

Faribault Police Department

Policy #: 216	Subject: Line of Duty Death
Issued by: Chief Daniel Collins	
Personnel: All personnel	Date Issued: May 10, 2011

Purpose

This policy establishes procedures to ensure the proper support and emotional care for a member's family following a line-of-duty death.

Policy

The Department will provide liaison assistance to the immediate survivors of a member who dies in the line of duty. This assistance is provided whether the death was unlawful or accidental (i.e., automobile crash, hit by a passing vehicle during a traffic stop, training accident) while the member was performing a police-related function, either on or off-duty and while he or she was an active member of the Department. The Chief of Police may institute certain parts of this policy for cases of a member's natural death. The department will also provide a clarification and comprehensive study of survivor benefits as well as emotional support during this traumatic period of readjustment for the surviving family. Funeral arrangements of the deceased member are to be decided by the family, with their wishes taking precedence over that of the Departments.

This policy is based upon guidelines suggested in the handbook entitled, "*Support Services to Surviving Families of Line of Duty Deaths*," by Suzanne F. Sawyer, the Executive Director of Concerns of Police Survivors, Inc. (C.O.P.S.).

Procedure

Coordination of events following the line-of-duty death of a police officer is an extremely important and complex responsibility. Professionalism and compassion must be exhibited at all times as an obligation to the Department member's survivors and to the law enforcement community. In order to provide the best possible services and support for the member's family, specific tasks may be assigned to selected members of the Department. Their titles are:

Notification Officer

Hospital Liaison Officer

Family Liaison Officer

Department Liaison Officer

Benefits Coordinator

An explanation of each of these responsibilities is contained in this policy. A member may be called upon to perform more than one role.

Members are encouraged to maintain an up-to-date “Confidential Line-of-Duty Death Information” form with administration. The information will be of extreme comfort to members’ families and the Department in fulfilling the deceased officer’s wishes. These forms will be kept sealed in both paper and electronic forms and accessible only to administration. Forms should be reviewed by members at the time of their annual review in the event there have been any changes.

A. Notification

- 1) It is the responsibility of the Chief of Police to properly notify the next of kin of a member who has suffered severe injuries or died. The Chief may personally make the notification or designate a **NOTIFICATION OFFICER** to inform the survivors.
- 2) The name of the deceased member will not be released by the Department until the immediate family is notified.
- 3) If there is knowledge of a medical problem with an immediate survivor, medical personnel should be available at the residence at the time of notification.
- 4) Notification must be made in person and never alone. The Chief of Police or his or her designee, police chaplain, close friend, or another police survivor may appropriately accompany the **NOTIFICATION OFFICER**. However, if the aforementioned persons are not readily available, notification should not be delayed until these people can gather. If there is an opportunity to get to the hospital prior to the demise of the member, the family should be notified as soon as possible. The family should learn of the death from the department first and not from the press or other sources.
- 5) A death notification must not be made on the doorstep. Ask to be admitted to the house. Inform family members slowly and clearly of the information that you have. If specifics of the incident are known, the **NOTIFICATION OFFICER** should relay as much information as possible to the family. Be sure to use the member’s name during the notification. If the member has died, relay that information. Never give the family a false sense of hope. Use words such as “died” and “dead” rather than “gone away” or “passed away”.
- 6) If the family requests to visit the hospital, they should be transported by police vehicle. It is highly recommended that the family not drive themselves to the hospital. If the family insists on driving, a member should accompany them in the family car.
- 7) If young children are at home, the **NOTIFICATION OFFICER** must arrange for babysitting needs. This may involve co-workers’ spouses, transportation of children to a relative’s home, or similar arrangements.
- 8) Prior to departing for the hospital, the **NOTIFICATION OFFICER** should notify the hospital staff and the **HOSPITAL LIAISON** (by telephone if possible) that a member(s) of the family is enroute.

