

Partner agencies

This page is from APP, the official source of professional practice for policing.

First published 23 October 2013 Updated 28 April 2020

Written by College of Policing

8 mins read

Involving partner agencies in road incidents and deploying their specialist equipment should be considered. Formal partnership strategies should be negotiated, jointly monitored and regularly updated. The police maintain primacy for incidents involving:

- injury or death
- criminality
- threats to public order and safety
- significant coordination of emergency responders

Forces should identify a minimum level of equipment to be carried in vehicles likely to respond to incidents, commensurate with the risks likely to be encountered.

Local policies on incident grading should reflect the [Association of Chief Police Officers \(ACPO\) \(2005\) National Call Handling Standards](#), which defines the classification of emergency and non-emergency calls.

Partner agencies and resources (in addition to those detailed below) may include:

- ambulance and paramedic service (including air ambulance)
- British Transport Police (BTP)
- Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)
- Department for Transport (DfT)
- Air Accident Investigation Branch (AAIB), Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) and Rail Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB)
- Foreign and Commonwealth Office (for road deaths abroad) (see [ACPO \(2011\) Death of British Nationals Abroad in Road Collisions: Memorandum of Understanding between the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, ACPO, and Coroners of England & Wales](#))

- Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
- Motor Insurers' Bureau
- Office of Rail Regulation (ORR)
- Traffic Commissioners
- Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA)

For further information go to [National Highways and others \(2022\) Strategic Road Responders Agreement](#).

Partner agencies

Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency

The [Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency \(DVLA\)](#) holds data on drivers and vehicles for the UK. Much of the data it holds is on the Police National Computer (PNC), which in turn updates details held by the DVLA such as lost/stolen reports and disqualified drivers. The DVLA has a police liaison and support group (PLSG), and each force has nominated DVLA liaison officers. The PLSG are able to provide other services to the police through a direct police liaison telephone number. These include:

- detailed vehicle and driver histories including microfilmed documentation
- examination of suspected forged driver or vehicle documents
- procedural and operational queries
- International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) stolen vehicle database
- sharing of intelligence through a dedicated intelligence unit
- administration of the misrepresented numbers scheme
- administration of the register of number plate suppliers
- central point for all data in respect of the national driver improvement and speed awareness schemes
- access to the European car information system

Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency

The [Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency \(DVSA\)](#) aims to promote safe driving for life by:

- setting standards for drivers, riders and instructors, including voluntary registration schemes for large goods vehicles, instructors and fleet driver trainers
- educating drivers
- authorising, registering and supervising quality assured instructors to ensure courses are provided to the required standard
- assessing learner drivers, using computer-based theory tests and practical tests for the various types of vehicle (car, motorcycle, large goods vehicles and people carrying vehicles) which reflect modern driving and riding conditions

The investigation of a collision involving a road death or life changing injuries is solely the responsibility of the police. The DVSA has a responsibility to the [Traffic Commissioner](#) and the government regarding the use of large goods vehicles and people carrying vehicles. DSA may appoint a vehicle examiner to attend the scene.

If a DVSA examiner does not attend the collision scene, the roads policing lead investigator (RP lead investigator) should ensure that the DVSA vehicle examination at a collision scene form is completed. On conclusion of the DVSA examination and any further enquiries deemed necessary, the examiner provides a witness statement detailing their findings about the vehicle or trailer condition. At the request of the RP lead investigator, a full technical report can also be provided where necessary.

When vehicles are examined by DVSA on behalf of the RP lead investigator, any components or samples removed from them should be retained by the police exhibits officer.

DVSA staff have the power to prohibit unroadworthy vehicles from being used on the road, and in certain circumstances can impound vehicles committing operator licensing offences.

Experian

[Experian](#) can provide access to vehicle information such as:

- VRMs
- vehicle identification numbers versus VRM checks
- date of first registration
- engine number and capacity
- number of previous keepers and date of last change

As part of its contract with the Home Office, Experian has agreed that all police forces can have free online access to their system.

Fire and Rescue Service

The Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) has powers to:

- move or break into a vehicle without the consent of its owner
- close a highway
- stop and regulate traffic
- restrict the access of persons to premises or a place

Health and Safety Executive

The police investigate all at-work road deaths (and incidents likely to result in death) and maintain primacy under road traffic legislation. The definition of at work, in these circumstances, excludes commuting journeys between home and normal workplace.

The police alert the [Health and Safety Executive \(HSE\)](#) where, on the basis of their investigation, they believe the HSE should become involved in a road death investigation. If in doubt, the RP lead investigator should discuss the circumstances with the HSE.

