

## Expanded Course Outline

### Major Accident Investigation Protocol / Procedure Course

- I. Introductions
  - A. Instructors / Students
  - B. Course Overview
    - 1. MAIT – Major (or Multidisciplinary- CHP) Accident Investigation Team
    - 2. Protocol / policies discussed are “industry standard”
    - 3. Your agency may be different based on manpower available
    - 4. Your agency should have protocols in place that you should know
  
- II. Administrative
  - A. Activation Scheduling
    - 1. MAIT Supervisors are responsible for maintaining the schedule of the “on-call” MAIT Officer(s)
    - 2. Two officers (if available) on call at all times
    - 3. On-call schedule consists of the names of the on-call officers and their contact information
    - 4. Schedule is completed for the year and should be provided to dispatch supervisors
  - B. On-call Criteria
    - 1. Maximum one hour response time (less for smaller districts)
    - 2. To be on-call, officers should have ability to maintain / work scene on their own
  - C. MAIT Response
    - 1. Both on-call officers shall respond to all activation / call-outs
    - 2. The on-call supervisor shall respond initially to the scene
    - 3. On scene supervisor may elect to call out additional team members or additional resources depending on the circumstances of the call
  
- III. Activation Criteria
  - A. Fatal Traffic Collision
    - 1. MAIT team shall be activated for all fatal traffic collisions
  - B. Serious Injury Collisions
    - 1. MAIT team may be activated to investigate serious injury collisions under the following circumstances
      - a. Injuries appear to be life threatening
      - b. Collision involved a felony “driving under the influence” (DUI)
      - c. At the Shift Commander’s discretion
      - d. Any collision with possibility of liability to the agency’s city / county
  - C. Officer Involved Collisions
    - 1. MAIT team shall be activated to investigate all serious injury traffic collisions involving an officer or civilian employee in an agency vehicle
    - 2. Scene documentation if requested by investigating authority
    - 3. MAIT may be activated to investigate a collision involving any city / county vehicle where there are serious injuries

#### IV. Equipment

- A. The following equipment should be available and used for any MAIT call-out:
  1. Dedicated MAIT vehicle
  2. FARO® 3D Scanner (or other measuring device)
  3. Digital Camera / Tripod / Flash Units
  4. Portable lighting trailer (or other generator operated lights for nighttime collisions)
  5. Laptop computer
  6. Digital audio recording device
  7. Crash Data Recorder (CDR)
  8. Accelerometer

#### V. Collision Scene Investigation and Management

- A. On-call investigator's responsibilities (initial)
  1. Respond to scene within 60 minutes of callout (30 minutes plus drive time)
  2. Identify scene impact parameters and ensure all evidence is contained within those parameters
  3. Manage traffic control devices and personnel to ensure scene integrity and officer safety
  4. Mark and collect any evidence in danger of being lost, contaminated, or inadvertently moved
  5. Photograph all details of scene and identified evidence
  6. Determine if any of the involved parties are under the influence and if they are, detain them and request a Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) if one is present
  7. Ensure that patrol officers obtain contact information and a verbal statement from any witnesses that cannot remain at scene
  8. Utilize and manage assigned resources from station / agency requesting assistance with investigation
- B. Scene manager (supervisor) responsibilities
  1. Respond to scene and assess any liability issues for governing agency (city/county)
  2. Notify civil liabilities, risk management, District Attorney's office, etc., if necessary
  3. Assist on-call officers wherever necessary
- C. Second Responding on-call officer responsibilities
  1. Respond to station and collect all equipment necessary to take to scene
    - a. The equipment brought to scene will be dependent on the station and equipment available
- D. Evidence Identification
  1. Upon arrival of team / equipment
    - a. Walk the scene together with initial responding officer and define the parameters of the scene and identify all items of evidence associated with the collision
    - b. If there is evidence identified that the team is unsure is associated with the collision, it shall be documented and included in the investigation to be looked at in the analysis phase
    - c. Mark and collect evidence
    - d. If a decedent was transported to hospital, send officer to hospital to photograph injuries
    - e. Each of involved parties will be evaluated by officer for impairment, and if there is any indication of impairment full DUI investigation shall be conducted
    - f. As a protocol, each involved party will be asked (consent) to submit to a blood draw, even if there are no obvious signs of impairment

- g. All statements SHALL be recorded from all involved parties perspective, including from several hundred feet preceding the Area Of Impact (AOI)
- E. Identify significant collision scene nuances
  - 1. Visibility
    - a. Examine scene from each involved party's perspective, including from several hundred feet preceding the AOI
- F. Look for visual obstructions such as:
  - 1. Foliage
  - 2. Structures (buildings, etc)
  - 3. Signs (for sale, roadway, business, etc)
  - 4. Roadway configurations (curves, grades, etc)
  - 5. Weather or other atmospheric conditions
  - 6. Vehicle issues (broken windshield, A pillar, etc)
  - 7. Lighting that might obstruct or obscure certain views
    - a. Examine the artificial lighting around the scene
    - b. Note type of lighting and location relative to AOI
    - c. Examine vehicle lighting at scene (if possible)
  - 8. Other
    - a. Roadway or other conditions around the scene
    - b. Temporary traffic or pedestrian controls (such as construction markers or barricades)
  - 9. All collision scene nuances SHALL be photographed to best depict the object or condition as it exists at the time of the collision
- G. Photography
  - 1. Photographer will photograph scene with a Digital Single Lens Reflex (DSLR) camera
  - 2. Tripod will be used whenever possible
  - 3. Range of photographs will include Overall, Mid-range, and Close-ups
  - 4. Photographs will be taken without placards at first and then with placards, utilizing all three ranges for each instance
  - 5. If photographs are taken during darkness, all attempts should be made to photograph the scene as is with existing light prior to the use of any flash or artificial lighting
  - 6. Photograph scene unaltered
  - 7. Photograph the approach to the collision scene from each party's perspective (forward and reverse) and shall include several hundred feet of the approach
  - 8. Photograph all witness perspectives if possible
  - 9. Photograph all evidence contained within the scene, including the involved vehicles
  - 10. Photograph the scene with evidence markers (utilizing artificial lighting if during hours of darkness)
  - 11. Photograph each individual item of evidence with an evidence marker beside it
  - 12. Take a photograph depicting all evidence items in a single frame if possible. If not, then overlap several photographs to depict all evidence items together
  - 13. Photograph all roadway evidence (tire marks, tire friction marks, gouges, etc)
  - 14. Photograph each involved vehicle at its point of rest (POR) – again utilizing artificial lighting if during the hours of darkness
    - a. Photograph each vehicle at 360° (at least 8 points)
    - b. Photograph areas of damage at distance, midway, and close-up with a scale if it appears to be significant to a certain item striking and causing that damage
  - 15. Photograph interior of vehicle

