



What happens if you have been involved in a road traffic collision?

We always complete a collision report if there are possible offences which will require investigation.

In cases of non-injury collisions, where the law has been complied with and all the details have been exchanged, there is no legal requirement for you to report the collision.

Will there be an investigation?

If an officer at the scene or at the police station completes a collision report, it goes to the Collisions Team within the Traffic Process unit for review. A decision is made if further investigation is necessary to be able to prove an offence in a criminal court.

Not all collisions need further investigation as we do not conduct enquiries to settle insurance claims. You should deal with insurance disputes through your insurers or through civil court.

How can I get details of the other party including insurance?

If you do not get the other party's details at the scene, you should contact the collision record unit.

If the other vehicle failed to stop at the scene, details may not be available for several weeks. This is because the ongoing enquiries will take time. We may not always be able to provide information due to the Data Protection Act. This includes witness details.

Do I have to report a collision to my insurance company?

You should report all collisions to your insurance company if you were not at fault. Insurance companies base quotes and policies on information provided to them. If information changes it could invalidate your insurance policy.

Do I have to report a collision that happened in a car park?

If a road traffic collision happens on a road or public place and the driver failed to stop or there are injuries, you must report the collision to us.

Some car parks are classed as public places such as supermarkets and multi-story car parks. Car parks belonging to private organisations (where the members of the public would not ordinarily be permitted) are not classed as a public place. In this case you should report the collision direct to your insurance company.

Do the police prosecute failing to stop and report a collision in every case?

We aim to prosecute in most cases where there is enough evidence to secure a conviction. But each case is judged on its own merits. If the collision is minor damage only then it is more likely (although not definitely) that the insurance companies will sort out liability.

Following a road traffic collision I exchanged details. I do not think the other person has got insurance. What should I do?

Contact your insurance company who should make the necessary enquiries in the first instance. If they are satisfied that the person does not have insurance, they will ask you to report the matter to us. We may be able to trace the other person.

It would help if you can supply the registration number, make and model of the vehicle and the name and address of the other person if you know it. If we can trace the person they will be prosecuted for any relevant traffic offence(s).

You can also take out civil proceeding against the other driver to try and reclaim the cost of any damage to your car. If you have legal protection as part of your cover, your insurance company can advise you on this matter.

If you have suffered any form of personal injury, loss or damage to your property as a result of the collision and the other person cannot be traced, you may be able to get compensation through the Motor Insurers Bureau. By writing to them at:

The Motor Insurer's Bureau
6-12 Linford Wood
Milton Keynes
MK14 6XT

How long do I have to report a collision after it has happened?

You should report reportable road traffic collisions as soon as is practicable and in any case, within 24 hours. You should do this in person at your local police station.

The law defines reportable road traffic collisions as a collision involving a mechanically-propelled vehicle on a road or other public area which causes:

- injury or damage to anybody – other than the driver of that vehicle
- injury or damage to an animal – other than one being carried on that vehicle (an animal is classed as a horse, cattle, ass, mule, sheep, pig, goat or dog)
- damage to a vehicle – other than the vehicle which caused the collision
- damage to property constructed on, affixed to, growing in, or otherwise forming part of the land where the road is

How long will it be before I hear from the police after I have reported a collision?

You will receive information from the Road Traffic Collision process team approximately 14 days after the collision. If you need information before this, please wait 7 days before contacting them. This is to allow them to submit and process the paperwork.

I have been in a road traffic collision. Nobody was injured and we both stopped. Do I need to report it to the police?

If both parties stopped at the scene and exchanged names and addresses there is no need to report the collision to us. Road traffic law has been complied with and we will not take a report.

If I or my vehicle is involved in a road traffic collision where nobody was injured but the other party did not stop, do I need to report it to the police?

If there is damage to your vehicle as a result of the collision, you need to report the matter to us as soon as possible and in any case within 24 hours. This does not mean you have 24 hours to report the collision – you must do this as soon as possible. If you know the registration of the offending vehicle we will make enquiries to trace and speak with the driver. This process can take some time.

If you did not get the registration of the vehicle then you can still report the collision to us. But without CCTV evidence or details of independent witnesses, we may not be able to make further enquires.

If the vehicle has an identifying mark, such as a company logo, then we may be able to trace the driver and speak to them.

We aim to prosecute in most cases where there is enough evidence to secure a conviction. Each case is judged on its own merits. A conviction for one of these offences could lead to imprisonment and/or a large fine.

I have been injured by a cyclist who was riding dangerously and/or carelessly. Can I report this to the police?

Cyclists are required by law to act responsibly. It is a criminal offence to cycle either dangerously or without due care and attention whilst on a road. It is also a criminal offence to ride a cycle in a public place or road whilst unfit through drink or drugs.

If you are injured due to the misconduct of a cyclist then they may be guilty of a separate offence of causing injury by 'wanton or furious driving'.

What documents do I need to take with me to the station to report a road traffic collision?

