

WEBER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE		POLICY AND PROCEDURES	
SUBJECT: Accident Scene Responsibilities		CHAPTER/SECTION NO.: 45.26, 45.27	
EFFECTIVE DATE: 10/7/03		REVIEW DATE:	
AMENDS/SUPERSEDES: See attached sheet		APPROVED: <u>**See Master File</u> Sheriff	
STANDARD NUMBER: 61.2.3			

45.26 Policy

- 45.26.1 Patrol deputies will be the primary responder to traffic accidents. If available, a deputy that is specially trained in accident investigations may be assigned to investigate accidents.

45.27 Procedure

- 45.27.1 The basic procedure and responsibilities of a deputy arriving at the accident scene are:
- A. Arrive quickly and safely.
 - B. Select a proper parking position which allows for maximum protection of injured persons, damaged vehicles, traffic hazards, and protection of evidence.
 - C. Make immediate inquiry for injuries, provide emergency first-aid or medical attention, and arrange for any needed medical units; or other necessary medical response.
 - D. Protect the scene. Take precautions to prevent further accidents, check for hazards, prevent destruction of evidence, provide for orderly handling of traffic, and obtain any required help to handle the accident. Protect the injured and vehicles from theft.
 - E. Determine if hit & run. Locate drivers, and if accident is hit & run, obtain as much information on driver and vehicle, and relay

- to communications for broadcast.
- F. Interview drivers and witnesses. Question each separately and obtain identification from each, and written statements when possible. Record in your notes all statements obtained. Observe condition of each driver.
 - G. Examine physical conditions. Check position of vehicles on the roadway, traffic control devices, damage to vehicles, brakes of vehicles, tires of vehicles, view obstructions, conditions of roadway, and marks and/or material on roadway surface.
 - H. Take photographs and measurements. Obtain proper photographs if required or warranted, measure and diagram all skid marks, gouges, debris, vehicle positions, roadway and land widths, positioning of any signs, poles, or objects which may have contributed to the accident.
 - I. Return normal traffic flow as soon as practical.
 - J. Arrange for needed tow vehicles to clear accident scene.
 - K. Ensure that the personal property of principles of the accident, who are unable to care for their property, is safe.
 - 1. The deputy will secure the property in a safe place until such time as the property can be released.
 - 2. Items brought to the police department for safekeeping will be entered into the offices evidence and property storage system.
 - 3. Property left in vehicles which are inoperable and are towed from the accidents scene shall be noted on the vehicle inventory report completed by the investigating deputy.

4. This is not applicable to those situations when a principle of the accidents is able to care for his/her own personal property or when he/she personally requests a tow company.
- 45.27.2 After all urgent information is obtained and the accident scene has been stabilized, the deputy should:
- A. Determine whether proof of violation is sufficient to issue a citation or make an arrest.
 - B. If skids are involved, determine if test skids are needed.
 - C. Supervise clean-up of the scene. If hazard exists, have proper agency notified to repair or remove.
 - D. Complete accident report forms.
- 45.27.3 Chain of command at accident scene
- A. The first deputy arriving at an accident scene will be in charge of the scene and will take all necessary steps to provide emergency aid to the injured, protect the scene, and protect evidence. The first deputy will remain in charge of the accident scene until relieved by the assigned deputy or a supervisor.
 - B. Upon assignment and arrival at the accident scene, the assigned deputy will take charge of the investigation.
 - C. The deputy assigned any accident will be responsible for completion of accident reports and investigation.
- 45.27.4 At-scene information collection
- A. Interviewing drivers and witnesses - Each driver and all witnesses will be interviewed by the investigating deputy. deputies will obtain full names, addresses, dates of birth,

and home and office phone numbers. deputies will obtain and record as much detail as possible from each driver and witness on the appropriate traffic accident report forms.

