

P.O. 225 Line of Duty Death/Injury

Effective From:

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Effective To:

Current

Y. *P.O. 225 - Line of Duty Death/Injury*

1. PURPOSE

- i) The death or serious injury of a Department employee, especially when it occurs in the line of duty, is a traumatic experience for the employee's family and co-workers. Properly managed support services and continued emotional support can assist those affected throughout this most difficult time. While circumstances will dictate specific courses of action, this policy delineates much of the comprehensive assistance and benefits available. It also establishes the liaison and command officer's responsibilities.

2. POLICY

- i) The Department shall provide assistance to the family of an employee killed or seriously injured in the line-of-duty, including comprehensive assistance with benefits and emotional support during the traumatic period of readjustment. Assistance and emotional support for co-workers of the employee shall also be provided. The needs of the family shall be foremost in every consideration.

3. DEFINITION

- i) Line of duty death/serious injury is when an officer sustains a fatal or serious injury while in the performance of his duties. This encompasses the direct and proximate result of taking any lawful and reasonable enforcement action or emergency response that the officer is authorized or obligated to perform by law, rule, regulation or condition of employment, appointment or service, whether on or off-duty. It also includes indirect results that are attributed to line-of-duty incidents, training exercises and direct results of felonious assaults perpetrated against the officer because of his or her status as an officer of the Department.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

- i) The Troop/Section Commander shall:
 - a) Designate Department members to serve in the following capacities when circumstances dictate:
 - 1) Department Liaison.
 - 2) Funeral Liaison.
 - 3) Benefits Coordinator.
 - 4) Family Assistance Officer.
 - b) An officer may be assigned to serve in multiple capacities. These assignments shall be made in writing to Department personnel and family members shall be informed of those designated.
 - c) Ensure that the Department's Troopers / Employees Assistance Program (TEAP) is activated and en route.
 - d) Ensure that the family of the officer is provided access to TEAP, particularly with regard to psychological services.
- ii) Department Liaison
 - a) The Department Liaison shall coordinate the delivery of services between the family and the Department. This individual will normally hold the rank of Lieutenant or above in order to expedite the tasks of employing Department resources and the delegation of assignments. The Department Liaison shall:
 - 1) Relay information to the family concerning the circumstances of the officer's

- injury and/or death.
 - 2) Coordinate with the Troop PIO, assisting the family in dealing with media inquiries.
 - 3) Assign an officer to the hospital to provide security to the injured officer, including the screening of telephone calls and visitors if desired by family members. Officers assigned to the hospital shall be in uniform and on-duty.
 - 4) Assign officers, with the family's permission, to remain outside the deceased officer's residence 24 hours a day. This shall continue until the time of the emergency has passed or upon completion of funeral services. Officers assigned to the deceased officer's residence shall be in uniform and on-duty.
 - 5) Coordinate all official law enforcement notifications and arrangements to include the Honor Guard, pallbearers, traffic control and liaison with visiting law enforcement agencies.
- iii) Funeral Liaison
- a) The Funeral Liaison acts as a coordinator between the deceased officer's family and the Department during the wake and the funeral. The Funeral Liaison shall:
 - 1) Ensure that the needs and wishes of the family come before those of the Department.
 - 2) Meet with the family and explain his responsibilities to them.
 - 3) Brief the family on the procedures involved in the law enforcement funeral.
 - 4) Be available to the family prior to and throughout the wake and funeral.
 - 5) Assist the family in working with the funeral director regarding funeral arrangements.
- iv) Benefits Coordinator
- a) The Commander of Operational Development shall be the Benefits Coordinator for all line-of-duty deaths and serious injury incidents. The Benefits Coordinator shall contact the following offices and initiate the process for acquiring benefits available to the surviving family:
 - 1) State of Louisiana Benefits
 - (i) Law Enforcement Officers and Firemen's Survivors Fund @ (225) 342-1171.
 - (ii) Louisiana State Police Retirement System @ (225) 925-4847.
 - (iii) Office of Workers' Compensation Administration, Louisiana Department of Labor @ (225) 342-7555.
 - (iv) Office of Risk Management @ (225) 342-8456.
 - 2) Federal Benefits
 - (i) Public Safety Officer's Benefits Program, Bureau of Justice Assistance @ (888) 744-6513.
 - (ii) Concerns of Police Survivors, Inc. @ (800) 784-2677.
 - (iii) National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund @ (202) 737-3400.
 - b) If the officer is killed while engaged in the 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, he may qualify for the Federal Workers' Compensation Benefits for Non-Federal Enforcement Officers benefits @ (202) 565-9424.
 - c) If the officer was a veteran of the United States Armed Forces or is currently an Armed Forces Reservist, he may qualify for benefits @ (225) 925-7268. Having a copy of the officer's DD 214 will expedite the query. The Veterans Administration can determine the veteran's eligibility for:
 - 1) Reimbursement of burial expenses (one or more of: \$300 burial and funeral