- 9) The deceased or severely injured member's parents should also be afforded the courtesy of a personal notification whenever possible.
- 10) If immediate survivors live beyond the Rice County area, the **NOTIFICATION OFFICER** must ensure that Pearl Street Dispatch sends a teletype message to the appropriate jurisdiction, requesting a personal notification. The **NOTIFICATION OFFICER** may choose to call the other jurisdiction by telephone in addition to the teletype message. Arrangements should be made to permit simultaneous telephone contact between the survivors and the department.
- 11) The Chief of Police or a high-ranking member of the Department should respond to the residence or the hospital to meet with the family as quickly as possible.
- 12) In the event of an on-duty death, the external monitoring of police frequencies may be extensive. Whenever possible, communications regarding notifications should be restricted to the telephone. If the media has obtained the member's name, they will be requested to withhold the information, pending notification of next of kin.

B. Assistance for Affected Members

- 1) Members who were on the scene or who arrived moments after a member was critically injured or killed should be relieved from duty as quickly as possible.
- 2) Police witnesses and other members who may have been emotionally affected by the serious injury or death of another member must attend a Critical Incident Stress Debriefing held by a trained mental health professional.

C. Assisting the Family at the Hospital

- 1) The first Department official, other than the Chief of Police or his/her representative, to arrive at the hospital becomes the **HOSPITAL LIAISON**. The **HOSPITAL LIAISON** is responsible for coordinating the activities of hospital personnel, the member's family, police officers, the press and others. These responsibilities include:
 - a) Working with hospital personnel to provide an appropriate waiting facility for the family, the Chief of Police, the **NOTIFICATION OFFICER**, and others requested by the immediate survivors;
 - b) By arranging a separate area for fellow police officers to assemble;
 - c) Establishing a press staging area;
 - d) Ensuring that medical personnel relay pertinent information regarding a member's condition to the family on a timely basis and before such information is released to others;
 - e) Notifying the appropriate hospital personnel that all medical bills relating to the injured or deceased member are directed to the City of

Faribault Finance Department. The family should not receive any of these bills at their residence. This may require the **HOSPITAL LIAISON** to re-contact the hospital during normal business hours to ensure that the proper billing takes place;

- f) Ensuring that the family is updated regarding the incident and the member's condition upon their arrival at the hospital; and
 - g) Arranging transportation for the family back to the residence.
- 2) If it is possible for the family to visit the injured member before death, they should be afforded that opportunity. A police official should "prepare" the family for what they might see in the emergency room and should accompany the family into the room for the visit if the family requests it. Medical personnel should advise the family of visitation policies and, in the event of death, explain why and autopsy is necessary.
 - 3) The **NOTIFICATION OFFICER(S)** should remain at the hospital while the family is present.
 - 4) Information should be freely shared with the family and not withheld for protective reasons. This includes sharing specific information as to how the member met his or her demise, as well as allowing the family time to be alone with the deceased member.

D. Support of the Family During the Wake and Funeral

- 1) The Chief of Police, or a designee, will meet with the member's family at their home to determine their wishes regarding departmental participation in the funeral or services. All possible assistance will be rendered.
- 2) With the approval of the family, the Chief will assign a **FAMILY LIAISON OFFICER**. The Chief will also designate a **DEPARTMENT LIAISON OFFICER** and a **BENEFITS COORDINATOR**.

E. Family Liaison Officer

- 1) The selection of a **FAMILY LIAISON OFFICER** is a critical assignment. An attempt should be made to assign someone who enjoyed a close relationship with the member and his or her family. When possible, male/female "teams" should be utilized as **FAMILY LIAISON OFFICERS**, thus preventing bonding between the survivor(s) and Department members during a vulnerable time in the survivor's life.
- 2) This is not a decision-making position, but instead the **FAMILY LIAISON** is to be a "facilitator" between the family and the Department.
- 3) Responsibilities of the **FAMILY LIAISON OFFICER** include:

- a) Ensuring that the needs of the family come before the wishes of the Department;
- b) Assisting the family with the funeral arrangements and making them aware of what the Department can offer if they decide to have a police funeral. If they choose the latter, briefing the family on the police funeral procedure (i.e., presenting the flag, playing of taps, firing party);
- c) Apprising the family of information concerning the death and the continuing investigation;
- d) Providing as much assistance as possible, including overseeing travel and lodging arrangements for out-of-town family members, arranging for food for the family, meeting child care and transportation needs, etc.;
- e) Being constantly available to the family;
- f) Determining what public safety, church, fraternal, and labor organizations will provide in terms of financial assistance for out-of-town family travel, food for funeral attendees following the burial, etc.; and
- g) Notifying Concerns of Police Survivors (C.O.P.S.), at (573) 346-4911. Members of this organization are available to provide emotional support to surviving families.

