



City of Manassas Police Department General Duty Manual



Effective Date: 12-24-2007	GENERAL ORDER	Number: 01-21
Subject: Line-Of-Duty Death / Critical Injury		
<input type="checkbox"/> New <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Amends <input type="checkbox"/> Rescinds <input type="checkbox"/> Reviewed 08-25-2017 General Order # 1-21 Dated: 02-18-2000		Reevaluation: <input type="checkbox"/> 1 yr. <input type="checkbox"/> 18 months <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
Accreditation Standards: 22.2.3 / 22.2.4	By Authority Of:  Douglas W. Keen, Chief of Police	Total Pages: 6

PURPOSE:

To prepare the Department for the event of an officer's death in the line-of-duty, or a critical injury. To direct the Department in providing proper emotional care for a deceased officer's family through contingency plans and procedures.

POLICY:

The Department has the responsibility to provide liaison assistance to the immediate survivors of an officer who dies in the line-of-duty, or an officer who suffers a critical injury. This responsibility includes providing tangible and intangible emotional support for the surviving family during this traumatic period of readjustment. A comprehensive study of survivor's benefits with clarification should be provided to the family. Continued emotional support for the family is essential.

DISCUSSION:

For the purpose of this directive, "line-of-duty" death includes: Any action, felonious or accidental (automobile accidents, hit by vehicle during traffic stop, training accidents, etc.), which claims the life of a law enforcement officer who was performing police functions either while on or off-duty. The Chief of Police may put certain parts of this directive into effect for cases of natural death of an officer. "Critical injury" includes: Any life-threatening injury to a law enforcement officer due to any action, felonious or accidental (automobile accidents, hit by vehicle during traffic stop, training accidents, etc.), while the officer was performing police functions either while on or off-duty.

"Survivors" include immediate family members of the deceased officer, spouse, children, parents, siblings, fiancée, and significant others.

Pre-planning on the part of officers is critical to the long-term welfare of their survivors. To aid in the pre-planning process, informational handbooks and guides are now available on our computer system. They are filed on the general "P" Drive in the folder titled "Death and Critical Injury Information." They are titled:

COPS Child_counsel.pdf

Financial Diary.doc

PSOB Checklist.pdf

Public Safety Officers Benefits Act.doc

This directive is based on recommendations provided by:

Concerns of Police Survivors, Inc. (C.O.P.S.)

P.O. Box 3199, Camdenton, Missouri 65020

573-346-4911.

Effective Date: 12-24-2007	GENERAL ORDER	Number: 01-21
Subject: Line-Of-Duty Death / Critical Injury		Page: 2 of 6

PROCEDURE:

I. Death / Critical Injury Notification

- A. This procedure is followed in cases of critically injured officers or obvious line-of-duty death.
- B. Timeliness takes precedence over protocol in the notification process. The senior ranking officer on the scene is responsible for ensuring that timely notification is made to the officer's immediate family. Upon a confirmation of death, a death notification must be made to the immediate survivors shortly after or coincidental with normal command notifications. The Chief of Police designates a ranking officer as Notification Officer. The Chief of Police normally assigns a second officer to accompany the Notification Officer or personally accompanies the Notification Officer, if circumstances permit. If the Chief of Police or appropriate Division Commander is not immediately available to make this designation, the responsibility for designating a Notification Officer remains with the senior ranking officer.
- C. Notification **MUST ALWAYS** be made in person, and never alone. The police chaplain, psychologist, and Chief of Police (or designee), should accompany the informing officer. Keep in mind, however, that if these persons are not readily accessible, notification should **NOT** be held up until they gather. The surviving family should hear of the death from a Departmental representative **FIRST**, and not from the media or other source.
- D. If the opportunity to get the family to the hospital prior to the death of the officer presents itself, **DO NOT WAIT** for the appropriate delegation to gather.
- E. The Notification Officer should be aware of the following:
 1. As soon as the family sees you, they will know something is wrong. Ask to be admitted to the residence. **NEVER** make a notification on the doorstep. Gather everyone in the home, and ask them to sit down, inform them slowly and clearly of the information you have on the incident, making sure you use the officer's name during the notification.
 2. If the officer has already died, relay that information using words such as "died" and "dead" rather than "gone away" or "passed away." **DO NOT** spark a false sense of hope.
 3. The Notification Officer will be seriously affected by the death, and as such needs to understand that showing emotions is perfectly acceptable.
 4. Reactions of the family may include hysteria, anger, fainting, physical violence, shock, etc.
 5. If the family wants to go to the hospital, they should be transported via police vehicle. It is highly recommended that the family **NOT** drive themselves to the hospital. Should there be serious resistance and the family insists on driving, an officer should accompany them in the family vehicle.
- F. Officers and Public Safety Communication Specialists should be aware that in the event of an on duty death or critical injury, the external monitoring of the police communications system (when and if possible) might be extensive, particularly by members of the media. Communications, therefore, should be restricted to the telephone whenever possible. Such monitoring may take several forms, such as:
 1. Direct scanning of the Department radio communications by electronic means. While the Department's current 800 MHz communication system cannot be scanned with equipment available to citizens, such equipment will most probably be made available on the open market in the future.
 2. Media personnel and others may simply eavesdrop on the Department members carrying on conversations while using police radios, cellular telephones, etc.
- G. The name of the deceased officer **MUST NEVER** be released to the media before immediate survivors living in the region are notified. If the media already has the officer's name, they should be requested to withhold this information, pending notification of next of kin.
- H. The Notification Officer notifies the senior ranking officer at the hospital that the family is en route (by telephone if possible).
- I. Any notification of immediate survivors beyond the Washington, D.C., region should be made through personal notification by the local law enforcement agency in that area. The Notification Officer obtains the names of relatives from the immediate survivors and passes this information on to the Public Safety Communications Center (PSCC). The PSCC sends a teletype message to the jurisdiction requesting a **PERSONAL** notification and the Notification Officer follows up with a personal contact by telephone to

