

**Procedure  
2.5**

**EFFECTIVE  
DATE  
9-1-00**

**Eugene  
Police Department**



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## **Line of Duty Deaths**

### **2.5.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

With the exception of section 2.5.2, E, the procedures in this policy are designed to be used on the occasion of a line-of-duty death of a department employee. Applicable parts of this policy may be used in cases where an employee has been critically injured with poor prognosis of survival.

#### PART I - Responsibilities and Procedures for All Personnel

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- D. Special assignment responsibilities
- E. Department participation in funeral services

#### PART II - Responsibilities and Procedures for Supervisors and Command Personnel

- A. On-duty supervisors
- B. Ranking command officer

### **2.5.2 RESPONSIBILITIES AND PROCEDURES ALL PERSONNEL**

#### A. Definitions

1. *Line-of-duty death*: The death of a police department employee by criminal or accidental means during the course of performing police functions while on- or off-duty.
2. *Survivors*: Immediate family members of the deceased employee, including spouse, domestic partner, children, parents, fiancé, and/or significant others.

#### B. Generally

1. Follow these procedures whenever possible, with the understanding that wishes of the family/survivors will normally take precedence over the desires of the department.

2. Employees providing assistance to survivors should take all reasonable measures to accommodate their needs, wishes and desires, but should not make promises to them that they are not sure can be met.

C. Notification

1. Make the notification in person, preferably with another person. If the health of the survivors is of concern, request standby of EMS personnel.
2. If there is an opportunity to get immediate family of a seriously injured employee to the hospital, provide immediate transportation. If the employee has died, make notification to the survivors in as forthright and empathetic manner as possible (refer also *Procedure 3.15 - Death Notification.*)
3. Make any communication regarding the employee via land-line telephone whenever possible, to avoid interception of the information by news media or others.
4. Identify any survivors outside the area and make notifications as requested by the immediate family. These should be made by contacting the law enforcement agency in that jurisdiction and requesting that a personal notification be made.
5. Report the notifications made to the supervisor who gave you the assignment.

D. Special assignment responsibilities

1. Department liaison officer
  - a. Work closely with the funeral liaison officer to ensure that the needs and requests of the family are met.
  - b. Provide assistance as needed to assist in travel and lodging arrangements for out-of-town family members.
  - c. Coordinate all official law enforcement notifications and arrangements including honor guard, pallbearers, traffic control, and liaison with visiting law enforcement agencies.
  - d. Assist family members in dealing with media inquiries, and advise them of limitations on what information they can release.
  - e. Oversee liaison with the media, to include coordination of any statements and press conferences.
  - f. Ensure that security checks of the survivor's residence are done if needed and requested.
2. Funeral liaison officer

The funeral liaison officer acts as facilitator between the deceased employee's family and the department during the wake and funeral. Responsibilities include:

- a. Meet with family members and explain your role and relevant department policies, including procedures involved in a law enforcement funeral.
- b. Be available to the family prior to and throughout the wake and funeral.
- c. Assist the family in working with the funeral director regarding funeral arrangements.
- d. Relay information to the family concerning the circumstances of the employee's death and appropriate information regarding the investigation.
- e. Communicate family needs regarding travel arrangements and other special needs to the department liaison officer.

3. Benefits coordinator

- a. Ensure filing of worker's compensation claims and related paperwork.
- b. Advise the family of all benefits available to them.
- c. Document inquiries and interest in public donations to the family and assist in establishing a mechanism for receipt of such contributions, as appropriate.
- d. Prepare all documentation of benefits and payments due survivors, including:
  - nature and amount of benefits to be received by each beneficiary
  - schedule of payments
  - name of contact person or facilitator at each payment or benefit office
- e. File all benefits paperwork, and follow up to ensure that benefits are being received. Provide a copy of benefits documentation to all survivors affected, and ensure they understand them.
- f. Advise the surviving family regarding the role of police associations and organizations, and the nature of support programs that they sponsor for law enforcement survivors.

4. Family support advocate

- a. Serve in a long-term liaison and support capacity for the surviving family.

- b. Keep surviving family members informed of any criminal proceedings relating to the death of their family member, and accompany them to any proceedings they opt to attend.
- c. Provide assistance to the family in securing any support services needed.
- d. Relay concerns and needs of family members to those individuals and organizations who can provide assistance.

E. Department participation in funeral services

1. If a current employee suffers a line-of-duty death, she or he would normally be accorded full honors. Department participation would include:
  - honor guard
  - pallbearer detail
  - firing team
  - flag for casket
  - presentation of the flag
  - EPD motor escort for funeral procession (police and fire vehicles only)
  - Wearing of badge shroud
  - Uniformed officer presence at church and/or graveside service(s)
2. If a current employees dies, but the death is not a line-of-duty death, the department would normally participate in the following manner, if consistent with the wishes of the family:
  - honor guard
  - uniformed officer presence at church and/or graveside service(s)

### **2.5.3 RESPONSIBILITIES AND PROCEDURES FOR SUPERVISORS AND COMMAND PERSONNEL**

A. On-duty supervisors

1. Do not release the name of the deceased employee until immediate survivors living in the area have been notified. If the media should obtain the employee's name prematurely, request that they withhold broadcast or publication of the information until immediate survivors have been notified.
2. Designate an officer to inform the immediate family of the employee's condition or death. This notification should be done as soon as possible and, if possible, at the same time as command notifications are made.
3. Ensure that the Chief and others in the employee's chain of command are notified as soon as possible.

B. Ranking command officer

1. If the employee has been taken to the hospital, designate a hospital liaison officer to be responsible for coordinating the arrival of immediate survivors, department personnel, the media, and others. The hospital liaison officer should:
  - a. Arrange, in conjunction with hospital personnel, waiting facilities for immediate survivors and a press staging area. The desires of the family members should be followed regarding their accessibility to other employees and friends.
  - b. Assist family members, in accordance with their desires, in gaining access to the injured or deceased employee.
  - c. Ensure that the hospital knows that all billing should be to the department, and not the employee's family.
  - d. Ensure that immediate family members are provided with appropriate assistance, including transportation when leaving the hospital.
2. Assign personnel to fulfill necessary functions. (A person may be assigned more than one responsibility, as appropriate.)
  - Department liaison officer (normally a command officer, in order to expedite accomplishment of tasks involving department resources)
  - Funeral liaison officer
  - Benefits coordinator
  - Family support advocate
3. Involve the PIO and others in dealing with incoming phone calls and inquiries.
4. Ensure that employee assistance program personnel are notified to be available to assist families.
5. Ensure that other employees involved are provided the opportunity to participate in critical incident debriefings.