

# FORT MYERS POLICE DEPARTMENT

## GENERAL ORDER 12.1

**TITLE:** Line of Duty Deaths

**INDEXING:** Line of Duty Deaths; Employee Emergencies; Death Notifications

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### PURPOSE

The purpose of this order is to establish procedures to ensure the proper support and emotional care for an employee's family following a line-of-duty death, as well as guidelines for assisting members of the agency and planning funeral services in accordance with the desires of the employee's family.

**(CALEA 22.1.5)**

### SCOPE

These procedures shall apply to all Fort Myers Police Department personnel.

### POLICY

The Department will provide liaison assistance to the immediate survivors of a member who dies in the line of duty. This assistance is provided whether the death was felonious or accidental, while the member was performing a police-related function, either on or off-duty and while he or she was an active member of the Department. The Department will provide emotional support for the surviving family and will make funeral arrangements at the direction of the family. The family wishes will take precedence over the Departments' wishes. The Department will provide a comprehensive study of survivor benefits as well as apply for the benefits on behalf of the family.

The Chief of Police may institute certain parts of this order for cases of an Officer's natural death, a retired Officer's death, the death of a civilian employee, or the death of a Department K-9 or equestrian.

The order is based upon guidelines suggested in the handbook entitled, "Support Services to Surviving Families of Line of Duty Deaths," published by the Concerns of Police Survivors, Inc (C.O.P.S), based in Camdenton, Missouri.

### SECTION I: DEFINITIONS

- A. Line of Duty Death: Any action, felonious or accidental (automobile accidents, hit by passing vehicle during traffic stop, training accidents, etc.) that claims the life of a law enforcement Officer who was performing law enforcement functions either while on or off duty.

- B. Survivors: Immediate family members of the deceased Officer; spouse, children, parents, siblings, ex-spouse, fiancée, and/or significant others.
- C. Beneficiary: Those designated by the Officer as recipients of specific death benefits.
- D. Funeral Payments: Financial payments made to the surviving families of an Officer killed in the line of duty that are specifically earmarked for funeral expenses.
- E. Benefits: Financial payments made to the family to ensure financial stability following the loss of a loved one.
- F. Liaison Officer: An employee designated by the Chief of Police to provide assistance to survivors.
- G. Benefits Coordinator: Designated employee by the Chief of Police to advise surviving family of benefits available and to apply for those benefits on behalf of the family.

## **SECTION II: DEATH NOTIFICATION**

It is the responsibility of the Chief of Police or designee to properly notify the next of kin of a member who has suffered severe injuries or death. Notification must always be made in person. The Chief of Police may personally make the notification or designate a Supervisor or an employee who is close to the member or family to make the notification, in accordance with any pre-determined request by the Officer. Should the next of kin be out of town, the Chief of Police or designee will coordinate with the local law enforcement where they are located.

- A. With local notifications, the Chief of Police or designee should make every attempt to make the notification with the agency's Victim Advocate, Police Chaplain and any member of the agency close to the Officer. It is important to have someone in uniform present during the notification. These individuals should select a meeting point and travel to the family's home as a group (but in separate vehicles). Immediate response by these individuals is of the utmost importance. If a member of this group is not readily available, the other members should make the immediate notification.
- B. If there is an opportunity to get to the hospital prior to the death of the Officer, the Chief of Police or designee should make the notification before the group gathers. The opportunity to get the family to the hospital prior to the demise of the Officer is significantly more important than who from the Department delivers the notification. Another law enforcement agency should not make the notification on behalf of the Department.

Prior to notification, Emergency Medical Services should be called and placed on standby nearby where the notification is going to take place.

- C. The death notification must never be made at a doorstep. The Chief of Police or designee should ask to be admitted to the house. The Chief of Police or designee should ascertain who is present in the household and discuss with the next of kin which family members should be included in the notification. The Chief of Police or designee should inform family members slowly and clearly of the information available. As much information as possible should be relayed to the family members. It is important to refer to the Officer by name and use words such as "died" or "dead" rather than "gone away" or "passed away." If the Chief of Police or designee has been seriously affected by the death, he (she) should understand that showing emotions is perfectly acceptable. If the Officer is injured but has not died, the Chief of Police or designee should not give the family false hope about the extent of injuries.

