

<b>Anchorage Police Department</b> Regulations and Procedures Manual	<b>Operational Procedures</b> <b>2.06.050</b>	
<b>Policy and Procedure Title</b> Line of Duty Death or Serious Injury	<b>Effective Date</b> April 5, 2021	Page 1 of 10
<b>Replaces Prior Policy:</b> August 5, 2009	<b>Approved by:</b> Chief Justin Doll	

**This policy is the internal use only and does not enlarge an employee's civil liability in any way. The policy should not be construed as creating a higher duty of care, in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party civil claims against employees. A violation of this policy, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this department for non-judicial administrative action in accordance with the laws governing employee discipline.**

## **2.06.050 Line of Duty Death or Serious Injury**

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to outline the procedure for notification, assistance and support of the families of Anchorage Police Department personnel who suffer serious injury or death in the line of duty.

### **POLICY**

The Anchorage Police Department shall provide services to the family of any employee who is seriously injured or dies in the line of duty. These services include timely notification of the injury or death, assisting the family at the hospital, supporting the family at a funeral and burial (if applicable), helping the family with benefits matters, supporting family through criminal proceedings (if any), and maintaining long-term contact with the family in the event of death.

### **DISCUSSION**

The most challenging situations that a police department might face is the line of duty death or serious injury of an employee. Coordination of events following the line-of duty death or serious injury of an employee is an extremely important and complex responsibility. Professionalism and compassion must always be exhibited as an obligation to the member's survivors and to the law enforcement community.

### **DEFINITIONS**

**Survivors:** Those people within a deceased employee's family. A "family" consists of: spouse, child, grandchild, parent, grandparent, sibling, uncle, aunt, nephew or niece of the victim, whether related by blood, marriage or adoption; a person who lives, or has previously lived, in a spousal relationship with the victim; a person who is a former spouse of the victim; or domestic partners.

**Line of Duty Death:** The death of an active duty officer or employee by felonious or accidental means during performing public safety functions while on-duty or off-duty.

**Serious Injury:** An incapacitating injury by felonious or accidental means during performing public safety functions while on-duty or off-duty, requiring extended medical care of an active duty officer or employee

## **PROCEDURE**

Each employee shall provide emergency contact information of immediate family members, domestic partners, or friends that the employee wishes to have personally notified in the event of a serious injury or death in the line of duty. The confidential information will be maintained in the employee's SAP personal profile and employees will be encouraged to update their information once a year. This information will only be accessed by the employee to update the information or by personnel staff in case of death or serious injury in the line of duty.

Should there be a serious injury or death of an employee, it will be the responsibility of the shift commander to immediately notify the Chief of Police, Deputy Chief of Operations and the Deputy Chief of Administration. This can be done through the dispatch supervisor. Other members of the Department will be notified at the direction of the Chief of Police. The dispatch supervisor will notify the police chaplain.

The following are the various responsibilities and positions that will be implemented to provide the best possible services and support to the member's family. Specific tasks will be assigned to selected members of the Department by the Chief of Police or his designee. The Chief of Police can select an individual to be responsible for several liaison assignments.

**Notification Officer:** A command staff member of the Department designated by the Chief of Police or his designee, to make the notification to the member's family.

**Hospital Liaison Officer:** A sergeant or commander who has been assigned to act as the liaison between the hospital and the Department.

**Family Liaison Officer:** A sergeant or commander who has been assigned by the Chief of Police to act as the liaison between the family and the Department.

**Department Liaison Officer:** A sergeant or command staff member who will coordinate the Department's response to the family and the news media. This person will be responsible for coordinating the funeral and related activities. The officer will also be a liaison between the family and the Anchorage Police Department Personnel Division.

