

IDAHO STATE POLICE PROCEDURE

07.02 CRASH INVESTIGATION

I. GENERAL

- A. The Idaho State Police (ISP) investigates crashes to facilitate the exchange of information to the involved parties, gather evidence, document necessary information required by the Idaho Transportation Department, and determine law enforcement actions. The severity of the crash and the conditions at the scene, including weather, road conditions, and traffic density, affect the level of investigation and the amount of time that can safely be spent on details. Trooper and public safety remain the highest priorities.

II. CRASHES TO BE INVESTIGATED

ISP investigates traffic crashes when:

ISP is the primary investigating agency; or

Requested by another agency and available to assist.

- A. Traffic crashes that are investigated are reported in accordance with [Idaho Code § 49-1306](#).
- B. Crashes on private property may be investigated if requested and if Troopers are available.
- C. Class A crashes are:
 - 1. any crash involving apparently fatal injuries as determined at the scene, or any crash involving a bus, school bus, police vehicle, or state and local highway department vehicle;
 - 2. with an incapacitating injury to any person; or
 - 3. any crash causing destructive damage to major structures or equipment, such as bridges, buildings, high tension wires, or water mains.
- D. All class A crashes are reviewed by an ISP Reconstructionist assigned by the district to determine the need for crash reconstruction.
- E. Class B crashes are:
 - 1. any crash involving apparently incapacitating injury; or
 - 2. any crash involving disabling damage to a motor vehicle so that it can not be driven, or in the case of trailers, towed from the scene of the crash in the usual manner during daylight after simple repairs.
- F. Class C crashes are all other crashes reported to or attended by police.

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III. INITIAL CRASH RESPONSE

- A. Troopers responding to the scene of a traffic crash must take action as the circumstances demand. This includes the following:
1. arrive safely;
 2. check for the presence of hazardous materials and respond appropriately;
 3. park the patrol vehicle where it will not create an additional hazard;
 4. use overhead lights, cones, and/or flares to protect the crash scene and alert oncoming traffic of danger;
 5. check for circumstances that require additional or special assistance, such as:
 - a. injuries requiring emergency medical response;
 - b. trapped victims requiring extrication;
 - c. downed power lines requiring response from the power company;
 - d. fire requiring fire department equipment; or
 - e. road and railway structures or conditions requiring response by the appropriate highway department or railroad.

IV. TROOPER RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Safety is the first priority for all Troopers responding.
- B. The Trooper assigned to a traffic crash call is responsible for the crash investigation and all necessary reports unless a different assignment is made by a supervisor.
1. A Crash Reconstructionist may be requested to assist in the investigation under circumstances described in the Crash Reconstruction procedure.
 2. The investigating Trooper at a crash scene is responsible for scene management, including:
 - a. protecting the scene and preventing further damage or injury;
 - b. administering emergency first aid treatment until medical personnel relieve the Trooper;
 - c. assisting with medical care or extraction only when required;
 - d. requesting necessary additional assistance;
 - e. establishing safe traffic patterns;
 - f. proper investigation and reporting; and
 - g. expediting removal of vehicles, persons, and debris in accordance with [Idaho Code 49-662](#).
- C. As a general rule, an on-duty supervisor responds to the scene of fatality crashes.
- D. If appropriate, the supervisor manages the scene and allocates patrol and other resources to facilitate the investigation.