The Chief of Police or designee will make every effort to personally notify *all* immediate family members, including the Officer's parents, the Officer's children, and/or the legal guardian of the Officer's children.

If there are personal effects to be returned to the Officer's family, it should not be done during the death notification. However, the Chief of Police or designee should return the personal effects as soon as possible.

- D. If the family requests to visit the hospital, they should be transported by police vehicle. Family members should not drive themselves to the hospital. If the family insists on driving, the Chief of Police or designee should accompany them in the family car. If young children are at home, the Chief of Police or designee should arrange for babysitting needs. Prior to leaving for the hospital, the Chief of Police or designee should notify the hospital staff by telephone that a member(s) of the family is on the way.
- E. The name of the deceased member will never be released by the Department to the public or the media before all immediate family members living in the area are notified. The name of the Officer and details of his/her injuries or death should never be discussed via police radio. Should members of the media obtain the Officer's name, the Public Information Officer will request the media not broadcast/publish the name until family members can be notified.
- F. With permission of the family, the Chief of Police or designee shall make every effort to contact other members of the immediate family both in Southwest Florida and outside the local community. Relatives living outside Southwest Florida also should be notified in person, whenever possible. The Chief of Police or designee should coordinate a teletype to another jurisdiction, where an Officer can make notification to relatives in person.

### **SECTION III: IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE FOR THE FAMILY**

- A. The Chief of Police or designee should meet with the appropriate hospital personnel to arrange appropriate waiting facilities for the family that are separate, but not isolated, from police employees. This official should also insure that medical personnel relay pertinent information to the family of the Officer's condition on a timely basis. These same medical personnel should make the family aware of hospital policy about visitation with the injured Officer and/or visitation with the body following the demise, as well as information about organ donation and an autopsy. If police employees are gathered separately from the family, the Chief of Police or designee should ensure employees are updated on the Officer's condition and notified about hospital visitation procedures.
- B. If it is possible for the family to visit the Officer prior to the death, the Chief of Police or designee must inform the family they have that right. Even if Department employees believe that would be too hard on the family, the Department must respect that it is the family's right. The Chief of Police or designee should prepare the family for what they might see in the emergency room and accompany the family into the room for the visit if the family requests it.
- C. The Chief of Police or designee should remain at the hospital the entire time the family is at the hospital and should arrange whatever assistance the family may need at that time. If additional members of the agency were present with the Chief of Police for the death notification, those members also should remain at the hospital while the family is there.

As many members of the Command Staff as possible should visit the family at the hospital. If other members of the command staff are involved in directing the scene of the Officer's death, they should make even a brief visit to the hospital. A survivor should not be sedated unless the

survivor requests medication. The Chief of Police or designee should ask the family member for permission to contact the family physician for possible medical assistance.

- D. Before leaving the hospital, the Chief of Police or designee should arrange to have the hospital bills sent to the Department. The hospital bills should never be sent to the family.

The presence of members of the Police Department at the hospital should never be minimized by any other support the family has, including other family members, friends or members of a church group. It is the policy of this agency to support the family in presence, even if direct assistance is not required.

- E. If members of the media arrive at the hospital, the agency's Public Information Officer should coordinate with the appropriate hospital staff to find a satisfactory area for the media to assemble without impacting the family. The agency's Public Information Officer or someone else designated by the Chief of Police will serve as a liaison with the media and the family, should the family be interested in talking to the media or relaying any information to members of the media.
- F. The Department personnel who drove the family to the hospital should offer to take the family back home or ensure they have made other arrangements. Idle promises **shall** not be made to the family at this time (i.e. "We'll promote him/her posthumously." "We'll retire his/her badge.").

