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New technology will assist in serious crash investigations

Kansas City Police will be able to clear serious accidents off roadways more quickly thanks to new equipment purchased by the Missouri Department of Transportation in conjunction with KC Scout.

MoDOT and KCPD will demonstrate the new equipment used to document crash scenes at 1 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 9, at MoDOT's Kansas City District Office, 600 NE Colbern Rd., Lee's Summit.

"By the design of this equipment, officers are often able to complete complicated investigations without unnecessarily exposing officers to traffic," said Rusty James, Incident Management Coordinator for Scout. "By investigating the incidents in this fashion, there is no further traffic backup. This technology is recognized in the courts as highly accurate, resulting in successful prosecutions."

Scout and MoDOT purchased four Sokkia total stations and two Archer Bluetooth evidence recorders valued at \$35,000 for KCPD. This equipment is used to create forensic maps of incident scenes. KCPD's crash documentation equipment was last updated in 2008, but James said technology has made leaps and bounds since then. The new total stations better protect officers and motorists.

"Kansas City Police investigate more fatality wrecks than anyone in the area, and we want to keep them safe, as well as the drivers around them," James said.

KCPD investigated 60 fatal crashes in 2011 and 40 so far in 2012.

But the department's 2008 equipment still works well and would be ideal for smaller law enforcement agencies with lighter accident investigation caseloads. Scout and MoDOT will be distributing KCPD's current equipment to other police departments who never would have had the opportunity to have such crash documentation technology before.

"The Kansas City Metro Traffic Incident Management Program is being used as a model around the country," James said. "Our example of what can be accomplished with these partnerships will be used in developing future programs nationwide."

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