

## **4.1.1 Accidents and Accident Reports**

### **I. POLICY**

It is the policy of the Johnstown Police Department to comply with sections 3741-3755 of the Pennsylvania Vehicle Code [Title 75] in regard to the reporting requirements for accidents and accident reports. This covers police personnel as operators of vehicles, as well as, investigators of vehicle accidents.

### **II. PURPOSE**

This general order is to provide personnel with guidelines regarding Pennsylvania accidents and accident reporting procedures.

### **III. Definitions**

1. Reportable Accident: the accident will be reported to the PA Department of Transportation when death, injury or towing is required.
2. Towing Required: damage to any vehicle to the extent that it cannot be driven under its own power in its customary manner without further damage or hazard to the vehicle, other traffic elements, or the roadway and therefore requires towing.

### **IV. PROCEDURES**

#### **A. Accidents and Accident Reports**

The Johnstown Police Department will respond to all reported accidents and then determine whether an investigation is to be conducted. If the traffic accident meets any of the condition[s] listed below, the accident shall be investigated.

1. Death or injury.
2. Property damage in which the property owner is not able to be located.
3. Hit and run.
4. Impairment due to alcohol or drugs.
5. Hazardous materials.
6. Vehicle damage to the extent that towing is required.
7. Involvement of a City of Johnstown vehicle.

#### 4.1.1 continued

- a. Any police department employee involved in a vehicle accident shall not move the vehicle, unless leaving it in the resting position causes a great hazard.
- b. If needed, the employee shall call for EMS.
- c. Their supervisor shall be notified immediately. If a police vehicle is involved the street supervisor will conduct the investigation.

#### B. Non-reportable Accidents

Traffic accidents involving any of the following situations need not be investigated and the operators may exchange information with regards to identity and insurance information. An incident report will be completed containing all individuals and vehicle registrations.

1. Private property traffic collisions of a non-reportable nature.
2. Traffic collisions with no injury and requiring no towing.
3. Property damage traffic collisions with the property owner present and no report requested.

#### C. Traffic Accident Investigation

When a traffic accident report is being completed, the investigating officer shall comply with the following procedure[s].

1. Reportable Traffic Accidents
  - a. Complete the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Police Crash Reporting Form and any subsequent forms, as completely and accurately as possible, including the description, observation and conclusion sections in the narrative.
  - b. Utilize supplemental and continuation forms as necessary.
  - c. Complete all forms according to PA Department of Transportation guidelines, as outlined in PennDOT Publication 153.
2. Non-reportable Traffic Accidents
  - a. Officers shall complete an incident report containing all individuals and vehicle registrations.

#### 4.1.1 continued

##### C. Submitting Reports

1. A preliminary incident report will be done by the investigating officer prior to the end of the officer's shift.
2. The accident report should be finished within the next duty day.
  - a. Exception would be an extensive investigation such as a "Homicide by Motor Vehicle".
3. Any accident for which a report is required by law is submitted electronically.

##### D. Receipt of Accident Investigation

Every accident reported to the Johnstown Police Department and required by law to be investigated, shall be investigated by a police officer. The police officer will provide each driver with a written notification that the accident was reported as per Title 75 section 3746 subsection c.

##### E. Acquiring Accident Reports

1. An accident report may be purchased at the predetermined rate either by mail or in person. The report must be paid for in advance.

Effective Date:

Date: October 1, 2010

By Order Of:

Craig Foust  
Chief Of Police