#### **SECTION IV: ASSISTANCE FOR AGENCY MEMBERS**

- A. Employees who were on the scene or arrived moments after a member was critically injured or killed shall be relieved as quickly as possible. If another Officer was directly involved in the death of the Officer, the Chief of Police, designee, or Supervisor should assign another Officer to assist the surviving Officer with anything they might need. The assisting Officer will not be ordered to leave the surviving Officer until the surviving Officer feels comfortable with being left alone.
- B. It is extremely important that members of the agency are notified after the family has been notified of the Officer's death. The Supervisor on scene should designate someone in communications to notify the Chief of Police, members of the Command Staff, the Victim's Advocate and the Public Information Officer. Afterward, the on-scene Supervisor should designate someone in communications or a civilian employee to notify all agency Supervisors utilizing the emergency contact list utilized in natural disasters. Each Supervisor will then be responsible for notifying his/her employees, both sworn and civilian.
- C. A Critical Incident Stress Management Team will be coordinated by the Victim Advocate with members from other local law enforcement agencies. Any member of the agency who witnessed the incident or may have been emotionally affected by the serious injury or death of another member will be invited to attend. Everything discussed in this debriefing is confidential and will not be part of any review by the agency. The debriefing is strongly recommended for anyone involved or emotionally affected by the incident. The Victim Advocate will be responsible for ensuring the agency's chaplains are notified and encouraged to respond to assist members of the agency.
- D. As soon as possible after the serious injury or death, the Chief of Police will notify employees in writing of all the psychological support that is available, including but not limited to, assistance from the agency's Victim Advocate, Chaplains, Critical Incident Stress Debriefing Team and the Employee Assistance Program. In addition, the Department should mail information to all employees' homes letting family members know the services that are available to assist them.

## **SECTION V: ASSISTANCE FOR THE FAMILY PRIOR TO VISITATION AND FUNERAL SERVICES**

- A. Immediately after the family returns home from the hospital (or immediately after notification if the family does not go to the hospital), the Department will assign a police Officer with a marked unit to the home. Officers will serve in shifts to be available to assist the family with anything they need. The Department will make this assignment immediately, without permission of the family. It is important for the family to know the Department is there to help them. The Department will continue with the assignment of an Officer at the home even if the family opts not to take advantage of that assistance. The Operations Bureau Commander will designate a Supervisor to coordinate the coverage of this assignment. If on-duty personnel cannot be utilized, the Supervisor will assign overtime hours. It is important to let Officers know that they can be paid overtime for this assignment, earn comp time, or they can decide to volunteer their time. No employee will be asked to volunteer their time, rather the Department will make it known that Officers have that option.
- B. Immediately after the family has left the hospital, an Officer of the Department will be assigned to guard the fallen Officer's body. The Honor Guard should be utilized if available. The body will be guarded at the hospital, at the medical examiner's office, at the funeral home and throughout services until burial. The Operations Bureau Commander will designate a Supervisor to coordinate the coverage of this assignment as well. If on-duty personnel cannot be utilized, the Supervisor will assign overtime hours. It is important to let Officers know that they can be paid overtime for this assignment, earn comp time, or they can decide to volunteer their time. No employee will be asked to volunteer their time, rather the Department will make it known that Officers have that option. The agency likewise will continue to guard the Officer's body should the family opt to have the body transported for burial at a hometown cemetery, in accordance with the wishes of the family.
- C. Immediately after the Officer's death the Chief of Police will order the flags at all Police Department facilities be lowered to half-staff. Additionally, members of the agency will immediately begin wearing memorial bands over their badges.
- D. The Chief of Police will assign a Liaison Officer to work with the family to plan funeral services and provide other Departmental support. The Liaison Officer should know the deceased Officer and be aware of the family relationships, as well as have training in line of duty death issues. The Liaison Officer should not be so emotionally involved with the loss that he/she would become ineffective. Close friends of the family should be avoided. It is extremely important that the Chief of Police, the Liaison Officer and the entire Department recognize that the family's desires always supersede any suggestions by the Department. In that regard, the Liaison Officer is the facilitator between the family and the Department and not a decision-maker. It is the job of the Liaison Officer to:
  - 1. Ensure that the needs of the family come before the wishes of the Department.
  - 2. Meet with the family and tell them what his/her responsibilities will be during this time.
  - 3. Provide the family with a cell phone number so they can reach the Liaison Officer at any time.
  - 4. Meet with the family regarding funeral arrangements. The Liaison Officer will provide the family with any information he/she may have about any wishes the deceased Officer made about his/her funeral services. The family will make all final decisions about the funeral services. The Liaison Officer will make the family aware of the various components of a "law enforcement" funeral, should they

want to include any and all of those options (such as honor guard, 21-gun salute, Taps, flag presentation, last call, etc.). The Liaison Officer also should make the family aware of how many people are expected to attend the service and where there are locations (other than the family church) that are big enough to accommodate the crowd. Again, the family will make the final decision as to where the funeral will be.

