

## Why “P & D” means something different to me – an essay by CJ Timper

**(P & D) PHOTOGRAPHS & DOCUMENTATION** are important to a successful third party recovery. It is difficult to impossible to prevail on some difficult or problematic recoveries without photographs or good documentation. In these budget cutting times, getting back every dollar of the City’s damage repair cost is critical. Isn’t it? “HELP ME, HELP YOU!” or is it “HELP YOU, TO HELP ME?” Either way, lets work together.

- If you have not taken a **minimum** of 5 -10 photographs, you are not taking enough pictures! Film is cheap – digital is cheaper. So shoot away.
- A close-up photo of the damage is important. Make sure the damage and destruction is clear. Even though we’ll ask you to describe it in writing “a picture is worth a thousand words” – sometimes a thousand dollars!
- But also step way back for long range shots of a scene or intersection where we may have a damaged hydrant or traffic control box!
- Did you take any from the opposite direction? How about from a different angle?
- Where is this taken? Yes, a photo of a landmark at the location or even the cross street signs can be very helpful! I occasionally get away from my desk, and have some knowledge of the city, but I haven’t been everywhere!
- If it is a vehicle collision, did you get those close-ups of the damage and a distanced perspective photograph for BOTH vehicles? Show the damage to yours and theirs.
- Did your picture clearly identify the kind of vehicles? Snap a photo of the nameplate and include either the front or rear of the vehicle with the license plate number. For a city vehicle, get the “City That Works” (although perhaps not at the moment). Capture the Bureau name and the vehicle ID number.
- For damage to hydrants, poles, or signal boxes, show us where you are when that utility is getting fixed (before & after photos!)
  - Location.
  - Setting, i.e. proximity to roadway, location in block, surrounding landmarks, topography, etc.
  - View close-up and at distance from all angles.

Click below for examples:

[How \*\*Not\*\* to Take Photos](#)

[How \*\*To\*\* Take Photos – Auto Accident](#)

[How \*\*To\*\* Take Photos – Stationary Property Damage](#)

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**(Cont.)**

Here are a few suggestions regarding documentation:

- WHO - get name, address, and phone number of the other person involved. In a car crash, they are required to give you their driver's license number and insurance card. Sometimes the driver does not own the vehicle or the vehicle is not insured. Document that in your report. Sometimes we need to pursue additional avenues when we get that insurance denial. More documentation is better.
- FIND WITNESSES! WHAT did they say? WHERE - location of incident or accident. WHEN did it happen –what time of day? WHY- give some details about what was going on at the time. If you did not call the police to come to the scene, please have the mindset as if this was your personal property and gather as much detail as possible. Report any traffic accident to your supervisor.
- Write information down and document it as soon as possible after the incident. You might feel that fault on an accident is clear, so you don't need to be as diligent about getting all the documentation or photos. Stories change! He said/she said without witnesses or photographs will reduce our ability for full collection recovery. If it were you who pays the repair bill wouldn't you question the necessity of each charge? Insurance companies surely do, so make sure you can provide the documentation to support our damage repairs.

When a third party incident happens call me and let me know as soon as reasonably possible. Too many times I get notified several weeks or months after the fact. By that time e-mails or photos can be deleted or lost, and/or details forgotten.

Contact me at 503-823-5265 or e-mail [carol.timper@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:carol.timper@portlandoregon.gov) I'll get working on cases right away. I'll find out early on if there are coverage issues with insurance companies or bad addresses that need more research.

Together let's do all we can to get the damage paid for your bureau. Remember Photos & Documentation!