



WRITTEN DIRECTIVE	No.	PD17-0203	Page:	1 of 6
	Subject:	Effective Date:	10/18/17	
	EMPLOYEE-RELATED DEATH OR CRITICAL INJURY	Supersedes/Amends:	PD15-0203	
		Reference:	22.2.3,22.2.4	



I. Purpose

The purpose of this directive is to establish procedures for the handling of employee line of duty death or critical injuries and to direct the agency in providing proper support for the employee's family.

II. Policy

It shall be the policy of the Lynchburg Police Department to provide liaison assistance to the immediate survivors of an employee who dies, or is critically injured, in the line of duty and to provide support during this traumatic period. This directive does not apply to cases of an officer's death outside of the line of duty.

III. Procedure

A. GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. For the purposes of this directive:
 - a. *Line of Duty Death* will be defined as the death of an active duty sworn employee by felonious or accidental means during the course of performing police duties while on or off duty.
 - b. *Non-Line of Duty Death* will be defined as the death of an active duty sworn employee by natural, or accidental means, while off duty, and not performing police duties
 - c. *Critical Injury* will be defined as any job-related critical injury, illness, or occupational disease incurred by any Lynchburg Police Department employee.
 - d. *Survivors* will be defined as immediate family members of the deceased officer to include spouse, children, parents, siblings, fiancée and/or significant others.
2. 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.
3. *Determination:* Within 10 days of completing the incident investigation, claim documents, investigative reports, and a signed letter from the Chief of Police will

be sent to the Comptroller's Office to determine eligibility of benefit payments. Based upon 9.1-404 of the Code of Virginia, death and disability benefit determination is the sole responsibility of the Comptroller's Office.

4. Initial and refresher training for all officers on line of duty death and disability benefits will be in accordance with Code of Virginia 9.2-407.

B. LINE OF DUTY CRITICAL INJURY OR DEATH

1. As soon as possible, the on-duty supervisor will notify the employee's division Captain, the Majors, and the Chief of Police of the situation. The Chief of Police, or a Major, will have the authority to designate an officer to inform the immediate family of the employee's condition or death.
2. The name of the deceased/critically-injured employee shall not be released to the media or other parties before immediate survivors living in the area are notified.
3. Notification of survivors in the immediate area shall be made in person and, whenever appropriate, with another person such as the police chaplain.
4. Whenever the health of immediate family survivors is a concern, emergency medical services personnel shall be requested to stand by.
5. If an opportunity to get the family to the hospital exists prior to the employee's death, officers shall inform the hospital that the family is on its way. In such cases, immediate transportation should be provided for survivors rather than waiting for any other members of the departmental delegation to arrive.
6. If the employee has died, notification should be made to the survivors in as forthright and empathetic manner as possible.
7. Communication of information concerning the employee and the incident shall, whenever possible, be restricted to the telephone to avoid interception by the media or others.
8. Should the media obtain the employee's name prematurely, the ranking officer should request that the information be withheld until proper notification of survivors can be made.
9. The notification officers shall be responsible for identification of additional survivors outside the area and shall make any notifications as desired by the immediate family.
10. Such notification shall be made by contacting the law enforcement agency in that jurisdiction and requesting that a personal notification is made.
11. The ranking officer making the notification will complete a detailed *Memorandum* containing the names of persons contacted, dates/times, and location of the notification and forward it to the Chief of Police.

C. ASSISTING FAMILY AT THE HOSPITAL

1. Whenever possible, the Chief of Police shall join the family at the hospital in order to emphasize the agency's support.
2. The next highest ranking officer to arrive at the hospital shall serve as or designate a hospital liaison officer who shall be responsible for coordinating the arrival of immediate family and survivors, departmental personnel, the media and others and will assume the following responsibilities:
 - a. arrange for waiting facilities for immediate family and survivors and designate a separate media staging area.
 - b. the desires of the surviving family member should be followed with regard to the accessibility to other officers and friends.
 - c. ensure the medical personnel provide pertinent medical information on the employee's condition to the family before any other parties.
 - d. assist family members, in accordance with their desire, in gaining access to the injured or deceased employee.
 - e. arrange transportation for the family and other survivors upon their departure from the hospital.
3. The hospital liaison shall ensure that immediate family members are provided with appropriate assistance at the hospital.

D. APPOINTMENT OF DEPARTMENT COORDINATION PERSONNEL

1. The designated departmental employee(s) shall begin serving in the following capacities: **department liaison, funeral liaison, benefits coordinator, and family support advocate.**
2. Assignments will be made in writing (as time permits) to departmental personnel and surviving family members regarding the responsibilities of each officer and those designated. In addition, the Chief of Police or his designee will:
 - a. make additional personnel assignments to assist in handling incoming telephone calls and inquiries and to direct the public to appropriate personnel.
 - b. ensure that the Employee Assistance Program (All Points EAP) is implemented to assist surviving family members and emphasize the family's right to psychological services.
 - c. ensure that employees are provided the opportunity to participate in a critical incident stress management process.

3. **Department Liaison:** The department liaison officer will serve as a facilitator between the family and the law enforcement agency and will:
 - a. normally be a commanding officer in order to expedite the tasks of employing departmental resources and the delegation of assignments.
 - b. 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:
 - 1) providing oversight of travel and lodging arrangements for out-of-town family members.
 - 2) identifying alternative churches and reception halls that will accommodate the employee's funeral. These alternatives will be presented to the family, who will make the final determination.
 - 3) coordinating all official notifications and arrangements to include the honor guard, pallbearers, traffic control and liaison with visiting agencies.
 - 4) assisting family members in dealing with general media inquiries and informing them of limitations on what they can say to the media specifically.
 - 5) 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.
 - 6) ensuring that security checks of the survivor's residence are initiated immediately following the incident for as long as necessary thereafter.
4. **Funeral Liaison:** The funeral liaison officer acts as facilitator between the employee's family and the department during the wake and funeral. The funeral liaison officer is responsible for the following:
 - a. meeting with the family members and explaining the liaison responsibilities to them.
 - b. being available to the family prior to and throughout the wake and funeral.
 - 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. relaying any information to the family concerning the circumstances of the decedent employee's death and appropriate information regarding any investigation.
 - f. 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.
5. **Benefits Coordinator:** The benefits coordinator is responsible for the following:
- 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 the receipt of such contributions, as appropriate.
 - d. preparing all documentation of benefits and payment due survivors to include the nature and amount of benefits to be received by each beneficiary, the schedule of payments and the name of the contact person or facilitator at each benefit or payment office.
 - e. filing, or providing assistance with, 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.
 - f. advising the surviving family of the role of the police associations and organizations and the nature of support programs that they sponsor for law enforcement survivors.
 - g. ensuring that any necessary documentation has been completed and filed as required by Code of Virginia 9.1-400 through 9.1-402 when a line of duty death occurs.
6. **Family Support Advocate:** The family support advocate serves in a long-term liaison and support capacity for the surviving family. The duties of the Family Support Advocate include the following:
- a. providing contact with surviving family members in order to keep them abreast of any criminal proceedings relating to the death/critical injury of the family member.
 - b. accompanying family members to any criminal proceedings, explaining the nature of the proceedings, and introducing them to prosecutors and other persons as required or needed.
 - c. identifying all support services available to family members and working on their behalf to secure any services necessary.

- d. maintaining routine contact with family members to provide companionship and emotional support and maintain an ongoing relationship between the department and the immediate family.
- e. 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.

Original Signed

Raul M. Diaz
Chief of Police

October 18, 2017

Date