5. Inform the family of any and all information concerning the death of the Officer and the investigation. The Liaison Officer should be prepared to answer or find answers to any questions the family asks.
6. Provide assistance – or arrange for another Department employee to provide assistance – to oversee arrangements for travel and lodging for out-of-town family members.
7. Be constantly available to the family throughout this traumatic time.
8. Ensure that arrangements are made for all family members, including parents, to have proper placement arranged for them during the funeral and funeral procession.
9. Ensure that the family is briefed in advance of the funeral procedure, including the law enforcement components, which can be quite emotional.
10. Ensure the family is transported via limousines or police vehicles to and from the visitation and funeral services.

- E. As quickly as the information is available, the Department will notify law enforcement agencies throughout the state of the funeral arrangements. The Department also should place the funeral information on the agency's website for ease of access.

The agency's Public Information Officer or Chief of Police designee will be assigned to coordinate media relations for the agency and on behalf of the family, facilitated through the Liaison Officer. The Public Information Officer or designee should personally ask the family if they wish to grant interviews to members of the media. Should the family decide to grant media interviews, the Public Information Officer or designee should coordinate the interview. The Public Information Officer should meet with the family in advance and let them know the questions that are likely to be asked and ascertain any "ground rules" the family would like to establish. The Public Information Officer will then ensure the media are aware of and follow those "ground rules." The Public Information Officer should suggest to the family limiting any questions about the death that would jeopardize any upcoming legal proceedings. The Public Information Officer or designee should notify the family member of any developments that might generate media interest, such as the release of reports concerning the death, the trial, etc.

- F. The agency's Victim Advocate will be responsible for ensuring the family's home is prepared for the influx of visitors and that ample food is available. The Victim Advocate should ensure babysitting needs are met, and that someone is available to answer the telephone and the door for the family. The Victim Advocate will ensure a law enforcement Officer protects the family's home during funeral services.
- G. The agency's Victim Advocate will make the family aware of psychological services that are available. In particular, they should be made aware of public safety survivors or other support groups (such as Concerns of Police Survivors, Survivors of Homicide Victims, etc.). The Victim

Advocate will notify the family of any court proceedings involved in the Officer's death, following the funeral services and throughout the justice process.

## **SECTION VI: PROVIDING BENEFIT INFORMATION TO FAMILY MEMBERS**

- A. The City Human Resources Department will designate a Benefits Coordinator to survey benefits available to the Officer's survivors and apply for those benefits on behalf of the family. The Benefits Coordinator will gather information on local, state, federal and professional benefits available to the surviving family and ensure the Department's full support in applying for those benefits. The Benefits Coordinator will be responsible for filing appropriate paperwork and following through with the surviving family to ensure benefits are being received. Whenever possible, the Benefits Coordinator should arrange for benefits to be delivered to the Department and then ensure they are hand-delivered to the family, rather than have them arrive by mail. **(CALEA 22.1.5)**
- B. The Benefits Coordinator should visit the surviving family within a few days following the funeral. The Benefits Coordinator should present the family with a prepared handout of the benefits potentially available to the family with possible amounts. The Benefits Coordinator should explain that the sources of the benefits make the final determination about whether the family is due the benefit and in which amount. The Benefits Coordinator should explain when the surviving family should anticipate a decision about the benefits and when the payments would be received. The same explanation procedure should be repeated within a month following the funeral since the initial contact is clouded by the emotional numbness of the family during the first benefits meeting. The Benefits Coordinator should update the family monthly on the status of the filing for benefits, the subsequent decisions and payment schedules. It is important for the Benefits Coordinator to tell the family what the benefits MAY be, but not promise any financial amount or when the check will arrive. *(See G.O. 12.1 Addendum One and Two)*
- C. If there are surviving children from a former marriage, the guardian of those children also should receive a printout of benefits to which the child or children are entitled, as well as updates on the status of those benefits.

