



# GENERAL ORDER

Loudoun County Sheriff's Office

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**Chapter:** Operations

**Section:** 406.11

**Subject:** Response to Selected Situations

**Topic:** Notification of Next-of-Kin

**Accreditation:**

**Revised:**

**Reaffirmed:**

**Enacted:** 07/30/2015

**Last Review:** 07/24/2015

**Review:** 07/30/2016

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## I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this General Order is to establish guidelines for the prompt notification of next-of-kin in situations involving serious injury, illness, or death.

## II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office to notify crime and crash victim's next-of-kin in a prompt and compassionate manner. These notifications will be made when a victim has died within Loudoun County, or when a request has been received from another jurisdiction to notify relatives living within the county. This policy also includes the notification of next-of-kin of persons suffering from serious injury or illness, or when such injury or illness becomes a Sheriff's Office concern. Except under unusual circumstances, all notifications will be made in person. Any alternative notification method will have prior approval by the on-duty shift supervisor.

## III. PROCEDURE

- A. Notification of the nearest relative should occur as soon as the victim's identity has been established, once the scene has been secured.
- B. If the notification involves a death; two deputies will be present during the notification. If the next-of-kin is alone, the deputies should attempt to contact a close friend, neighbor, chaplain, or any other available resources to stay with that person.
- C. Extreme tact and a direct approach should be exercised by deputies when making notifications. Be reassuring, understanding, and offer any assistance possible.
- D. If the next-of-kin resides within Loudoun County, members of this agency will make notification in person.
- E. Notification of persons residing outside of Loudoun County will be accomplished by contacting the law enforcement agency in that jurisdiction and requesting assistance. When making requests for notification assistance, as much pertinent information as possible will be provided to the agency. If extenuating circumstances exist, the outside agency may be directed to have the next-of- kin contact this department for details after notification is accomplished. This would normally apply in deaths of a suspicious nature.
- F. Notification by telephone may be made only when all other methods are not feasible and only when pre-approved by the on-duty shift supervisor.

- G. In situations involving death, cooperation of the press and other news media will be requested with reference to withholding the identity of the subject until next-of-kin notification is accomplished.
  
- H. An I.B.R. report will be completed on all notifications, containing the name, address, relationship, date, time, notifying deputy, others present, and any other pertinent information. If the notification involves a case being handled by the Sheriff's Office, a supplemental report may be filed instead of an original offense report.