


# **GAINESVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT**

## **GENERAL ORDER**

	<b>TITLE</b> Official and Emergency Notifications		<b>ACCREDITATION</b> CALEA 11.3.3, 55.2.6
	<b>PROPOSER UNIT</b> Patrol Operations		<b>PRIOR REVISIONS</b> 08/11/2009, 04/13/2020
<b>ATTACHMENT:</b> None			
<b>NUMBER</b> 40.11	<b>ISSUE DATE</b> 7/1/1998	<b>REVISION DATE</b> 09/16/2024	<b>TOTAL PAGES</b> 9

I. **PURPOSE:** This Order provides members with procedures for when and how to make notifications to Department, City and other governmental workers regarding work-related incidents. This Order also provides members with procedures for next-of-kin notifications for seriously ill and/or injured persons, as well as notification requests initiated by other law enforcement agencies.

II. **POLICY:** To effectively relay information and to enable the appropriate response, the Department shall develop a set of procedures for when and how to make notifications.

### III. **PROCEDURE:**

#### A. **Major Incidents:**

1. The Command Staff (Chief, Assistant Chiefs, Major and Captains) and/or applicable outside agencies shall be immediately notified of major incidents, to include but not be limited to the following:
  - i. Natural disasters requiring extensive police involvement (e.g., hurricane, tornado);
  - ii. Instances of civil unrest (e.g., rioting, protesting) requiring a police response;
  - iii. Major transportation incidents (e.g., hazardous material spills, a plane crash);
  - iv. Incidents requiring the establishment of a command post (e.g., hostage incidents, major fires, chemical/gas leaks);
  - v. Shooting incidents involving Department members (except the destruction of animals); (also refer to [GO 1.5 Use-of-Force](#) regarding Incident Review Procedures- FDLE etc)
  - vi. Incidents in which a Department member is severely injured or killed;

- vii. Any event determined to be a major incident by a commanding officer.
2. The current list of officials to be contacted and current means for making the notifications shall be maintained by the Combined Communications Center.
  3. The on-scene supervisor shall ensure that notification is made to the GPD Command Staff by the Combined Communications Center via the approved messaging method, and/or the shift commander shall make notification, via telephone, as directed by their Chain of Command, for the above-listed major incidents and for the following significant incidents:
    - Special Response Team (SWAT, NRT, EST) call-outs;
    - Death, or serious injury to GPD employee involving transport to a hospital or medical follow-up;
    - Airplane crashes within Alachua County;
    - Any LEA-involved shooting within Alachua County;
    - Any incident involving a person being shot within City limits;
    - Escape of a GPD prisoner;
    - Confirmed explosive device or significant bomb threat within City limits;
    - Homicide or unusual death within the City limits;
    - Armed Robbery;
    - Business Robbery;
    - Hostage/Barricaded subject;
    - Level 3 Hazmat incidents within the City Limits;
    - Missing child 12 YOA or younger;
    - Riots/Civil Unrest;
    - Search and Rescue Operation within the City;
    - Serious injury/death to citizen by a GPD employee;
    - On duty or department vehicle involved crash where a GPD employee or citizen is injured;

- Traffic crash with fatalities within Alachua County, especially involving youth or special circumstances;
  - Train derailments;
  - In-custody deaths;
  - Aggravated Assault with shots fired or resulting in death/serious injury;
  - Sexual battery in which the victim and offender are strangers;
  - Pediatric injuries resulting in death/serious injuries;
  - Major incident involving a school, especially if a lockdown or shelter-in-place occurs;
  - Arson or fire resulting in death or serious bodily injury;
  - Life threatening injury or death of one or more students (primary, secondary or post-secondary) under any circumstance;
  - Accidental discharge of a firearm by a GPD employee, on or off duty;
  - An arrest of any GPD employee, regardless of the jurisdiction of arrest;
  - Any incident in which federal, state or local agency request GPD to comply with an immigration detainer and/or engage in federal immigration enforcement.
  - Any serious incident generating significant media interest which may be important for Command Staff to be aware of; e.g. school bus collisions, incidents involving prominent persons, etc.
  - Any incident not specifically listed for which, in the judgement of the shift commander or on scene supervisor, Command Staff should be notified. If the need for notification is in question, the preferred course of action is to make the notification.
4. In addition to the above notifications, the on-scene supervisor or shift commander shall personally make notifications (by telephone or otherwise) as directed by their chain of command.
5. The State Attorney's Office shall be notified of significant events to include:
- Any LEA-involved shooting within Alachua County;
  - Any incident involving a person being shot within City limits;

