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LAURENS COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT CENTER

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

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SOP# P-230

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SUBJECT:           TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS:

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INDEX AS: ACCIDENTS:       ACCIDENT REPORTS:

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EFFECTIVE DATE: 09/30/2005           REVISED DATE:  
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I.    PURPOSE:

To establish guidelines to ensure that information concerning accidents that occur in Laurens County is properly reported and recorded.

II.   SCOPE:

These guidelines shall apply in all accidents involving one or more vehicles, where there exists:

1.    Death or injury to one or more persons;
2.    Property damage to vehicles or other property;
3.    Evidence that a vehicle left the scene;
4.    Collision due to alcohol or drugs;
5.    Hazardous materials.

III.  POLICY:

It shall be the policy of the Laurens County Law Enforcement Center for Deputies to respond to and report accidents that occur outside the corporate limits of the City of Dublin in Laurens County.

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IV. TRAFFIC ACCIDENT RESPONSE AND INVESTIGATION:

- A. When notified that an accident has occurred, either by telephone or radio, the Deputies response to the accident scene will be determined by the seriousness of the accident.

Deputies shall respond to all accidents with injury or death or accidents that present potential hazardous conditions, with emergency lights and siren. Other accident responses will be non-emergency.

Deputies responding to accidents with two or more vehicles and/or injuries shall normally turn the accident investigation over to the Georgia State Patrol. If exigent (unusual or urgent) circumstances arise, working the accident will be at the discretion of the Supervisor.

Deputies will always assist the Georgia State Patrol as needed.

V. DUTIES OF FIRST OFFICER TO ARRIVE AT ACCIDENT SCENE:

- A. Deputies responding to the scene of an accident will drive in a safe manner and must not endanger themselves or the public. The first Deputy on the accident scene will take the following action:

1. Place patrol vehicle in a manner to protect the accident scene;
2. Summon additional assistance;
3. Search for injured. Administer first Aid/CPR until emergency unit arrives;
4. Protect the scene from bystanders;
5. Establish traffic patterns around the scene;
6. Locate persons involved in the accident;
7. Locate witnesses.

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B. Fire Hazards:

Whenever a fire hazard exists, the first Deputy shall take immediate action to clear the area of all persons and shall notify communications for the assistance of fire department personnel. The Deputy shall summon additional Law enforcement assistance to make a perimeter around the accident scene.

C. Hazardous Materials:

In the event of train derailment, or traffic accident suspected to involve hazardous materials, the responding Deputy shall immediately:

1. Notify communications center for Fire Department and emergency management assistance;
2. Notify the supervisor in charge to proceed to the scene;
3. Move and keep people away from accident scene;
4. Request additional Law Enforcement assistance to establish a perimeter around the scene;

\*\* WHEN APPROACHING THE SCENE OF AN ACCIDENT INVOLVING ANY CARGO:

1. Do not walk into or touch any spilled material;
2. Avoid inhalation of all gases, fumes and smoke even if no hazardous materials are involved;
3. Do not assume that gases or vapors are harmless because of lack of smell.

SUPERVISORS AT SCENE SHALL ESTABLISH A COMMAND POST NEAR THE ACCIDENT SCENE AND COORDINATE ACTIVITIES FROM THIS POST.

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VI. DUTIES OF INVESTIGATION OFFICER;

- A. Any accident that occurs outside the city limits shall be properly reported by the Investigating Officer or Deputy on a Georgia Uniform Motor Vehicle Accident Report, if the accident occurs on a public highway, road, street, or public property.
- B. Accidents occurring on private property shall be properly reported on a private property report. All accident reports shall be read and approved by the Supervising Officer in charge before forwarding to the Records Division.
- C. The investigating Deputy shall be responsible for the following on scene duties:
  - 1. Interviewing principals/witnesses;
  - 2. Examining/recording vehicle damage;
  - 3. Recording accident information;
  - 4. Determining damages.
  - 5. Taking measurements, when appropriate;
  - 6. Taking photographs, when appropriate;
  - 7. Collecting/preserving evidence;
  - 8. Exchanging information among parties involved.
- D. Follow up activities may be conducted away from the accident scene after normal flow of traffic is resumed. The investigating Deputy shall be responsible for follow-up accidents when necessary. Follow-up activities include.
  - 1. Collecting off-scene data- includes locating hit and run vehicles, talking to other witnesses who are not present at the scene;
  - 2. Obtaining/recording witnesses statements;

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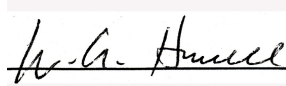
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3. Reconstructing accidents- includes making test skids, measurements, replace vehicles;
  4. Completion of accident report and an incident report, if necessary, to support criminal charges arising from the incident.
- E. Expert or technical assistance may be requested if the accident involves a fatality or serious injury. Technical/Expert assistance will be authorized by the Supervising Officer.  
Such assistance may include:
1. Professional photography;
  2. Surveyors;
  3. Mechanics;
  4. Physicists;
  5. Physicians.
- All expert reports will be included in the Investigating Deputy's report.
- F. The Investigating Deputy shall be authorized to issue a citation for any violation that results in a traffic accident. Deputies should take enforcement action whenever they detect a violation of law or ordinance and such violation was the cause of the accident.

  
W. A. HARRELL  
SHERIFF

09/30/2005  
EFFECTIVE DATE