



TEXAS SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY



STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

SUBJECT: Line of Duty Death/Serious Injury to Member		NO. OF PAGES: 4
REFERENCE: N/A	EFFECTIVE DATE: Jan. 1, 2009	REVIEW DATE: N/A
General Order 008	SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS/SUPERSEDES: N/A	ISSUING AUTH.: Chief of Police

PURPOSE: To establish procedure that will ensure support and emotional care for an officer's family following a line of duty death.

It shall be the responsibility of the Texas Southern University Department of Public Safety to provide liaison assistance to the immediate family of an officer who dies in the line of duty, whether feloniously or accidentally, while an active member of the department, to include tangible and intangible emotional support during this traumatic period of re-adjustment for the surviving family.

A. Death Notification:

1. It shall be the responsibility of the on-duty shift commander (notification officer) to properly notify the next of kin of an officer who has suffered severe injuries or died.
 - a. A confidential form (attachment), completed by each officer, will be stored in the officer's personnel file. This form contains information that will assist the notification officer in making notifications as directed. Completion of this confidential form is voluntary.
2. The name of the deceased officer will never be released to the media by the department before 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 to coincide with the death notification.
4. Notification will always be made in person and never alone. The Chief of Police, division commander, close friend, or another police officer should accompany the notification officer. If the aforementioned persons are not readily accessible, notification should not be delayed until these people can gather.
5. Death notification should not be made on the doorstep. Ask to be admitted into the house. Inform family members slowly and clearly of the information available. If specific information about the incident is known, the notification officer should relay as much of this information as possible to the family. The officer's name should be used during the notification. If the officer 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 may be transported by police vehicles. It is recommended that the family not drive themselves to the hospital. If the family insists on driving, an officer may accompany them in the family car.
7. Prior to departing for the hospital, the notification officer should notify the hospital staff (by telephone or cellular phone if possible) that a member(s) of the family is in route.
8. The deceased or severely injured officer's parents should also be afforded the courtesy of a personal notification if possible.

9. If the immediate survivors live beyond the Houston area, the notification officer will ensure the police communications operator 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.
10. The Chief of Police or a ranking representative should respond to the residence or the hospital to meet with the family as quickly as possible.
11. In the event of an on duty death, the external monitoring of police frequencies may be extensive. Communications regarding notifications should be restricted to the telephone or cell phone whenever possible. If the media has somehow obtained the officer's name, they should be advised to withhold the information, pending notification of the next of kin.

B. Assistance for Affected Officers:

1. Officers who were on the scene or who arrived after an officer was critically injured or killed should be relieved as soon as possible.
2. Police employees who may have been emotionally affected by the serious injury or death of another officer should be referred to the University's Employee Assistance Program for assistance.

C. Assisting the Family at the Hospital:

1. The first official, other than the Chief of Police or the notification officer, to arrive at the hospital becomes the hospital liaison. The hospital liaison is responsible for coordinating the activities of hospital personnel, the officer's family, police officers, the media, and others. These responsibilities include:
 - a. Arrange with hospital personnel to provide an appropriate waiting facility for the family, the Chief of Police, the notification officer, and only those others requested by the immediate family.
 - b. Arrange with hospital personnel to provide a separate area for fellow police officers and friends to assemble.
 - c. Arrange with hospital personnel to provide a media / press area.
 - d. Work with medical personnel to relay pertinent information regarding an officer's condition to the family on a timely basis and before such information is released to others.
 - e. Ensure that the family is updated regarding the incident and the officer's condition upon their arrival at the hospital.
 - f. Arrange transportation for the family back to their residence.
2. If it is possible for the family to visit the injured officer before death, they should be afforded that opportunity. A police official or hospital personnel should prepare the family for what they might see in the emergency room and should accompany the family in the room for the visit if the family requests.
3. The notification officer(s) should remain at the hospital while the family is present.
4. Do not be overly protective of the family. This includes the sharing of specific information on how the officer was injured or died, as well as allowing the family time with the deceased officer.