- expense allowance, \$1500 burial allowance; \$150 plot or interment allowance).
 - 2) American burial flag.
 - 3) Interment in a national cemetery.
 - 4) Headstone or marker.
 - 5) Death pension based on need.
 - 6) Death gratuity.
 - 7) Medical care.
 - d) The Benefits Coordinator shall visit with the surviving family members within three (3) days after the funeral and assist the immediate family in identifying, processing and receiving all eligible benefits.
 - v) Family Assistance Officer
 - a) The Family Assistance officer, if possible, should be a close friend of the family and/or the deceased/seriously-injured officer. He shall work closely with the Department Liaison to ensure that any concerns of surviving family members are addressed. The Family Assistance Officer shall:
 - 1) Escort the family of the injured officer to the hospital or other locations as needed; or if the officer is deceased, escort the family to the chapel or church for funeral services and then to the cemetery for graveside services.
 - 2) Work with the TEAP Liaison to identify all support services available to the family.
 - 3) Relay 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.
 - 4) Remain in contact with the family indefinitely until the family indicates otherwise. It is important that long after the incident has transpired that family members be invited to all State Police functions as a sign that they are still considered part of the State Police family.
 - 5) Notify the surviving family members of any criminal proceedings relating to the death or serious injury of their family member.
 - 6) Accompany surviving family members to criminal proceedings, explaining the nature of the proceedings and introducing them to prosecutors and other persons as appropriate.
 - 7) Assistance for Affected Department Members
 - (i) The Department recognizes that members either close to the deceased/seriously-injured officer or his family are also adversely affected in a variety of ways. To minimize the psychological impact to other Department members, the following guidelines shall be followed.
 - (a) Officers on the scene, or who arrive moments after an officer was killed or seriously injured, shall be relieved as quickly as possible.
 - (b) TEAP team members shall proceed to the scene or other designated area as appropriate and initiate off-scene defusing of relieved officers.
 - (c) Department members who are emotionally affected by the death or serious injury of another officer shall attend a TEAP debriefing.
 - (d) Long-term counseling shall be provided to all affected members as long as professional assistance is requested or deemed necessary.
5. DEATH/SERIOUS INJURY NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES
- i) The following procedures should be followed in cases of line-of-duty deaths and cases of seriously injured officers. These procedures should be strictly 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 family and survivors shall

take all possible measures to accommodate the family's needs, wishes, and desires but should not make promises that they are not sure can be met.

- ii) Upon being notified of a line-of-duty death/serious injury, the Shift Supervisor shall:
 - a) Notify the Troop/Section Commander.
 - b) Notify the TEAP Coordinator.
 - c) Notify the Troop PIO.
 - d) Proceed to the scene and safeguard it.
 - e) Identify any witnesses.
 - f) Not release the name of the deceased or seriously injured officer to the media or other parties before family members living in the area have been notified.
 - iii) The Troop/Section Commander shall:
 - a) Ensure that notification is made to the immediate family of the officer as soon as possible.
 - b) Notification of the immediate family shall be made in person and, whenever appropriate, with another person such as the Troop/Section chaplain. Whenever the health of a family member is a concern, emergency medical services personnel shall be requested to stand by or accompany the notification team.
 - c) If young children are at home, the notifying team shall make arrangements for the care of these children. This may involve transportation of children to a relative's home, or a similar arrangement.
 - d) If the opportunity to get the family to the hospital exists prior to the officer's death, the notification team shall inform the officer at the hospital that the family is en route. In such cases, immediate transportation should be provided for the family rather than waiting for any other members of the Departmental delegation to arrive.
 - iv) The Public Information Officer shall:
 - a) Report to the scene or to the Troop if the situation has stabilized.
 - b) Prepare and disseminate news releases.
 - c) To the extent possible, control news media access to the crime scene and to involved troopers and their families.
 - v) Assisting the Family at the Hospital
 - a) The officer assigned to the hospital shall:
 - 1) Ensure that medical personnel relay pertinent information regarding an officer's condition to the family on a timely basis and before such information is released to others.
 - 2) Arrange with hospital personnel to provide an appropriate waiting facility for the family, the Superintendent, the notification team, and only those others requested by the immediate family.
 - 3) Arrange a separate area for fellow officers and friends.
 - 4) Notify the appropriate hospital personnel that all medical bills relating to the deceased or seriously injured officer be directed to the Department. The family shall not receive any of these bills at their residence. This may require the Department Liaison to re-contact the hospital during normal business hours to ensure that proper billing takes place.
 - 5) Arrange transportation for the family and others upon their departure from the hospital.
6. CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR THE FAMILY
- i) Members of the Department must remain sensitive to the needs of the surviving family long after the officer's death.
 - ii) Officers of the Department are encouraged to keep in touch with the surviving family. Close friends, co-workers and Department officials should make arrangements with the

family to visit the home from time to time so long as the family desires to have these contacts continue.

- iii) The Superintendent may observe the officer's death date with a short note to the surviving family and/or have flowers placed on the grave.
- iv) The Family Assistance Officer shall act as the long-term liaison with the surviving family to ensure that close contact is maintained between the Department and the survivors.