



Clayton County Police Department PROCEDURES

Subject LINE-OF-DUTY DEATH/SERIOUS INJURY		Procedure # D25	
Authorizing Signature 	Effective 02-17-2026	<input type="checkbox"/> New <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Amended <input type="checkbox"/> Rescinds	Total Pages 5

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines and procedures for responding to the needs of an officer, their families and co-workers when an officer of the Clayton County Police Department (CCPD) is seriously injured or dies in the line-of-duty.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Clayton County Police Department (CCPD) to provide assistance to the immediate family and co-workers of officers who are seriously injured or die in the line-of-duty, and to provide them with all possible support during this traumatic period of readjustment.

III. DEFINITIONS

Immediate Family: Is defined to include, parent/guardian, brother, sister, child, spouse, grandparent, grandchild, and employee's spouse's parent/guardian, brother, sister, child, grandparent, or grandchild.

Line-of-Duty Death: The death of an active duty officer by felonious or accidental means during the course of performing police functions while on or off duty.

Line-of-Duty Injury: The injury of an officer by intentional or accidental means during the course of performing law enforcement functions while on-duty or off-duty.

Serious Injury: Injury that involves a substantial risk of death, protracted and obvious disfigurement, or extended loss or impairment of the function of a body part or organ.

Survivors: Immediate family members of the deceased officer, which can include spouse, child, parent/guardian, brother, sister, grandparent, grandchild, and employee's spouse's parent/guardian, brother, sister, child, grandparent, grandchild, other next of kin or significant others. The determination of who should be considered a survivor for purposes of this policy should be made on a case-by-case basis given the individual's relationship with the member and whether the individual was previously designated by the deceased member.

IV. PROCEDURES

The following procedures should be adhered to in the event that an officer of this Department is seriously injured or dies in the line of duty. These procedures should be followed whenever possible, with the understanding that the wishes of the family take precedence over the desires of the Department. Officers providing services and assistance to the affected officer's immediate family shall

take all possible measures to accommodate their needs, wishes and desires, but should never make a promise unless they are absolutely sure the promise can be fulfilled.

A. Death or Serious Injury Notifications

1. The name of any officer who is seriously injured or dies in the line of duty shall not be released to the media or other parties until the immediate family has been notified.
2. Whenever an officer is seriously injured or dies in the line of duty, the respective on-duty supervisor shall notify the Division/Shift or Unit Commander and the Public Information Officer (PIO). The Chief of Police, or authorized designee (hereinafter referred to as the Chief of Police), shall be notified through the chain of command.
3. The Chief of Police will assign a Notification Officer to notify the immediate family and provide them with an update on the injured or involved officer's condition.
4. Due to the impact of social media, notification of the officer's immediate family should be made as soon as possible.
5. Notification of the officer's immediate family shall be made in person, whenever possible, and with another person such as the Police Chaplain. Whenever the health of a family member is a concern, emergency medical services (EMS) personnel shall be requested.
6. If the family has an opportunity to see the officer, the Notification Officer shall inform the Hospital Liaison Officer that the family is en route. In such cases, immediate transportation should be provided for the officer's family. If the officer has already passed away, notification should be made to the survivors in a forthright, yet empathetic manner.
7. The PIO will be responsible for assisting the news media at the hospital. Should the media obtain the officer's name prematurely, the PIO shall request that the information be withheld pending notification of the next of kin.

See also CCPD SOP: *G2: Public Information & Media Relations* for PIO responsibilities.

8. The Notification Officer shall be responsible for identifying additional family members and shall make notification as desired by the immediate family. Notifications for family members who are not located in or near the county shall be made by contacting the law enforcement agency in the respective jurisdiction and requesting that a personal notification be made.
9. The Notification Officer shall submit a Memorandum (Memo) to the Chief of Police through the chain of command, specifying the identity, time and place when the officer's family members were notified.
10. Supervisors involved in the initial notification will ensure that a *Command Notification Incident Detail Sheet* is completed and sent via County email to their chain of command, the Police Report Notification group, the PIO, and any other concerned/affected personnel. This must be completed as soon as possible, and no later than the end of their shift or tour of duty.

B. Hospital Liaison - Assisting Family Members at the Hospital

Whenever possible, a member of the Chief's command staff shall join the officer's family at the hospital in order to emphasize the Department's support. At that time, the Chief of Police will designate a Hospital Liaison Officer who shall be responsible for coordinating the arrival of additional family members, Department personnel, the media and any other individuals who are involved and/or related to the incident.

The Hospital Liaison Officer shall assume the following responsibilities:

1. Attempt to secure from hospital staff two rooms, if possible: one for the officer's immediate family and the other for co-workers. The desires of the officer's family members should be followed with regard to their accessibility to other officers and friends.

2. Disseminate information regarding waiting rooms and direct family members and Department personnel to the appropriate areas.
3. Ensure the officer's immediate family and Department personnel are briefed and updated on the events as soon as possible.
4. Assist family members, in gaining access to the injured or deceased officer.
 - a. Prepare the family for what they might see, and offer to accompany them when they see the officer.
 - b. If injuries are likely fatal and it is possible for the family to visit the officer prior to death, they should be afforded the opportunity.
5. If the family desires, contact the Department Chaplain and/or other clergy as requested.
6. Provide hospital personnel with all necessary billing information, ensuring all medical bills are directed to the appropriate departmental authority and not to the officer's family.
7. Arrange transportation for the officer's family members upon their departure from the hospital.
8. Remain at the hospital until no longer needed or relieved by a supervisor.

