



Bureau of Investigations

# VEHICULAR CRIMES UNIT

## Procedures Manual

### I. THE TRAFFIC INVESTIGATIONS UNIT [TIU] MISSION

Pursuant to SJPD Duty Manual section A1800, this unit is devoted to the investigation of traffic collisions and other types of incidents that are considered to be accidents occurring within the City limits. Members of TIU bear the responsibility of gathering the evidence in these types of potentially criminal cases. TIU reviews these cases with the Office of the District Attorney and assists in the judicial process of trial preparation. TIU participates when needed as expert witnesses in the field of traffic collision reconstruction. TIU otherwise helps the Department members fulfill the obligations identified in sections L6900 and L7000.

To meet this duty, members of TIU participate in on-going professional and technical classes to build their ability to understand the theories and applications of the sciences and the laws that are related to collisions. Members of TIU seek current information in the literature and in the practical experiences of others that will broaden their depth of understanding. Members of TIU do this preparation constantly to maintain a level of competence for those times when they will be asked to explain how a collision occurred and the collision dynamics.

### II. THE PUPOSE OF THIS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

This collection of policies, procedures, and guidelines is meant to outline the basic responsibilities of a TIU member, and to ensure consistency within the unit. This manual is also meant to assist TIU members in several other ways. First, being the proper application of the law. Second, to create consistency and completeness of investigations that promotes interagency utility of the findings. Third, to guide members of TIU in the techniques of evaluating particular evidence, interviewing to get complete information and in the best practice methods of useful expert reports. It is recognized that some steps or conditions may not apply to every investigation and may not be utilized. These procedures and guidelines are always limited by collective experience and do not cover every potential set of facts an investigator might eventually find.

### III. UNIT PERSONNEL AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. **The Unit Supervisor** (Sergeant) reports to the Homicide Lieutenant, Bureau of Investigations. The Unit Supervisor has responsibility to achieve the compliance of the Vehicle Crimes Unit members in all matters administrative and legal. The Vehicle Crimes Unit is divided into the Auto Theft Unit and the Traffic Investigations Unit. The Unit Supervisor is also responsible for instituting a callout when appropriate.

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- B. The Sergeant of TIU directly supervises five investigator positions and one Principal Office Specialist.
1. The Sergeant of TIU has the following investigative responsibilities:
    - Respond to fatal collisions during duty hours and non-duty hours when available.
    - Contact TIU investigators and ascertain their availability in the event of a fatal collision during non-duty hours.
    - Monitor and intervene as necessary in on-going investigations.
    - Review completed cases.
    - Versadex coding and assignment of cases assigned to TIU.
    - Release of property in cases that are not assigned to an investigator.
    - Preparation or approval of press releases with regard to fatal accidents through PIO.
  2. The Sergeant of TIU has the following administrative responsibilities:
    - Maintain a log of fatal cases and their dispositions, for ease of reference on old cases and for furnishing accurate statistics when needed.
    - Monitor the case databases and call-out log for accuracy.
    - Coordinate training.
    - Coordinate the testing process for vacant TIU positions.
    - Provide input for the Annual Program Plan and Management Report.
    - Liaison with the Department of Transportation to reconcile the monthly fatal accident statistics.
    - Maintain an updated log of equipment assigned to TIU members.
    - Maintain the specialized software maintained by TIU.
    - Facilitate the general upkeep, maintenance and repair of unit equipment.
    - Update primary contact status for fatal notification with SJPd Communications as needed.
    - Coordinate S.T.A.R. training with BFO.
    - Ensure a copy of every fatal collision report is faxed to the Coroner's Office as soon as possible.
    - Review the bi-weekly vehicle impound list published by OSSD. Release vehicles that have been held for 30 days (unless extension is needed).
- C. **Officers** of TIU are responsible for investigating fatal traffic collisions and other accidents where follow-up is necessary.
1. Officers of TIU have the following investigative responsibilities:
    - Investigate and file the cases assigned to them in accordance with the techniques identified in the SJPd Duty Manual and this policies and procedures manual.



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- Incoming officers to TIU will assume the responsibilities for cases assigned to the outgoing officers they replace.
- Release the property involved in completed cases. Investigators transferring to the Unit will be responsible for the property involved with the case assigned to the outgoing investigator. Property will be released **60** days after the sentencing date, if no appeal has been filed. CJIC will be utilized to determine the sentencing date, and to ensure an appeal has not been filed. If the item to be released is a firearm, notify the TIU Sergeant and follow the current guidelines established by law for weapons release.
- Act as the Officer of the Day [OD] on one assigned day of the week.

