

VEHICLE ACCIDENT REPORTING AND INVESTIGATION 1718

(No. 12 March 1998)

Every accident involving a state vehicle or any vehicle used for state business must be reported within 48 hours to the Office of Risk and Insurance Management (ORIM). If the accident resulted in bodily injury or significant property damage to a non-state party, the accident must be first reported by telephone or by faxing a preliminary copy of the [STD. Form 270](#).

If an accident involving bodily injury or significant property damage occurs on a weekend, call ORIM and leave a voice mail message.

Report forms (see Section 1718.3) have been developed to provide essential information for the purpose of:

Providing legal protection for the state and its employees.

Establishing reasonable policies and regulations relating to safe vehicle operation.

Encouraging compliance with legal requirements and operational rules and policies.

Unit, region, and headquarters staff chiefs are responsible for seeing that all vehicle accident and incident reports are being reviewed to determine cause and need to initiate accident prevention measures.

See serious state vehicle accident investigation (Section 1718.8) for information on investigating vehicle accidents.

DEFINITIONS

1718.1

(No. 12 March 1998)

When reporting vehicle accidents, use the following definitions:

Employee	Any CAL FIRE employee or other person authorized to drive a vehicle on state business.
State Vehicle	Any state-owned vehicle or mobile equipment unit in which a person or equipment may be carried overland from one place to another. This includes a vehicle that may not be self-propelled, such as a trailer.
Rental Vehicle	Any vehicle rented from a vehicle rental or leasing vendor.

Privately-owned Vehicle	Any vehicle that is owned by an employee or private citizen.
Preventable Accident	A vehicle accident that the driver could have prevented by applying defensive driving principles. A police report citing another driver or indicating the other driver to be at fault does not necessarily demonstrate that the accident was not preventable. An accident may be preventable if it occurs at any time other than when the driver has legally and properly parked the vehicle. Another exception may occur when a vehicle is hit from the rear during a situation in which the driver could not move out of the way and neither stopped suddenly nor took another action that contributed to the accident.
State Vehicle Accident	<p>An accident that results in death or personal injury, or damage to an employee-operated vehicle or public or private property. This definition applies to an accident that results in any damage to the vehicle or property of another, even though the damage to the employee-operated vehicle may be minor. An accident may occur due to the position of the employee-operated vehicle, even though the vehicle made no physical contact with the person injured or the property damaged.</p> <p>An accident that results in damage of \$150.00 or less to an employee-operated vehicle and was due to lack of driver skill, judgment, or negligence, should be reported as a state vehicle accident.</p>
Serious State Vehicle Accident	An accident that results in a death, serious injury or \$3,000 or more in vehicle damages.

AGENCIES TO NOTIFY

1718.2

(No. 12 March 1998)

Local Administrative Unit

Whenever an accident occurs, the driver of the state vehicle (or any competent person, if the driver is incapacitated) will promptly notify the nearest administrative unit headquarters, either personally, by radio, or by telephone. That administrative unit will promptly do the following:

Complete the report to the state insurance carrier and send it to the home units of the driver and vehicle.

Inform the home reporting unit of the driver and vehicle.

In the event of serious injury, death, or extensive property damage, notify the Director's Office and others as specified in [Section 1715](#).

State Insurance Carrier

The driver's administrative unit will notify (by phone or wire) the nearest office of the state's insurance carrier when an accident results in an injury to a person other than an employee, or causes substantial damage to property other than the state's. STD Form 269 includes a list of addresses and phone numbers of local representatives. Include the following information:

License number and the name of the owner of each vehicle.

Name, title, and employer of each driver.

Exact location or place of the accident.

Identification of damage or injury that may have resulted.

California Highway Patrol (CHP)

Notify the CHP within 24 hours if there is an injury or death on a public street.

California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)

Notify the DMV if the accident involves a rental or employee-owned vehicle and the damage is over \$500.00. File Report of Injury or Damages Resulting from a Motor Vehicle Accident, Form SR-1.

VEHICLE ACCIDENT FORMS

1718.3

(No. 12 March 1998)

The driver of a state-owned vehicle must use an Accident Identification Card, STD Form 269 to record basic information before leaving the scene of the accident. The driver then uses this information to complete the Report of Vehicle Accident, STD Form 270.

Blank STD Forms 269 will be kept in the maintenance packet of each state vehicle.

Accident reporting procedure for privately-owned vehicles used on state business is the same as for a department vehicle, except that the report must be clearly marked "privately-owned vehicle".

Supervisors must fill out the Review of State Driver Accident, STD Form 274 (see Section 1718.5). They must also request a copy of the employee's driving record by submitting Form DL 254 to the Department of Motor Vehicles (see Section 1718.6).

REPORT OF VEHICLE ACCIDENT (STD 270)

1718.4

(No. 12 March 1998)

Use the Report of Vehicle Accident, STD Form 270 to report any state vehicle accident or reportable state vehicle incident. If the driver is incapacitated, the immediate supervisor or the manager of the administrative unit must complete this report.

When completing the STD Form 270, the following items require special attention:

- Item 16: Enter the CAL FIRE vehicle "X" NUMBER.

- Item 17: "Owning Department." In addition to "Forestry and Fire Protection," enter the region number.

- Item 19: Indicate the name of the person who examined the vehicle. A forestry equipment manager must perform this task, if possible, in order to give a valid estimate of repair costs.

- Item 48: If the vehicle was responding to, returning from, or working on a fire, include the fire name and incident number.

Item 69: In case of serious accident, and in other cases whenever possible, call the law enforcement agency having jurisdiction.