You need to take your driving licence, MOT certificate (if your vehicle needs one) and a valid insurance certificate. You need to do this in person at your local police station.

If you want to report the collision to us, we are required to take a report of it, which we will then investigate.

If you have caused damage to any road side property (lights, street signs etc.) then you must report the collision.

As well as name, address and registration number, you must exchange insurance details after a collision if someone is injured. Otherwise you must report the collision to us as soon as possible (and no later than 24 hours).

Although you must report such a collision straight away you should always seek medical help in the first instance.

I have had a collision with a foreign vehicle, what should I do?

If you know the insurer's name, check the [Motor Insurance Bureau website](#) to find a Green Card Agent who will handle the claim on behalf of the foreign insurer.

If you know the insurer's name, contact the Motor Insurance Bureau Green Card department on 01908 830001. Or you can write to them at:

The Motor Insurer's Bureau
6-12 Linford Wood
Milton Keynes
MK14 6XT

If the collision involves a foreign lorry, take a note of the registration number from the front of the lorry (there may be a different number on the trailer). Also get the policy and Green Card numbers and then contact the Motor Insurance Bureau.

What if I have not reported the collision and cannot get insurance details from the other driver?

Under Section 154 Road Traffic Act 1968, the other person must provide their insurance details when injury or damage has been caused in a collision. If they fail to supply that information they may be committing an offence. Usually your own insurance company will take steps if this occurs.

I have knocked over an animal. Do I have to report it?

Some animals do not come under the definition of animal in the Road Traffic Act 1988 so you do not need to report it to us. The local authority will need to be contacted to remove the remains of the animal.

A dog (as well as a goat, horse, cattle, ass, mule, sheep and pig) does come under the remit of the Road Traffic Act. This is a reportable so by law you must report it to us.

Important: Badgers are specially protected and it is an offence to have one, dead or alive, (without the proper authority). If you kill one, leave it at the roadside. If you are concerned you can voluntarily contact the police.

I have been involved in a traffic collision and I think I have an injury. Do I need to report it to the police?

You should report this at your nearest police station. Take your driving licence, valid insurance certificate and MOT certificate (if your vehicle requires one) and any details of the offending vehicle.

Which station do I have to report a road traffic collision to?

You can report the collision at any police station in the country. You should report it to the most convenient police station for you.

[Find your nearest Lincolnshire police station](#)

What is a notice of intended prosecution?

A notice of intended prosecution (NIP) informs you that you may face prosecution for an offence you have committed, whilst the incident is still fresh in your memory.

Receiving an NIP does not automatically mean that you will face prosecution. It is a warning that you may face prosecution.

You will receive an NIP if you are the driver or registered keeper of the vehicle. It must be served within 14 days of the offence otherwise it cannot be processed in court.

If the details of the driver are not known, then we send it to the registered keeper. In either case, so long as it arrives at the relevant address within the time limit the notice is valid.

If you are the registered keeper and have changed address, the NIP will still be valid if it arrives at the address on record within 14 days. You then have an obligation to identify the driver.

The driver may then receive further paperwork in due course. Do not confuse this with the document that is legally required to be sent within 14 days.

We can also issue verbal NIPs to the driver at the time of the offence. Or you could receive a court summons though the post for the alleged offence within 14 days.

Small mistakes on the notice do not render it ineffective unless it would mislead you.

A notice is deemed to have been served when we have sent it to you at your last known address. This is regardless of whether the notice is returned as undelivered, or for any other reason, not received by you. The posted NIP is deemed to be served until the contrary is shown.

If the police recover my vehicle, what happens to it?

If we remove your vehicle from the scene of the collision because it is causing an obstruction, we will tell you where your vehicle is.

If we remove your vehicle because it requires examination, we will inform you when it has been released.

Will I have to make a written statement?

You may have made one at the scene but this may not be detailed enough.

If you have not made a statement at the time or if we need further information, we will send a witness questionnaire to you. You should complete this form in full and ensure you sign after the declaration on page 1 and on the other pages where indicated. You should return this questionnaire in the pre-paid envelope provided within 10 days.

Even though you have completed this form it does not definitely mean a prosecution will take place or that you will have to attend court.

Is there a prosecution in every case and who makes the decision?

No. A dedicated decision maker will review the evidence and make the decision whether prosecution is recommended.

In some cases we can offer a Driver Improvement Course to the offending driver. This course aims to educate drivers through theory and practical training at a fee. It is an alternative to prosecution as punishment by the courts is not always the best course of action in improving road safety. Attendance on this course does not affect your insurance claim or the others party's liability.

Will there always be prosecution if I am seriously injured?

No. The law is complex and each case is treated on an individual basis. The decision is made on the standard of driving displayed and must be below that of a competent and careful driver. It is not made on the degree of injury sustained by any party. There must be evidence of an offence.

More help and support

Motor Insurance Bureau

<https://www.mib.org.uk/>