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MONTGOMERY COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

No. 24-02

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VEHICLE COLLISION INVESTIGATION AND REPORTING POLICY

MONTGOMERY COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

VEHICLE COLLISION INVESTIGATION AND REPORTING POLICY

Issued by: Fire Chief

Policy No. 24-02

Supersedes DFRS Policy and Procedure #605

Vehicle Accident Investigation and Reporting

Authority: Montgomery County Code Section 21-d.(2)(4)

Effective Date: June 15, 2012

Section 1. **Purpose:** To establish a policy and procedure for investigating and reporting collisions and incidents involving vehicles driven/operated by Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service (MCFRS) personnel.

It is also the goal of MCFRS to ensure that the personnel assigned to its Safety Section to investigate Fire Department collision/incidents meet the requirements of NFPA 1521 *Standards for Fire Department Safety Officer*.

Section 2. **Applicability.** This policy and procedure applies to all MCFRS personnel.

Section 3. **Definitions.**

- a. **Apparatus.** Any vehicle owned, leased, or operated by MCFRS or a local fire and rescue department (LFRD).
- b. **Collision.** That occurrence in a sequence of events involving a motor vehicle which produces personal injury, death, or property damage regardless of fault, nature, and extent of personal injury or property damage. This includes occurrences resulting in no property damage, but injuring persons inside or on the vehicle.
- c. **Collision/Incident Investigation Checklist.** A document used as a guide for investigating collisions or incidents. Using this checklist will help to ensure that all collisions and incidents are investigated consistently. (See Attachment #1.)



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- d. **Collision/Incident Investigation Kit.** A supply of materials used to properly investigate and document vehicle collisions and incidents. These kits are carried on the MCFRS Safety Section vehicles, MCFRS Battalion vehicles, and other staff vehicles as appropriate. At a minimum, a Collision/Incident Investigation Kit should include:
- A digital camera;
 - A 100-foot tape measure;
 - A can of marking paint;
 - A note pad and pencil/pen; and
 - An Incident Investigation Checklist.
- e. **Collision/Incident Investigator.** An individual who is authorized by the Fire Chief to investigate vehicle collisions and incidents.
- f. **Incident.** An unusual, unplanned occurrence that does not result in immediate property damage or injury, but could produce a claim by or against the County or a local fire and rescue department (LFRD), or their personnel, at a later date.
- g. **MCFRS Duty Chief.** On-duty operational chief(s) in the County, designated by the Division Chief of Operations as the on-duty operations chief for a scheduled period of time.
- h. **MCFRS Personnel.** All operational and administrative individuals of the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service.
- i. **Risk Management Accountability Program (Risk MAP).** The MCFRS electronic database, maintained by the Safety Section, used to report collisions, incidents, injuries, and near misses.
- j. **Safety Chief.** MCFRS Assistant Chief assigned to the Safety Section by the Fire Chief. The Safety Chief is responsible for maintaining a collision notification group.
- k. **Safety Officer.** Trained MCFRS personnel designated by the Fire Chief and assigned or detailed to the MCFRS Safety Section.
- l. **Safety Section.** The MCFRS Section designated by the Fire Chief to manage the overall safety program of the Department.



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- m. **Supervisor.** An individual responsible for the assignment and management of MCFRS personnel at the same work site, program, or location.

Section 4. Policy.

- a. MCFRS intends to reduce the number and severity of **collisions** and **incidents** involving the operation of vehicles and **apparatus** through education, training, and accountability, and by providing safe driving and operating policies and practices.
- b. All **collisions** and **incidents** involving MCFRS or LFRD **apparatus** must be investigated and reported in accordance with this policy.
- c. For **collisions** and **incidents** involving a Chief Officer, the Duty Operations Chief and/or an Assistant Chief or higher ranking chief officer must handle the post-collision drug and alcohol testing.
- d. The **Safety Officer**, or designee, **must** be the lead investigator on all **collisions/incidents** resulting in any injuries, and for those resulting in more than \$2499 *total* damage of all vehicles and other property involved.
- e. All **collisions, incidents, injuries, and property damage, must** be reported using **Risk MAP**.

Section 5. Responsibilities.