C. Appointment/Coordination of Assigned Personnel

To prevent duplication of efforts, maintain order, and ensure that the process works for the benefit of the officer and their family, a supervisor shall coordinate all departmental functions regarding the incident. The supervisor will provide assignments to the officer(s) so they can start serving in the following capacities: Department Liaison, Funeral Liaison, Benefits Coordinator, and Family Liaison. These assignments will be documented and provided to Department personnel and the officer's immediate family. In addition, the Chief of Police will:

1. Make additional personnel assignments to assist in handling incoming phone calls and inquiries, and to direct the public to the appropriate personnel.
2. Ensure the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is implemented to assist the officer's immediate family and that the family is aware of their right to psychological services.

D. Department Liaison

The Department Liaison Officer will serve as a facilitator between the family and the Department. This role will normally be performed by a commanding officer in order to expedite the tasks of employing departmental resources and the delegation of assignments. The Department Liaison Officer will work closely with the Funeral Liaison Officer to ensure that the needs and requests of the family are fulfilled.

Key responsibilities of the Department Liaison Officer include, but are not limited to:

1. Directing the other liaisons and coordinators in fulfilling the needs and request of the officer's immediate family.
2. Establishing contact with the officer's immediate family, providing them with contact information for other liaisons and coordinators, and explaining their roles and responsibilities.
3. Identifying locations that will accommodate the law enforcement funeral. These alternatives will be presented to the officer's immediate family, who will make the final decision.
4. Coordinating all official law enforcement notifications and arrangements, to include the Honor Guard, pallbearers, traffic control, and liaison with visiting law enforcement agencies.
5. Assisting the officer's family in dealing with general media inquiries.
6. Coordinating with the Public Information Officer (PIO) regarding statements and press conferences.

7. Ensuring that officers are aware of restrictions regarding release of any information that might undermine future legal proceedings.
8. If necessary, ensuring that security checks of the officer and/or officer's family are initiated immediately following the incident and for as long as necessary thereafter.

E. Funeral Liaison

The Funeral Liaison Officer acts as facilitator between the survivors of the deceased officer and the Department during the wake and funeral.

Key responsibilities of the Funeral Liaison Officer include, but are not limited to:

1. Meeting with survivors and assisting them in working with the funeral director regarding funeral arrangements and briefing them on law enforcement funeral procedures.
2. Being available to survivors prior to and throughout the wake and funeral.
3. Completing funeral notifications to other law enforcement agencies.
4. Coordinating the funeral activities of the Department with survivors, which include, but are not limited to the following: Honor Guard, casket watch, pallbearers, 21-gun salute, bagpipers, flag presentation, and last call (end of watch).

The family has the option of excluding any portion of the funeral procedure.

5. Relaying funeral arrangements and any other related information to the Chief of Police, command staff, liaisons, coordinators, and any other personnel, agencies or individuals that are associated with the funeral services and/or funeral procession.
6. Determining the need for out-of-town travel arrangements and any other special needs of survivors during the funeral and reporting this information to the Department Liaison Officer.
7. Providing transportation for survivors to all memorial, funeral, and internment services as needed.
8. Ensuring survivors are recognized and have proper placement arranged for them during the funeral services and funeral procession.

F. Benefits Coordinator

Key responsibilities of the Benefits Coordinator include, but are not limited to:

1. Filing all workers' compensation claims and associated documentation.
2. Presenting comprehensive information regarding all benefits available to the family.
3. Documenting inquiries and interest in public donations to the family and establishing a mechanism for receipt of such contributions, as appropriate.
4. Compiling detailed benefit summaries for survivors, including 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. Facilitating the benefits application process and maintaining regular family contact to ensure 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 surviving family of the role of police associations and the specific support programs available to law enforcement survivors.

G. Family Liaison

The Family Liaison Officer will inform, and facilitate care and support for the officer's family.

Key responsibilities of the Family Liaison Officer include, but are not limited to:

1. Updating family members in a timely manner and providing relevant information regarding the incident.
2. Relaying family concerns and needs to assist organization and encouraging visits or help as necessary.
3. Providing information regarding available services, explaining how they work, and helping them access website information.
4. Obtaining information or personal stories the family wishes to share, documenting requests or complaints, and forwarding them through the chain of command.
5. Staying in contact with the officer's immediate family and providing emotional support.

H. Peer Support

1. Whenever an officer of this Department is seriously injured or dies in the line of duty, the Division/Shift, or Unit Commander is responsible for notifying the Peer Support Team (PST).
2. The Peer Support Administrator, or authorized designee, will coordinate with the Division/Shift or Unit Commander to schedule the debriefing, which will be conducted by the PST.
3. All personnel who responded to the incident are required to attend the debriefing.
See also CCPD SOP: *E10: Peer Support Team*.
4. Officers who were witnesses or close to the deceased or seriously injured officer may be emotionally affected and experience various levels of grief. Assistance for these employees is available through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and the Police Chaplain Program.
See also CCPD SOP: *C1: Personnel* and CCPD SOP: *G4: Police Chaplains*.

I. The Office of the Chief of Police

1. Upon notification of a Department officer line-of-duty serious injury or death, the Chief of Police shall cause notification to be made to all Department personnel.
2. In the event that a Clayton County Police Department (CCPD) officer has died honorably in the line-of-duty, the Chief of Police shall:
 - a. Order all flags flown at departmental facilities lowered to half-staff from the time of death until the day of the officer's funeral or memorial service.
 - b. Authorize the wearing of black mourning bands on badges, from the time of death until the day of the officer's funeral.

V. CANCELLATION

This procedure amends and supersedes the following standard operating procedure: *D25: Line-Of-Duty Death*, dated May 17, 2021.