



HOWARD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
GENERAL ORDER ADM-43
LINE OF DUTY DEATHS
EFFECTIVE APRIL 3, 2013

This General Order contains the following numbered sections:

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I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this directive is to prepare the office in the event of a deputy's death in the line of duty and to direct the office in providing the proper support for the deceased deputy's family.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Howard County Sheriff's Office to provide liaison assistance to the immediate survivors of a deputy who dies in the line of duty and to provide tangible and emotional support during this traumatic period of readjustment for the surviving family.¹

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. Line of Duty Death- The death of a deputy by felonious or accidental means during the course of performing official duties and/or law enforcement functions while on or off duty.
- B. Survivors- Immediate family members of the deceased deputy to include spouse, children, parents, siblings, grandparents, fiancé (e) and/or significant others. (Keep in mind if deceased is separated or going through a divorce.)

IV. NOTIFICATIONS

- A. Upon notification of a serious injury to an employee, whether the injury was sustained on or off duty, the senior ranking deputy on duty shall notify the following personnel:
 - 1. Sheriff;
 - 2. Chief Deputy (Major);
 - 3. Injured Employee's Division Commander/Lieutenant; and
 - 4. Section Supervisor
- B. Notification

The following procedures should be adhered to in cases of line of duty deaths and in cases of ***seriously injured*** deputies. These procedures should be followed whenever possible with the understanding that **the wishes of the family take precedence over the desires of the office.**

¹ CALEA 22.2.4

Deputies 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 the family that they are not sure can be met.

1. The name of the deceased/injured deputy **shall not** be released to the media or other parties before family/survivors are notified and permission has been granted by the Sheriff or Chief Deputy.
2. The Sheriff, Chief Deputy or (2) designated personnel will inform the immediate family of the deputy's condition or death in person.
3. Notification of the immediate family or next of kin should be made as soon as possible.
4. Notification of survivors in the immediate area will be made in person. Whenever the health of survivors is a concern, emergency medical services personnel shall be notified to stand by.
5. If the opportunity to get the family to the hospital exists prior to the deputy's death, the notifying deputies shall inform the hospital liaison deputy that the family is on the way. In such cases, immediate transportation should be provided for survivors. It is recommended that the family not be allowed to drive themselves to the hospital. If the deputy has died before the family's arrival, notification should be made to the survivors by the designated office member(s) and Doctor in as forthright and empathetic manner as possible.
6. Communication of information concerning the deputy and the incident shall, whenever possible, be restricted to telephone communication to avoid interception by the media. Should the media obtain the deputy's name prematurely, the notifying deputy shall request that the media withhold information until proper notification of survivors can be made.
7. The notifying deputy shall be responsible for identification of additional survivors outside the area and shall make any notifications as desired by the family. Such notifications shall be made by contacting the law enforcement agency in that jurisdiction and requesting that a personal notification be made. If the office receives calls from family, advise them of the truth and request they stay at home or at their present location until our arrival for assistance. Command staff should notify HCSO personnel of line of duty death personally and offer assistance.

V. HOSPITAL LIAISON DEPUTY

- A. The highest ranking deputy to arrive at the hospital shall serve as or designate a hospital liaison deputy. Whenever possible, the Sheriff and Chief Deputy will join the family at the hospital.
- B. The hospital liaison deputy shall be responsible for coordinating the arrival of the family and other survivors will assume the following responsibilities:
 1. Arrange for waiting facilities for the survivors and a press staging area. The desires of the survivors should be followed with regard to their accessibility to other deputies and friends.
 2. Encourage medical personnel to provide pertinent medical information on the deputy's condition to the family before any other parties.
 3. Assist family members, in accordance with their desires, in gaining access to the injured or deceased deputy.

4. Provide hospital personnel with all necessary information on billing for medical services. The hospital liaison deputy should ensure that all medical bills are directed to the Sheriff's Office and that they are not forwarded to the deputy's family or other survivors. This may require the hospital liaison deputy to re-contact the hospital later during normal business hours to ensure that proper billing occurs.
5. Arrange transportation for the family and other survivors upon their departure from the hospital.
6. Ensure that the family members or other survivors are provided with additional assistance at the hospital, as appropriate.

