

Germantown Police Department

Policies and Procedures

Number: 8-3
Effective Date: January 1, 2003
Subject: Grade Crossing Crash Investigation
Previous Revisions:

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide procedures for officers responding to the scene of a grade crossing crash.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Germantown Police Department that officers responding to grade crossing crashes should follow established procedures to effectively and efficiently conduct the investigation and complete the crash report in a timely manner.

III. PROCEDURE

The following are guidelines to be followed when conducting a crash investigation at any grade crossing.

- A. Upon arrival at the scene, officers will determine if there are any personal injuries and call for rescue personnel when necessary.
- B. Officers should ascertain whether or not hazardous chemicals are a concern and take appropriate precautions (i.e., traffic control, staying upwind, evacuating citizens, etc.).
- C. After the crash scene is stabilized, officers will conduct a thorough investigation. During the investigation, the officers should:
 1. Obtain basic information as to time, location, identification of vehicles and parties involved, and identification of witnesses.
 2. Note and measure from the crossing any obstruction which may have contributed to the crash or which may be used as an excuse for the crash, i.e., a cut of rail cars on an adjacent track or a vehicle parked close to the crossing.

3. Note and measure skid marks, which are relevant to the crash.
 4. Note the position (up or down) of the windows of the vehicle involved.
 5. Determine if the vehicle's radio or tape player is turned on and if so the volume (high or low).
 6. Note whether or not the streetlights are illuminated.
 7. In the event a victim has been thrown from a vehicle or struck by a train, mark the spot where the victim came to rest.
 8. If the crossing is protected by signals and/or gates, determine if they are operating properly.
- D. The investigating officer will take photographs of the crash scene.
- E. Officers should go to the hospital or medical facility and obtain information relative to the investigation from medical personnel and follow up on the condition of transported parties.
- F. The following is a checklist of information that should be obtained by the investigating officer(s):
1. Engineer information
 - a. Name, address, DOB, phone
 - b. Time of crash
 - c. Train speed estimate at crash

(NOTE: Operators license not required on crash report)
 2. Conductor information:
 - a. Name, address, DOB, phone

(NOTE: Operators permit not required on crash report)
 3. Train information:
 - a. Lead engine number
 - b. Train I.D. number (from conductor)
 - c. Number of cars in train

- d. Railroad co. name/address (owns tracks)
- e. Name of railroad company operating train
- f. Names of additional crewmembers

4. Engine information:

- a. Head light working?
- b. Horn working?
- c. Bell working?

5. Miscellaneous information:

- a. Railroad car number on crossing?
- b. Distance to last railroad car from point of impact (POI)
- c. Witnesses

(NOTE: At this point, if no further information is required, consider releasing the train)

6. Crossing signals:

- a. Light/gate bell combination?
- b. Light/bell combination?
- c. Passive warning (crossbucks)?
- d. Lights flashing/bells ringing when officers arrived?
- e. Crossing gates down?

(If devices not working at officers arrival, explain)

7. Other crossing characteristics:

- a. Advance warning signs in place? (distance from this sign to nearest rail)
- b. Crossing surface (rubber, asphalt, etc.)
- c. Pavement markings
- d. DOT/AAR crossing I.D. number
- e. Width of right-of-way
- f. Visual obstructions on driver approach
- g. Citation given, if warranted

IV. REVIEW PROCESS

An annual review of this policy shall be conducted to determine if it should be revised, cancelled or continued in its present form.

This order shall remain in effect until revoked or superseded by competent authority.