**Police Chaplain:** The chaplain will assist all the liaison officers and be another contact for the family.

### **I. Notification Officer:**

- A. In the event of a serious injury or death to a department employee in the line of duty, the notification of the family will be generally in accordance with this policy.
- B. The on-duty Shift Commander will make personal notification to the persons listed by the employee's emergency contact list. While these notifications should be in person, it is recognized that extenuating circumstances may sometimes make that impossible. Such incidents should be rare. In the event a person named by the employee resides outside the jurisdiction of the Anchorage Police Department, the shift commander shall determine if it is practical and expeditious to go there personally (or by designee), or if a request should be made to a law enforcement agency having jurisdiction for the location to make such notification on behalf of this department.
- C. The principles of death notification are:
  - 1. The name of the deceased member will **never** be released to the news media until after the family and/or immediate survivors are notified.
  - 2. In person: Such notifications should always be in person. If necessary, an officer from another jurisdiction may be requested to make the notification where the family member resides.
  - 3. In time: There should be an immediate and timely notification. News of such events will travel fast, and it is important that the survivors hear the news from a reliable source.
  - 4. In pairs: The notification officer with another officer or with a clergy member should make the notification. Before they arrive, the notification team should decide who will speak, what will be said, and how much will be said. Many times, the survivors may react in a manner requiring medical attention, or there may be more than one person in the home to deal with.
  - 5. In plain language: The notification should be straight forward and honest. As many questions from the survivors should be answered at this time. Always remember to refer to the deceased officer by name. State that the officer died in clear terms, never leave doubt or suspense or create false hope. Avoid terms such as "passed away", or that "God chose this time to take him/her".
  - 6. With compassion: Offer to assist the survivors with contacting other family members, their chosen clergy, or friends. Never make statements like "I know how you feel" unless you have been a survivor in identical circumstances. Remember that you are creating a memory for the survivor that will be with them for the rest of their life.

7. The notifying party should assist the family as long as the officer's presence is needed. Officers should offer to transport an employee's immediate family by police vehicle to the local hospital, if such need for transportation is advised due to lack of available transportation or the emotional state of the family member.
8. Prior to leaving for the hospital, the Notification Officer should contact the Hospital Liaison Officer and advise that officer that the family is en route to the hospital. This should be done by telephone only.
9. A Command Staff Officer should respond to either the residence or the hospital to meet with the family as soon as possible.

## **II. Hospital Liaison Officer:**

- A. The officer or supervisor who accompanies the injured or deceased employee to the hospital will function as the Hospital Liaison Officer, until such time as relieved by the appointed Hospital Liaison Officer.
- B. The Hospital Liaison Officer will be responsible for coordinating the activities of hospital personnel, fellow police officers, the member's family, the press and others that may be involved.
- C. Arrange with hospital personnel to provide an appropriate waiting facility for the family, the Chief of Police, the Notification Officer and only those people that the surviving family wishes to be there.
- D. In the case of death, the Hospital Liaison Officer will arrange for the Police Chaplain or Honor Guard to have access to the deceased employee to drape the body with a flag.
- E. Arrange with hospital personnel for a second area for police officers and friends of the employee to assemble.
- F. In conjunction with the hospital, arrange through Community Relations Unit for a place to use as a press staging area.
- G. Ensure that medical personnel relay pertinent information regarding the employee's condition to the family on a timely basis and before the information is released to others.
- H. Notify the appropriate hospital personnel that all medical bills relating to the injured or deceased employee will be directed to the Employee Relations office of the Anchorage Police Department. The family should not receive these bills at their residence. This may require the Hospital Liaison Officer to contact the hospital during normal business hours to ensure the proper billing will take place.

- I. If possible, arrangements should be made with hospital personnel to allow the family to visit with the employee. It is important that the family be prepared for what they might see in the Emergency Room. If the family requests, an officer should accompany the family. It should be remembered that there is a definite need to touch and hold the employee.
- J. Officers should not be overly protective of the family. This means that specific information should be shared with the family when appropriate. This should include how the employee met his/her death.
- K. The Hospital Liaison Officer and the Notification Officer(s) will remain at the hospital as long as the deceased employee's family is present.
- L. It will further be the responsibility of the Hospital Liaison Officer to take custody of the deceased officer's duty weapon, ammunition and other equipment that can be released prior to the officer's remains being transported to the medical examiner's office.

### **III. Family Liaison Officer:**

- A. The Chief of Police will designate an officer to act as liaison between the Department and the deceased officer's family. This is not a decision making position but is that of a facilitator between the family and the Department.
- B. The Family Liaison Officer should be a sergeant or commander who knew the deceased officer but should not be an officer who is so emotionally involved in the death of the officer as to render him/her ineffective. The Chief of Police may assign other officers or chaplain as necessary to assist the Family Liaison Officer.
- C. Ensure the needs and the wishes of the family come before the wishes of the Department.
- D. In the event of a death: maintain a detailed record of assignments and duties associated with the wake and the funeral.
- E. Determine what type of funeral the family desires. Meet with the family and advise them of what the Department can offer if they decide to have a line of duty death funeral. If they should choose this, explain the funeral procedure (i.e., 21-Gun Salute, presentation of the flag, playing of "TAPS", etc.). If the family chooses any of these options, it will be the responsibility of the Family Liaison Officer to notify the Department Liaison of this.
- F. Apprise the family of information concerning the investigation into the death of the employee.

