



HARFORD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE OPERATIONS POLICY

Jeffrey R. Gahler,
Sheriff

Non-Traffic Accidents

Distribution:	All Personnel		Policy Number:	OPS 0916	
Responsible Unit:	Traffic Unit		Rescinds:	N/A	
Original Issued Date:	01/01/18	Revision #:	1	Latest Revision Date:	08/01/25
Required 3-yr. Review was Completed:		08/01/25	Next Review Due:	08/31/28	

1. Purpose

To describe the procedures for handling and investigating non-traffic accidents.

2. Policy

Harford County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) deputies will ensure that the proper authorities are notified of non-traffic accidents and will conduct any needed investigation.

3. Definitions

BOATING CRASH: an incident involving a waterborne vessel or its appendages which causes death or injury; or any accident related to the use of a waterborne vessel or its appendages.

FARM ACCIDENT: a non-traffic accident on a farm, or associated with a farm, which causes death or injury; or any accident related to the use of farm machinery, equipment, or livestock.

HUNTING ACCIDENT: an incident when a hunter directly or indirectly causes personal injury or death, or any unplanned and uncontrolled action that occurs while using a sporting arm.

INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENT: a sudden and unforeseen event, attributable to any cause, which happens to a person, arising out of, or in the course of, his work, and resulting in an employment injury to that person.

SERIOUS INJURY: an injury which may cause death or the loss of a limb.

SIGNIFICANT EVENT: any explosion, fire, or other incident which causes the death of an employee.

TRAIN DERAILMENT/ACCIDENT: a safety-related event involving on-track rail equipment (both standing and moving), causing monetary damage to the rail equipment and track, or injury or death to persons on or near the track-rail equipment. These may include collisions, derailments, and other events involving the operation of on-track equipment; impacts between railroad on-track equipment and highway users at crossings; and all other incidents or exposures that cause a fatality or injury to any person (Federal Railroad Administration).

4. References

49 C.F.R. § 225, Title 49, Transportation
29 C.F.R. § 1952.215 (a), Approved Plans for Enforcement of State Standards
Federal Railroad Administration Office of Safety Analysis (FRA F 6180.54)

5. Procedures

A. Boating Crashes

1. The Harford County Department of Emergency Services (DES) and/or the duty officer/watch commander will notify the Natural Resources Police of any boating accident.
2. HCSO will offer any assistance needed by the primary investigative agency.
3. If no other agency is investigating and documenting the incident, deputies will capture all relevant information in an Incident Report in the Law Enforcement Records Management System (RMS).

B. Farm Accidents

1. An Incident Report in RMS will be completed for any farm accidents resulting in injury or death.
2. If the incident causes a death or injury, the Harford County Department of Emergency Services (DES) and/or the duty officer/watch commander will contact Maryland Occupational Safety and Health at 888-257-6674 and provide the operator with all requested information.

C. Hunting Accidents

1. The Harford County Department of Emergency Services (DES) and/or the duty officer/watch commander will contact Natural Resources Police for all hunting accidents reported to the Harford County Sheriff's Office.
2. HCSO will offer any assistance needed by the primary investigative agency.
3. If no other agency is investigating and documenting the incident, deputies will capture all relevant information in an Incident Report in RMS.

D. Industrial Accidents

1. An Incident Report will be completed for any industrial accidents resulting in injury or death.
2. If the incident causes a death, injury, or is considered a significant event, the Harford County Department of Emergency Services (DES) and/or the duty officer/watch commander will contact Maryland Occupational Safety and Health at 888-257-6674 and provide the operator with all requested information.

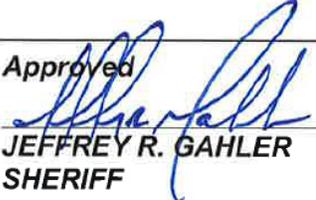
E. Train Derailment/Accidents

1. The Harford County Department of Emergency Services (DES) and/or the duty officer/watch commander will contact the appropriate railway for all railway accidents reported to the Harford County Sheriff's Office.
2. The Harford County Department of Emergency Services and/or the duty officer will ensure that the contacted railway company stops all train movement on the affected track, if necessary.
3. Deputies will offer any assistance needed by the primary investigating agency.
4. If no other agency is investigating and documenting the incident, deputies will capture all relevant information in an Incident Report in RMS including:

- a. type of train (passenger or freight) and number of cars and engines;
 - b. all relevant trip information for the train;
 - c. speed of train (may be able to check speed recorder in cab of engine);
 - d. what railroad signals were "set" at, or just prior to, the accident scene;
 - e. type of crossing warning signs, signals, or gates at the crossing, if applicable;
 - f. if view of crossing and/or warning signals or devices was obstructed;
 - g. the physical condition of the employees involved in the event; and
 - h. whether a whistle or horn sounded prior to train reaching the crossing.
5. If a train strikes a motor vehicle at a crossing, deputies will ensure the required Automated Crash Reporting System (ACRS) report is submitted.
6. In case of a serious injury, death, or spill incident involving a train, the Harford County Department of Emergency Services and/or the duty officer will contact the National Response Center at 800-424-0201 (primary) or 800-424-8802.
- F. Duty Officer/Watch Commander will notify Agency commanders via a Bureau Chief text when an above accident/incident results in injury or death.
- G. All incidents will be processed per normal investigative procedures.

6. Summary of Changes

- A. On 08/01/25 the 3-Year Agency review was conducted and the following changes were made:
1. Under Section 3. Definitions, changed the term "BOATING ACCIDENT" to "BOATING CRASH," and changed the term "TRAIN ACCIDENT" to "TRAIN DERAILMENT/ACCIDENT."
 2. Added the following text at Section 5.E.5 Procedures: If a train strikes a motor vehicle at a crossing, deputies will ensure the required Automated Crash Reporting System (ACRS) report is submitted.
 3. Under Section 5.F Procedures, revised text to indicate Agency commanders will be notified via a Bureau Chief text, rather than via a command text.

Approved

JEFFREY R. GAHLER
SHERIFF
DATE 8/13/25