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## Line-of-Duty Deaths

### 828.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to members of the Humboldt County Probation Department (HCPD) in the event of the death of a member occurring in the line of duty and to direct the Department in providing proper support for the member's survivors.

The Chief Probation Officer may also apply some or all of this policy in situations where members are injured in the line of duty and the injuries are life-threatening.

#### 828.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

**Line-of-duty death** - The death of a sworn member during the course of performing probation-related functions while on- or off-duty, or a civilian/non-sworn member during the course of performing their assigned duties.

**Survivors** - Immediate family members of the deceased member, which can include spouse, children, parents, other next of kin, or significant others. The determination of who should be considered a survivor for purposes of this policy should be made on a case-by-case basis given the individual's relationship with the member and whether the individual was previously designated by the deceased member.

### 828.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the HCPD to make appropriate notifications and to provide assistance and support to survivors and coworkers of a member who dies in the line of duty.

It is also the policy of this department to respect the requests of the survivors when they conflict with these guidelines, as appropriate.

### 828.3 INITIAL ACTIONS BY COMMAND STAFF

- (a) Upon learning of a line-of-duty death, the deceased member's supervisor should provide all reasonably available information to the Department.
  1. Communication of information concerning the member and the incident should be restricted to secure networks to avoid interception by the media or others (see the Chief Probation Officer section of this policy).
- (b) The Division Director should ensure that notifications are made in accordance with the Officer-Involved Shootings and Deaths and Major Incident Notification policies as applicable.
- (c) If the member has been transported to the hospital, the Division Director or the designee should respond to the hospital to assume temporary responsibilities as the Hospital Liaison.
- (d) The Chief Probation Officer or the authorized designee should assign members to handle survivor notifications and assign members to the roles of Hospital Liaison

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(to relieve the temporary Hospital Liaison) and the Department Liaison as soon as practicable (see the Notifying Survivors section and the Department Liaison and Hospital Liaison subsections in this policy).

#### **828.4 NOTIFYING SURVIVORS**

Survivors should be notified as soon as possible in order to avoid the survivors hearing about the incident in other ways.

The Chief Probation Officer or the authorized designee should review the deceased member's emergency contact information and emergency notification form, if one exists, and make accommodations to respect the member's wishes and instructions specific to notifying survivors. However, notification should not be excessively delayed because of attempts to assemble a notification team in accordance with the member's wishes.

The Chief Probation Officer, Division Director, or the authorized designee should select at least two members, or one member and a member of the clergy, to conduct notification of survivors.

Notifying members should:

- (a) Make notifications in a direct and compassionate manner, communicating as many facts of the incident as possible, including the current location of the member. Information that is not verified should not be provided until an investigation has been completed.
- (b) Determine the method of notifying surviving children by consulting with other survivors and taking into account factors such as the child's age, maturity, and current location (e.g., small children at home, children in school).
- (c) Plan for concerns such as known health concerns of survivors or language barriers.
- (d) Offer to transport survivors to the hospital, if appropriate. Survivors should be transported in department vehicles when possible. Notifying members shall inform the Hospital Liaison over a secure network that the survivors are on their way to the hospital. Notifying members should remain at the hospital while the survivors are present.
- (e) When survivors are not at their residences or known places of employment, actively seek information and follow leads from neighbors, other law enforcement, postal authorities, and other sources of information in order to accomplish notification in as timely a fashion as possible. Notifying members shall not disclose the reason for their contact other than a family emergency.
- (f) If making notification at a survivor's workplace, ask a workplace supervisor for the use of a quiet, private room to meet with the survivor. Members shall not inform the workplace supervisor of the purpose of their visit other than to indicate that it is a family emergency.
- (g) Offer to call other survivors, friends, or clergy to support the survivors and to avoid leaving survivors alone after notification.
- (h) Assist the survivors with meeting childcare or other immediate needs.

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- (i) Provide other assistance to survivors and take reasonable measures to accommodate their needs, wishes, and desires. Care should be taken not to make promises or commitments to survivors that cannot be met.
- (j) Inform the survivors of the name and phone number of the Survivor Support Liaison (see the Survivor Support Liaison section of this policy), if known, and the Department Liaison.
- (k) Provide their contact information to the survivors before departing.
- (l) Document the survivors' names and contact information, as well as the time and location of notification. This information should be forwarded to the Department Liaison.
- (m) Inform the Chief Probation Officer or the authorized designee once survivor notifications have been made so that other HCPD members may be apprised that survivor notifications are complete.

#### **828.4.1 OUT-OF-AREA NOTIFICATIONS**

The Department Liaison should request assistance from law enforcement agencies in appropriate jurisdictions for in-person notification to survivors who are out of the area.