- G. Provide as much assistance as possible to the family. This may include assisting them in making travel and lodging arrangements for out of town family members.
- H. Notify Concerns of Police Survivors (C.O.P.S) at (773) 205-7868 and local representative. Members of this group are survivors of officers that have died in the line of duty and are available to provide emotional support to the families.
- I. Work closely with the Department Liaison Officer.
- J. The Family Liaison Officer will recover any gear and equipment from the officer's home.
- K. Support for the family awaiting trial for those responsible.
  - 1. This is a very important part of the grieving process and there are several things that should be done so the family does not feel left out or feel the Department is hiding something from them. There are several ways to prevent this.
  - 2. If not done at this point, the family should be met with and the circumstances surrounding the officer's death should be explained to them. If there are investigative reasons why certain details cannot be released prior to the trial, this should be explained to them.
  - 3. The family should never hear of court or parole hearings from the media first. It is the responsibility of the Department to keep the family advised of all legal proceedings.
  - 4. Family members should be encouraged to attend the trial, so they feel they are representing the slain officer's interests.
  - 5. The Family Liaison Officer should be assigned to accompany the family throughout the trial. This officer can explain the proceedings to the family and advise them of testimony that may be upsetting to them. The officer should remember not to be overly protective of the family. It is the decision of the family whether to attend the trial.
  - 6. Members of the Department should be encouraged to attend the trial. This is not only comforting to the family, but also may be beneficial to the members of the Department that were close to the fallen officer.
- L. An employee who was close to the fallen officer should be assigned to assemble a scrapbook to give to the family, along with any plaques or memorabilia that will be given to the family. The remembrance book could include newspaper articles, remembrances from fellow employees, etc.

#### **IV. Department Liaison Officer**

- A. This position will normally be assigned to a Command Staff Officer or sergeant due to the need to effectively coordinate the Department resources.
- B. Work closely with the Family Liaison Officer to ensure the needs of the family are fulfilled.
- C. Be available to handle any and all inquiries from the news media throughout the ordeal, should the family want this service. If the family decides to accept an interview, the Department Liaison Officer or his/her designee will be present to screen questions presented to the family.
- D. Gather information on all benefits and funeral payments that are available to the survivors. The Officer will be responsible for the following:
  - 1. Assist the family in the filing of Worker's Compensation claims and other related paperwork.
  - 2. Contact the Employee Relations to ensure the correct paperwork is filed for survivor benefits and work with the Employee Relations to ensure all monies due to the deceased officer are paid.
  - 3. Prepare a printout of benefits available to the surviving family, listing benefits available to the named survivors, along with contacts for the various benefits.
  - 4. Meet with the surviving family a few days following the funeral to discuss the benefits they will be receiving and provide them with a copy of the printout. If there are surviving children from a previous marriage who did not reside with the deceased officer, they also should be provided with a copy of any benefits due them.
  - 5. Meet with the family approximately six months following the funeral to ensure they have received all the benefits that are due to them.
- E. Meet with the following persons in order to coordinate funeral activities:
  - 1. The Chief of Police and Command Staff
  - 2. Honor Guard Coordinator
  - 3. Funeral Director/Funeral Home
  - 4. Clergy
  - 5. Cemetery Director

- F. Coordinate the activities of the Department and visiting police departments according to the wishes of the family.
- G. Issue an itinerary to include the following information:
  - 1. Name of deceased officer
  - 2. Date and time of death
  - 3. Circumstances surrounding the death
  - 4. Funeral Arrangements (state if service will be private or a police funeral)
  - 5. Uniform to be worn
  - 6. Expressions of sympathy in lieu of flowers
  - 7. Name and telephone number of the contact person for visiting departments to indicate their desire to attend and to obtain further information
- H. Obtain an American Flag. If the family wishes presentation of the flag by the Chief of Police, notify the Chief.
- I. If the family desires a burial in uniform, select an officer to obtain a uniform and leather gear and deliver the items to the funeral home.
- J. Arrange for delivery of the officer's personal belongings to the family.
- K. Ensure the Chief of Police is briefed on the arrangements and that Department employees are aware of duties as outlined in the itinerary.
- L. Ensure the surviving parents are afforded recognition and that proper placement is arranged for them during the wake and the funeral.
- M. Coordinate traffic management with other jurisdictions, if necessary, to accommodate the procession and funeral.
- N. Maintain a roster of all visiting departments sending personnel to the funeral, including:
  - 1. Name and address of the responding agency
  - 2. Name of the Chief of Police
  - 3. Number of Officers attending
  - 4. Number of vehicles



