

FLORENCE POLICE DEPARTMENT

GENERAL ORDER

Subject: <p style="text-align: center;">LINE OF DUTY DEATHS</p>	Procedure: <p style="text-align: center;">General Order 10.2.4 CALEA 22.2.4</p>	Total Pages: <p style="text-align: center;">6</p>
Authorizing Signature: Original with Authorizing Signature on File	Effective: 01/01/2011 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Amended <input type="checkbox"/> Rescinds	

I. POLICY

It is the policy of this Department to provide liaison assistance to the immediate survivors of an active duty officer who dies in the line of duty; and to provide tangible and emotional support during this traumatic period of readjustment for the surviving family.

II. PURPOSE

This written order provides guidance to the Department in the event of an officer's death in the line of duty and it provides direction for the proper support of the deceased officer's family.

Although this policy is intended to address the line of duty death or injury of police officers, many provisions, including death notification and family assistance, may be applicable to any agency employee regardless of whether or not the death is duty related.

III. SCOPE

This written order is applicable to all personnel.

IV. RESPONSIBILITY

It shall be the responsibility of all personnel to comply with the policies established by this directive.

V. PROCEDURES FOR LINE OF DUTY DEATHS

A. **DEATH NOTIFICATION:** The following procedures should be adhered to in cases of line of duty deaths and critically injured officers with poor prognosis of survival. These procedures should be followed whenever possible with the understanding that the wishes of the family take precedence over the desires of the agency. Officers providing services and assistance to family members and survivors shall take all possible measures to accommodate their needs, wishes, and desires, but should not make promises to family members that they are not sure can be met.

1. The name of the deceased officer shall not be released to the media or other parties before immediate survivors living in the area are notified;

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2. Notification of the immediate family should be made as soon as possible and, if possible, coincidental with command notifications;
3. A member of the Command Staff, when possible, should respond to advise the family. It is recommended that the Command Staff or supervisor make the notification with a family friend present for support. Whenever the health of immediate survivors is a concern, emergency medical services personnel shall be requested to stand by;
4. Never make a death notification on the doorstep. Ask to be admitted to the house. If the officer has died, notification should be made to the survivors in as forthright and empathetic a manner as possible;
5. A Police Chaplain should be notified to assist in the notification and support for the family, availing themselves to the family for any requests for their services;
6. If the opportunity to get the family to the hospital exists prior to the officer's death, immediate transportation should be provided for survivors and notification officers shall inform the hospital liaison officer that the family is on its way. It is highly recommended that the family not drive themselves to the hospital;
7. Communication of information concerning the officer and the incident shall, whenever possible, be restricted to the telephone to avoid interception by the media or others. Should the media obtain the officer's name prematurely, the ranking officer should request that the information be withheld until proper notification of survivors can be made;
8. The notification supervisor shall be responsible for identification of additional survivors outside the area and shall make any notifications as desired by the immediate family. Such notifications shall be made by contacting the law enforcement agency in that jurisdiction and requesting that a personal notification be made; and
9. The notification supervisor shall write an incident/offense supplement report specifying the identity, time, and place of survivors notified.

B. ASSISTING SURVIVORS AT THE HOSPITAL:

1. Whenever possible, the agency's chief executive officer shall join the family at the hospital in order to emphasize the agency's support. The next highest ranking officer to arrive at the hospital shall serve as or designate a *Hospital Liaison Officer*.
2. The *Hospital Liaison Officer* shall be responsible for coordinating the arrival of immediate survivors, departmental personnel, the media and others; and assume the following responsibilities:

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- a. Arrange for waiting facilities for immediate survivors and a press staging area. The desires of the surviving family members should be followed with regard to their accessibility to other officers and friends;
- b. Ensure that medical personnel provide pertinent medical information on the officer's condition to the family before any other parties;
- c. Assist family members, in accordance with their desires, in gaining access to the injured or deceased officer;
- d. Provide hospital personnel with all necessary information on billing for medical services. The liaison officer should ensure that all medical bills are directed to the appropriate departmental authority and that they are not forwarded to the officer's family or other survivors; and
- e. Arrange transportation for the family and other survivors upon their departure from the hospital.

C. APPOINTMENT OF DEPARTMENT COORDINATION PERSONNEL:

The Chief of Police, or his designee, shall assign personnel to begin serving in the following capacities:

1. **Department Liaison;**
2. **Funeral Liaison;**
3. **Benefits Coordinator;** and
4. **Family Support Advocate.**
5. The surviving family members will be informed of those designated. In addition, the Chief of Police or his designee will:
 - a. Make additional personnel assignments to assist in handling incoming phone calls and inquiries; and to direct the public to appropriate personnel;
 - b. Ensure that the employee assistance program is implemented to assist surviving family members and emphasize the family's right to psychological services; and
 - c. Ensure that other officers are provided the opportunity to participate in critical incident stress debriefings.