## **SECTION VII: ASSISTING THE FAMILY AFTER FUNERAL SERVICES**

- A. Members of the Department must remain sensitive to the needs of the surviving family long after the Officer's death. The grief process takes up to five years, or even longer. The Department recognizes the importance of continued support of the family.
  - 1. It is important for the Liaison Officer, Benefits Coordinator, Chief of Police and friends of the Officer to maintain close contact with the family. Initially that contact should be weekly, and eventually monthly and quarterly.
  - 2. It is important for the family to be invited to Department events and functions. The family should continue to feel a part of the "Department family."
  - 3. It is important to remember important dates (such as the Officer's birthday, death anniversary and holidays) and remember the family on those dates.
  - 4. The Department should assist the surviving family with participation in National Law Enforcement Officer Memorial events, as well as state and local memorial events.
  - 5. It is important to involve the family in memorial projects, such as mementos for the family or the agency. If memorial items are provided to the next of kin, it is

important to consider other family members such as children and parents and provide duplicates of those memorial items to them as well.

6. It is important to keep the family informed throughout the judicial process if the Officer was killed feloniously. Additional support should be provided at crucial times, such as a trial.
7. It is important that support from the Department continue as long as the family desires it.

#### **SECTION VIII: OBTAINING / UPDATING EMPLOYEE CONTACT INFORMATION**

- A. The Office of the Chief of Police will be responsible for obtaining next of kin and contact information for each employee of the Department to assist with proper notification in the event of the Officer's injury or death. The form to be used is attached to this policy. The forms will be stored in the Office of the Chief of Police to ensure confidentiality. Responsibilities related to this form are as follows:
  1. The Office of the Chief of Police will be responsible for updating the contact information annually and updating the electronic file.
  2. ***The Training Division will be responsible for ensuring new sworn and civilian employees update all personal information on the personnel page.***
  3. ***Each employee of the agency is responsible for updating personal information on the personnel page if any changes occur and prior to the annual update.***
- B. All employees of the agency are reminded about the importance of each employee taking responsibility for updating proper beneficiary information with the City of Fort Myers Employee Services. Many death benefits are paid to the beneficiary listed on the insurance policy provided by the City of Fort Myers, regardless of other documents, such as wills. Likewise, having a will and living will are of utmost importance.

#### **SECTION IX: ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION**

Additional documentation to assist the members of the agency in the event of a line of duty death, natural death or serious injury has been drafted. All members of the agency's Command Staff have been provided with a copy of this documentation and a copy is stored in the Office of the Chief of Police. These documents include information about funeral services, additional assistance available to the family, benefits available to the family and a checklist of steps to be taken during a tragic event.

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**APPROVED:**

**[Electronic Signature on File]**

**10/18/2024**

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**Jason Fields, Chief of Police  
Fort Myers Police Department**

**Date**



## **ADDENDUM ONE TO GENERAL ORDER 12.1**

### **Benefits Available to Surviving Families for In the Line of Duty Deaths**

The following information concerns benefits available to the beneficiary(s) of Officers killed in the line of duty. Much of this information was compiled with the assistance of the Concerns for Police Survivors Group. The information listed is subject to change and should be used only a guideline.

The Fort Myers Police Department is committed to representing the family of a fallen Officer in applying for these benefits. This document is provided to survivors for information purposes and as a guide for the agency's designated Benefits Coordinator. The Benefits coordinator will pursue each applicable benefit on behalf of the family, as well as actively search for any other applicable benefits that might have been added since this document was created. Whenever possible, the Benefits Coordinator will arrange for checks to be delivered to the Police Department so the Benefits Coordinator can then hand-deliver the check to the surviving family.

Those administered at the federal, state, and local level, and those available from particular organizations break down the benefits listed. Names and contact information for organizations that offer support for surviving family and law enforcement agencies also is listed after the benefit information.