VI. OFFICE LIAISON DEPUTY

- A. The Chief Deputy is designated as the office liaison deputy and will act as a facilitator between the family and the Sheriff's Office.
- B. The office liaison deputy will maintain the Howard County Sheriff's Office Causality Assistance Guide and refer to this Guide for forms and additional information.
- C. To lessen the confusion for the family and to the extent possible, the office liaison deputy will be the one voice through which the assistance representatives (family liaison, benefits coordinator and family support advocate) communicate with the family. The office liaison deputy will expedite tasks employing office resources and the delegation of assignments. The duties of the office liaison deputy include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:
 1. Sending a teletype announcing the death of the deputy.
 2. Providing oversight of travel and lodging arrangements for out of town family members.
 3. Identifying alternative churches and reception halls that will accommodate the law enforcement funeral. Those alternatives will be presented to the family who will make the final determination.
 4. Coordinating all official law enforcement notification and arrangements to include the honor guard, ceremonial funeral, traffic control, and liaison with visiting law enforcement agencies, taps, fly over, bag piper, casket watch, rifle detail and last roll call announcement.
 5. Ensure a twenty-four hour a day security presence at the home of the spouse or significant others is provided from the time immediately following the incident until the conclusion of the funeral.
 - a. At the request of the family and with the approval of the Sheriff and/or Chief Deputy, the security presence may be continued for a reasonable period of time.
 - b. The assistance of other law enforcement agencies may be required.
 6. Ensure that the office coordinates all statements and press conferences concerning the incident. The family should not have to personally deal with the stress of media inquires.

VII. FAMILY LIAISON DEPUTY

- A. The office liaison deputy (Chief Deputy) will designate a family liaison deputy who acts as facilitator between the decedent deputy's family and the office during the wake and funeral.

- B. This position requires that the deputy have a good knowledge of the family relationships, but not so emotionally involved with the loss that it would impair his/her effectiveness. The family liaison deputy is responsible for:
1. Meeting with the family members and explaining his/her responsibilities to them. Offer Grieving In Sight Books and information/handouts for adults and children.
 2. Being available to the family prior to and throughout the wake and funeral.
 3. Ensuring that the needs and wishes of the family are met and come before those of the office.
 4. Assisting the family in working with the funeral director regarding funeral arrangements.
 5. Relay any information to the family concerning the circumstances of the deputy's death and appropriate information regarding any investigation. The family liaison deputy should coordinate with investigating deputies/officers to ensure the family receives as much information as is allowable during the first few days.
 6. 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 office liaison deputy.
 7. Briefing the family members on the procedures involved in the law enforcement funeral.

VIII. BENEFITS COORDINATOR

- A. The Sheriff/Chief Deputy shall designate a deputy or supervisor as the benefits coordinator and is responsible for"
1. Filing worker's compensation claims and related paperwork. If any bills inadvertently are sent to the family, he/she is to coordinate with the hospital liaison deputy, if necessary, to ensure all bills go to the office and not the family.
 2. Presenting information on all benefits available to the family, including:
 - a. Life Insurance
 - b. Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance
 - c. Long Term Disability Benefits
 - d. Social Security
 - e. Credit Union Life Insurance (if applicable)
 - f. Salary Due
 3. Documenting inquiries and interest in public donations to the family and establishing a mechanism for receipt of such contributions.
 4. Preparing all documentation of benefits and payments due survivors to include the nature and amount of benefits to be received by each beneficiary, the schedule of payments and the name of a contact person or facilitator at each benefit or payment office.
 5. Filing 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.
 6. Advising the family of the role of police/sheriff associations and organizations and the nature of the support programs that they sponsor for law enforcement survivors.

B. There are federal, state and county benefits to which beneficiaries of deputies killed in the line of duty are entitled. The benefits coordinator will initiate contact with the following immediately after a deputy's death:

1. Federal

U.S Department of Justice
Bureau of Justice Assistance
Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program
633 Indiana Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001

2. State

Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services
Suite 310, Plaza Office Center
6776 Reisterstown Rd.
Baltimore, MD 21215

3. County

Howard County Personnel Office
8930 Stanford Boulevard
Columbia, MD 21045

Risk Management
6751 Columbia Gateway Drive, Box 303
Columbia, MD 21046

IX. FAMILY SUPPORT ADVOCATE

A. The office liaison deputy will designate a deputy to serve as the family support advocate.

B. The family support advocate serves in a long term liaison and support capacity for the surviving family. The duties include:

1. Providing contact with the family members in order to keep them abreast of criminal proceedings related to the death of the family member.
2. Accompanying family members to criminal/civil proceedings, explaining the nature of the proceedings and introducing them to prosecutors and other persons as required.
3. Identifying all support services available to family members and working on their behalf to secure any service necessary.
4. Maintaining routine contact with family members to provide companionship and emotional support and maintain an ongoing relationship between the office and the immediate family.
5. 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.
6. Ensuring that the anniversary date of the deputy'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.

X. PROTOCOL

- A. Deputies attending the funeral of a deceased law enforcement/Deputy will dress in Class A uniform.
- B. Black tape/ribbon will be worn over the badge immediately upon the death of a deputy of this office and will continue to be worn for the next thirty (30) days.
 - 1. Tape/ribbon will be worn over the badge immediately upon the death of an officer of another law enforcement agency located in Howard County until the burial of the officer.
 - 2. Deputies attending funeral involving deputies/officers from jurisdictions outside of Howard County will wear tape/ribbon over the badge while attending the funeral and it will be removed immediately after the burial of the deputy/officer.
- C. Flags will be flown at half mast upon the death of a deputy and for the next thirty (30) days.

Authority:

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Sheriff