Remain in the office to assist the Non-Sworn personnel with incoming telephone calls.

Non-O.D. related fieldwork requires supervisor's approval.

Interview suspects, victims and witnesses associated with walk-in cases.

Interview individuals with appointments.

It is the responsibility of the OD to find a replacement if they intend to schedule an absence on their assigned day.

- Respond to fatal collisions during duty hours and when available during non-duty hours.
- TIU does receive Standby Duty Compensation, per the Memorandum of Agreement. When a fatality occurs, the sergeant in TIU will contact the investigators on-call to respond to the scene.

2. An Officer of TIU who is categorized as a **Traffic Investigator** has the following additional investigative responsibilities:

- Successfully complete the Intermediate Traffic Accident Investigation technical school.
- Successfully complete the Advanced Traffic Accident Investigation technical school.
- Successful completion of Traffic Accident Reconstruction training
- Acquire on the job training in the proper use of the map scenes / Total Station.



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A Traffic Investigator position has a 4-year limit of assignment in TIU before forced rotation will occur (if the investigator becomes a **Reconstructionist**, then it is a 5-year assignment).

3. An Officer in TIU who is categorized as a **Reconstructionist** has the following additional investigative responsibilities:

- Progress beyond the training level of a Traffic Investigator by successfully completing Traffic Accident Reconstruction technical school.
- Successfully complete a minimum of three classes from the list of approved curriculum prior to the third year within TIU. Refer to the addendum for the list of courses.
- Assist the other investigators in TIU with their fatal investigations.
- The Unit Commander has the final decision on who will become a Reconstructionist.
- There are no upper or lower limits on the number of Reconstructionists allowed within TIU.
- A Reconstructionist position has a five-year continuous total time limit of assignment in TIU before forced rotation will occur. This 1-year extension of a Reconstructionist is at the discretion of the Unit Supervisor.

## IV. TIU AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

### A. IMMEDIATE RESPONSIBILITY

- All fatal vehicle collisions whether the motor vehicle was “in transport” or not. This includes cases where the collision occurs on private property or at a job site. An example of a motor vehicle not in transport would be a runaway vehicle on private property where a person dies as a consequence of the vehicle movements.
- All fatal industrial accidents involving vehicles. The TIU investigation will be concerned with any possible criminal violation. CAL / OSHA will conduct their own separate investigation at the job site and their report will be used for civil purposes.
- All fatal aircraft collisions within the City limits. The TIU investigation will be concerned with any possible criminal violation. FAA and NTSB will conduct their own separate investigation for civil purposes and the determination of cause.
- All fatal train collisions that happen within the grade crossing of a city street and the rails of the track. The railroad police [AMTRAK and Union Pacific] will investigate cases involving pedestrians struck on the rails at locations other than at the intersection of the street. However, TIU will respond to assist if requested.
- Fatal Lightrail vehicle collisions occurring within the city jurisdiction at a roadway crossing (this includes bicycles). Lightrail vs. pedestrian is investigated by VTA.

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- Felony and misdemeanor hit and run collisions.
- Collision related false information and insurance fraud reports.
- DUI cases involving a collision where a suspect is in custody but the Court Liaison Unit needs assistance in follow-up investigation to make the case acceptable to the Office of the District Attorney [DA].
- Evading / illegal street racing cases where follow-up is required.

Refer to L6901 for the general provisions of Department policy regarding traffic accidents.

- In those cases that are beyond the general categories listed above, TIU will investigate when assigned by the Unit Commander.

### B. COLLISION INVESTIGATIONS OUTSIDE OF IMMEDIATE TIU RESPONSIBILITY.

TIU will defer investigations to other units when the classification of the criminal violations falls outside of the investigative scope. Examples of when this will happen include:

- Cases where the suspect is a juvenile (except where fatality has occurred).
- Evading an Officer cases involving the allegation of resisting arrest. Typically the Assaults Unit will bear the responsibility for follow-up in section 148 PC cases. TIU may be involved in interpreting the vehicle dynamics of any collisions.
- In hit and run cases where a fatality does not occur and the suspect is arrested by Patrol Officers. The Court Liaison Unit will process the preliminary reports and route the case to the DA. CLU will also release the holds on vehicles impounded for those cases.
- In fatal collision cases where the circumstances indicate the suspect formed malice aforethought and the state of mind indicates intent. The Homicide Unit may assume control of the investigation. TIU might be asked to interpret the vehicle dynamics of any collisions or to assist in the evidence collection process (willful act vs. unintentional collision).
- Fatalities that indicate the driver was deceased for reasons other than the direct result of the collision (medical). For example, the decedent suffered a heart attack that resulted in the collision.
- Cases of suicide involving a motor vehicle, train, or the light rail, whether the decedent occupied the vehicle or was a pedestrian using the vehicle as the method of suicide.