Effective Date: 12-24-2007	GENERAL ORDER	Number: 01-21
Subject: Line-Of-Duty Death / Critical Injury		Page: 3 of 6

the other jurisdiction coordinating notification activities. Logistical arrangements should include telephone number for a ranking officer of this Department or the Notification Officer.

- J. The Notification Officer submits a written report of any notifications made to the Chief of Police.
- K. Officers required to perform notification duties must remember the Principals of Death Notification:
 1. IN PERSON.
 2. IN TIME.
 3. IN PAIRS.
 4. IN PLAIN LANGUAGE.
 5. WITH COMPASSION.

II. Assisting the Family At the Hospital

- A. The first ranking officer to arrive at the hospital becomes the Hospital Liaison. The Hospital Liaison Officer is responsible for coordinating the arrival of immediate survivors, police officials, the media, and others. These responsibilities include:
 1. Arrangements with hospital personnel for appropriate waiting facilities. There should be SEGREGATED areas reserved for:
 - a. Immediate survivors, the Chief of Police, the Notification Officer, and ONLY others as requested by the immediate survivors.
 - b. A separate area or room for fellow police officers and friends.
 - c. A media staging area.
 2. Ensuring that medical personnel relate pertinent information on the officer's condition to the family FIRST.
 3. Notifying the appropriate hospital personnel that all billing for medical services shall be directed to the City of Manassas. The family should NOT receive any of these bills at their resident address. This may require the Hospital Liaison Officer to re-contact the hospital later during normal business hours to ensure that proper billing takes place.
 4. Arranging transportation for the immediate survivors and others from the hospital back to their residence.
- B. If it is possible for the family to visit a critically injured officer prior to death, depending on hospital policy, they should be afforded the opportunity without delay. Medical personnel should make the family aware of hospital policy about visiting a trauma patient or visitation with the remains. Medical personnel should also explain why an autopsy is required.
- C. Those present at the hospital should be aware of the following when dealing with the immediate survivors:
 1. DO NOT BE OVERLY PROTECTIVE OF THE FAMILY. This includes the sharing of specific information on how the officer met his demise, as well as allowing the family time with the remains of the deceased officer.
 2. Idle promises should not be made to the family at this time; e.g., "We'll promote him posthumously." "We'll retire his badge."
 3. DO NOT suggest a survivor be sedated unless medication is requested by that survivor.
 4. The expression of raw emotion by anyone, including officers under these circumstances is perfectly understandable.
- D. The Chief of Police or designee is present the entire time the family is at the hospital to arrange whatever assistance the family may need at the time.