D. DEPARTMENT LIAISON:

1. The *Department Liaison* officer will serve as a facilitator between the family and the law enforcement agency. This individual will normally be a commanding officer in order to expedite the tasks of employing departmental resources and the delegation of assignments. The *Department Liaison* will obtain the officer's confidential

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worksheet in order to follow the officer's requests as closely as possible. This officer will work closely with the ***Funeral Liaison*** officer to ensure that the needs and requests of the family are fulfilled. This includes, but is not necessarily limited to, the following:

- a. Providing oversight of travel and lodging arrangements for out of town family members;
- b. Identifying alternative churches and reception halls that will accommodate the law enforcement funeral. These alternatives will be presented to the family, who will make the final determination;
- c. Coordinating all official law enforcement notifications and arrangements to include the honor guard, pallbearers, and traffic control. To send teletype notification of the officer's death and funeral arrangements; and be a liaison with visiting law enforcement agencies. In addition, request a stand-by of medical personnel;
- d. Determine the family's feelings about the media being at the funeral home, at the church service, and at the cemetery. Assisting family members in dealing with general media inquiries and informing them of limitations on what they can say to the media specifically;
- e. Providing liaison with the media to include coordination of any statements and press conferences. The ***Departmental Liaison*** shall also ensure that members of the agency are aware of restrictions regarding release of any information that might undermine future legal proceedings;
- f. Ensuring that security checks of the survivor's residence are initiated immediately following the incident and for as long as necessary thereafter; and
- g. Arrange for the delivery of the member's personal belongings to the family.

E. FUNERAL LIAISON

1. The ***Funeral Liaison*** officer acts as facilitator between the decedent officer's family and the department during the wake and funeral. The ***Funeral Liaison*** officer is responsible for:
 - a. Meeting with family members and explaining his responsibilities to them;
 - b. Being available to the family prior to and throughout the wake and funeral;

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- c. Ensuring that the needs and wishes of the family come before those of the department;
- d. Assisting the family in working with the funeral director regarding funeral arrangements;
- e. Relay the funeral information to the **Department Liaison** officer for coordination with the department's specialized units (honor guard, traffic, etc.);
- f. Relaying any information to the family concerning the circumstances of the decedent officer's death and appropriate information regarding any investigations;
- g. Determining the need for travel arrangements for out of town family members and any other special needs of the family during the funeral and reporting this information to the **Department Liaison**;
- h. Brief the family members on the procedures involved in the law enforcement funeral; and
- i. Maintain a roster of all departments sending personnel to the funeral and acknowledge these visiting and assisting departments.

F. BENEFITS COORDINATOR

- 1. The **Benefits Coordinator** is responsible for working with Human Resources to provide information on employee benefits to the family by:
 - a. Filing workers' compensation claims and related paperwork;
 - b. Presenting information on all benefits available to the family;
 - c. Documenting inquiries and interest in public donations to the family and establishing a mechanism for receipt of such contributions, as appropriate;
 - d. Preparing all documentation of benefits and payments due survivors to include the nature and amount of benefits to be received by each beneficiary, the schedule of payments and the name of a contact person or facilitator at each benefit or payment office;
 - e. Filing all benefits paperwork and maintaining contact with the family in order to ensure that benefits are being received. A copy of benefits documentation should be provided to all survivors affected and explained to each of them; and

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- f. Advise the surviving family of the role of police associations and organizations and the nature of support programs that they sponsor for law enforcement survivors.

G. FAMILY SUPPORT ADVOCATE

1. The *Family Support Advocate* serves in a long-term liaison and support capacity for the surviving family. The duties of this individual include:
 - a. Providing contact with surviving family members in order to keep them abreast of criminal proceedings relating to the death of their family member;
 - b. If criminal proceedings arise, ensure the Victims Advocate is involved with the family;
 - c. Accompanying surviving family members to criminal proceedings, explaining the nature of the proceedings, and introducing them to prosecutors and other persons required;
 - d. Identify all support services available to family members and working on their behalf to secure any services necessary;
 - e. Assume responsibility for the return of the deceased officer's department equipment to the department;
 - f. Maintaining routine contact with family members to provide companionship and emotional support and maintain an ongoing relationship between the department and the immediate family making them feel like part of the "police family." This includes increasing contact during sensitive times of the year like holidays and the officer's death date every year; and
 - g. Relaying the concerns and needs of the family to those individuals or organizations that may provide assistance, and encouraging others to visit and help as necessary.