- (a) The Department Liaison should contact the appropriate jurisdiction using a secure network and provide the assisting agency with the name and telephone number of the department member that the survivors can call for more information following the notification by the assisting agency.
- (b) The Department Liaison may assist in making transportation arrangements for the member's survivors, but will not obligate the Department to pay travel expenses without the authorization of the Chief Probation Officer.

#### **828.5 NOTIFYING DEPARTMENT MEMBERS**

Supervisors or members designated by the Chief Probation Officer are responsible for notifying department members of the line-of-duty death as soon as possible after the survivor notification is made. Notifications and related information should be communicated in person or using secure networks and should not be transmitted over the radio.

Notifications should be made in person and as promptly as possible to all members on-duty at the time of the incident. Members reporting for subsequent shifts within a short amount of time should be notified in person at the beginning of their shift. Members reporting for duty from their residence should be instructed to contact their supervisor as soon as practicable. Those members who are working later shifts or are on days off should be notified by phone as soon as practicable.

Members having a close bond with the deceased member should be notified of the incident in person. Supervisors should consider assistance (e.g., chaplain, counselor, peer support group, Employee Assistance Program, modifying work schedules, approving sick leave) for members who are especially affected by the incident.

Supervisors should direct members not to disclose any information outside the Department regarding the deceased member or the incident.

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#### **828.6 LIAISONS AND COORDINATORS**

The Chief Probation Officer or the authorized designee should select members to serve as liaisons and coordinators to handle responsibilities related to a line-of-duty death, including but not limited to:

- (a) Department Liaison.
- (b) Hospital Liaison.
- (c) Survivor Support Liaison.
- (d) Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) coordinator.
- (e) Funeral Liaison.
- (f) Benefits Liaison.
- (g) Finance coordinator.

Liaisons and coordinators will be directed by the Department Liaison and should be given sufficient duty time to complete their assignments.

Members may be assigned responsibilities of more than one liaison or coordinator position depending on available department resources. The Department Liaison may assign separate liaisons and coordinators to accommodate multiple family units, if needed.

##### **828.6.1 DEPARTMENT AGENCY LIAISON**

The Department Liaison should be a Division Director or of sufficient rank to effectively coordinate Department resources and should serve as a facilitator between the deceased member's survivors and the Department. The Department Liaison reports directly to the Chief Probation Officer. The Department Liaison's responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- (a) Directing the other liaisons and coordinators in fulfilling survivors' needs and requests. Consideration should be given to organizing the effort using the National Incident Management System (NIMS).
- (b) Establishing contact with survivors within 24 hours of the incident and providing them contact information.
- (c) Advising survivors of the other liaison and coordinator positions and their roles and responsibilities.
- (d) Identifying locations that will be sufficient to accommodate visitation and presenting the options to the appropriate survivors, who will select the location.
- (e) Coordinating all official law enforcement notifications and arrangements.
- (f) Making necessary contacts for authorization to display flags at half-staff.
- (g) Ensuring that department members are reminded of appropriate information-sharing restrictions regarding the release of information that could undermine future legal proceedings.
- (h) Coordinating security checks of the member's residence as necessary and reasonable.

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- (i) Serving as a liaison with visiting law enforcement agencies during memorial and funeral services.

#### 828.6.2 HOSPITAL LIAISON

The Hospital Liaison should work with hospital personnel to:

- (a) Arrange for appropriate and separate waiting areas for:
  1. The survivors and others whose presence is requested by the survivors.
  2. Department members and friends of the deceased member.
  3. Media personnel.
- (b) Ensure, as much as practicable, that any suspects who are in the hospital and their families or friends are not in close proximity to the member's survivors or HCPD members (except for members who may be guarding the suspect).
- (c) Ensure that survivors receive timely updates regarding the member before information is released to others.
- (d) Arrange for survivors to have private time with the member, if requested.
  1. The Hospital Liaison or hospital personnel may need to explain the condition of the member to the survivors to prepare them accordingly.
  2. The Hospital Liaison should accompany the survivors into the room, if requested.
- (e) Stay with survivors and ensure that they are provided with other assistance as needed at the hospital.
- (f) If applicable, explain to the survivors why an autopsy may be needed.
- (g) Ensure hospital bills are directed to the Department, that the survivors are not asked to sign as guarantor of payment for any hospital treatment and that the member's residence address, insurance information, and next of kin are not included on hospital paperwork.

Other responsibilities of the Hospital Liaison include but are not limited to:

- Arranging transportation for the survivors back to their residence.
- Working with investigators to gather and preserve the deceased member's equipment and other items that may be of evidentiary value.
- Documenting actions at the conclusion of liaison duties.