F. Department Liaison Officer

- 1) This position is normally assigned to a Division Captain because of the need to effectively coordinate resources throughout the Department.
- 2) Responsibilities of the **DEPARTMENT LIAISON OFFICER** include:
 - a) Working closely with the **FAMILY LIAISON OFFICER** to ensure that the needs of the family are fulfilled;
 - b) Handling the news media throughout the ordeal. If the family decides to accept an interview, a member should attend to “screen” questions presented to the family so as not to jeopardize subsequent legal proceedings;
 - c) Meeting with the following persons to coordinate funeral activities and establish an itinerary:
 - 1. Chief of Police and Captain(s);
 - 2. Funeral director;
 - 3. Family priest or minister;
 - 4. Cemetery director; and

5. LEMA Honor Guard.
- d) Directing the funeral activities of the Department and visiting police departments according to the wishes of the family;
 - e) Issuing a teletype message to include the following:
 1. Name of the deceased;
 2. Date and time of death
 3. Circumstances surrounding the death;
 4. Funeral arrangements (state if service will be a private or police funeral);
 5. Uniform to be worn;
 6. Expressions of sympathy in lieu of flowers; and
 7. Contact person and phone number for visiting departments to call to indicate their desire to attend or to obtain further information.
 - f) Establishing a command center, if necessary, to coordinate information and response to the tragedy;
 - g) Developing a policy for the wearing of badge memorial ribbons and use of patrol vehicle memorial sashes;
 - h) Obtaining an American flag. If the family wishes to have a flag presentation by the Chief of Police, the Chief should be notified;
 - i) Determining if the family desires a burial in uniform and selecting a member to obtain a uniform and all accouterments (except weapons) and deliver them to the funeral home
 - j) Assigning members for usher duty at the church;
 - k) Arranging for the delivery of the member's personal belongings to the family;
 - l) Briefing the Chief and staff concerning all funeral arrangements;
 - m) Ensuring that the surviving parents are afforded recognition and that proper placement is arranged for them during the funeral and procession;
 - n) Arranging for a stand-by doctor for the family, if necessary;
 - o) Coordinating traffic management with other jurisdictions during the viewing, funeral, and procession, and arranging for a tow truck to be available along the procession route;

- p) Assigning a member to remain at the family home during the viewing and funeral;
- q) Maintaining a roster of all departments sending personnel to the funeral, including:
 - 1. Name and address of responding agencies;
 - 2. Name of the Chief of Police
 - 3. Number of officers attending;
 - 4. Number of officers attending the reception after the funeral; and
 - 5. Number of vehicles.
- r) Assisting in making the necessary accommodations for food, lodging, etc.;
- s) Acknowledging visiting and assisting departments;
- t) Arranging for routine residence checks of the survivor's home by the patrol unit for six to eight weeks following the funeral. This service is necessary because large amounts of money are passing through the residence and the survivors will be spending time away from the home with legal matters.

G. Benefits Coordinator

- 1) The **BENEFITS COORDINATOR** will gather information on benefits/funeral payments available to the family. The **BENEFITS COORDINATOR** has the department's full support to fulfill this responsibility to the survivors and is completely responsible for filing the appropriate benefit paperwork and following through with the family to ensure that these benefits are being received.
- 2) The **BENEFITS COORDINATOR** is responsible for:
 - a) Filing worker's compensation claims and related paperwork;
 - b) Contacting the Finance Department without delay to ensure that the beneficiary receives death and retirement benefits, the member's remaining paychecks and payment for remaining annual and compensatory time;
 - c) Gathering information on all benefit/funeral payments, including those available through the Public Safety Officers Benefits Act that are available to the family;
 - d) Setting up any special trust funds or educational funds;