After discussion with the RP lead investigator, the HSE decides whether it should make initial enquiries and/or investigate, and advises the police. If the HSE undertakes an investigation it liaises with the police throughout, in accordance with existing protocols.

National Highways

National Highways is responsible for operating, maintaining and improving the strategic road network in England. Most motorways and some all-purpose trunk roads are part of the strategic road network and are the responsibility of National Highways. A small number of motorways and all other all-purpose roads are the responsibility of local councils.

Where incidents occur on motorways and some all-purpose trunk roads, National Highways staff are responsible and accountable for assessing, planning and implementing the restoration of the carriageway and infrastructure to normality.

They provide National Highways traffic officers to manage congestion, remove obstructions and assist vulnerable road users.

They also undertake traffic management:

- at the scene
- beyond the scene, including:
 - the approach to the incident
 - the tactical, regional and wider strategic road network
- of diversionary routes, including activities and actions to discharge their responsibility to inform motorists, through a range of technologies, of incidents that have occurred, the impact on the road network and alternative travel information

The police maintain primacy for incidents involving:

- death or injury
- criminality
- threats to public order and safety
- coordination of emergency responders

National Highways traffic officers

National Highways traffic officers may only be used for:

- maintaining or improving the movement of traffic
- preventing or reducing congestion
- avoiding danger to persons or traffic, or the risk of any such danger arising
- preventing damage to anything on or near the road

Police officers should take full account of these restrictions when providing direction to National Highways traffic officers to resolve incidents.

Independent Police Complaints Commission

Police-related road deaths and life-changing injuries must be referred to the **Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC)**, which may decide to send an investigator to the scene.

The IPCC determines the mode of investigation necessary, based on the circumstances of

incidents. Early collision scene management and fast-track actions are always determined by the host force, by necessity. The need for swift examination means that the management of the scene automatically falls to the local force.

A protocol for the early deployment of road policing investigative assets from a police force to the IPCC has been agreed between national policing business area leads and the IPCC.

A police-related road death may also need to be notified to the HSE and, if so, the HSE will confirm its interest and level of involvement at an early stage.

For further information see [IPCC Protocol with ACPO Roads Policing Business Area Collision Investigation Group: Use of Collision Investigators in IPCC Led Fatal & Serious Road Collision Investigations.](#)

Local Highway Authority

The local highway authority is responsible for:

- managing and maintaining the local highway authority network
- managing traffic
- event planning
- supporting the police in incident management
- managing emergency local diversions on agreed routes
- providing traffic information to the media
- road safety (education, training and publicity)

Office of Rail Regulation

The police advise the [Office of Rail Regulation \(ORR\)](#) where they believe it should become involved in a road death investigation. If in doubt, the RP lead investigator should discuss the circumstances with the appropriate ORR area team manager.

After discussion with the RP lead investigator, the ORR decides whether it should make initial enquiries and/or investigate, and advises the police of the outcome. If an investigation is undertaken, the ORR liaises with the police throughout, in accordance with existing protocols.

Recovery operators

Recovery operators may be engaged in the routine removal of broken-down and seized vehicles, and the clearing of the scene of a road incident. When recovery of vehicles (and their loads, where applicable) is likely to be required, the police incident commander consults with the highways authority and recovery operator at the earliest opportunity, in accordance with [CLEAR Keeping traffic moving \(National Highways, 2021\)](#) principles.

Control rooms should advise the recovery operator of:

- any hazards relevant to their operation at the scene
- the full details of vehicles and any loads
- the location of vehicles and any load
- the condition of the vehicle(s), including damage, to enable the correct type of lifting equipment to be used
- any special requirements for recovery, for example, forensic preservation

Recovery operators are responsible for ensuring that their staff are fully trained to use the equipment, in compliance with health and safety legislation.

Support agencies

The RP lead investigator and the investigation team should be aware of all national and local agencies or groups that can provide support to those affected by road deaths, and/or campaigns in relation to road safety. These include:

- [Belt up School Kids \(BUSK\)](#)
- [Brake](#)
- [Campaign Against Drinking and Driving \(CADD\)](#)
- [Cruse Bereavement Care](#)
- [Learn and Live](#)
- [PACTS](#)
- [RoadPeace](#)
- [Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents \(ROSPA\)](#)
- [Samaritans](#)
- [Support and Care After Road Death and Injury \(SCARD\)](#)
- [The Child Death Helpline](#)
- [The Compassionate Friends \(TCF\)](#)

- [TISPOL](#)
- [Victim Support](#)

Tags

Roads policing