- B. Vehicle damage - Investigating deputies will examine each vehicle involved in the accident to determine vehicle damage and damage location. The information will be placed in the appropriate section of the traffic accident report form.
- C. Roadway damage - Investigating deputies will examine roadway to determine if damage to roadway, signs, signals, or other equipment resulted from the accident. deputies will record information in the traffic accident report and will make notification to the appropriate agency to have condition repaired or removed.
- D. Measurements - Investigating deputies, when necessary, should obtain measurements by use of department pedometer or 100' tape measures. Investigating deputies will include position of vehicles on roadway, position of bodies, location and length of skid marks, width and lane divisions of roadway, signs of maximum engagement, roadway defects or gouges, location of obstructions, and any pertinent evidence located. Investigation deputies will record this information in his accident notes and in the appropriate sections of the traffic accident report form.
- E. Photographs - Photographs, when needed, will be taken. Photos may include any or all of the following:
 - 1. Vehicle damage, four sides.
 - 2. Final resting positions.
 - 3. Damage to vehicles, exterior and interior.
 - 4. Debris or marks on roadway.
 - 5. Paths of vehicles before and after collision.
 - 6. View of driver approaching accident

scene.

- F. Investigating deputies will note in their traffic report form that photos were taken, if applicable, and will place photos into evidence per department policy.
- G. Evidence - Investigating deputies will check the accident scene for any items or markings which will assist in determining cause of accident or identity of vehicle or driver(s). Items to look for may include, but are not limited to:
 - 1. Debris.
 - 2. Vehicle parts.
 - 3. Paint.
 - 4. Things carried on vehicle and scattered.
 - 5. Baggage, clothing, bottles, cans, or papers.
 - 6. Fibers or hairs.
 - 7. Tire prints and footprints.
 - 8. Fingerprints.
- H. The above items should be photographed when necessary and locations measured prior to being collected as evidence. All of the above items should be collected, packaged, and placed into evidence per Office policy.
- I. Information exchange - Investigating deputies will facilitate drivers exchanging information at an accident scene. deputies can best see that this exchange is complete by using the department exchange of information form.

45.27.5 Procedures for Handling Accidents Involving Injury, Fire Hazard, and Hazardous Materials

- A. Upon arrival at the scene of any traffic accident, the deputy shall check for injuries and fatalities and render aid as appropriate.
 - 1. Where death is likely or evident, the deputy shall notify the shift supervisor immediately.

- a) The shift supervisor shall notify the appropriate accident investigation deputy, if one is available.
 - b) The investigating deputy may notify the medical examiner if appropriate.
- 2. The traffic accident shall be thoroughly investigated and the scene shall be secured the same as a major crime scene.
- 3. Investigating deputies are to be aware of the possibility of alcohol and/or drugs being a contributing factor to the accident.
 - a) Blood or breath samples shall be obtained when appropriate.
 - b) If probable cause exists, the obtaining of a blood sample does not have to be voluntary. The sample should be drawn in accordance to existing policy and statutes.
 - c) If probable cause does not exist, the deputy shall request the driver(s) to submit to a voluntary chemical test.
- 4. Preliminary investigation:
 - a) Since accidents involving fatalities or serious bodily injury have the potential for criminal charges being filed, the investigation must be as complete and detailed as possible.
 - b) To enable the follow-up investigator to complete the investigation, it is important that the preliminary investigator complete as many of the following step as possible.

- i) Secure the area as in any major crime scene. If possible, notify the accident investigator prior to removal of vehicles.
 - ii) Identify and separate drivers, witnesses, and passengers. Obtain detailed statements indicating what they could testify to, if anything.
 - iii) Determine if the driver of any vehicle drove the vehicle in a reckless manner, or if the driver or operator was under the influence of an intoxicating liquor and/or drug, and such conduct was proximate cause of the death or serious bodily injury to any participant in the accident.
 - iv) Obtain detailed information from medical personnel as to the extent of injury or the probable cause of death.
5. In the event a deputy responds to a traffic accident and identifies a potential fire hazard, hazardous materials are involved or a fire has already ignited, the deputy will:
- a) Immediately request the fire department respond to the scene, request emergency medical services as required and be aware of appropriate incident command protocols that may be required.
 - b) If the hazard involves a flammable liquid or vapor, position the patrol vehicle away from the hazard. Do not drive the vehicle through any flammable liquid or vapor.