#### 828.6.3 SURVIVOR SUPPORT LIAISON

The Survivor Support Liaison should work with the Department Liaison to fulfill the immediate needs and requests of the survivors of any member who has died in the line of duty, and serve as the long-term department contact for survivors.

The Survivor Support Liaison should be selected by the deceased member's Division Director. The following should be considered when selecting the Survivor Support Liaison:

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- The liaison should be an individual the survivors know and with whom they are comfortable working. If the member has completed an emergency notification form, it should be used for this purpose.
- If the survivors have no preference, the selection may be made from names recommended by the deceased member's supervisor and/or coworkers. The deceased member's partner or close friends may not be the best selections for this assignment because the emotional connection to the member or survivors may impair their ability to conduct adequate liaison duties.
- The liaison must be willing to assume the assignment with an understanding of the emotional and time demands involved.

The responsibilities of the Survivor Support Liaison include but are not limited to:

- (a) Arranging for transportation of survivors to hospitals, places of worship, funeral homes, and other locations as appropriate.
- (b) Communicating with the Department Liaison regarding appropriate security measures for the family residence, as needed.
- (c) If requested by the survivors, providing assistance with instituting methods of screening telephone calls made to their residence after the incident.
- (d) Providing assistance with travel and lodging arrangements for out-of-town survivors.
- (e) Returning the deceased member's personal effects from the Department and the hospital to the survivors. The following should be considered when returning the personal effects:
  1. Items should not be delivered to the survivors until they are ready to receive the items.
  2. Items not retained as evidence should be delivered in a clean, unmarked box.
  3. All clothing not retained as evidence should be cleaned and made presentable (e.g., items should be free of blood or other signs of the incident).
  4. The return of some personal effects may be delayed due to ongoing investigations.
- (f) Assisting with the return of department-issued equipment that may be at the deceased member's residence.
  1. Unless there are safety concerns, the return of the equipment should take place after the funeral at a time and in a manner considerate of the survivors' wishes.
- (g) Working with the CISM coordinator to ensure that survivors have access to available counseling services.
- (h) Coordinating with the department's Chief Probation Officer to brief the survivors on pending press releases related to the incident and to assist the survivors with media relations in accordance with their wishes (see the Chief Probation Officer section of this policy).

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- (i) Briefing survivors on investigative processes related to the line-of-duty death, such as criminal, internal, and administrative investigations.
- (j) Informing survivors of any related criminal proceedings and accompanying them to such proceedings.
- (k) Introducing survivors to prosecutors, victim's assistance personnel, and other involved personnel as appropriate.
- (l) Maintaining long-term contact with survivors and taking measures to sustain a supportive relationship (e.g., follow-up visits, phone calls, cards on special occasions, special support during holidays).
- (m) Inviting survivors to department activities, memorial services, or other functions as appropriate.

Survivor Support Liaisons providing services after an incident resulting in multiple members being killed should coordinate with and support each other through conference calls or meetings as necessary.

The Department recognizes that the duties of a Survivor Support Liaison will often affect regular assignments over many years, and is committed to supporting members in the assignment.

If needed, the Survivor Support Liaison should be issued a personal communication device (PCD) owned by the Department to facilitate communications necessary to the assignment. The department-issued PCD shall be used in accordance with the Personal Communication Devices Policy.

#### 828.6.4 CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT COORDINATOR

The CISM coordinator should work with the Chief Probation Officer or the authorized designee, liaisons, coordinators, and other resources to make CISM and counseling services available to members and survivors who are impacted by a line-of-duty death. The responsibilities of the CISM coordinator include but are not limited to:

- (a) Identifying members who are likely to be significantly affected by the incident and may have an increased need for CISM and counseling services, including:
  - 1. Members involved in the incident.
  - 2. Members who witnessed the incident.
  - 3. Members who worked closely with the deceased member but were not involved in the incident.
- (b) Ensuring that members who were involved in or witnessed the incident are relieved of department responsibilities until they can receive CISM support as appropriate and possible.
- (c) Ensuring that CISM and counseling resources (e.g., peer support, debriefing, grief counselors) are available to members as soon as reasonably practicable following the line-of-duty death.

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- (d) Coordinating with the Survivor Support Liaison to ensure survivors are aware of available CISM and counseling services and assisting with arrangements as needed.
- (e) Following up with members and the Survivor Support Liaison in the months following the incident to determine if additional CISM or counseling services are needed.

#### 828.6.5 FUNERAL LIAISON

The Funeral Liaison should work with the Department Liaison, Survivor Support Liaison, and survivors to coordinate funeral arrangements to the extent the survivors wish. The Funeral Liaison's responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- (a) Assisting survivors in working with the funeral director regarding funeral arrangements.
- (b) Completing funeral notification to other probation and law enforcement agencies.
- (c) Briefing the Chief Probation Officer and command staff concerning funeral arrangements.
- (d) Assigning an officer to remain at the family home during the viewing and funeral.
- (e) Arranging for transportation of the survivors to and from the funeral home and interment site using department vehicles and drivers.