- a. **MCFRS Personnel** must:
1. Report **collisions** and **incidents** to the ECC via radio, to their immediate **supervisor**, and request emergency assistance and police response as appropriate;
 2. Ensure proper medical attention is given to any injured person;
 3. Cooperate with and provide truthful information to the **Collision/Incident Investigator** and police regarding the **collision/incident**;
 4. Make no statements to any other individual while at the scene, except as approved by the **Collision/Incident Investigator**, as to



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fault, liability, or preventability regarding the **collision/incident**;

5. Make no alteration or change to the condition of the **apparatus** or equipment that would affect the nature of any investigative procedure or results;
 6. Provide a detailed written statement to the **Collision/Incident Investigator(s)** outlining the circumstances of the **collision/incident**; and
 7. Notify the County Division of Risk Management, via the chain of command, as soon as possible, and request guidance before paying any **collision/incident**-related traffic citation(s).
- b. The **Supervisor** must comply with Section 5.a. immediately above, and:
1. Ensure that the on-duty ECC supervisor has been notified of the **collision** or **incident**;
 2. Ensure that the **collision/incident** is properly investigated and reported;
 3. Ensure that the police are notified, as appropriate; and
 4. Complete an *Employer's First Report of Injury* for any injured **MCFRS personnel**.
- c. The on-duty ECC Supervisor must:
1. Notify the appropriate police agency for response;
 2. Notify the closest Battalion Chief (or appropriate Chief Officer) and the on-duty **Safety Officer** of the **collision/incident** (via phone or radio);
 3. Upon the request of the **Collision/Incident Investigator**, send a text message to the collision notification group, indicating: the unit involved; its stock number; the **collision/incident** location; the disposition (whether Personal Injury Collision or Property Damage Collision); and point of contact.



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d. The **MCFRS Duty Chief** must:

1. Ensure that the **collision/incident** is properly investigated and reported;
2. Ensure that a **Collision/Incident Investigator** is assigned;
3. Notify the Fire Chief and other chief officers, as required;
4. Ensure the LFRD Chief/designee is notified when the involved **apparatus** is owned by an LFRD, or if LFRD personnel are involved in the **collision/incident**;
5. Assume the responsibilities of the **Collision/Incident Investigator** when one is unavailable;
6. Assist the **Collision/Incident Investigator** on major **collisions** involving disabling **apparatus** damage, and whenever there is personal injury;
7. Assist as needed in acquiring replacements for **apparatus** out-of-service as a result of a **collision/incident**;
8. Assist the **Collision/Incident Investigator**, as necessary, to ensure that this Policy is followed.

e. The **Battalion Chief** (or Chief Officer) must:

1. Report immediately to the scene of the **collision/incident**;
2. Determine, with the **Safety Officer**, who will be the lead **Collision/Incident Investigator**;
3. Determine whether the **collision/incident** meets post-collision drug/alcohol testing parameters, as provided in MCFRS Policy #26-08, *Substance Abuse Testing and Rehabilitation*;
4. Conduct the **collision/incident** investigation with the **Safety Officer**. However, either officer can conduct the investigation if one is not available;



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5. Notify the Duty Chief, the LFRD Chief (if LFRD owned-equipment), and Fleet Section;
 6. Coordinate and escort the driver(s) to the post-collision testing site when required;
 7. Maintain an up-to-date **Collision/Incident Investigation Kit**.
- f. The **Safety Officer** must:
1. Report immediately to the scene of the **collision/incident**;
 2. Determine, with the Battalion Chief (or Chief Officer), who will be the lead **Collision/Incident Investigator**;
 3. Ensure that all **Collision/Incident Investigators** are certified and approved by the Fire Chief;
 4. Conduct the **collision/incident** investigation with the Battalion Chief (or Chief Officer). However, either officer can conduct the investigation if the other is not available;
 5. Determine whether the **collision** meets post drug/alcohol testing parameters, as provided in MCFRS Policy #26-08, *Substance Abuse Testing and Rehabilitation*;
 6. Notify the **Safety Chief** or designee if: personnel or civilians are injured; a death has occurred; **apparatus** is damaged or destroyed; where there is disagreement as to preventability; or, as is otherwise appropriate;
 7. Maintain an up-to-date **Collision/Incident Investigation Kit**.
- g. The **Collision/Incident Investigator(s)** must:
1. Report immediately to the scene and ensure completion of all required reports;
 2. Investigate the **collision/incident**;



