



# Clayton County Police Department

# PROCEDURES

Subject <b>LINE-OF-DUTY DEATH OR SERIOUS INJURY</b>			Procedure # <b>D25</b>
Authorizing Signature 	Effective  <b>05-17-2021</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Amended <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rescinds (see below)	Total Pages  <b>7</b>

## 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 this Department is seriously injured or dies in the line-of-duty.

## II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Clayton County Police Department to provide assistance to the immediate family and co-workers of employees 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 or guardian, brother, sister, child, spouse, grandparent, grandchild, and employee's spouse's parent or 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 or guardian, brother, sister, grandparent, grandchild, and employee's spouse's parent or 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**

##### **A. Death or Serious Injury Notification**

The following procedures should be adhered to in the event an officer of the 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 agency. Officers providing services and assistance to the 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.

1. The name of the injured or deceased officer shall not be released to the media or other parties until the immediate family has been notified.
2. The subject officer's supervisor or respective on-duty supervisor shall notify the Division, Shift and/or Unit Commander and the Public Information Officer; the Chief of Police shall be notified through the chain of command.
3. The Chief of Police or designee will assign an officer to notify the immediate family and provide them with an update on the 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 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 enroute. 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 Public Information Officer will be responsible for assisting the news media at the hospital. Should the media obtain the officer's name prematurely, the Public Information Officer shall request that the information be withheld pending notification of the next of kin.
8. The Notification Officer shall be responsible for identifying additional family members and shall make notification as desired by the immediate family. Such notifications 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 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.

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 agency's support. At that time, the Chief of Police or his designee 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; one for use by the officer's immediate family and the other for co-workers, if possible. 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. 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. Assist family members, in gaining access to the injured or deceased officer. Prepare the family for what they might see, and offer to accompany them when they see the officer.
6. If the family desires, contact the Department Chaplain and/or other clergy as requested.
7. Provide hospital personnel with all necessary information on billing for medical services. The Hospital Liaison Officer should ensure that

all medical bills are directed to the appropriate departmental authority and that they are not forwarded to the officer's family.

8. Arrange transportation for the officer's family members upon their departure from the hospital.
9. The Hospital Liaison Officer shall remain at the hospital until they are no longer needed and/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, or his designee will:

1. Make additional personnel assignments to assist in handling incoming phone calls, inquiries and to direct the public to the appropriate personnel.
2. Ensure that the employee assistance program is implemented to assist the officer's immediate family and emphasize the family's right to psychological services.
3. Ensure that other officers are provided the opportunity to participate in critical incident stress briefings.  
Refer to procedure *E10: Peer Support Team*.

D. Department Liaison

The Department Liaison Officer will serve as a facilitator between the family and the Department. This individual will normally be a commanding officer in order to expedite the tasks of employing departmental resources and the delegation of assignments. This officer will work closely with the funeral liaison officer to ensure that the needs and requests of the family are fulfilled. This includes, but is not necessarily limited to the following:

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 and providing them with other liaison and coordinator positions, contact information 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 regarding statements and press conferences. The Department Liaison Officer shall also ensure that officers of the Department are aware of restrictions regarding release of any information that might undermine future legal proceedings.
7. 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. The Funeral Liaison Officer is responsible for:

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 is 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. Provide transportation for survivors to all memorial, funeral, and internment services as needed. Ensure survivors are recognized and have proper placement arranged for them during the funeral services and funeral procession.

F. Benefits Coordinator

The Benefits Coordinator is responsible for:

1. Filing workers' compensation claims and related paperwork.
2. Presenting information on 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. Preparing all documentation of benefits and payments for 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.
5. 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.
6. 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.

G. Family Liaison

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

1. Updating the officer's family members in a timely manner and providing them with all relevant information regarding the incident.
2. 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.
3. Providing information regarding additional services that are available for families and explain what they are and how they work, and help them access service website information, if necessary.
4. If the family is willing, obtain information and/or personal stories they might want to share with the Department. Document any requests and/or complaints made by the family, and forward the information through the chain of command.
5. Staying in contact with the officer's immediate family and providing them with emotional support.

H. The Office of the Chief of Police

Upon notification of a Department officer line-of-duty serious injury or death, the Chief of Police or designee shall cause notification to be made to all agency personnel. In the event that a Clayton County Police Department officer has died honorably in the line-of-duty, the Chief of Police shall:

1. Order all flags flown at Clayton County Police Department facilities lowered to half-staff from the time of death until the day of the officer's funeral or memorial service.
2. Authorize the wearing of black mourning bands to be worn on badges, from the time of death until the day of the officer's funeral.

**V. CANCELLATION**

- A. This procedure rescinds and supersedes the following standard operating procedure: D25: *Line-Of-Duty Death*, dated March 30, 2009.