following distance and have the vehicle under control considering all the conditions pertaining to the situation (e.g., traffic patterns, weather conditions, etc.).
- B.** Driver failed to keep alert to traffic conditions and note a slowdown.
- C.** Driver failed to ascertain whether traffic ahead was moving slowly, stopped or slowing down.
- D.** Driver misjudged rate at which he/she was overtaking vehicle.
- E.** Driver came too close before pulling out to pass.

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- F. Driver failed to wait for car ahead to move before starting up.
- G. Driver's attention diverted by activity inside the vehicle (e.g., KDT, cell phone, radio, loose items) or outside of the vehicle.
- H. Driver's foot slipped off the brake pedal.

**IV. Collisions at intersection are preventable if the:**

- A. Driver failed to control speed so that he/she could stop within available sight distance.
- B. Driver failed to check cross traffic and wait for it to clear before entering the intersection.
- C. Driver pulled out from a side street in the face of oncoming traffic.
- D. Driver collided with vehicle, object, person, etc. when making a turn when other vehicle/person's actions should have been anticipated.
- E. Driver collided with a vehicle in front, which was making a turn after having properly signaled.

**V. Sideswipe and Head-on collisions are preventable if the:**

- A. Driver was not entirely in his/her proper lane of travel in a non-emergency response mode.
- B. Driver did not pull to the right (or left on a one-way street) and slow down/stop for a vehicle encroaching on his/her lane of travel when actions could have been taken without danger.

**VI. Backing collisions are preventable if the:**

- A. Driver backed when backing could have been avoided by better planning of his/her route.
- B. Driver backed into traffic stream when such backing could have been avoided.
- C. Driver depended solely on mirrors when it was practical to look back.
- D. Driver failed to check proposed route of travel before backing.
- E. Driver failed to periodically recheck proposed route of travel while backing.
- F. Driver relied solely on a guide while backing.

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- G. Driver backed from the blind side when a more open route was available.

**VII. Collisions involving rail operated vehicles are preventable if the:**

- A. Driver attempted to cross the tracks directly ahead of the train.
- B. Driver ran into the side of the train.
- C. Driver stopped or parked too close to the tracks.

**VIII. Collisions while passing are preventable if the:**

- A. Driver passed where view of the road ahead was obstructed by hill, curve, vegetation, traffic, adverse weather conditions or another obstruction.
- B. Driver attempted to pass in the face of closely approaching traffic.
- C. Driver failed to warn the driver of the vehicle being passed when a passing lane in the same direction was not available.
- D. Driver failed to signal a change of lanes.
- E. Driver pulled out in front of other traffic approaching from the rear.
- F. Driver cut in short when returning to the lane.

**IX. Collisions while being passed are preventable if the:**

- A. Driver failed to stay in his/her own lane when being passed.
- B. Driver failed to maintain or reduce speed while being passed to allow the passing vehicle to execute the action safely.
- C. Driver failed to leave sufficient room for the passing vehicle to safely return to the lane.

**X. Collisions while entering the traffic stream are preventable if the:**

- A. Driver failed to signal when pulling from the curb.
- B. Driver failed to check traffic before pulling from the curb.
- C. Driver failed to check traffic when in a position where mirrors did not show traffic conditions.
- D. Driver pulled out in a manner, which forced other vehicle(s) to change speed or direction.

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- E. Driver failed to stop before entering traffic stream from a side street, alley or driveway.
- F. Driver failed to make a full stop before crossing a sidewalk.
- G. Driver failed to yield the right-of-way to approaching traffic.

**XI. Pedestrian collisions are preventable if the:**

- A. Driver failed to yield the right-of-way to a pedestrian as required by law.
- B. Driver failed to reduce speed upon approaching an area of pedestrian crosswalks with pedestrian traffic.

**XII. Mechanical defect collisions are preventable if the:**

- A. Defect was a type the driver should have detected during pre-shift inspection of the vehicle.
- B. Defect was a type the driver should have reasonably detected during normal operation.

**XIII. Collisions during emergency responses are preventable if the:**

- A. Driver failed to use due care while responding to an emergency using the siren and emergency lights.
- B. Driver attempted to exercise the rights of an emergency vehicle without using the siren (e.g., turning off the siren while talking on the radio, running lights only, turning off the siren prior to arriving at the scene but continuing to drive under "emergency privileges").
- C. Driver did not "clear" the intersection lane by Jane when running against the signal, stop sign, etc. (Clearing the intersection means that traffic in the lanes has stopped and granted the right-of-way, and/or the lane has no traffic or traffic is far enough away to allow an emergency vehicle to cross without interfering with the flow of traffic).
- D. Driver crossed over into the oncoming traffic lane when traffic has not stopped to allow for clear travel.
- E. Driver passed a stopped vehicle by crossing over into oncoming traffic lanes without slowing to ensure that the other driver is aware of the officer's intentions (e.g. the officer stops to make a left turn and that police vehicle passes over a double yellow line just as the vehicle starts to make the turn).

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**XIV. All types of collisions:**

- A.** Driver was not operating consistent with existing conditions.
- B.** Driver failed to control speed consistent with the existing conditions (speed too great for road conditions due to weather or construction).
- C.** Driver misjudged available clearance.
- D.** Driver failed to yield the right-of-way to avoid a crash.
- E.** Driver failed to accurately observe the existing conditions.
- F.** Driver fell asleep while driving.
- G.** Driver failed to maintain control of vehicle after initiating evasive maneuver(s) to avoid a crash.
- H.** Driver failed to exercise skid control actions to maintain control of the vehicle (counter-steering, off throttle/brake, etc.).
- I.** Driver locked the brakes and/or did not use evasive steering with ABS to avoid a crash (applied brakes but used no steering to avoid the crash).
- J.** Driver's speed too great (non-weather related).
- K.** Driver opened the door while in moving traffic.