TOLEDO FIRE & RESCUE DEPARTMENT

C-80 Preservation Of Evidence At Accident Scenes

Emergency Manual

Date Revised: 02/01/2018

Last Modified: 09/27/2024 09:59

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Policy/Procedure

In cases where a determination of cause must be decided at the scene of a vehicular accident, the following items should not be removed or disturbed, if possible.

1. All vehicles involved.

2. Vehicle fluids such as gasoline, oil, anti-freeze, and others, unless there is an immediate threat of fire or other serious hazard. In most cases the problem of fluid collection can be resolved by distributing sand delivered by a sand truck at the end of the on-scene investigation.

3. Body fluids. Bodily fluids are very important pieces of evidence and should not be washed away, walked through, or otherwise tampered with.

4. Clothing items that may have been carried, not worn, by passengers. These may indicate seating position inside a vehicle, location of pedestrians prior to impact, and in very remote cases may assist in determining the speed of vehicles involved in an accident or crime.

5. Vehicle parts and or debris as they may indicate impact points or direction of travel.

6. If an accident vehicle is found to have its lights off, fire personnel shall not turn on head lights, tail lights, or 4-way hazards to assist in traffic control. These actions may destroy valuable filament evidence.

7. If possible, fire personnel shall not move any item near the accident scene, no matter whether it appears to be of value or not. What may look like a piece of trash may have been thrown from an accident vehicle or discarded by a pedestrian involved in the incident.

See Also:

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Last update: **09/27/2024 09:59**