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3. Provide the on-duty ECC Supervisor with information to send a text message to the collision notification group, indicating: the unit involved; its stock number; the **collision/incident** location; the disposition (whether Personal Injury Collision or Property Damage Collision); and a point of contact;
4. Follow the "**Collision/Incident Investigation Checklist**" (Attachment 1) to ensure a thorough investigation, documentation, and reporting of the **collision/incident**;
5. Gather information from all parties including, but not limited to:
 - A. vehicle registration information;
 - B. driver's license information;
 - C. insurance information;
 - D. scene and weather information;
 - E. photographs of scene and involved vehicle(s); and
 - F. statements from all drivers and witnesses.
6. Determine the cause and preventability of the **collision**, and report the findings to the appropriate chief officer;
7. Determine whether post-collision drug/alcohol testing parameters are met, as provided in MCFRS Policy #26-08, *Substance Abuse Testing and Rehabilitation*;
8. Coordinate with the police department and obtain a report number;
9. Coordinate with the MCFRS Fleet Section and/or LFRD regarding **apparatus** disposition;
10. Estimate total dollar amount of damage to all vehicles and property involved;
11. Determine the nature and extent of any personal injuries that resulted from the **collision**;
12. Complete the **Risk MAP** report within **24 hours**;
13. Ensure that the required reports and statements of **MCFRS**



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personnel are properly completed and submitted as required;

14. Notify the MCFRS Fleet Section if County/LFRD maintained **apparatus** is involved in the **collision/incident**;
 15. Coordinate with the MCFRS Fleet Section Chief/designee on the impounding of **apparatus** for inspection when mechanical failure is suspected or claimed, a serious injury occurs, or as the investigation reasonably dictates;
 16. Notify/coordinate with the towing company after consulting with the MCFRS Fleet Section, as required;
 17. Notify the appropriate LFRD, as required.
- h. The MCFRS **Safety Section** must:
1. Review all completed **Risk MAP** reports to ensure their accuracy and completion;
 2. Notify the insurance carrier and file all claim forms;
 3. Attach the police report to the **Risk MAP** Report;
 4. Maintain the MCFRS Certified Drivers List;
 5. Maintain all **Risk MAP** data;
 6. Notify County Risk Management and/or Maryland Occupational Safety and Health Administration when three or more **MCFRS personnel** are hospitalized, or if a Line of Duty Death occurs.
- i. The MCFRS Fleet Section must:
1. Assist the **Collision/Incident Investigator(s)**; and
 2. Ensure that **apparatus** involved in a **collision/incident** are evaluated for mechanical defects by a qualified mechanic, as is reasonably appropriate.



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Section 6. **Procedure.** When a **collision/incident occurs**, the driver/operator **must**:

- a. Stop, secure the **apparatus**, and determine whether anyone is injured;
- b. Notify ECC and the **supervisor**;
- c. Ensure that the police are notified;
- d. Assist in treating injured persons, and request additional assistance, if needed;
- e. Remain at the scene of the **collision/incident** and await the arrival of **supervisor(s)**, police, and other authorities. The unit involved in the **collision/incident** may continue its response, at the unit officer's discretion, when:
 1. the **collision/incident** occurs during an emergency response;
 2. the situation at the dispatched location is life-threatening (e.g.; a working code, a working fire, personal injury **collision** with trauma, etc.); or
 3. there are no injuries at the scene of the **collision/incident**.
- f. If conditions warrant leaving the scene, the driver/operator **must** record the license numbers of the other involved vehicles, and provide the MCFRS unit number and the driver/operator's name to the other driver(s). The driver/operator **must** advise other parties to remain on the scene and await the MCFRS representative(s). The unit must return to the **collision/incident** scene, or communicate with the **Collision/Incident Investigator**, immediately after the conclusion of the emergency.

Section 7. **Implementation and Enforcement:** The Fire Chief is the implementation and enforcement authority for all policies and regulations of the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service.