- Homicide or unusual death within the City limits;
- In-custody deaths;
- Aggravated Assault with shots fired or resulting in death/serious injury;
- Arson or fire resulting in death or serious bodily injury.

**B. Firearms Discharge:** To initiate an immediate investigation of a firearms discharge by a GPD member (see [GO 1.5](#)), the shift commander shall promptly notify the Investigations Bureau Commander or Commander-On-Call, who will make a determination regarding the following notifications:

1. Chief of Police,
2. Assistant Chiefs of Police,
3. Commander of Internal Affairs and Major,
4. Division Commander of the involved member(s),
5. Public Information Officer,
6. Department's Legal Advisor,
7. State Attorney's Office, in the event of injury,
8. Other individuals deemed appropriate.

**C. Detective Notifications Regarding Criminal / Major Incidents:** To ensure accurate notifications, the Investigations Bureau (IB) shall furnish an on-call list to all Department bureaus, as well as to the Combined Communications Center.

1. **Cases:** The IB commander or on-call IB (CID/SID) member (after normal working hours) shall be notified regarding:
  - i. Homicides, except vehicular;
  - ii. Business robberies, excluding retail theft;
  - iii. Personal robberies and aggravated batteries with life-threatening injury;
  - iv. Arsons involving death or personal injury to a citizen, or fires initiated to disguise another crime;
  - v. Unattended deaths, except those resulting from natural causes or traffic fatalities;

- vi. Major burglaries in which a substantial loss is sustained;
  - vii. Home invasion robberies;
  - viii. Car-Jacking;
  - ix. Kidnapping and hostage situations;
  - x. Confirmed sexual batteries, or felony sex crimes against minors;
  - xi. Situations in which a Department member is a victim of firearms discharge;
  - xii. Arrests associated with any of the aforementioned situations;
  - xiii. Other situations not described above in which an incident commander feels the contact should be made.
2. **Method:** Whenever possible, the on-scene Patrol supervisor or original investigating member, with supervisor approval, should notify detectives. If this is not practical, the pertinent information shall be relayed to the shift commander / designee, who shall make the notification or request that the notification be made by the Combined Communications Center supervisor / designee.
3. **Forensic Crime Unit:** After-hours requests for Forensic Crime Unit personnel shall be handled by the IB member on-call.
- D. **City Risk Management:** The City's Risk Manager needs to be aware of incidents that involve the City's interests. The investigating or supervising GPD member shall ensure that notification occurs as follows:
- 1. Risk Management shall be notified immediately should any of the following situations occur:
    - i. Fatality or severe injury involving City employee(s);
    - ii. Catastrophic or multiple injury incident involving City employee(s);
    - iii. Fatality or severe injury to a member(s) of the public that, in any way, involved City personnel, property, or equipment;
    - iv. Damage to private property that, in any way, involved City personnel, property, or equipment.
      - a Utility property damage incidents are routed through the Gainesville Regional Utilities Training and Distribution Officer, who notifies City Safety, if necessary.

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**G. UF/Santa Fe Police:** Members conducting certain investigations involving a University of Florida or Santa Fe College student or employee should ensure that the shift commander of the relevant institution (University Police Department or Santa Fe Police Department), is notified.

1. Notifications should be made whenever an incident involves:
  - i. A physical arrest for a major crime (such as a burglary, robbery, or sexual assault),
  - ii. A serious injury or death,
  - iii. Any facts that are sensitive or could lead to a public interest, as deemed by a GPD shift commander/designee.
2. Members shall ensure that their commanding officer or the on-duty shift commander is notified of incidents that require UF or SFCC PD notification.
3. Notification of UF/SFCC PD personnel will be coordinated via the investigating member and the commander.

