



**CHEVY CHASE
VILLAGE
POLICE
DEPARTMENT**

Police Chief: John Fitzgerald

GENERAL ORDER: 4-26 LINE OF DUTY DEATHS OR SERIOUS INJURIES TO EMPLOYEES

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I. POLICY

It shall be the policy of the Chevy Chase Village Police Department to promptly notify and provide assistance to the immediate family of any Village police employee who dies or who is seriously injured in the line of duty, regardless of whether the death or serious injury is the result of felonious or accidental circumstances.

Consistent with that assistance, the Department, at an appropriate time for the surviving family, will make the family aware of survivor benefits, as well as provide both tangible and intangible emotional support during this traumatic period.

The Department further realizes and understands that the actual funeral arrangements will properly reflect the wishes of the deceased member's family and that any conflict that arises will be decided in favor of the family's wishes.

II. PROCEDURES FOR EMERGENCY NOTIFICATIONS

A. Prior to Making the Notification

1. Information that was provided by the employee and saved in the CODY RMS Employee Files will be consulted to determine whom, and in which order a particular notification will be made, in accordance with the member's wishes who completed the form.
2. The member's name will not be released to the media (on or off the record) until appropriate notifications of the fallen employee's family are made, and the loved ones are made aware of the impending release.
3. If there is knowledge of a medical problem with someone on the emergency notification list, medical personnel should be dispatched to the residence to coincide with emergency notification.
4. Notification will always be made in person by the Chief of Police or the Lieutenant. Notifications will be made first to the fallen employee's immediate family, and if other specific family members should be notified in person, that will be determined after consulting with member(s) of the immediate family.

5. If immediate survivor(s)/family members are out of town or do not reside in the area, the Department will request an in-person notification be made by the law enforcement agency in the jurisdiction in which the survivor (s) is located.

B. General Guidelines

1. Unless the situation dictates otherwise, the notification will never be made on the doorstep of those being notified.
2. Everyone at the residence should be asked to enter the residence and to sit down.
3. The person(s) being notified will be informed slowly and clearly of the information pertaining to the incident.

- When conveying the information, the officer's name should be used during the notification.
- If specifics of the incident are known, those being notified must be given as much information as possible.
- If the injury is potentially fatal, those notified will not be given a false sense of hope. If it is possible for the family to visit the member prior to his/her death, they most certainly should be afforded that opportunity.

4. The person responsible for the emergency notification should understand that showing emotions is perfectly acceptable. Additionally, reactions by those being notified may include hysteria, anger, fainting, physical violence, shock, etc.
5. If those being notified want to go to the hospital, they should be transported via police vehicle, as it is highly recommended that they not drive themselves.

- If small children are home during the notification, the notifying officer(s)

must be cognizant of the fact that babysitting needs may have to be arranged.

6. Once the family is enroute to the hospital, ECC should be notified so that information (along with an E.T.A.) can be relayed to officers who may be at the hospital.

C. Assisting the Next-of-kin, etc. at the Hospital

1. This will be a priority of the Department and the Department will communicate with hospital staff in order to arrange for appropriate waiting facilities for the family and a separate area for fellow officers.
2. The officer-in-charge at the hospital should ensure that medical personnel relay pertinent information to the family on the member's condition on a timely basis.
3. These same medical personnel should make the family aware of hospital policies about visitation with the injured member.
 - Concerns of Police Survivors recommends that officers at the hospital should not be overly protective of the family.
4. As soon as the family arrives at the hospital, the Chief of Police, or designee, will ensure that the family is updated on the incident as soon as possible.
5. The Chief of Police, or designee, will make every effort to be present the entire time the family is at the hospital, unless called away, at which time, a representative will be appointed to arrange whatever assistance the family may need at that time.
6. The people who made the initial notification should be among those at the hospital.
7. Arrangements should be made for transportation of the family back to their residence.

D. Line of duty death notifications

1. It is suggested that the words such as "died" or "dead" be used, rather than "gone away" or "passed away".
2. If the employee dies in the hospital, the officer-in-charge at the hospital should ensure that medical personnel assist with the notification.
3. These same medical personnel should make the family aware of hospital policies about viewing the body following death, and explain why an autopsy is needed.

E. Support for the Family During the Wake and Funeral

1. The Chief of Police or his/her designee will, with the approval of the family, appoint a "liaison officer" to assist the family throughout the wake and funeral.

