

**DEPARTMENT TRAFFIC COORDINATOR  
TRANSIT SERVICES BUREAU**

**NOTICE**

June 2, 2021

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**TO:** All Department Personnel

**FROM:** Department Traffic Coordinator, Transit Services Bureau

**SUBJECT:** INJURY CLASSIFICATION – UPDATE

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Notice is to update officers on changes to injury classification criteria when conducting a traffic collision investigation.

**BACKGROUND**

The Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System (SWITRS) was implemented in 1972 to establish uniformity in the collection, reporting, and retrieval of traffic collision data. As a result, Section 20008 of the California Vehicle Code requires all law enforcement agencies to forward a copy of every traffic collision report involving injury or death to the California Highway Patrol (CHP). The Statewide use of the CHP Traffic Collision Report forms in accordance with instructions of the CHP's Collision Investigation Manual ensures that traffic collision reporting criteria is consistent and uniform.

In 1996, the Department adopted the CHP Traffic Collision Report forms to ensure Statewide consistency in traffic collision investigations and reporting in SWITRS. As a result, the Department's injury reporting classification terminology and criteria was changed to ensure consistency and uniformity with the CHP's Collision Investigation Manual. The revised terminology was changed to:

Severe Injury	→	Suspected Serious Injury
Other Visible Injury	→	Suspected Minor Injury
Complaint of Pain	→	Possible Injury

**PROCEDURES**

When conducting a traffic collision investigation where injuries are being reported, the following injury reporting classifications are to be used:

**Suspected Serious Injury:** Any serious, incapacitating injury which requires hospitalization, other than for observation, and prevents an individual from walking or driving. A suspected serious injury would include:

- Broken bones (not a broken finger);
- Dislocated or distorted limbs;

- Severe lacerations resulting in exposure of underlying tissues/muscles/organs or results in significant loss of blood;
- Unconsciousness when transported from the collision;
- Severe burns (second or third degree burns over 10 percent or more of the body); or,
- Suspected skull, chest, or abdominal injury other than bruises or minor lacerations.

Suspected Minor Injury: Any visible injury other than a fatal or suspected serious injury. A suspected minor injury would include:

- Bruises, discoloration or swelling;
- Minor lacerations or abrasions; or,
- Minor burns.

Possible Injury: This classification could consist of internal, other non-visible injuries, and fraudulent claims of injury. A possible injury would include:

- Momentary loss of consciousness;
- Parties who seem dazed, confused, or incoherent (unless behavior can be attributed to intoxication, extreme age, illness or mental infirmities);
- Parties who are limping, or complaining of pain or nausea, but do not have visible injuries; or,
- Parties who say they want to be listed as injured, but do not appear to be injured.

Fatal Injury: An injury that results in death as a result of injuries sustained in a collision, or an injury resulting in death within 30 days of the collision. The term fatal injury was previously classified as a "K" injury.

**Note:** The death of a fetus involved in a traffic collision will be documented as a fatal injury if the coroner classifies the injury as a death and attributes the death to the collision.

Lastly, any injuries listed on the traffic collision report shall be restricted to those resulting from the collision. Any injury sustained prior to, or subsequent to, the collision shall be explained in the "Remarks" section of the traffic collision report.

If you have any questions regarding this Notice, please contact Traffic Coordination Section, Traffic Group, at (213) 486-0690.



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APPROVED:



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