### C. ADDITIONAL INVESTIGATIONS, REVIEWS AND CONSULTATIONS.

- Review CHP 180 reports where Officers have impounded a vehicle and that vehicle is being held for TIU.

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- Review the preliminary reports associated with serious injury collisions when a Department member brings them to TIU and input is requested. “Refer to TIU for follow-up” does not obligate TIU involvement.
- Review the reports associated with Officer involved cases only when directed to do so. Typically, the investigators assigned to the Risk Management staff / City Accident Review Board at the Office of the City Attorney have direct responsibility in those cases. Because these cases involve Department members where a disciplinary action is under consideration, a formal administrative order is given to the Unit Supervisor to conduct the follow-up as the lead investigator. [L7011]
- Consult on those cases where technical advice is requested to answer a particular question. A simple answer may not be possible without considering the related effects of time, speed, and distance. It is important to understand that TIU is responsible for criminal investigations, not administrative investigations. TIU members will try to give an accurate answer to

hypothetical questions asked, but it is important to understand the limits of how such conditional information can be used.

## V. GENERAL OPERATING PROCEDURES

### **SCHEDULE**

- Individual daily schedules may vary, according to personal preference, as long as the needs of the unit are met. Department seniority will be the deciding factor in the event of a conflict of choice. Unless otherwise approved by a supervisor, a regular daily work schedule shall be observed. To vary an assigned work schedule requires a supervisor’s approval. If an investigator will be more than 15 minutes late for their assigned schedule, they are directed to notify a Sergeant. If an investigator calls in sick, or needs to use emergency time off of any variety, the investigator’s supervisor will be advised.
- Mid-day workouts are acceptable. The time spent is in addition to the investigator’s 10-hour shift and any time spent for lunch. If the investigator is assigned to a 10.5 -hour shift, the lunch hour will be restricted to one half-hour.
- The TIU Sergeant will consider requests for time off. When time off is approved it will be posted on the Time Off calendar. This calendar will also include vacation, training and sick leave.
- Minimum staffing will be 2 Unit members. The Unit Supervisor must clear any exception to this rule.



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- Officers responding to the field will note their status on the status board, including their estimated time back to the office. If the officer anticipates being gone longer than 2 hours they should apprise their supervisor.

### OVERTIME

- Any pre-planned overtime must be approved by a supervisor prior to working the event.
- Comp time exceeding 240 hours will be reduced in accordance to the current Memorandum of Agreement, Section 13.6.5.
- All paid overtime in excess of 10 hours per pay period shall be determined by the Unit Commander. Paid overtime will only apply to TIU related functions. A TIU member working a city funded pay job must obtain VIS code that identifies the overtime fund from which the time will be paid, and note the number on their timesheet.

### UNIT MEETINGS

- Unit meetings are essential for the clear communication and understanding of administrative and investigative information among Unit members. Unit meetings are held on Wednesday at 0900 hours. It is the supervisor's responsibility to ensure the attendance of Unit members.
- If an investigator cannot attend a meeting they must notify their supervisor. Weekly schedules will be arranged to accommodate the weekly meetings.
- Supervisors will advise any absent team member of the content of the missed meeting.

### CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION of ACCIDENT RECONSTRUCTION SPECIALISTS MEETINGS

- CAARS training meetings attended by traffic investigators from allied agencies are held quarterly. Unit members are encouraged to attend these meetings whenever possible. Release time will be granted.

### EQUIPMENT

1. Vehicles
  - Vehicles will be shared by investigators who will be responsible for keeping the vehicle clean, maintained in good condition and fueled.
  - A spare set of vehicle keys will be marked and hung on a hook on the outside of the TIU cubicles. Any investigator using the spare key will place a business card on the hook until the keys are returned.
  - Due to the nature of TIU, investigators may be assigned a vehicle to take home in the event of a fatal collision occurring during non-duty hours. Vehicle assignment is at the discretion of the TIU Supervisor.

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- If a vehicle assigned to TIU is loaned to another unit, a supervisor must approve it. While the vehicle is out on loan, a note indicating the borrowing unit and the officer's name and badge number shall be hung on the key's hook.
- 2. FIELD EQUIPMENT
  - It will be the responsibility of each unit member to maintain a complete uniform and required equipment.
- 3. SPECIAL EQUIPMENT
  - A. Handpack radios are assigned to unit members. They will not be loaned out without supervisor approval.
  - B. TIU maintains 2 vehicles with specialty equipment for the on-scene investigation of fatal collisions. One vehicle is fully equipped as a primary vehicle (callout rig #1113) and the other is minimally equipped as a secondary or back up (light rig #4755). An investigator using equipment and/or supplies from either vehicle will be responsible for returning and restocking the items used. All Investigators will share equal responsibility in the maintenance, stocking and general care of the vehicles and equipment.