Item 70: Complete the diagram of the accident scene, being as specific as possible. Use a separate sheet if the printed form does not permit a satisfactory diagram of the accident scene. Attach a copy of any separate diagrams to each copy of STD Form 270.

NOTE: A photograph of the accident scene often provides valuable evidence for legal and management purposes. Enclose the print with OSHPRO's Office copy of STD Form 270. Keep the negative at the regional headquarters office.

Item 71: Complete as follows:

Signature of employee (driver).

The signature of the driver's immediate supervisor or the person authorizing the use of a vehicle by a nonstate employee (reviewing officer).

If the vehicle was used for any purpose other than state business at the time of an accident, the supervisor or unit manager will explain the circumstances in a separate statement attached to each copy of the report.

Expedite the transmittal of the original and three copies of the STD Form 270 through administrative unit and region channels to the OSHPRO Office using the Transmittal Sheet-Mobile Equipment Accident/Incident Report ([AO-80](#)). The OSHPRO Office must receive the [STD Form 270](#) within seven working days of the accident date. The OSHPRO Office will distribute copies as follows:

Insurance Office, Department of General Services.

Departmental Accounting Office.

Mobile Equipment Management Office.

Academy.

For field units, the following vehicle damage should not be reported to Sacramento Headquarters:

Vehicle damage that results from loading or unloading or from other non-driving mishaps, if the circumstances do not include illegal or improper parking of the vehicle.

Vehicle damage that results from a storm, falling branches, falling stone, or other events that may cause nicks, pits, and scratches.

Paint scratches due to inadequate road clearance.

Fender damage due to snow chains.

Broken door glass that may result from closing the door, or from a defective mechanism.

Fire damage due to mechanical or electrical apparatus failures within the vehicle.

Sacramento units must report all accidents to the appropriate staff chief.

SUPERVISOR'S REVIEW (STD 274)

1718.5

(No. 12 March 1998)

The Review of State Driver Accident, STD Form 274 provides supplemental information to that submitted on STD Form 270. This form provides information to help management determine the following:

Whether the accident or incident was avoidable.

What actions, if any, the driver should have taken to avoid the accident.

What corrective (disciplinary) action, if any, should be taken.

Whether accident prevention training should be improved.

Whether administrative policy statements relating to vehicle operations should be improved.

Whether management may have given tacit approval to unsafe acts or conditions by not providing effective supervision.

SUPERVISOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES

1718.5.1

(No. 12 March 1998)

NOTE: For the purposes of this section, the lowest level supervisor is a State Forest Ranger I (SFR I) or comparable position in other class series.

The supervisor of each driver involved in an accident or incident will:

Personally investigate each accident promptly and thoroughly. If a serious accident investigation team is initiated, a personal investigation would not be necessary.

Prepare STD Form 274 with sufficient copies to provide one for the Department Safety Coordinator, the region office, and the administrative unit office. The employee may have a copy, if desired.

When completing STD Form 274, give special attention to the following items:

Item 2: Organizational unit and department. Organization is the name of the reporting administrative unit (unit, state forest, etc.). Enter name and region number.

Item 4: How did the accident occur? The supervisor should describe the accident based upon his or her own investigation unless a serious accident investigation team is formed. Note that the team is investigating the accident on the STD Form 274. This description may or may not agree with the employee's description.

The supervisor is entitled to read and make notes from the police report on file (normally within 24 hours) at the office of the law enforcement agency having jurisdiction over the place of the accident. A copy of an accident report made by the CHP may be obtained at no cost by addressing a request to the Commissioner, California Highway Patrol, P.O. Box 898, Sacramento 95804. If it is advisable, the supervisor may make arrangements with the law enforcement agency to talk with the investigating officer.

Submit the completed report so that all reviews are completed and the report reaches the Department Safety Coordinator not more than 30 days after the accident.

Item 8: The reviewing officer in a unit normally will be the unit chief. This responsibility will not be delegated below the SFR II or equivalent level. In other administrative units or in a regional headquarters, the responsibility will be delegated at least one class level above the supervisor completing the report

The reviewing officer in the Sacramento Headquarters normally will be the staff chief.

REQUEST FOR DRIVER RECORD INFORMATION

1718.6

(No. 12 March 1998)

The supervisor responsible for completing STD Form 274 for an accident will submit Form DL 254 to the Department of Motor Vehicles, P.O. Box 944231, Sacramento 94244-2310).

Enter the employee's driver's license number, name, address reported to the Department of Motor Vehicles, and birth date.

Indicate the information requested--normally "Status and Record."

Enter the name and address of the unit originating the request, also the date of the request.

REQUESTS FOR REPORTS AND RECORDS

1718.7

(No. 12 March 1998)

All reports and records will be made available to properly identified state officials, representatives of the state's insurance carrier, county officials, and representatives of the county's insurance carrier. Only the following information from records relating to a state vehicle accident should be released to other parties:

The name, address, and driver's license number of the operator involved.

The name and address of any employee present.

The registration number and description of any vehicle involved.

The date, time, and location of the accident.

An employee receiving a request for information described above will record the name and identification of the person making the request and the date and nature of the information requested and given. Include this information in a memorandum in the local case file pertaining to the accident.

SERIOUS STATE VEHICLE ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION 1718.8
(No. 12 March 1998)

A state vehicle accident involving a fatality or serious injury will be investigated under the guidelines described in [Section 1716](#).

When state vehicle damages are \$3,000 or more, the Sacramento Mobile Equipment Management Office will be notified and may participate in the investigation.

[\(see next section\)](#)

[\(see HB Table of Contents\)](#)

[\(see Forms or Forms Samples\)](#)