#### 828.6.6 BENEFITS LIAISON

The Benefits Liaison should provide survivors with information concerning available benefits and will assist them in applying for benefits. Responsibilities of the Benefits Liaison include but are not limited to:

- (a) Confirming the filing of workers' compensation claims and related paperwork (see the Work-Related Illness and Injury Reporting Policy).
- (b) Researching and assisting survivors with application for federal government survivor benefits, such as those offered through the:
  - 1. Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program.
  - 2. Public Safety Officers' Educational Assistance (PSOEA) Program.
  - 3. Social Security Administration.
  - 4. Department of Veterans Affairs.
- (c) Researching and assisting survivors with application for state and local government survivor benefits.
  - 1. Education benefits (Education Code § 68120)
  - 2. Health benefits (Labor Code § 4856)
  - 3. Workers' compensation death benefit (Labor Code § 4702)
- (d) Researching and assisting survivors with application for other survivor benefits, such as:
  - 1. Private foundation survivor benefits programs.
  - 2. Survivor scholarship programs.

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- (e) Researching and informing survivors of support programs sponsored by probation associations and other organizations.
- (f) Documenting and informing survivors of inquiries and interest regarding public donations to the survivors.
  - 1. If requested, working with the finance coordinator to assist survivors with establishing a process for the receipt of public donations.
- (g) Providing survivors with a summary of the nature and amount of benefits applied for, including the name of a contact person at each benefit office. Printed copies of the summary and benefit application documentation should be provided to affected survivors.
- (h) Maintaining contact with the survivors and assisting with subsequent benefit questions and processes as needed.

#### **828.6.7 FINANCE COORDINATOR**

The finance coordinator should work with the Chief Probation Officer and the Department Liaison to manage financial matters related to the line-of-duty death. The finance coordinator's responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- (a) Establishing methods for purchasing and monitoring costs related to the incident.
- (b) Providing information on finance-related issues, such as:
  - 1. Paying survivors' travel costs if authorized.
  - 2. Transportation costs for the deceased.
  - 3. Funeral and memorial costs.
  - 4. Related funding or accounting questions and issues.
- (c) Working with the Benefits Liaison to establish a process for the receipt of public donations to the deceased member's survivors.
- (d) Providing accounting and cost information as needed.

#### **828.7 PRESS INFORMATION OFFICER**

In the event of a line-of-duty death, the department's, Chief Probation Officer, or the authorized designee should be the Department's contact point for the media. As such, the Chief Probation Officer should coordinate with the Department Liaison to:

- (a) Collect and maintain the most current incident information and determine what information should be released.
- (b) Ensure that department members are instructed to direct any media inquiries to the Chief Probation Officer.
- (c) Prepare necessary press releases.
  - 1. Ensure coordination with other entities having media roles (e.g., outside agencies involved in the investigation or incident).

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2. Ensure that important public information is disseminated, such as information on how the public can show support for the department and deceased member's survivors.
  - (d) Arrange for community and media briefings by the Chief Probation Officer or the authorized designee as appropriate.
  - (e) Respond, or coordinate the response, to media inquiries.
  - (f) If requested, assist the member's survivors with media inquiries.
    1. Brief the survivors on handling sensitive issues such as the types of questions that reasonably could jeopardize future legal proceedings.
  - (g) Release information regarding memorial services and funeral arrangements to department members, other agencies, and the media as appropriate.
  - (h) If desired by the survivors, arrange for the recording of memorial and funeral services via photos and/or video.

The identity of deceased members should be withheld until the member's survivors have been notified. If the media have obtained identifying information for the deceased member prior to survivor notification, the Chief Probation Officer should request that the media withhold the information from release until proper notification can be made to survivors. The Chief Probation Officer should ensure that media are notified when survivor notifications have been made.

#### **828.8 INVESTIGATION OF THE INCIDENT**

The Chief Probation Officer shall ensure that line-of-duty deaths are investigated thoroughly and may choose to use the investigation process outlined in the Officer-Involved Shootings and Deaths Policy.

Investigators from other agencies may be assigned to work on any criminal investigation related to line-of-duty deaths. Partners, close friends, or personnel who worked closely with the deceased member should not have any investigative responsibilities because such relationships may impair the objectivity required for an impartial investigation of the incident.

Involved department members should be kept informed of the progress of the investigations and provide investigators with any information that may be pertinent to the investigations.

#### **828.9 NON-LINE-OF-DUTY DEATH**

The Chief Probation Officer may authorize certain support services for the death of a member not occurring in the line of duty.