## VI. INVESTIGATION GUIDELINES FOR NON-FATAL CASES







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calling the company and asking if the policy was in effect on the date of the collision.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

## VII. INVESTIGATION GUIDELINES FOR FATAL CASES

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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[illegible]



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- Complete, to the extent possible, an inventory of the vehicle's contents.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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\*In no way is this TIU Protocol meant to be all-inclusive to cover every investigation or exclusive of other investigative steps\*.

### C. POST SCENE / FOLLOW UP INVESTIGATION

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

|            |            |            |            |
|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] |
| [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] |
| [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] |
| [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] |
| [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] |

[REDACTED]





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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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- Measurement of the crush profile can be done with the Leica system.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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- Avoid the editorial interpretation of the actions of the involved parties.

## VIII. MISCELLANEOUS

### A. DRESS STANDARDS

- Standard attire for Investigators shall include a shirt with a collar or a polo shirt with the T.I.U. logo embroidered on the upper left chest.
- Pants shall be of the investigators choosing but will be clean and in good repair.
- No shorts or sandals will be allowed.
- For planned and scheduled court appearances business attire or the police uniform is required.



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- When responding to a TIU Callout investigators will dress in a professional manner, keeping in mind the weather and circumstances. Pants similar to BDU's, have been provided and shall be worn when called to fatal scene investigations
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- B. COFFEE FUND
  - Unit members may contribute, voluntarily, to a Unit coffee fund. The Primary Office Specialist maintains the fund.
- C. WORK AREA
  - Please keep your work area as organized as possible. Often times TIU personnel are called upon to assist in a case assigned to you, in your absence. This entails locating the case and its contents. Investigators are expected to keep food and other material that could attract rodents put away.

### ADDENDUM

#### **A. Institutions providing Training**

RCS Riverside County S/D  
NUTI Northwestern University Traffic Institute (Evanston, IL)  
TEEX Texas Engineering Extension Service, Texas A&M University  
(College Station, TX)  
IPTM Institute of Police Technology and Management, University of  
North Florida (Jacksonville, FL)  
CCI California Criminalistics Institute, Calif. Dept. of Justice  
(Sacramento, CA)  
EDC Engineering Dynamics Corporation  
RDA Rudy Degger and Associates  
COCOSD Contra Costa County Law Enforcement Training Center  
MAP Micro Survey



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### **B. Courses necessary to qualify as a TIU Investigator:**

- Traffic Accident Investigation (Intermediate) (RCS / COCOSD)
- Traffic Accident Investigation (Advanced) (RCS / COCOSD)
- Traffic Accident Reconstruction (RDA / TEEX / IPTM / RCS / COCOSD)
- MapScenes & Total Station (MAP/NUTI)

### **C. Approved elective courses needed to qualify as a Reconstructionist (choose 3)**

- Pedestrian / Bicycle Accident Reconstruction (TEEX / IPTM / RDA / RCS)
- Motorcycle Accident Reconstruction (TEEX / IPTM)
- Commercial Vehicle Accident Investigation (TEEX / IPTM)
- Commercial Vehicle Accident Reconstruction (TEEX / IPTM)
- Analysis of Speed from Vehicle Crush (RDA / RCS)
- Traffic Accident Photography (IPTM / CCI / NUTI)
- Biomechanics, Mechanisms of Injury (TEEX / CCI)
- Applied Physics for Accident Reconstruction (TEEX IPTM)
- Headlamp Examination (CCI)
- Human Factors in Accident Reconstruction (IPTM)
- EDCRASH Engineering Dynamics Corporation Reconstruction of Accident Speeds on the Highway (EDC / NUTI)
- EDSMAC Engineering Dynamics Simulation Model of Automobile Collisions (EDC / NUTI)
- Tire Forensics (IPTM)
- Auto Sketch (COCOCSD / RCSD)
- Interviewing Techniques (IPTM / CCI)

### **D. Additional courses recommended for TIU Reconstructionist:**

Vehicle Dynamics (NUTI)

Traffic Accident Reconstruction 1 (NUTI)

Traffic Accident Reconstruction 2 (NUTI)

**This is a representative list that will change with time and technology and the skill needs of an Investigator.**



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