- O. Acknowledge visiting departments.
- P. Make arrangements for routine checks of the survivor's home for a period of six-eight weeks following the funeral. If the survivors live out of town, make arrangements with the agency for the town of residence. This is done due to the amount of money that passes through the residence and the fact that the survivors will be out of the residence attending to legal matters.

#### **V. Police Chaplain:**

- A. Will assist all liaison officers.

#### **VI. Continued Support for the Family**

- A. Members of the Department must remain sensitive to the needs of the survivors long after the officer's death. The grief process has no timetable and survivors may develop a complicated grief process. More than half of the surviving spouses can be expected to develop a post-traumatic stress reaction to the tragedy.
- B. Survivors should continue to feel a part of the "police family". They should be invited to Anchorage Police Department and APDEA activities for continued support.
- C. Members of the Department are encouraged to keep in touch with the family. Close friends, co-workers and staff should arrange with the family to visit the home from time to time, if the family expresses a desire to have these contacts continue.
- D. The Department should maintain close contact with the family if the family feels need for the support. The family will let it be known when they are ready to move on and live their lives without the assistance of the Department.

#### **VII. Post Incident Stress of Department Personnel**

- A. Family members, friends and close associates of the fallen employee will experience various levels of grief. However, the need for the Police Department to provide psychological assistance or post incident debriefing cannot be stressed strongly enough. The loss of a co-worker is often the most traumatic experience that an employee may experience in his or her career.

#### **VIII. Funeral Protocol**

- A. Any Anchorage Police Officer who dies in the line of duty will be accorded full honors if requested by the family. This will include the Casket Watch during the wake, Honor Guard, pallbearers, rifle squad, taps, military flag fold, and presentation of the flag and motor escort.

- B. The Honor Guard Coordinator will be responsible for coordinating and directing the activities of the Honor Guard, Casket Watch, Pallbearers, Rifle Squad, Bugler and Flag presentation and will be under the direct supervision of the Department Liaison Officer.

- 1. Uniforms and Appearances

- a. Class A uniforms will be worn by all personnel
    - b. A black band will be worn over the badge.

- 2. Wake

- a. All members of the Department who attend the wake will, regardless of assignment, dress in the appropriate dress uniform.

- C. The Casket Watch is comprised of volunteer officers from throughout the Department. Officers assigned to the casket watch must present an excellent uniform appearance and will conform to all Department regulations on grooming and appearance.

- 1. The dress uniform will be worn to include white gloves. The watch will be divided into shifts with two officers standing watch for 2 to 4 hours at a time.
  - 2. A shift supervisor will organize the casket watch immediately following the line of duty death, until the Honor Guard Coordinator is able to take over the responsibility.

- D. The Honor Guard Coordinator will post the watch and the officers will position themselves at or near the head and feet of the deceased officer.

- E. If the family requests pallbearers from the Department or they have no special request for who will serve as pallbearers, the Honor Guard Coordinator will be responsible for selecting them. If possible and practical, the pallbearers should be officers that the slain officer worked closely with, regardless of rank. Pallbearers will be under the direct command of the Honor Guard Coordinator and will report to the funeral home as directed for instructions.

## **IX. Funeral Procedures**

- A. Refer to the funeral procedures outline in the Anchorage Police Department Funeral Planning Guide or based upon the requests of the family.

## **X. Procedural Variation**

- A. The procedures that have been outlined in this policy will be followed in most cases. Any changes that are made necessary by shortage of manpower, the unusual size of the funeral, the type of service, the physical arrangement of the place of the service or for any other reasons, shall be made by the Department Liaison Officer in conjunction with the Chief of Police.
- B. In the case of an officer killed in the line of duty, the Chief of Police or his designee will make arrangements for two officers to escort the deceased officer's family to the Police Memorial Wall ceremony in Washington DC.
- C. At the discretion of the Chief of Police, Department Honors may be accorded to deceased members of the Department.

**\*\*\*END OF DOCUMENT\*\*\***