




Cocoa Beach Police Department

Standard Operating Procedure



Effective Date: November 28, 2023	Replaces: Amends: May 16, 2012	Number: 201.00
Subject: Death and Serious Injury Notification		Re-Evaluation: 2025
Distribution: All Members	Related CFA Standards:	
Approving Authority: Chief of Police Mike Coffin		
Approval Date: November 14, 2023		

This standard operating procedure consists of the following numbered sections:

1. PURPOSE

To provide guidelines for death and serious injury notification to assist the victim's immediate family in coping with the challenges of these stressful and emotional events.

2. SCOPE

This standard operating procedure shall apply to all members of the Cocoa Beach Police Department.

3. POLICY

It is the policy of the Cocoa Beach Police Department to apply tact, discretion, and compassion in order to assist in meeting the needs of survivors.

4. DEFINITION(S)

- A. IMMEDIATE FAMILY– includes spouses, siblings, children, or parents.
- B. NEXT-OF-KIN – a surviving member of the decedent's immediate family.
- C. VICTIM – this term is synonymous with a decedent or one who has sustained serious bodily injury.

5. PROCEDURES

A. General Notification Guidelines

- 1. When making any death or serious injury notification police personnel shall:
 - a. Verify the victim's identification.
 - b. Never dispatch death information over the radio, such information shall be transmitted by telephone.
 - c. Make notifications in person unless extenuating circumstances exist.
 - d. Assist family member in contacting relatives/family if requested.
 - e. Provide or arrange for transportation to hospital where victim is located.
 - f. Document the next-of-kin's name, address, telephone number, date and time of notification.
 - g. Leave their card with their name, phone number and case number, when applicable.
 - h. Plan to make a follow-up contact, when practical.
 - i. Make sure they are clear as to who is responsible for follow-up investigations.
 - j. Call victim assistance if next-of-kin makes the request.
- 2. The decedent's name shall not be released to the media until authorized by a supervisor.

B. Unsuccessful Attempts

1. When the original officer is unable to make the notification before going off-duty, that officer is responsible for relaying the information to the on-duty shift supervisor. The shift supervisor is then responsible for ensuring that the notification is made or passing it on to their supervisory relief.
- C. Crime Scenes
1. At scenes where the victim is deceased and family members are present, notification shall be handled by the ranking officer in charge of the scene.
 2. Notifications involving a death for a criminal investigation shall be made only upon the approval of the detective in charge of the investigation or the on-duty shift supervisor.
- D. Death and Serious Injury Notifications within Department Jurisdiction
1. When a death or serious injury occurs within the city, the following applies:
 - a. The detective assigned to the investigation shall be accompanied by at least one uniformed officer when making the notification to the next-of-kin.
 - b. If the detective is not available, on-duty shift supervisor, accompanied by a uniformed officer, shall make the notification, manpower permitting.
- E. Death and Serious Injury Notification Where Next-of-kin is Outside of Department Jurisdiction
1. When a death or serious injury occurs and the next-of-kin is outside this jurisdiction, the following applies:
 - a. The notifying member shall make a request to a law enforcement agency within the jurisdiction where the next-of-kin is located to make the notification in person. Telephone requests to the other law enforcement agencies shall be confirmed by teletype to that agency.
 - b. The agency requested to make notification shall be asked to provide teletype confirmation that the notification has been made.
- F. Death and Serious Injury Notifications Requests from Other Agencies
1. When a death or serious injury occurs in another jurisdiction and the next-of-kin live in this jurisdiction, the following applies:
 - a. Upon receipt of a teletype request for notification from an agency in another jurisdiction, Communications shall determine the name, residence location, and victim's name and provide the information to the on-duty shift supervisor.
 - b. The on-duty shift supervisor shall contact the requesting agency's lead investigator and verify all facts and circumstances involving the death or serious injury in order to provide as much accurate information to the next-of-kin as possible.
 - c. The on-duty shift supervisor shall make the notification, accompanied by a uniformed officer. If the on-duty shift supervisor is unavailable, two uniformed officers shall be assigned to make the notification.
 - d. The next-of-kin shall be provided the name and telephone number of the requesting agency individual in charge of the death or serious injury investigation.