

Cobb County Police Department

Policy 2.09

INJURY AND DEATH NOTIFICATION

Effective Date: October 1, 2019	Issued By: Chief C.T. Cox
Rescinds: Policy 2.09 (November 1, 2017)	Page 1 of 5
The words "he, his, him," which may appear in this policy, are used generically for clarity and ease of reading. These terms are not meant to imply gender and relate to all employees of the Department.	

The Cobb County Police Department will provide assistance to the family member(s) of employees upon injury or death. This policy provides procedural guidelines to be followed in the notification of the family member(s).

I. DEFINITIONS

As used in this policy, the following words and terms shall have the meaning ascribed:

- A. Death:** The death of an employee by accident or felonious means while performing police functions on-duty or off-duty.
- B. Employee Emergency Contact Form:** A confidential file maintained by the Department of Public Safety (DPS) Personnel Unit. Information within this file is available to the chain of command upon implementation of this policy.
- C. Family Member(s):** Includes spouse, children, parents, siblings, fiancé and or significant other.
- D. Injury:** An injury in which the employee is unable to contact the family member(s) and requires or requests assistance.

II. ASSIGNMENTS

The key words for implementing this policy are professionalism and compassion. Coordination of assistance is paramount; therefore the assigned duties will be accomplished by the Deputy Chief of the Bureau to whom the injured or deceased officer is assigned.

- A. Notification Officer:** The Employee Emergency Contact Form maintained in the DPS Personnel Unit provides a designated person who is to be contacted first in case of an emergency. The first line supervisor is responsible for contacting the Bureau Commander who will contact the DPS Personnel Unit and obtain information concerning the contact person. (If the emergency occurs after normal office hours the supervisor should contact the manager of the DPS Personnel Unit at the after hours telephone number listed in the RMS computer).

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1. If the contact person is a Cobb County Police Department employee, this person shall then be designated the Notification Officer, if he is able to be contacted within a reasonable time.
 2. If the designated person is not available, or the contact person is not a Police Department employee, the first line supervisor of the injured or deceased employee will assume the duties of the Notification Officer, contingent on the approval of the Chief of Police.
 - a. The decision to utilize the designated person (based upon availability) or complete the notification via first line supervisor is the responsibility of the Chief of Police or Deputy Chief.
 - b. The Notification Officer also serves as the family liaison.
 - c. The Notification Officer will contact the Departmental Chaplain Coordinator to provide clergy assistance.
- B.** Hospital Liaison Officer: The Deputy Chief selects a Hospital Liaison Officer as needed.
- C.** Department Liaison Officer: The Commander of the unit to which the employee is assigned will normally serve as the Department Liaison Officer when available. The Deputy Chief can, however, assign this position to another officer if circumstances dictate.
- D.** Benefits Coordinator: The Deputy Chief selects a benefits coordinator to work with the DPS Personnel Unit and the family member(s).
- E.** Chaplain Coordinator: A designated member of the Department who is responsible for contacting the Senior Chaplain assigned to the deceased or injured officer's unit. Upon notification, the Senior Chaplain will assist in the notification process and meet the officer's family at the hospital. Associate Chaplains may also be utilized if needed.

III. PROCEDURE

Upon the serious injury or death of an employee, the following tasks will be accomplished:

- A.** The first line supervisor will notify his superior. Then each person in the chain of command is responsible for notifying his superior of the incident information.
- B.** Notification will be made in person, unless the family member(s) live outside a 100-mile radius of the county.
 1. The Notification Officer will be accompanied by a member of the chain of command and a Police Department Chaplain, if possible.

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2. If a medical problem with the family member(s) is known, medical personnel should be available at the time of notification.
3. The Notification Officer should ask to be admitted into the residence of the family member(s). Inform the family member(s) slowly and clearly of the information available. Use the employee's name, provide specifics, and do not provide false hope. Be truthful and if an employee has died, relay that information.
4. If the family member(s) want to visit the hospital, the Notification Officer is authorized to transport the family member(s) by police vehicle.
5. If young children are at home, the Notification Officer may assist in arranging for child care. The Notification Officer may transport children to a relative's home or call upon police employees and/or spouses for assistance.
6. Prior to departing for the hospital, the Notification Officer will contact the Deputy Chief. The Deputy Chief will advise the Hospital Liaison Officer that the family is en route.

The Notification Officer will also advise the Deputy Chief of any out-of-state or local area notifications that should be made to the other family member(s). The Department Liaison will accomplish this duty.

- C. Communications regarding notifications and follow-up details will be restricted to telephone.
- D. The Hospital Liaison Officer will be responsible for coordinating the activities at the hospital as follows:
 1. Coordinate with hospital personnel the waiting facility for the family and Department personnel.
 2. Ensure medical personnel provide up-to-date medical condition information to the family member(s) before any other parties are informed.
 3. Assist the family member(s) in gaining access to the injured or deceased.
 4. Coordinate with hospital personnel to ensure all billing on medical services are directed to the DPS Personnel Unit and not to the family member(s).
 5. Arrange transportation for the family member(s) as required.
 6. Establish a press staging area for the Department Public Information Officer (PIO)

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7. Assist in liaison with funeral home if required.

E. The Department Liaison Officer will be responsible for the following duties:

1. Contact the out-of-state or local area family member(s).
2. Provide control of information for PIO and inquiries.
3. Provide supervision of travel and lodging arrangements for the out-of-town family member(s).
4. Coordinate all official law enforcement notifications.
5. Ensure residence security checks of the family member(s) are initiated and continued as long as reasonable.
6. Ensure completion of requirements in the Cobb County Employee Safety Manual.
7. Coordinate ceremonial details.

F. The Benefits Coordinator will be responsible for the following duties:

1. Ensure the workman's compensation claim is complete and filed with DPS Personnel Unit.
2. Present benefits briefing to the family member(s).
3. Establish mechanism for receipt of public contributions or donations to the family member(s).
4. Prepare documents for payments due to the family member(s).
5. Provide the family member(s) with documentation and explanation of all benefits, including nature and amount of benefits to be received by each beneficiary, schedule of payments, and point of contact at each benefit office.

G. The Departmental Chaplain is responsible for the following duties:

1. Assign a Senior Chaplain and any Associate Chaplains as necessary, to assist the family in any way possible.
2. Serve as part of the notification process.
3. Contact family clergy if requested by the officer or his family.

IV. CONTINUED SUPPORT

The Notification Officer will remain as the pillar of continued support for the family member(s):

- A.** He will maintain long-term liaison with the family member(s) to ensure family needs are addressed with the chain of command.
- B.** He will provide guidance to the chain of command on sensitive matters such as holidays, anniversary of injury or death, and Law Enforcement Memorial Day, and will advise on how the Department can assist the family member(s) through these troubled times.
- C.** He will provide information to the family on court proceedings, investigative updates, legal proceedings, victim assistance specialist, and continued police accessibility.