Section 8. **Effective Date.** This policy is effective on June 15, 2012.

Section 9. This policy *supersedes and repeals* DFRS Policy and Procedure #605, *Vehicle Accident Investigation and Reporting*.



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Approved:

Richard R. Bowers, Chief
Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service

Date

Attachment 1: Incident Investigation Checklist

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY.

OFFICE OF COUNTY ATTORNEY

BY Richard H. Melnick

DATE 6/5/12



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Attachment 1

MCFRS Collision/Incident Investigation Checklist

Unit: _____
Date: ____/____/____ Time: _____
Location: _____

Battalion where collision/incident occurred: _____ Shift: _____
LFRD/MCFRS Entity Involved: _____
Specific Worksite Involved: -

Driving Task in Progress when Occurred: _____
Active Driving Status: () Emergency () Non-Emergency () Parked

Record:

Weather Conditions: _____
Road Conditions: _____

Intersection : () Yes () No
If Yes: What controlled the intersection? _____
If Traffic Light: Color - () Red () Yellow () Green () Flash R or Y
Did MCFRS vehicle stop before proceeding through intersection?
() YES () NO

Severity of Collision :

Private Vehicles Involved: () Yes () No
Injured Persons: () Yes () No Treating Facility: _____

Reporting Police: _____
P.O. NAME: _____ REPORT #: _____

MCFRS INFORMATION:

Vehicle Stock #: _____
Vehicle VIN #: _____ Make/Model/Year: _____
Vehicle Owner: () MCFRS () LFRD#
Unit Officer: _____
Unit Driver: _____ FD ID#: _____



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Career () Volunteer ()
 Driver Status: () Primary () Certified () Back-up () Driver Training
 Detailed Driver: () Yes () No
 Station: _____ Shift: _____
 Driver License #: _____ State: _____ Class: _____
 Address: _____

Phone #: _____
 MCFRS Witnesses: (Name, Rank, Station/Shift, Riding Position, Phone #)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Total Damage to ALL property and vehicles in Collision \$: _____

MCFRS Driver Tested: () Yes () No
 >\$2499 total damage to all vehicles/property involved or any injury per MCFRS P&P #26-08. For non-uniformed employees, there is no automatic post-testing, except for mechanics who must be tested in compliance with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) standards. Any employee may be tested "for cause."

1. Notify lab of pending drug testing request @ 240-994-4098, 24/7.

(Contact lab from scene ASAP to ensure lab personnel can respond to FROMS in a timely manner.)

2. Notify Scheduling, DOC, Safety 700, and Admin B/C of incident and drug test; place driver on NATD and AML pending lab results.

Preventable by MCFRS?: () Yes () No

Damage to MCFRS Unit:



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Estimated \$ Damage to MCFRS Unit: _____

Vehicle Impounded: () Yes () No

Impound Location: _____

Reason Impounded: _____

OTHER VEHICLE(S) INFORMATION:

VIN#: _____

Make: _____ Model: _____ Year: _____

Plate# _____ State: _____

Insurance Co: _____ Policy#: _____

Owner Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone #: _____

Damage to Vehicles: _____

Estimated \$ Damage to Vehicle: _____

Driver Information: () Same as owner information; if not

Driver Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone #: _____ D.O.B. ____/____/____

Driver License # _____ State: _____ Class: _____

Driver Statement:

Injured in Vehicle: () Yes () No

Injured Name: _____ DOB: ____/____/____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Treating Facility: _____

WITNESS STATEMENTS:



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Name: _____

Telephone #: _____

Address:

In Involved Vehicle?: YES () NO ()

() Additional Witness Statements

*****REMEMBER TO TAKE AT LEAST 4 PICTURES of EACH VEHICLE
(At least one of each side)**

INCIDENT INVESTIGATORS ANALYSIS:

Analysis:

- Driving Tasks
- Final Pathway
 - Driver Errors
 - At-Risk Behaviors
 - Vehicle Hazards
 - Roadway Hazards

Causes:

- Cause and Effect
- 5 Whys
- Direct cause
- Causal Factors
- Root Cause

Corrective Actions:

- Recommendations for remediation and prevention from recurrence