### **FEDERAL BENEFITS**

#### **Public Safety Officers' Benefit Act (PSOB)**

[www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bja/grant/psob/psob\\_main.html](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bja/grant/psob/psob_main.html)

The U.S. Department of Justice administers this benefit for the survivor(s) of a public safety Officer whose death is a direct and proximate result of a traumatic injury sustained in the line of duty.

The amount of the benefit changes each October, when the benefit is adjusted based on the Consumer Price Index. As of **October 1, 2023**, the benefit was **\$437,503**.

The benefit is paid to the spouse and minor children of the Officer, or to his/her parents, or to the beneficiary of the Officer's life insurance policy. Who is paid depends on the structure of the surviving family.

For information: Call (888) 744-6513 or Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program, Bureau of Justice Assistance, 810 7<sup>th</sup> Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20531 / Fax: (202) 307-3373. The agency must fill out a Report of Public Safety Officer's Death or Permanent and Total Disability Claim Form in addition to the claim for death benefits.

#### **Public Safety Officers' Educational Assistance Program (PSOEA)**

The U.S. Department of Justice also administers this benefit, which provides educational assistance for the spouses and dependent children of law enforcement Officers killed in the line of duty.

The PSOEA benefits may be used solely to defray educational expenses, including tuition, room and board, books, supplies, and education-related fees. The allowance varies depending on whether the student is **fulltime**.

For information, call (888) 744-6513 or Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program, Bureau of Justice Assistance, 810 7<sup>th</sup> Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20531 / Fax: (202) 307-3373.

## **Federal Worker's Compensation Benefits for Non-Federal Law Enforcement Officers**

This benefit is paid if a state or local law enforcement Officer is killed while engaged in the apprehension or attempted apprehension of a person who has committed a crime against the United States or who is being sought by a law enforcement authority of the United States. The benefit also is extended to those killed while engaged in the lawful prevention or lawful attempt to prevent the commission of a crime against the United States. Further, the program encompasses those engaged in protecting or guarding a person held for the commission of a crime against the United States or as a material witness.

For information, call (202) 565-9224 or Office of Workers Compensation Programs, Special Claims Office, P.O. Box 37117, Washington, D.C. 20013.

## **Social Security Benefits**

Social security benefits are paid only to a surviving spouse and dependents. If there is no spouse and no dependent children, no social security benefits are available.

There are two benefits available: A one-time death benefit and monthly social security benefits.

A claim must be filed with the Social Security Office, which can be done at the local office. In general, that claim can be made by telephone, mail or in person. The Social Security Office will tell you what documents they need.

Some of the Social Security benefits will be subject to income tax, based on the survivor's income.

The amount of the one-time death benefit is a set amount (\$255 at the time of this writing).

The amount of the monthly survivor benefit varies based on the type of family member (i.e. spouse or child), the survivor's age, and the Officer's earned credits while working.

For information, contact the local Social Security Office or call (800) 772-1213.

## **Veteran's Benefits**

The Veteran's Administration has several benefits available if the Officer was also at some point a member of the Armed Services.

A Death Pension is paid to low-income widows and children of wartime veterans.

The VA will pay up to \$300 toward funeral expenses, plus **\$749** for interment or burial plot. You must file VA Form 21-530 for this benefit. Additional funeral benefits are available, such as assistance with an American Flag and headstones/markers. ***To receive this benefit, the Officer must have a current account / claim with the Veterans Administration.***

Many veterans have life insurance policies, i.e. National Service Life Insurance, Servicemen's Group Life Insurance, and Veterans' Group Life Insurance. For more information on this benefit, contact the local VA office **(727-319-7440)**.

## STATE OF FLORIDA BENEFITS

### Florida Statutory Police Officers Death Benefit

This is the benefit outlined by state law to provide for Officers killed in the line of duty.

The amount varies based on the nature of the death.

**\$75,000** if the death is accidental

**\$75,000** if the death is accidental and the Officer was in “fresh pursuit” or responding to an emergency.

**\$225,000** if unlawfully and intentionally killed.

This is paid to the beneficiary listed by the Officer on life insurance and/or surviving spouse. In addition to the one-time benefit, there is a monthly benefit available only to surviving spouses and/or dependent children.