III. Support for the Family During the Wake and Funeral

- A. Within 24 hours of death, the Chief of Police designates a Funeral Liaison Officer, a Benefits Coordinator, a Family Support Advocate, and a Department Liaison Officer (usually the appropriate Division Commander). These designations are announced to the Force in writing and all referrals are made according to areas of responsibility.
- B. The Chief of Police personally notifies the surviving family of the designated choices.
- C. The Public Safety Communications Center may require additional members or overtime to field incoming telephone calls. Callers should be directed to the appropriate liaison, according to responsibility.

Effective Date: 12-24-2007	GENERAL ORDER	Number: 01-21
Subject: Line-Of-Duty Death / Critical Injury		Page: 4 of 6

- D. Within 24 hours, the Chief of Police makes appropriate referrals under the Employee Assistance Program for Critical Incident Stress Debriefing for officers close to the incident and referrals for the surviving family if they wish.

IV. Department Liaison

- A. This position is normally filled by a Division commander because of the need to make expedient provisions of all Departmental resources and delegation of tasks.
- B. The Department Liaison Officer works closely with the Funeral Liaison Officer to ensure the needs and requests of the family are fulfilled regarding funeral arrangements.
- C. The Department Liaison Officer directs the funeral activities of the Department and visiting Departments, according to the wishes of the family. The Department Liaison Officer is also responsible for:
 - 1. Oversight of arrangements for travel and lodging for out of-town family members.
 - 2. Expedient provisions for all Departmental resources.
 - 3. A comprehensive survey of alternate churches and reception halls with seating capacities large enough to accommodate attendance of a law enforcement funeral. This information is given to the family as soon as possible to help them decide a location. **THE CHOICE REMAINS WITH THE FAMILY.**
 - 4. Coordinating all official law enforcement notifications and arrangements for a law enforcement funeral, including honor guards, pallbearers, traffic control, and liaison with visiting law enforcement agencies.
 - 5. Liaison with media relations. In the unlikely event that the family decides to accept an interview, an officer should attend and “screen” all questions presented to the family, so as to not jeopardize upcoming legal proceedings. Specific instructions on what information may be released are given to the Force.
 - 6. Arranging for routine residence checks of the survivors’ home for 6-8 weeks following the tragedy. This service is necessary since large amounts of money may pass through the residence and the survivors may be spending much time away from the home with legal matters. This may require outside liaison with other jurisdictions.

V. Funeral Liaison Officer

- A. The Funeral Liaison Officer works closely with the Department Liaison Officer.
- B. The Funeral Liaison Officer need not be a ranking officer, but the assignment is critical.
- C. The Funeral Liaison Officer IS NOT a decision making position. The FUNERAL LIAISON Officer acts as facilitator between the decedent’s family and the Department during the wake and funeral. The position requires the officer have a good knowledge of the family relationships, but not be so emotionally involved with the loss, that he becomes ineffective. The Funeral Liaison Officer is responsible for:
 - 1. Meeting with the family and explaining the responsibilities of a Funeral Liaison Officer.
 - 2. Being constantly available to the family throughout the wake and funeral.
 - 3. Ensuring that the **NEEDS OF THE FAMILY** come before the wishes of the Department.
 - 4. Meeting with the family and funeral director regarding funeral arrangements. Since most officers have not prearranged their wishes for the handling of their own funeral, the family will most likely need to decide **ALL** aspects of the funeral. **THESE DECISIONS SHOULD REMAIN WITH THE FAMILY.** The Funeral Liaison officer should only make the family aware of what the Department may offer in the way of assistance and resources, according to the Department Liaison Officer.
 - 5. Relaying all available information to the surviving family concerning the circumstances of death and any continuing investigation. Departments traditionally “hold their cards close to their chest” with this type of information, particularly in sensitive homicide cases. The Funeral Liaison Officer should coordinate with investigating officers and prosecutors to ensure that the family receives as much information as is allowable during the first few days. Being “kept in the dark” is a common complaint of surviving families.

Effective Date: 12-24-2007	GENERAL ORDER	Number: 01-21
Subject: Line-Of-Duty Death / Critical Injury		Page: 5 of 6

6. Determining the need for travel arrangements for out-of-town family members or any other special needs during the funeral, and reporting the same to the Department Liaison Officer.
7. Reporting to the Department Liaison Officer.
8. Briefing the family on the law enforcement funeral procedure, including:
 - a. The twenty-one gun salute.
 - b. The presentation of the colors.
 - c. The playing of taps.
 - d. General military protocol.