**H. Public Information Officer:** (See Media Relations, [GO 54.1](#))

**I. Family of Injured Member:** When a Department member is involved in an accident or serious incident, the Department shall notify the family if the involved member requests the notification.

1. Notification will be automatically made if the member is incapacitated and unable to make a determination.
2. The notification shall be made by the injured member's bureau commander or the shift commander (or designee), if the bureau commander cannot be located within 15 minutes.
3. Whenever possible, the notification should be made within one hour of the event.
4. Whenever possible, the notification should be made in person.
5. To spare the family emotional stress of receiving inaccurate information, the notification will occur only after the facts of the incident are verified.
6. Unless authorized by the bureau commander, members shall not contact family members for the purpose of making an initial notification.
7. Authorized persons can access the Records Management System to obtain emergency contact information so that a family member/next-of-kin may be notified.

NOTE: During regular business hours, the Personnel Services Division can assist in providing information, if needed.

- J. Emergency Notifications:** The Gainesville Police Department will make notification to the appropriate person(s) in the event of death, serious injury and other emergency situations in the most expedient manner possible. (CALEA 55.2.6)

**1. Responsibility:**

- i. Gainesville Resident:** If the next-of-kin reside in the Gainesville area, the notification should be made, in-person, by a Department member. Officers should be mindful of the impact of such notification and make every effort to ensure the person to be notified has the company of a relative, clergy or close friend.
- ii. Non-Gainesville Resident:** If the next-of-kin resides outside the Gainesville area, the Department member shall direct Communications personnel to send a teletype to the jurisdictional law enforcement agency and request the agency make an in-person notification. Members shall make telephone contact with personnel at the jurisdictional agency to ensure the message was delivered.
- iii. Delayed:** The assigned member will inform the on-duty shift commander if the notification cannot be made prior to the end of the shift. After receiving pertinent information, the on-duty shift commander shall, unless otherwise directed by Command Staff, ensure that the task is reassigned and that notification is made.

- 2. Method:** Members issuing notifications must be cognizant that anything and everything they say and do can have an impact on those receiving the notification. To minimize the relatives' emotional discomfort, members should adhere to the following procedures:

- i.** Verify the victim's identity and obtain information regarding the Incident;
- ii.** Make the notification in-person; do not use the phone;
- iii.** Make the notification as a team and present police credentials;
- iv.** Move people to a physically comfortable setting;
- v.** Inform simply, directly, and compassionately;
- vi.** Do not discourage grieving; permit a ventilation of emotions, show sympathy;
- vii.** Answer questions honestly;
- viii.** Offer to make telephone calls and provide notifications to other family;



- ix. Do everything possible to keep a family member from being left alone;
  - x. Provide transportation and other immediate support services;
  - xi. Provide your name or a contact person;
  - xii. Support from the Alachua County Crisis Center (ACCC) may be sought for the survivor to assist during this time.
- K. **Documentation:** The name of the next-of-kin and date of the notification shall be included in the Incident/Investigation Report.
- L. **Support Services / Referrals:** Members investigating a sudden death (e.g., homicides, suicides, traffic deaths, accidental deaths) shall request support services and crisis intervention for emotionally affected persons such as witnesses, family members, friends, or co-workers.
1. **Request:**
- i. When a person needs support, the investigating member shall, via Communications, request that the Alachua County Crisis Center (ACCC) send a care team for incidents involving non-criminal acts such as accidents, natural deaths and suicides.
  - ii. If the incident involves a criminal act, a victim advocate may be requested from Alachua County Victim Services.
2. **Services:** The ACCC counselor or victim advocate can assist with death notifications, provide crisis intervention, and offer other general support services.

When requested by other law enforcement agencies, the Gainesville Police Department, upon receipt of the teletype, will take the responsibility of notification of next-of-kin.

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**By Order of**

*Signed Original on File in the  
Accreditation Unit*

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**Nelson Moya  
Chief of Police**