Although this is a benefit is outlined in state statute, it is administered by the city through an insurance policy.

The city’s legal Department facilitates this benefit.

### Florida Crime Victim Compensation

This benefit is available if the Officer was killed as a result of a criminal act.

A benefit up to \$50,000 is paid by the State of Florida. The Governor’s Office coordinates this benefit. The amount of the benefit paid depends on expenses incurred by the Officer’s family.

The Department’s Victim Advocate files out the application for this benefit on behalf of the family.

The victim’s family may be eligible for up to **\$12,500** for loss of support for any minor children.

### Florida Workers’ Compensation

Workers comp pays an accidental death benefit to spouses of Officers killed in the line of duty. The amount is 50 percent of the Officer’s pay, plus 16 2/3 percent of Officer’s pay if there are minor children, until a total of \$150,000 is received.

Workers comp also pays up to \$2,500 in funeral expenses.

Workers comp however, does reimburse for funeral expenses (even when the family didn’t have to pay the expenses).

## **LOCAL BENEFITS**

### **City of Fort Myers Final Paycheck**

The Police Department will coordinate the payment of the last paycheck with City Hall.

A payroll authorization will be prepared that documents the death and outlines the benefits to be paid in the final paycheck.

The paycheck will include any salary earned since the last paycheck in addition to any applicable overtime, detail pay, accrued compensatory time, accrued vacation time and any applicable sick time in accordance with the contract with the city.

### **Medical Expenses**

If there were any medical expenses incurred because of the incident that caused the Officer's death, the City of Fort Myers will pay those expenses.

The Fort Myers Police Department should notify the appropriate medical facility to send the bills to the agency. Should the surviving family members receive any such bills, they should be immediately forwarded to the Fort Myers Police Department for payment.

### **Medical Insurance**

If the Officer had dependents on his/her medical insurance, the dependent coverage will continue through the end of that month. At the end of the month, the coverage stops. However, the dependents are eligible for COBRA. The city's benefits coordinator in Human Resources is the contact for this coverage.

If the Officer was eligible for retirement and the pension board decides to "retire" the Officer, the beneficiary of the retirement (i.e. spouse) would be eligible for the insurance available through the pension.

### **City of Fort Myers Life Insurance**

The amount of the life insurance benefit may depend on the circumstances of the death and is dependent on the Officer's salary before death.

The Fort Myers Police Department will coordinate the payment of this benefit with City Hall officials.

### **City of Fort Myers Pension**

The amount of money paid from the Officer's pension is dependent on how many years the Officers served, whether he/she was vested and how much he/she had contributed to the pension system.

If the Officer previously were a civilian employee, there would be two pension amounts: one for the civilian retirement and one for the sworn retirement.

The Police Department will coordinate the payment of any applicable pension amounts with Human Resources.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL BENEFITS**

### **Police Benevolent Association (PBA)**

The PBA pays one-time benefit to help with immediate expenses for Officers who were members of the organization.

The PBA also pays a death benefit equal to one-year salary.

Contact the local PBA president for the forms to be filled out.

### **Fraternal Order of Police (FOP)**

The FOP provides a one-time benefit of \$1,000 to help with immediate expenses.

Contact a local or state FOP office for information (although they usually make the arrangements on their own and pay the family at the funeral services).

### **National Rifle Association (NRA)**

The NRA provides a one-time death benefit of **\$35,000** for Officers who are feloniously killed in the line of duty and who are current NRA members.

Surviving families need the Officer's name and NRA association number and must file within (90) days.

Contact the NRA's insurance carrier at (800) 247-7989.

### **Credit Card Travelers Insurance**

If the Officer was killed while traveling at the time of his/her death, many credit card companies may provide traveler's insurance if that credit card was used.

Check with individual credit card companies the Officer had.

Likewise, the Officer's private automobile insurance might have an applicable death benefit.

### **Concerns for Police Survivors (COPS)**

COPS provides a wealth of support and financial services available to both the survivors of a line of duty death and law enforcement agencies.

COPS provides emotional support for all types of family members, i.e. spouses, parents, children, siblings, grandparents, etc.

