

**Purpose**

To provide for the proper notification of Command Staff and victim's family in the event an employee is killed or seriously injured while performing their duties. Establishes a support mechanism for the victim's family to assist in funeral planning and application for death benefits. Provides assistance during the case investigation and prosecution of the suspect.

**Policy**

It is the policy of the Cecil County Sheriff's Office to assist the family of an employee involved in a critical incident (death or critical injury).

- A. Death or Critical Injury Notification
  - 1. Upon confirmation of an agency employee's death, or critical injury, notification shall be made by the Shift Commander to the Sheriff and Command Staff.
  
- B. Family Notification
  - 1. The Sheriff, Chief Deputy, or member of the Command Staff shall designate an employee to conduct the notification and accompany them, if possible.
  - 2. If an employee is critically injured, the family will be transported to the medical facility.
  
- C. Communications
  - 1. Communications regarding agency deaths or critical injuries shall be restricted to a telephone, when practical. The radio system will not be used, unless approved by command.
  - 2. All contact with the media shall be conducted by the Public Information Officer with approval from the Sheriff, Chief Deputy, or designated member of the Command Staff.
  - 3. The name of the employee will not be released to the news media prior to the immediate family being notified.
  - 4. If the news media has obtained the employee's name, the Sheriff, Chief Deputy, or designated member of the Command Staff shall request the media withhold this information until notification to the family.

- D. Family Assistance at the Hospital
1. A member of the Command Staff shall coordinate the arrival of family, agency officials, news media and other persons, as required.
  2. A Command Staff member shall coordinate with medical facility personnel/security for the following:
    - a. Segregated areas, for family, Sheriff, and other persons as requested by the family.
    - b. News media staging area.
    - c. The release of information to the media through the Public Information Officer.
- E. Family and Staff Support during the Viewing and Funeral
1. Upon an employee's death, the Sheriff or designee shall designate the following positions:
    - a. Funeral Liaison Deputy (designated Command Staff member).
    - b. Family Support Deputy (any employee requested by the family).
- F. Director of Law Enforcement
1. Shall make appropriate referrals under the guidelines of the Cecil County Government Assistance Program for employees involved in the incident and for the family to include: peer (CISM) support, referral to Concerns of Police Survivors, and the Agency Chaplain.
  2. Shall coordinate with the Cecil County Human Resource Department to process benefits and insurance payments to the family.
- G. Operations Commander
1. Shall plan/coordinate funeral activities of the agency in accordance with the desires of the family including, but not limited to the following:
    - a. Arrangements for travel and lodging for out of town attendees.
    - b. Coordinate all official law enforcement notifications and arrangements for the funeral service: honor guard(s), pallbearers, traffic control, and liaison with other law enforcement, public safety agencies, and dignitaries.
  2. Shall ensure that the residence/property of the deceased employee shall receive routine patrol checks during scheduled viewing and funeral times.
  3. Meet with the surviving family and funeral director regarding funeral arrangements and be available to them throughout the process. The decisions regarding the funeral services shall be

made by the family.

H. Family Support Deputy

1. Shall communicate directly with the Director of Law Enforcement and Operations Commander to ensure the needs and requests of the family are fulfilled regarding funeral services.
2. Shall be responsible for the following:
  - a. Keeping the family advised of developments in the case before the news media is notified by the Agency.
  - b. Accompany the surviving family to any criminal proceedings.
  - c. Assist the family with their continuing needs.
  - d. Completion of the Death Notification Worksheet CCSO Form #SO-060 and forward to command staff.

### Resources

Maryland Death Benefits to the surviving families of law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty. <http://www.odmp.org/pdfs/benefits/maryland.pdf>

Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program. <https://www.psob.gov/>

Death Notification Work Sheet CCSO Form # SO-060 (5/2017)