



BRAINTREE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Policy and Procedure

LINE OF DUTY DEATH OR SERIOUS INJURY

2019-51

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Policy 22.2.4

The Braintree Police Department will make prompt, accurate, compassionate notifications and provide liaison assistance to family members of all personnel, sworn or civilian, who die or are seriously injured at work. **[22.2.4]**

The listed procedures should be followed whenever possible with the understanding that the wishes of the family take precedence over the desires of the agency.

General Notification Guidelines

Positive identification of the Officer or employee must be confirmed prior to making a notification. Secure communications (cell phones, land lines, etc.) should be used in communicating the condition or identity of the Officer or employee to avoid release of this information before family members and fellow employees can be notified. No employee should contact the family or friends of the Officer or employee until a department notification can be made.

An Officer's or employee's immediate family must be contacted and confirmation of notification made before the Officer's or employee's name is released to the media. Should the media obtain the Officer's or employee's name prematurely, the ranking Officer or his/her designee should request that the information be withheld until proper notification of survivors can be made.

If the family is not immediately available, reasonable efforts should be made to locate them and to inform them of the condition of the Officer

or employee and the circumstances surrounding the Officer's or employee's injury or death.

If the family is out of the area, the local police of the jurisdiction in the family's area should be contacted and requested to make the notification; however, an in-person notification by members of this department is preferred. Death or serious injury notifications should not be given over the telephone.

Notification shall be made by the Chief of Police or in his/her absence, by a Deputy or Supervisor unless otherwise requested by an Officer or employee ahead of time. If an officer/employee is a close personal friend or member of the officer's or employee's family, it may be appropriate for that officer/employee to assist with making the notification. At least two officers should be present when a notification is made.

The notifying Officers should understand the facts available that are relevant to the officer's or employee's death or serious injury.

If members of the family are in poor health and may require medical attention, a paramedic should be alerted to stand by in case of an emergency. If time permits, a clergy member or department chaplain may accompany the notification party.

If the family has infants or small children that will require attention while the adult members of the family are taken to the hospital, additional assistance should be provided for their care.

**Family
Notification**

Avoid making notifications on the doorstep. The notifying Officers should attempt to gain admission to the home, gather the adult members of the household together and inform them of the situation.

In giving notification, Officers should be as straightforward as possible about the condition of the officer or employee and should not make statements or use language that is ambiguous or gives false hope.

While notifying officers should attempt to maintain composure in order to better provide assistance to members of the surviving family, they should recognize that a show of emotion on their part is simply a natural expression of anguish and empathy and is not a sign of weakness.

Notifying Officers should be aware of and prepare themselves for a range of possible reactions from surviving family members. Hysteria,

shock, physical violence, anger and rage, silence or stoicism, fainting or screaming are some of the more common reactions.

In many cases, the best reaction of the notifying team is simply to stand by quietly until members of the family have regained some composure and are prepared to ask additional questions.

Family Needs Officers providing services and assistance to family members and survivors should take reasonable measures to accommodate their needs, wishes and desires, but should not make promises to family members that they are not sure can be met.

After the immediate family is notified, the notification Officer should make any additional notifications as desired by the immediate family. Such notifications should be made by contacting the law enforcement agency in that jurisdiction and requesting that a personal notification is made.

Any officer making notification shall notify the Chief of Police in writing of such.

Assisting Affected Officers The Shift Commander should consider and take necessary actions to address:

- Officers who were on the scene or who arrived moments after the Officer/Employee was critically injured or killed. They should be relieved as quickly as possible.
- Police witnesses and other Officers who may have been emotionally affected by the serious injury or death of another officer/employee should attend a Critical Incident Stress Debriefing, unless otherwise ordered to do so.

Employee Notification The Shift Commander or his/her designee should notify off-duty employees rather than having them hear about the death or injury from the media.

One or more supervisors or their designees should be assigned to notify off-duty personnel. A message should be left for the employee to call the police station rather than leaving a notification on a voicemail. A group text message can be sent out by the station officer for officers and employees to call the station.

Assisting Survivors to the Hospital

If the opportunity to get the family to the hospital exists prior to the Officer's or employee's death, transportation shall be provided for survivors.

Whenever possible, the Chief of Police shall join the family at the hospital in order to emphasize the agency's support.

The next highest ranking officer to arrive at the hospital shall serve as, or designate a, hospital liaison officer who shall be responsible for the following tasks:

- Coordinating the arrival of immediate survivors, department personnel and others;
- Arranging for waiting facilities for immediate survivors. The desires of the surviving family members should be followed with regard to the accessibility of other officers, employees and friends;
- Request that medical personnel provide pertinent medical information on the Officer's or employee's condition to the family before any other parties;
- Assisting family members, in accordance with their desires, in gaining access to the injured or deceased officer or employee;
- Providing hospital personnel with all necessary information on billing for medical services. The liaison officer should request that all medical bills are directed to the appropriate departmental authority and that they are not forwarded to the Officer's or employee's family or other survivors;
- Arranging transportation for the family and other survivors upon their departure from the hospital; and
- Provide immediate family members with any other appropriate assistance at the hospital.