D. Support of the Family During the Wake or Funeral:

1. The Chief of Police, or a designee, will meet with the officer's family at their home to determine their wishes regarding departmental participation or assistance in the preparation of the funeral or services. All possible assistance will be rendered.
2. With the approval of the family, the Chief of Police will assign a family liaison officer.

E. Department Liaison Officer:

1. This position is normally assigned to a division commander due to the need to effectively coordinate resources of the department.
2. Department Liaison Officer responsibilities include:
 - a. Notify Concerns of Police Survivors (COPS), (210) 623-1162. Members are available to provide emotional support and assistance to surviving families.
 - b. Notify the Hundred Club of Houston, 1233 West Loop South, Suite 1250, Houston, Texas 77027, (713)952-0100. Members are available to provide emotional support and assistance to surviving families.
 - c. Work closely with the family to ensure that the needs of the family are fulfilled.
 - d. Meet with the following persons to coordinate funeral activities if the family desires departmental involvement:
 1. Chief of Police and Command Staff.
 2. Funeral Director.
 3. Family priest or minister.
 4. Cemetery Director.
 5. Honor Guard.
 - e. Direct the funeral activities of the department and visiting agencies according to the wishes of the family.
 - f. Issue a teletype message (according to TCIC and NCIC guidelines) to include the following:
 1. Name of deceased.
 2. Date and time of death.
 3. Circumstances surrounding the death.
 4. Funeral arrangements.
 5. Uniform to be worn.
 6. Expressions of sympathy in lieu of flowers.
 7. Contact person and phone number for visiting agencies to indicate their desire to attend and to obtain further information.
 - g. Obtain an American Flag. If the family wishes a flag presentation by the Chief of Police, notify the Chief's office.
 - h. If the family desires a burial in uniform, select an officer to obtain a uniform and all accouterments (except weapons) and deliver them to the funeral home.
 - i. If the family desires, assign members for usher and/or pallbearer duty.
 - j. Arrange for the delivery of the officer's personal belongings to the family.
 - k. Brief the Chief of Police and staff concerning all funeral arrangements.
 - l. Ensure that the surviving parents are afforded recognition and that proper placement is arranged for them during the funeral and procession.
 - m. Coordinate traffic management with other jurisdictions.
 - n. Assign an officer to remain at the family home during the viewing and funeral.
 - o. Arrange for close patrol checks of the survivor's home for several weeks following the funeral. This service is necessary since the survivors may be spending much time away from the home dealing with family matters.
- q. Assist the family gather and coordinate information regarding benefits available to them.

F. Continued Support for the Family:

1. The department liaison officer acts as a long-term liaison with the surviving family. The department liaison officer ensures 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.
2. Members of the department are encouraged to keep in touch with the family. Close friends, coworkers and officials should arrange with the family to visit the home periodically as long as the family expresses a desire to have these contacts. Increased contact and additional support

during holidays should be considered.

3. Survivors should continue to be invited to departmental activities or functions to ensure continued contact.

G. Response to Life Threatening Injury and Death not in the Line of Duty:

1. The department will offer the following for the surviving family.
 - a. Personal notification of family members.
 - b. Transportation to the hospital or other location(s) for family members.
 - c. Family liaison officer will be available to the family, as needed or requested by the family.
 - d. Department honors will be rendered with approval of Chief of Police.
2. Survivor Benefits:
 - a. Refer to benefits information posted on the Concerns of Police Survivors, Inc. web page <http://www.nationalcops.org/forms/benefits/texas.rtf>

Serious Injury to Member

A. Notification

When notifying family members of serious injury to department officer or personnel follow the same protocol as “ Line of Duty Death” procedures.

APPROVED:

Roger Byars
Chief of Police

Date

Review and Responsibility

Responsibility Party: Texas Southern University Department of Public's Safety's Command Staff

Review: Review will be conducted every even numbered

Retention: Original on file in the Office of the Chief of Police

Approval: Roger D. Byars, Director for Public Safety/Chief of Police

Date of Approval: September 1, 2008