This appointment is a critical assignment and:

- The liaison officer should know the deceased member and be aware of the family relationships;
 - The officer should not be so emotionally involved with the loss that he/she would become ineffective; and,
 - The liaison officer must know that this is not a decision-making position, but that this is a "facilitator" role between the family and the Department.
2. The appointment will require the liaison officer, with the assistance of others, to:
 - Ensure that the needs of the family come the wishes of the Department;
 - Meet with the family and inform them what his/her responsibilities will be during this time;
 - Meet with the family concerning funeral arrangements (if any), since most officers have not pre-arranged their wishes for the handling of their own funeral, the family will most likely need to decide all aspects of the funeral;
 - Make the family aware of what the Department can offer in the way of assistance if the family decides to have a "law enforcement funeral;"
 - Understand and remain aware of developments concerning the death and continuing investigation to answer family questions;
 - Provide information to out-of-town family members to help them make their own travel and lodging arrangements;
 - Be constantly available throughout this traumatic time;
 - Ascertain what police fraternal/labor

organization involvement will be, if any, and what financial assistance they are willing to provide for out-of-town family travel, feeding the funeral attendees following the burial, etc;

- See that the surviving parent(s) are afforded recognition and will have proper placement arranged for them during the funeral and funeral procession;
- See that the family is briefed on the funeral procedure (i.e., “21-gun-salute”, presenting of the flag, playing of “Taps”, etc.);
- Assist family members in securing adequate babysitting help for their needs, if necessary;
- Accommodate all possible family requests for assistance by communicating those desires to the Chief of Police;
- *Assist as a liaison between* the family minister, police Chaplain, F.O.P., Funeral Director, and Cemetery Director regarding funeral arrangements;
- Compile information concerning the funeral arrangements and any other pertinent information needed to complete the teletype notification as follows:
 - ◇ Name of the deceased,
 - ◇ Date/Time of death,
 - ◇ Funeral arrangements (to include if service is private or formal, police funeral to include F.O.P. services),
 - ◇ Expressions of sympathy in lieu of flowers,
 - ◇ Uniform to be worn,
- Complete an itinerary for the day of the funeral services,
- Brief the Chief of Police concerning all funeral arrangements;
- Determine the location of the officer’s personal property (i.e. Evidence

Room), being particularly attentive to wedding rings and religious medals;

- If the family desires a burial in uniform, obtain or designate an officer to obtain a uniform and all accouterments and deliver them to the funeral home;
- Determine if the family wishes a flag presentation by the Chief of Police and notify the Chief (*an American flag can usually be obtained from the funeral home*);
- Ensure that mourning bunting is erected at the Police facility;
- Arrange for funeral escort service with MCP;
- Arrange for an ambulance to be present at the cemetery;
- *If necessary*, assist the family with transportation after the funeral; and
- Acknowledge visiting or assisting departments with letters of appreciation.

3. The family will be made aware of, and have access to, other public safety survivors or other support groups, such as:

- Concerns of Police Survivors
[REDACTED]
- Compassionate Friends
[REDACTED]

F. Relations With the Media and Release of Information

1. While the Department recognizes the importance of providing the public, via the media, with accurate and complete information, and will involve the media during this crisis situation, the Department will withhold certain information concerning a member’s serious injuries or death in the following circumstances:

- If a survivor has not been notified, and/or
- If the premature release of certain information would/could hamper the investigation into the incident.

2. If a *criminal* investigation is being conducted by an outside agency, *any* release of information by

this Department will be coordinated with their investigators.

G. Benefits Information Provided to Surviving Family

1. The Chief, with the assistance of the Village Manager, will gather information regarding financial benefits (federal, state, and local benefits, employer-sponsored life insurance, etc.) that the employee's survivor may be entitled to. Key agencies to make a claim for benefits include:

- **U.S. Department of Justice**
Bureau of Justice Assistance
Public safety Officers Benefits Program



Contact the office and request claim forms and a list of necessary documents to be returned with the claim.

- **Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services**



Will fax or mail a list of documents necessary to file a claim.

2. The Chief will arrange a meeting with the appropriate family members and provide the benefit information to them.

H. Long-Term Contact With Family Maintained

The Department, through its liaison officer, or as directed by the Chief of Police, will maintain contact with the surviving family by, among other things:

1. Frequently communicating with survivors to reiterate the Department's interest and support of the family;
2. Assisting the surviving family with completion of applicable forms and papers;
3. Providing words of encouragement to the family;
4. Accompanying survivors to Court appearances, as necessary.

Attribution note:

Much of the content of this policy was printed with permission from Concerns of Police Survivors, Incorporated, based on a publication titled, "Support Services to Surviving Families of Line-of-Duty Death."

This directive voids the previous version dated 6/23/2009.