**Department Liaison Officer(s)
22.2.3**

The Chief of Police shall assign a member (s) of the department to a department liaison position. This assignment will be made in writing to department personnel, and the surviving family members will be informed of those designated to assist with funeral arrangements, benefits, and any other support necessary. **[22.2.3]**

The department liaison officer will serve as a facilitator between the family and the department. A supervisor will generally be in charge in order to expedite the tasks of employing departmental resources and the delegation of assignments. Assignments may include;

- Assigning Officers to the deceased officer’s or employee’s residence to assist with the family’s privacy and security.
- Ensuring that the Employee Assistance Program services and/or Peer Support, if available, are contacted to assist surviving family members and emphasizing the family’s right to counseling services. **[22.2.3]**
- Providing assistance with travel and lodging arrangements for out-of-town family members.
- Identifying alternative churches and reception halls that will accommodate the law enforcement funeral. These alternatives will be presented to the family, who will make the final determination.
- Coordinating all official law enforcement notifications and arrangements, to include the honor guard, pallbearers, traffic control and liaising with visiting law enforcement agencies.
- Sending a CJIS administrative message to New England States immediately following notification of the family. It will briefly outline the facts surrounding the death. As wake and funeral arrangements are made, additional messages will be sent to help coordinate other agencies wishing to send representatives.
- Assisting and advising family members in dealing with general media inquiries.
- Acting as a liaison, along with the Deputy of Operations, with the media to include coordination of any statements and press conferences. Family department liaisons shall also ensure that members of the agency are aware of restrictions regarding release of any information that might undermine future legal proceedings.
- Ensuring that security checks of the survivor’s residence are initiated immediately following the incident and for as long as necessary thereafter.

Funeral Liaison

The Funeral Liaison Officer acts as facilitator between the decedent Officer’s or employee’s family and the department during the wake and funeral. The funeral liaison officer is responsible for:

- Meeting with family members and explaining his/her responsibilities to them;
- Being available to the family prior to and throughout the wake and funeral;
- Prioritizing the needs and wishes of the family before those of the department;
- Assisting the family in working with the funeral director regarding funeral arrangements;

- Relaying any information to the family concerning the circumstances of the decedent officer’s or employee’s death and appropriate information regarding any investigation;
- Assisting as necessary with travel arrangements for out-of-town family members and any other special needs of the family during the funeral; and
- Briefing the family members on the procedures involved in the law enforcement funeral.

**Ceremonial
Commander**

The Ceremonial Commander shall work closely with the Family Department Liaison Officer and the Funeral Liaison Officer. He/She will be in charge of all ceremonial arrangements where official departmental participation has been requested. The Ceremonial Commander shall assume responsibility for the following:

- Arrangement for the presentation of the flag to the family;
- Coordinate Honor Guard activities at the wake, church and graveside services;
- If requested, coordinate officers as pallbearers;
- Direct departmental participation in wake, church and graveside services;
- Coordinate any military participation (Military Honor Guard, 21 gun salute, etc.);
- Arrange for Bagpipes and the playing of Taps;
- Coordinate State and Local government participation;
- Coordinate the “Final Call”.

**Benefits
Coordinator
22.2.3**

The Benefits Coordinator aids the survivors by coordinating the delivery of municipal, state, federal and private benefits. The benefits coordinator is also responsible for: **[22.2.3]**

- Filing injured-on-duty claims (if appropriate) and related paperwork;
- Presenting information on all benefits available to the family from:
 - The Municipality,
 - State Government,
 - Federal Government, and
 - Private Foundations;
- Assisting with appropriate public donations and contributions to the family when necessary;
- 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;
- 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; and
- Advising the surviving family of the role of police associations and organizations and the nature of support programs that they sponsor for law enforcement survivors.

Family Support Liaison

The Family Support Liaison serves in a long-term liaison and support capacity for the surviving family. The duties of this individual include:

- Providing contact with surviving family members in order to keep them abreast of criminal proceedings relating to the death of their family member;
- Accompanying surviving family members to criminal proceedings, explaining the nature of the proceedings and introducing them to prosecutors and other persons as required;
- Identifying support services available to family members and working on their behalf to secure any services necessary;
- Maintaining contact with family members to provide an ongoing relationship with the department; and
- 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.

Employee Support

Employees affected by the death and/or serious injury of another officer or employee shall be given the support to sustain their ability to perform their duties. This also applies to officers or employees that were seriously injured. The employee should be given:

- Mental and psychological counseling services;
- Emotional support services provided by other department members, and the Chief of Police;
- Religious counseling, if applicable, by their religious denominations, or when one does not exist by the Police Chaplin;
- Medical clearance – officers should be medically cleared for their police duties. **[22.2.3]**

Review Department Policy; **Post-Shooting Personnel Support and Critical Incident Stress Management.**

A Supervisor shall identify officers to complete the assignments detailed in this Policy. An officer's continued participation in any of the assignments detailed herein shall be voluntary.