- a. Speedometer
  - b. Gear shift lever
  - c. Seat positions
  - d. Seatbelts for use
  - e. Any alcoholic beverages (open or closed) or empty containers
16. Photograph all involved parties including drivers and passengers (whether or not they are injured – head to toe and front to back)
- a. Photograph decedents still on scene
  - b. Photograph decedents who have been transported to hospital and take photos with scale rulers
17. Photographs SHALL be entered into a digital image management system (DIMS)
- a. Prior to entering into DIMS – a CD maybe burned for the investigator’s reference for court / depositions

VI. Collision Scene Documentation

- A. All collision scene evidence shall be documented with the FARO® 3D scanner (or other data gathering system)
  - 1. Other measuring devices may be utilized if electronic devices are not available
- B. Each item of evidence shall be described in the evidence log
- C. Roadway evidence analysis
  - 1. All tire friction marks shall be documented as follows:
    - a. Identify the type of friction mark (locked wheel, critical speed, scuff, etc)
    - b. Compare friction mark tread pattern to tread pattern on involved vehicles
    - c. Measure the distance between the friction marks and then compare it to the track width of the involved vehicles

VII. Follow up

- A. Follow up investigations on MAIT calls will be done by the lead investigator if it is within the city jurisdiction of the investigator – this includes making arrests, etc
- B. Follow up investigations on REGION MAIT (large agency jurisdictions) calls will be handled by the station detectives of the jurisdiction the collision occurred in – including arrests

VIII. Report Writing

- A. Cover page
- B. Table of contents
  - 1. Name of section
  - 2. Page numbers
- C. Sections
  - 1. CHP 555 form w/ “injured party / witness / passenger” (IWP) information page
  - 2. Factual diagram information
    - a. Scene sketch / factual information (narrative format)
    - b. Sketch (drawing)
    - c. Factual diagram
    - d. Dynamic Analysis
    - e. Factual diagram legend
    - f. Speed analysis (narrative format – show math)
    - g. To include data from CDR downloads

3. Investigative narrative facts
  - a. Notification / arrival information
  - b. Scene observations upon arrival
  - c. Scene description
  - d. Lighting description
  - e. Weather description
  - f. Photographs
  - g. Emergency personnel on scene
  - h. Involved parties (indicated as “P-1, P-2”, etc and witnesses)
  - i. Include 24 hour work-up on all drivers or involved parties (pedestrian/bicyclist)
4. Statements of all parties and witnesses
5. Opinions and conclusions
  - a. Area of impact
  - b. Description of collision
  - c. Cause / Primary Collision Factor (PCF)
6. Recommendations – forward to DA, to file, etc
7. Miscellaneous information - including, but not limited to:
  - a. Vehicle recall information
  - b. Mechanical inspections for all vehicles
  - c. Speed information and calculations (if done as confirmation on computer)
  - d. Evidence report form, property disposition form
  - e. Press releases
  - f. Any vehicle information printouts
  - g. Lighting information
  - h. Weather information
  - i. CDR download data and printouts
  - j. Supplemental reports
  - k. Computer Assisted Dispatch (CAD) reports
  - l. Any other pertinent data that the investigator used to base opinions and conclusions on

IX. SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY specific

\*\*Before going home on the day of the collision a CHP form 555 (page one) or Sheriff’s form CR4 SHALL be completed in Presynct (computer data management system) in order for the report to be entered into the system and allow others to attach their supplemental reports, etc. and allow for supervisors, Public Affairs, or Records to obtain any pertinent information needed\*\*

X. Practical exercise

- A. Respond in teams to mock MAIT collision scene (Auto vs Ped)
  1. Utilizing information learned from the classroom analyze and document the scene
  2. In teams, instructor will demonstrate use of the Sokkia (data gathering system) or FARO® 3D to document scene
- B. Return to classroom and each member of the team will complete a section of the report to include
  1. Completed CHP 555 form and the IWP page
  2. Investigative / narrative facts
  3. Statements
  4. Opinions and conclusions

## 5. Recommendations

**EXERCISE:** Will consist of a vehicle parked in a secured parking lot (taped off with crime scene tape, or behind locked gates), mannequins placed as victims, and other evidence items to create a mock vehicle vs pedestrian fatal traffic collision scene. No vehicle will be moving during this exercise. There will be no hazardous materials used (such as broken glass or motor oil). Any blood used will be “stage” blood, consisting of corn syrup and food coloring. Any motor oil may be simulated with evaporated coffee or dark corn syrup.