

**GENERAL ORDER 61.4.2**

**Accident Scene Procedures**

**GENERAL ORDER CROSS-REFERENCE: 61.5.1**

**SUMMARY**

Establishes procedures for the handling and securing of traffic accident scenes by responding officers.

**DISCUSSION**

Guidelines set forth in this section are designed to protect both the health and welfare of Springfield's citizens and the safety of our officers.

Certain precautions must be taken to minimize the danger to the general public and police officers while at or near an accident scene. In certain instances evacuation of nonessential personnel, summoning of medical and fire suppression personnel, or disposal of hazardous materials may be necessary. In addition to the above-mentioned items, care must be taken to ensure the safety of accident victims' property from theft or destruction. Guidelines are set forth for the removal, inventory, and storage of property, and the general handling of the accident scene.

**POLICY**

**I**

**TRAFFIC DIRECTION AND CONTROL AT ACCIDENT SCENES**

When an officer responds to the scene of an accident where vehicles or victims are blocking the roadway, officers shall find a suitable thoroughfare for traffic to flow as early as is practicable. This may be done by moving a damaged vehicle out of the flow of traffic. Other options are to set a flare pattern with D.O.T. (Department of Transportation) certified fuses in a manner that would set up temporary lanes for the smooth flow of traffic. The officer shall take into account the spillage of volatile fuels which may endanger the safety of citizens or officers by flame or explosion. If volatile liquids or hazardous materials exist fuses shall not be used for traffic control. Portable stop signs and control devices are available at the City shops for use as needed.

Where possible, officers involved in the direction of traffic control shall be in uniform displaying a badge. A reflective vest provided by the Department shall be worn on the exterior of the uniform so that it is plainly visible by oncoming traffic.

## II

### ACCIDENT SCENE PROCEDURES HANDLING INJURIES, FIRE HAZARDS, HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

#### **Injuries:**

The first duty of officers on scene is to protect and provide first aid to the injured. As soon as practical, Fire and Life Safety personnel shall be summoned. Officers rendering first aid shall continue to provide aid until relieved by medical personnel.

In the event that injuries appear to be fatal or death may occur from the injuries sustained in the accident, an on-scene officer shall notify the watch commander. The watch commander shall determine whether the Major Accident Investigation Team shall be notified.

#### **Fire Hazards:**

In the event of fire at an accident scene, the Fire and Life Safety Department shall be immediately notified. Ensure that all victims and bystanders are a safe distance from the hazard. The officer shall extinguish the fire if the officer can safely do so.

#### **Hazardous Materials:**

Only properly trained and equipped personnel shall be allowed into the contaminated areas. The Fire and Life Safety Department shall be immediately notified. Evacuate all nonessential personnel and secure the scene. As soon as possible, identify the possible hazard by checking the vehicle container placards.

## III

#### **Control of Property Belonging to Accident Victims:**

In the event that the driver or occupants are unable to care for property in the vehicle, the property shall be left with the vehicle if the vehicle is being towed to a private lot. If the vehicle is being towed to a private lot, the tow company is responsible for the property. If the vehicle is secured at the scene or towed to a City lot, the officer shall remove and secure all valuable items for safekeeping.

The inventory shall be on an evidence/property sheet. The property shall be lodged in the Police Department's property room. If the valuables are too large for the property room, the item(s) may be taken to the City shops to be placed in a secure area.

A receipt of the items taken shall be given to the victim or left in the vehicle in a conspicuous place.

In the event that a victim requests the property go to someone else other than the Department, a reasonable attempt will be made to assist the victim with his request.

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Richard L. Lewis  
Chief of Police