

Traffic Safety Unit | Policy Model from Greenville, North Carolina

Given how systemic racism manifests in often-deadly police brutality towards Black and brown people, it is important to minimize police involvement in civil matters. Civilian-led traffic safety units preclude the need for an armed officer to respond to a traffic accident. The use of civil traffic investigators is just one item on Emancipate NC's policy menu for local policing reform. View the full menu of local policy models [here](#).

Utilizing Civil Investigators

Cities and counties across North Carolina are employing civil investigators to respond to traffic accidents instead of using police. This not only makes police more readily available for violent or dangerous emergencies, it also decreases the chances of armed officers using force during civil incidents.

Civil traffic investigators complete traffic crash reports, insurance information exchanges, and authorization for vehicle towing.

These investigators do not have the authority to write citations or tickets and they do not carry a weapon. Reports created by civil investigators are reviewed by the police sergeant on the task force, and that individual will issue a ticket or citation as necessary.



You go out there and you just give it your all, you do the best you can, you treat people with respect and you gain the trust of the public. That's why we're here, to serve people."

Stanley Pollock, Civilian Crash Investigator
Wilmington

Advocate for Change

NC law currently requires municipalities to get a special waiver from the General Assembly to use civil investigators for traffic safety.

NC state representatives are working to pass a bill that would make it easier for cities and police departments to hire civil investigators to respond to traffic accidents.

[House Bill 140](#), Civilian Traffic Crash Investigators, was proposed in February 2023 by representatives from Guilford and Forsyth counties.

Contact [your state representatives](#) to voice support for HB 140.

A Holistic Approach

Greenville, NC created a [Traffic Safety Task Force](#) in 2017 in response to high fatality rates from car accidents.

In the event of a crash or other road safety issue, the task force sends unarmed civilian investigators to the scene.

These investigators, who wear uniforms to distinguish them from police, facilitate any necessary information exchanges and ensure the accident is cleared safely and efficiently.

Their job doesn't stop once the accident is cleared, though. The Task Force takes a comprehensive and proactive [approach](#) to reducing car accidents and fatalities: education, enforcement and engineering.

Information collected by the Task Force has prompted updates to traffic safety infrastructure like street lights, red light cameras, and pedestrian crosswalks.

The Task Forces efforts helped to [decrease the number of crashes](#) in Greenville by 732 between 2019 and 2020.