



# NEWS RELEASE

## HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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### **Howard County Police Offer Traffic Accident Reports Online**

The Howard County Police Department is launching a new program Sept. 1 that will make traffic accident reports available online. Citizens and insurance companies will be able to access the reports from any computer by visiting the police department's Web site, [www.hcpd.org](http://www.hcpd.org).

Until now, anyone interested in obtaining an accident report would have to mail a request into the police department or fill out a form in the lobby of the police station. Once the police department's records section received the request and approved it, employees would process it in two to three business days and mail the report back to the requester.

With the new computer program, requesters can simply fill out basic information online and have immediate access to a report, which can be printed from the Web site.

"This is an exciting new tool for Howard County citizens," said acting Police Chief William McMahon. "It will enable drivers involved in collisions and their insurance companies to access accident reports quickly and easily."

Most reports will be made available on the Web site within 48 hours of an accident, and in many cases sooner. The fee to obtain a report will remain \$5. Users can pay by credit card or through an account set up with the service provider, [PoliceReports.US](http://PoliceReports.US).

In order to access an accident report, users will have to provide at least two of three pieces of information: a report number, the date of the incident and the name of an involved party. Each user also will have to certify that he or she was involved in the incident, or is an attorney or insurance company representing someone involved.

Requests for reports may still be submitted in writing, but the department expects to significantly reduce the time records employees spend manually pulling, copying and mailing reports from files. Reports involving fatalities or juvenile arrests will not be available online, but may be requested through the written process.

The Howard County Police Department is only the second law enforcement agency in Maryland to offer accident reports online.

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