VI. Benefits Coordinator

- A. The Chief of Police designates a ranking officer to act as Benefits Coordinator. The Benefits Coordinator is responsible for:
 1. Filing worker's compensation claims and related paperwork.
 2. Gathering information on all benefits / funeral payments available to the family, including the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Act provided by the United States Justice Department and any available state benefits.
 - a. The Concerns of Police Survivors group should be contacted at 573-346-4911 for assistance.
 - b. Public Safety Benefits Office:
1-888-SIGNL13 (888-744-6513) or
202-307-0635
www.psob.gov
 - c. Social Security: <https://secure.ssa.gov/apps6z/ISBA/main.html>
 3. Contacting the City's Director of Human Resources to coordinate City / State benefit processing.
 4. Fielding all telephone calls and inquiries regarding the establishment of any special trust funds or educational funds.
 5. Making a clear distinction between benefits, (which are financial payments made to the family to ensure financial stability following the loss of a loved one) and funeral payments, (which are funds specifically earmarked for funeral expenses).
 6. Preparing a printout or other documentation of the benefits / funeral payments due the family, listing named beneficiaries, contacts at various benefits offices, and when they may expect to receive the benefit.
 7. Filing all benefit related paperwork and following through with the family to ensure that these benefits are being received. Private consultants / attorneys should NOT be used for this purpose IF they intend to bill the family for their services.
 8. Visiting with the surviving family within a few days following the funeral to discuss benefits. The prepared printout and other documentation should be made available to the family at that time.
 - a. If there is minor age surviving children from a former marriage, the guardian of those children should also receive a printout of what benefits the children will receive.
 - b. Special attention should go to problems with possible revocation of health benefits. The vast majority of survivors are given a 30-day grace period prior to being removed from the coverage or of being responsible for monthly payments for the coverage.
 9. Advising the surviving family of the role of police associations and organizations such as Heroes, Inc. in making their attorney / financial counselor available to the surviving family for whatever legal / financial counseling is necessary: (i.e., establishing trust funds, educational funding, etc.). This attorney should NOT be affiliated with the City government and should work as an avid advocate for the family's interest.
- B. Division Commanders may serve as Benefits Coordinator in addition to the Department Liaison Officer.

Effective Date: 12-24-2007	GENERAL ORDER	Number: 01-21
Subject: Line-Of-Duty Death / Critical Injury		Page: 6 of 6

VII. Family Support Advocate

- A. The Family Support Advocate acts in a long-term liaison with the surviving family. The Family Support Advocate should have extensive experience dealing with police victims and witnesses. The Notification Officer or Funeral Liaison Officer may also serve as Family Support Advocate. This officer should not be a principle witness in the criminal trial. This officer's responsibilities include:
 - 1. Constant contact with the surviving family to keep them abreast of criminal proceedings. The family should NEVER learn of developments in the case from the media prior to learning them from the Department.
 - 2. Accompany the surviving family to any criminal proceedings. Introducing them to prosecutors, and answering any questions they may have concerning the criminal trial.
 - 3. Cooperation with outside peer support groups.
 - 4. Ensuring that the surviving family does not feel isolated from the Department.
 - 5. Encouraging others to make visits or help with family needs of the surviving family. Care should be used that idle promises are not made to the surviving family.
- B. The Family Support Advocate should not set time limitations on when the family should "recover" from this traumatic event. The grief process has no timetable. Survivors may experience a complicated grief process.
- C. Survivors should continue to feel a part of the "police family" for which the officer gave his life. The Family Support Advocate should keep in touch with the family with at least monthly telephone calls through the first year, dwindling off as necessary. The needs of the survivors usually dictate the frequency of contact.
- D. The Chief of Police, Family Support Advocate, and others ensure that the anniversary date of the officer's death is observed with a note to the family and / or flowers sent to the grave; and that adequate support is given to the family during holidays, particularly during the first year.
- E. The Chief of Police works with community groups and government leaders toward the establishment of any appropriate memorial, plaques or memorabilia and considers surviving parents with any presentations. The surviving family continues to receive support and invitations from the Chief of Police to appropriate Department social activities.

Attachments: N/A

Index as: Line-of-Duty Death.
Death of a Member.
Police Funeral.
Critically Injured Officers.

References: Department "P" Drive – Death or Injury Information