- e) Notifying police organizations such as LEMA, the Fraternal Order of Police, the Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association, etc., of the death and ensuring that any and all entitlements are paid to the beneficiary. These agencies may also offer legal and financial counseling to the family at no cost;
- f) Preparing a printout of the various benefits/funeral payments that are due to the family, listing named beneficiaries and contacts at various benefits offices, and when they can expect to receive payment;
- g) Meeting with the surviving family a few days after the funeral to discuss the benefits they will receive. A copy of the prepared printout and any other related paperwork should be given to the family at this time.
 - 1. If there are surviving children from a former marriage, the guardian of those children should also receive a printout of what benefits the child(ren) may be receiving; and
 - 2. Attention should be given to the revocation of health care benefits. Many providers allow a 30-day grace period before canceling or imposing monthly payments upon survivors.
- h) Meeting again with the family in about six months to ensure they are receiving benefits.

H. Continued Support for the Family

- 1) Members of the Department must remain sensitive to the needs of the survivors long after the member's death. The grief process has no timetable. More than half of the surviving spouses can be expected to develop a posttraumatic stress reaction to the tragedy.
- 2) Survivors should continue to feel a part of the "police family". They should be invited to Department activities to ensure continued contact.
- 3) Members of the Department are encouraged to keep in touch with the family. Close friends, co-workers, and officials should arrange with the family to visit the home from time to time so long as the family expresses a desire to have these contacts continue.
- 4) The Chief of Police should observe the member's death date with a short note to the family, flowers on the grave and/or wreath placement at the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial.
- 5) Holidays may be especially difficult for the family, particularly if small children are involved. Increased contact with the survivors and additional support is important at these times.

- 6) The **FAMILY LIAISON** acts as a long-term liaison with the surviving family to ensure that close contact is maintained between the Department and the survivors and that their needs are met for as long as they feel the need for support.
- 7) If no criminal violations or court proceedings surround the circumstances of the member's death, the **FAMILY LIAISON** will relay all details of the incident to the family at the earliest opportunity.
- 8) If criminal violations surround the death, the **FAMILY LIAISON** will:
 - a) Inform the family of all new developments prior to press release;
 - b) Keep the family apprised of legal proceedings;
 - c) Introduce to family to the victim's assistance specialists of the court;
 - d) Encourage the family to attend the proceedings, and accompany them whenever possible; and
 - e) Arrange for investigators to meet with the family at the earliest opportunity following proceedings to answer all their questions.

CONFIDENTIAL

Line-of-Duty Death Information

Full Name: _____

Information will be used ONLY in the event of your serious injury or death in the line of duty. Please take the time to fill it out accurately because the data will be of extreme comfort to your family and the department in fulfilling your wishes.

Your address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ ZIP: _____

Home Phone: _____

Family Information

Spouse's name: _____

Address and phone if different from above:

Spouse's employer,

Work address and phone number:

Names and dates of birth of your children

_____	DOB: _____

If you are divorced, please provide information about your ex-spouse:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ ZIP: _____

Phone: Home _____

Work _____

Do you want a police representative to contact your ex-spouse?

() Yes () No

Please list the name, address and phone numbers of your children who live outside the family home and key relatives (parents, siblings, in-laws, etc.) below:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Relationship</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Notifications

Please list the persons you would like to be contacted by a police representative in case of serious injury or death in the line of duty. Begin with the first person you would like notified.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Relationship</u>

Is there anyone you would like to accompany the police representative when the notification is made to your immediate family? If someone other than a Faribault police officer, please include address and phone number.

Is there anyone you would like contacted to assist your family, or to assist with the funeral arrangements, or related matters that are not listed above? This person should be knowledgeable concerning your life insurance representatives, location of your will, etc.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Relationship</u>

Additional Information

Please list any preferences you may have regarding funeral arrangements:

Funeral Home: _____

Church: _____

Cemetery: _____

Are you a veteran of the US Armed Services? () Yes () No

If you are entitled to a military funeral as determined by the Department of Veterans Affairs, do you wish to have one? () Yes () No

Do you wish a law enforcement funeral? () Yes () No

Please list memberships in law enforcement, religious, or community organizations that may provide assistance to your family.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Do you have a will? () Yes () No

If yes, where is it located? _____

Please list any insurance policies you may have.

<u>Company</u>	<u>Policy #</u>	<u>Location of Policy</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Are there any special requests or directions you would like followed upon your death?
