



BRAINTREE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Policy and Procedure

NOTIFICATIONS of CIVILIAN DEATH, SERIOUS INJURY or SERIOUS ILLNESS 2018-35

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Chief Paul Shastany

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Policy 55.2.6

The Braintree Police Department shall attempt to make a family notification in a timely, considerate and personal manner when investigating a civilian death, serious injury, or serious illness. This would include criminal investigations, motor vehicle crash investigations, and medical responses. Investigating Officers will communicate with hospital personnel, emergency medical response personnel, and other law enforcement agencies to ensure the correct family contact information is obtained and notification is made. **[55.2.6]**

Information Preparation and Gathering 55.2.6

Prior to contacting next of kin, notifying Officers should gather and familiarize themselves with essential details concerning the victim, to include full name, age, address, as well as details of the death, location of the body, illness, injury, and other pertinent information. Officers should advise the family to contact hospital personnel for details concerning the condition of a seriously injured or ill patient. **[55.2.6]**

When available two officers shall deliver notifications in person, unless the exigencies of circumstances demand telephone notification. Officers should be prepared to and should be provided adequate discretion to spend the necessary time with the family to provide assistance.

Only where substantial delays would be required to make contact with next of kin should other relatives be contacted.

Wherever possible, Officers should gather available information concerning the survivors that may aid in the notification. This includes, but is not limited to, whether survivors are elderly, disabled, visually or hearing impaired, have medical problems or may not speak English. When Officers are aware of serious medical conditions in advance of notification, they should consider placing a local medical response unit on alert.

Personal effects of the deceased should not be delivered to survivors at the time of death notification.

**Notification
55.2.6**

Upon arrival at the residence or business, the Officers shall identify themselves and request to speak with the family in a private location or in the residence. Officers should ask that any family members available be present. It is the family's decision to decide whether children shall be in attendance. **[55.2.6]**

Officers should address the family in a straightforward manner and use easy-to-understand language to briefly explain the circumstances of the incident and the fact that the individual is dead, injured, or ill.

Officers should avoid graphic aspects of the incident and the use of police jargon and should be prepared for unexpected responses from family members to include hysteria and possible verbal or physical attack. Family members should be provided a sufficient time to regain composure before proceeding. **[55.2.6]**

Officers should provide any additional information on the incident requested by family member(s). While graphic details may not be necessary, officers should provide information if asked specifically concerning the cause of death, condition of the body or other details of the fatality. **[55.2.6]**

If needed officers can provide the family transportation to the hospital.

**Providing
Assistance
55.2.6**

Officers should not leave upon completion of the notification until reasonably assured that the person has adequate personal control and/or family or close friend(s) readily available to provide support. In gauging the need for assistance, officers should also consider the following: **[55.2.6]**

- The emotional reaction and physical condition of the person notified.
- The availability of other adults in the home.
- Responsibility for infants or small children.
- Home environment (e.g. evidence of excessive alcohol use or drug use, lack of means of financial support, shortage of food, problem with shelter, etc.).
- Availability of a support system (e.g. including friends, family, close neighbors, access to clergy, means of transportation, etc.)

Officers should consider not leaving a lone survivor unattended until reasonable efforts have been made to garner first-hand support from the survivor's family, friends, co-workers, neighbors, family clergy, crisis counselors or other community social service agency, but if insistent should honor requests to be left alone.