- c) Be cautious of utilizing radio equipment around escaping flammable vapors or gases.
 - d) Remove all injured parties, drivers, passengers, witnesses, and bystanders away from the hazard to a location of safety.
 - e) Arrange to divert traffic from the area of danger.
 - f) Advise the shift supervisor of any relevant information.
 - g) Upon arrival of the fire department, relinquish command to the on-scene fire department commander per standard incident command protocols.
 - h) Once the fire is extinguished or the hazard has been removed, the deputy will again assume command of the scene and conclude the accident investigation.
6. Explosives, flammable and combustible liquids, flammable solids, oxidizing materials, corrosives, flammable and nonflammable compressed gases, poisons, and poison gases are shipped daily on both roadways and railways. deputies should be aware that the potential for investigating an accident involving a vehicle transporting a hazardous material is significant. deputies should be especially cautious when investigating any accident where known or suspected hazardous materials are involved.
- a) Upon arrival at the scene, the deputy must be alert for hazardous materials. The substance can be identified by use of the following sources:

- i) Placards as required by the department of transportation.
 - ii) Shape and type of transporting vehicle.
 - iii) Driver of the vehicle.
 - iv) Bills of lading.
 - v) Driver's log book.
 - vi) Labels on containers.
 - vii) Unusual vapors, liquids, or smoke.
- b) **If a recognized hazard exists, the deputy shall not attempt to rescue those persons in the hazard area.**
The deputy shall notify communications to contact the shift supervisor and the Haz-Mat unit.
- c) The deputy shall take appropriate action to stabilize the conditions by providing adequate protection to the scene and isolating the immediate area, to limit access to responding emergency vehicles.
- d) Eliminate the possibility of sparks from smoking, flares, electricity, radios, or by driving through the flammable substance.
- e) The deputy and/or shift supervisor, if on scene, shall relinquish command of the incident to the fire department commander until the material has been neutralized.
- f) The Sheriff's Office shall assist with traffic control, crowd control, and evacuation if necessary.
- g) Once the hazard has been neutralized, the investigating deputy shall resume command of the accident scene and conduct the investigation in accordance with provisions of these procedures.

- h) Extra staffing and time, directly associated with the hazardous material incident, should be documented for any reimbursement charges which the hazardous material carrier may be responsible for.
7. In the event of a traffic accident involving a train, the following procedures are necessary in addition to the usual traffic investigation effort:
- A. Upon arrival, care for any injured person(s)
 - B. Locate and identify the engineer and the conductor.
 - C. Advise communications to notify a railroad detective or yard foreman to alert any oncoming rail traffic that might present an additional hazard.
 - D. Record the engineer's name, train number, and engine number.
 - E. If probable cause exists, the deputy may request the engineer and/or vehicle operator to submit to a blood alcohol test or other chemical test.
 - F. Take the necessary photographs.
 - G. Mark key points for measurements and diagrams.
 - H. Clear the track and right-of-way.
 - I. Conduct a thorough examination of the railroad crossing, including grade, visibility, and condition and operation of control signals. If necessary, notify railroad officials for technical inspections of the railroad tracks.

- J. Coordinate follow-up effort with railroad detectives and the conductor to determine personnel on the train, their assigned responsibility, and their location at the time of the accident.

45.27.6 Hazardous material: response and procedures

- A. Whenever an deputy responds to a hazardous material incident, he/she shall adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Choose the best route to approach. Stop upwind or uphill.
2. At the scene, report the situation to communications. Give exact location, recommended approach routes, and call for assistance. Do not try to handle it alone. Call the fire department.
3. Establish an incident command.
4. Notice and report the extent of the spill. What form the material is in. What direction it is flowing. Remember, the invisible vapor cloud is much larger than the visible cloud.
5. Avoid contact with the material or fumes.
6. Isolate the area. Warn people in the area.
7. Eliminate sources of possible ignition.
8. Rescue the injured, if prudent.
9. Identify materials and determine conditions. Spell out the name, letter by letter. Give complete EPA number, including the dots and dashes.
10. Use the Orange Dot Guide Book for initial response.

11. If necessary, evacuate.
 12. If help is not available, call Chemtec:
1-800-424-9300.
- B. Traffic accidents are a common cause of hazardous material spills: gasoline, diesel oil, etc. If there is a material spill, notify the fire department as soon as possible. The fire department can assist in determining if a hazardous spill report is required.