



# Austin Police Department

P.O. Box 689001, Austin, Texas 78768-9001~ (512) 974-5000

[www.cityofaustin.org/police](http://www.cityofaustin.org/police)

Highway Enforcement Command ~ Leaving the Scene Unit

Dear Citizen;

Your property or a vehicle registered to you was reported to have been involved in a "**Leaving the Scene**" collision, or (LTS), where another driver failed to remain on scene and provide information required by law.

**Please read this letter carefully and decide your continued interest in pursuing criminal charges.**

We understand if you are only interested the civil aspect of receiving reimbursement for getting your car repaired, or other related expenses. If you do not wish to pursue criminal charges, there is no need to respond to this letter.

We have included the following information to help guide your decision:

**The criminal process is kept separate from the civil process, by law and policy.**

Police cannot force one party to reimburse another party or make them pay for repairs. That can only be ordered by a judge in civil court.

**Both the criminal and civil processes can occur at the same time.** Work with your insurance company or attorney directly to get your vehicle or property repaired. If you do not have insurance, you have the option to file a civil action, with a Justice of the Peace or other civil court of law, to seek payment for damages.

**Charging a person with this crime:**

Only a person (the driver) can be charged with a crime, not the vehicle. While every car has an owner, the vehicle's owner may not have been driving when the vehicle was involved in a collision with you. Police must prove who was driving the vehicle, at the time of the crash, in order to charge them for the crime. Having only the make, model, and license plate of the suspect car is not enough.

**Suspect Identification:** If there is not any readily identifiable suspect vehicle information, your case will remain suspended. In other words, if no one got a license plate number, or the number you gave is incorrect (doesn't belong to the vehicle make and model reported), Police will not have the viable leads necessary to proceed with a criminal investigation.

**Photo Lineup requirement:** If a potential suspect is eventually identified by our unit, and you or a witness got a good look at the suspect, you and/or the witness(s) are required by the courts to positively identify that suspect out of a photo lineup. A photo lineup consists of the suspect's photo mixed with five additional similar-looking non-suspects. If you or, a witness, do not recognize the suspect, there is no positive suspect identification to file charges. Also, if we cannot locate a mug-shot or government ID photo, of the potential suspect, a photo lineup cannot be done.

**Surveillance video:** Is rarely available, and if it is, it is of low quality and rarely shows a readable license plate number. Video almost never shows the identity of the driver. If you or a witness does not recognize who the person in a video is, neither will police.

If surveillance video exists, YOU must confirm with the person or business in control of the video camera that the act was captured by the camera, and that the quality of the footage is such that the suspect is recognizable. If the suspect is recognizable, YOU must ask the person or business in control of the video camera for a copy of the footage to provide the investigator. If the person in control of the video camera will not provide you a copy, ask the person or business to hold a copy for police. Include this information in your response to this letter.

**To obtain a copy of your police report:** Call our Central Records Division during business hours at 512-974-5212 and select option "1" for a list of several methods by which you can obtain a police report.

**Registered Owner Information:** The Driver Privacy Protection Act restricts access to personal information on vehicle title and registration records. Your signature and a copy of your current government issued photo ID are required with this application to certify the statements are true and correct for the described vehicle. Submit completed and signed form with copy of your government issued photo ID, written authorization and required documentation, if applicable, to the following address or visit a Texas Department of Motor Vehicles (TxDMV) Regional Service Center for assistance. Include payment in the form of a personal check, money order, or cashier's check made payable to TxDMV. Do not mail cash. Fees are not refundable.

**Website to access VTR-275 form:** <https://www.txdmv.gov/forms>

**Mail request to:** Texas Department of Motor Vehicles  
Vehicle Titles and Registration Division  
Austin, TX 78779-0001

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An official written damage estimate from a body shop is required if you wish to pursue a criminal charge. Please send the written damage estimate to one of the three options below.

To check status of your case you can go online or contact the Highway Enforcement Command (512) 974-5789.

A **written damage estimate** of the cost to repair to your vehicle or property is required by law to determine level of offense. The written damage estimate must be on repair company letterhead. This information is evidence, and may be validated and submitted at trial. The written damage estimate must be provided before this case will be assigned for investigation. **KEEP A COPY FOR YOUR RECORDS AND INCLUDE THE CASE NUMBER ON ANY PAPERWORK SUBMITTED**

Email, mail or fax the written damage estimate to:

**Highway Enforcement - Leaving the Scene Unit**  
**Austin Police Department**  
**P.O. Box 689001**  
**Austin, TX 78768-9001 Case # \_\_\_\_\_**

**Phone: (512) 974-5789**

**Fax: (512) 974-5929**

**Email: [Highway.Enforcement@austintexas.gov](mailto:Highway.Enforcement@austintexas.gov)**

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