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V. INVESTIGATION PROCEDURES

- A. Collect urgent data –Troopers collect data and evidence subject to loss or destruction first. Steps for gathering evidence may include:
 - 1. Photograph the following:
 - a. roadway evidence;
 - b. final resting position of people, vehicles, and debris;
 - c. all sides of the involved vehicles;
 - d. crash scene and vehicle approaches; and
 - e. occupant injuries.
 - 2. Document the following measurements:
 - a. final positions of vehicles and people; and
 - b. marks having evidentiary significance.
 - 3. Complete a field sketch and notes; and
 - 4. Collect any evidence of violations of the law.
 - 5. Interview drivers and witnesses:
 - a. interview drivers and witnesses separately;
 - b. record their statements in writing, on video/audio, or both;
 - c. collect all information needed to complete reports;
 - d. facilitate the exchange of required information between the parties in accordance with Idaho Code 49-1302.
- B. Follow-up away from the crash scene may be required for a thorough investigation and may include the following:
 - 1. interview victims or witnesses not interviewed at the crash scene;
 - 2. inspect damage to vehicles in daylight at the impound lot or wrecking yard;
 - 3. visit the hospital;
 - 4. visit the morgue, attend the post-mortem examination, document injuries, and photograph remains.

VI. REPORTS

- A. All field notes, measurements, photographs, witness statements, and similar materials are part of the official investigation. The records are:
 - 1. filed in a timely manner with the Idaho Vehicle Collision Report (IVCR) in the district office;
 - 2. maintained by ISP per the retention schedule.
- B. Reports are submitted to the Idaho Transportation Department's Office of Highway Safety in accordance with [Idaho Code § 49-1306](#).
- C. The investigating Trooper:
 - 1. provides the Regional Communications Officer (RCO) with crash information required for RCO reporting prior to going out of service; and

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2. on serious injury, fatality, or special circumstance crashes, provides the RCO with a synopsis of the crash appropriate for media use in accordance with procedure [02.05 Media Releases](#);

VII. FATALITY CRASHES

- A. The investigating Trooper
 1. Contacts the county coroner to assist in confirming the identity of deceased individuals;
 2. Ensures the coroner obtains blood samples from all deceased pedestrians and motor vehicle operators per Idaho Code 49-1314;
 3. Ensured all notifications, including next of kin, are completed in a timely manner in accordance with procedure [07.11 Patrol Operations](#); and
 4. Provides the RCO with required information as soon as the information is available.
- B. The RCO completes the ILETS system "FATL" mask entry as soon as possible.

VIII. CRASHES CAUSED BY PHYSICAL HAZARDS

- A. The investigating Trooper reports crash-causing physical hazards to the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) and/or the local Board of County Commissioners in accordance with [Idaho Code § 49-1315](#) using a written memorandum.
- B. If an immediate traffic safety hazard exists or if conditions require that a state or federal highway be closed for an extended period of time, the investigating Trooper requests that the RCO notify the appropriate ITD District Engineer and ISP supervisor as soon as possible.
- C. The investigating Trooper may also request ITD set up traffic control. Highways may be officially closed ONLY by an ITD declaration.

IX. COMMERCIAL VEHICLE/TRUCK CRASHES

- A. Any crash involving a truck larger than a one-ton pickup truck is considered a commercial vehicle/truck (truck) crash.
- B. For the purposes of the IVCR, any vehicle other than an All Terrain Vehicle (as defined in [Idaho Code §49-102](#) or Utility Type Vehicle (as defined in [Idaho Code §49-122](#) having six (6) or more tires is considered to be a commercial vehicle.
- C. For truck crashes resulting in fatalities, serious injuries, or significant property damage:
 1. the investigating Trooper requests a Commercial Vehicle Safety/Hazardous Materials Specialist (CVS/HM Specialist);

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2. if available, a CVS/HM Specialist responds to the scene to conduct any necessary inspections;
3. if a CVS/HM Specialist responds to the scene, the truck should not be removed until the CVS/HM Specialist authorizes removal.

D. For truck crashes, the investigating officer may contact a CVS/HM Specialist for assistance as needed.

X. AIRCRAFT AND BOATING CRASHES

- A. Aircraft crash investigations are the responsibility of the Idaho Aeronautics Administration.
- B. Boating crash investigations are generally under the jurisdiction of the County Sheriff.
- C. Investigative assistance may be provided if requested.

XI. INVESTIGATIONS OF ISP VEHICLE CRASHES

- A. Crashes involving ISP vehicles are investigated under procedure [02.12 Use of State Vehicles/Fleet Management](#).