COPS provides some financial support, such as for children of Officers and scholarships.

Support available is too numerous to list. For information, contact the national COPS office at (800) 784-2677. Local chapters representatives also are available by contacting the national office.

## SUPPORT GROUPS

**Parents of Murdered Children:** The only national self-help organization designed solely to offer emotional support and information about surviving the loss of a loved one to murder. For information, call (513) 721-5683 or write 100 E. 8<sup>th</sup> Street, #B41, Cincinnati, OH 45202

**The Compassionate Friends, Inc.:** A nationwide support group for bereaved parents and siblings. For information, call (312) 990-0010 or write P.O. Box 3696, Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696.

**Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD):** A nationwide support and advocacy group for victims of drunken drivers. For information, call (214) 744-6233 or write P.O. Box 54168, Dallas, TX 75354-1688.

**National Organization for Victim Assistance:** A nationwide clearinghouse for all victimization issues. For information, call (703) 535-6682 or write 1757 Park Road NW, Washington D.C. 20010.

**Association of Death Education and Counseling:** Offers counseling referrals. For information, call (612) 337-1808 or write 638 Prospect Avenue, Hartford, CT 06105-4298.

**The International Critical Incident Stress Foundation:** Offers public safety Officer de-briefings. For information, call (410) 750-9600 or write 5018 Dorsey Hall Drive, Suite 104, Ellicott City, MD 21042.

**Federal Bureau of Investigations:** Offers law enforcement Officer de-briefings. For information, call (703) 640-1628 or write Behavioral Sciences Unit, FBI Academy, Quantico, VA 22135. **Tampa Office:** (813-253-1000)

**American Association of Retired Persons:** Organizes widowed persons' support groups. For information, call (202) 434-2277 or write 601 E Street NW, Washington D.C. 20049.

**The On-Site Academy:** Offers counseling and peer-support training. For information, call (978)-874-0177 or write P.O. Box 1031, Gardner, MA 01440.

## **ADDENDUM TWO – GENERAL ORDER 12.1**

### **Community Providers**

The following businesses have pledged to provide free or significantly reduced goods/services/support to the Fort Myers Police Department as well as the family in the event of a line of duty death.

#### **Funeral Homes that provide funeral services at no charge.**

Fort Myers Memorial Gardens  
1589 Colonial Boulevard  
Fort Myers, FL 33907  
Contact: Jackie Bell/ (239) 936-0555

Coral Ridge Funeral Home  
1630 SW Pine Island Road  
Cape Coral, FL 33991  
(239) 283-0540

Gendron Funeral & Cremation  
**2325 East Mall Drive**  
Fort Myers, Florida 33901  
Contact: Michael P. Gendron  
(239) 274-0088  
(877) 251-0088  
[www.gendronfuneralhome.com](http://www.gendronfuneralhome.com)

#### **Hotel**

Hampton Inn Fort Myers Downtown  
2151 Johnson Street  
Fort Myers FL. 33901  
239-362-9542

#### **Limo Services**

Maximum Limos  
Contact: Max or Ben / (239) 936-6669  
Will assist if additional are needed

#### **Restaurants**

Oasis  
2260 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd  
Fort Myers, FL. 33901  
Contact: Bonnie or Tammy / (239) 334-1566

Farmer's Market  
2736 Edison Avenue  
Fort Myers, FL 33916 / (239) 334-1687

Perkins – North

13620 North Cleveland Avenue  
Fort Myers, FL. 33903 / (239) 656-1999  
Perkins – Cape Coral  
1502 Cape Coral Pkwy E  
Cape Coral, FL 33904  
Contact: Jay Robins / (239) 540-8181 / Cellular: (239) 826-6543

**Dry Cleaners**

***Metro*** Cleaners  
2017 Monroe Street  
Fort Myers, FL. 33901  
**(239)-334-1353**  
Contact: Manager Dawn Higgbotham

This includes all locations: Country Cleaners – Lehigh Acres, Metro Cleaners – Cape Coral, Metro Cleaners - Fiddlesticks

*INFORMATION VERIFIED ACCURATE AS OF AUGUST 2024*

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