



TOWN OF MACEDON POLICE DEPARTMENT

General Order: 620	Effective Date: May 8, 2020
Subject: Death or Serious Injury of Agency Personnel	
Reference Standards: 18.1	
Rescinds: N/A	
Page 1 of 8	Attachments: 1- Notice of Critical Injury; 2-Death and Funeral Notice; 3- Emergency Contact Form; 4- Funeral Protocols; 5- Mortuary Liaison Checklist; 6- House of Worship Checklist; 7- Cemetery Liaison Checklist

I. Purpose

- A. The purpose of this policy is to provide direction for the Macedon Police Department in response to the death or serious physical injury of any member of the department, whether in the line of duty or otherwise. If the incident is the line-of-duty death of a police officer, funeral arrangements are to be decided by the family of the officer with their wishes taking precedence over those of the Macedon Police Department. Although this policy is intended to address the line-of-duty death or injury of police officers, many provisions, including death notification and family assistance, may be applicable to any agency employee regardless of whether or not the death is duty related. It is also assumed that any decedent, subject to the provisions of this protocol, was **not** involved in criminal conduct at the time of death.

II. Definitions

- A. **Line-of-Duty Death:** Any action, felonious or accidental, which claims the life of a member of the Macedon Police Department who is performing work related functions while either on or off-duty.
- B. **Line-of-Duty Serious Injury or Illness:** For the purposes of this policy a line-of-duty serious injury or illness shall be an injury or systemic illness serious enough that hospitalization or time away from the department is ordered by a physician for an indefinite period.
- C. **Immediate Family:** The employee's spouse, children of current and previous marriage, parents, siblings, and others recognized by the employee's spouse, children, or parents as having had a close relationship with the employee.

III. Procedure

- A. It shall be the responsibility of the Macedon Police Department to provide liaison

assistance to the immediate family of a member who dies in the line-of-duty or who is hospitalized for an indefinite period of time or requires repeated and/or intermittent hospitalization because of a line-of-duty injury or systemic illness. This assistance shall include, but not limited to, the clarification and comprehensive study of survivor benefits and emotional support during this traumatic period for the deceased or injured member's family. It shall be the responsibility of the member's immediate supervisor to notify the Chief of Police of the incident as soon as possible.

B. Shared Resources

1. The Macedon Police Department will request mutual aid and assistance from outside agencies, as necessary. Such assistance includes but is not limited to law enforcement funeral experts, buglers, pipers, equestrian units, motorcycle units, helicopters, honor guard, chaplains etc.

C. Debriefing

1. Any member involved in the conduct of the funeral shall be given the opportunity to be debriefed for the purpose of evaluating the event and to determine if any changes to this policy or practice are appropriate.

D. Mourning bands / flag protocol

1. A standard protocol will be utilized for the display of mourning bands and flags, and a uniform mourning time period will be observed prior to the resumption of normal department operations. Upon the death of a sworn employee, mourning bands shall be worn and Town Hall/Macedon Police Department flags flown at half-staff for a period of thirty (30) days. For all other personnel this mourning period will end after the funeral, unless otherwise dictated by the Chief of Police.

E. Critical injury/death and funeral notice

1. The standard forms "Notice of Critical Injury" (Attachment #1) and "Death and Funeral Notice" (Attachment #2) will be utilized for release relative to the critical injury or death of an employee. The "Critical Injury" aspect of the form is reserved for those injuries that are so grave that there is little or no expectation of recovery.

IV. Classification of decedents:

- A. Four classifications of law enforcement employees are utilized for the purpose of identification and discharge of the appropriate level of funeral ceremonies.

1. **Sworn:** Those sworn to enforce laws
2. **Civilian:** Those other employees, including volunteers
3. **Retired:** Those honorably retired on service or disability pensions
4. **Separated:** Those who have left the employment of the agency and whose welfare and whereabouts are of general interest to the agency or other government

employees

V. Recommended order of notification

- A. Chief of Police
- B. Police Chaplain Next of kin/immediate family
- C. President of the Macedon Police Association, P.B.A, Inc.
- D. Next of kin/ immediate family
- E. On-duty personnel
- F. Psychologist or member of the Employee Assistance Program or Wayne County Peer Support Team
- G. Town executives and elected officials

VI. Procedures

A. Notification

1. The following procedures shall be adhered to in cases of line-of-duty deaths and in cases of seriously injured members with poor prognosis of survival, with the understanding that the wishes of the family take precedence over the desires of the Macedon Police Department. Members providing services and assistance to immediate family members shall take all possible measures to accommodate and support their needs, wishes and desires, but should not make promises to family members that they are not sure can be met.
 - a. It shall be the responsibility of the Chief of Police, or his or her designee, to personally, and as soon as possible, notify the immediate family of a deceased or injured member. Notification will be made to the person listed upon the "Emergency Contact Form" (Attachment #3) of the deceased or seriously injured member.
 - b. The name of the deceased or injured member shall not be released to the media or other parties before the family members are notified. If the media has already obtained information related to the incident, they shall be asked to withhold the information until after the notifications have been completed.
 - c. Notifications shall be made in person and, if possible, never alone. The Chief of Police, or his/her designee, and one additional support person (Clergy, fellow member, etc.), will make the notification together. The family members should learn of the death or injury from the department first and not from the press or other sources.
 - d. As soon as most families see the notifying members, they will know something is wrong.

- (1) Ask to be admitted to the house. Do not make a notification on the doorstep.
 - (2) Gather everyone in the home and ask them to sit down.
 - (3) Inform them slowly and clearly of the information you have on the incident.
 - (4) It is important to use the officer's name during the notification.
- e. If the member has already died, relay that information to the family in as forthright and empathetic a manner as possible. Do not give them a false sense of hope.
 - f. Notifying personnel must be prepared for unexpected responses from the family to include hysteria and possible verbal or physical attack, anger, fainting, shock, etc.
 - g. Notifying personnel must be reassuring to the family. The most acceptable comment to newly bereaved people is something such as "I'm so sorry this has happened" and "The department will do everything we can to help you through this."
 - h. If the family wishes to go to the hospital, they shall be transported via department vehicle. It is highly recommended the family not drive themselves to the hospital. If the family members insist on driving, an officer should offer to accompany them in the family car, or escort them to the hospital.
 - (1) In such cases where there is an opportunity to get the family to the hospital exists prior to the member's death, immediate transportation should be provided for the family members.
 - i. If there is knowledge of a medical problem with an immediate family member, medical personnel should be available at the residence at the time of the notification.
 - j. Communication of information concerning the member and the incident shall, whenever possible, be restricted to the telephone or other secure means of communication to avoid interception by the media or others. Should the media obtain the officer's name prematurely, the ranking officer should request that the information be withheld until proper notification of next of kin can be made.
 - k. If the immediate family members are not in close proximity to the Town of Macedon, the Chief of Police, or his/her designee, shall request personal notification from a law enforcement agency in that jurisdiction.
 - l. The Chief of Police, or his/her designee, shall be responsible for identification of additional family members outside the area and shall make any notifications as desired by the immediate family. Such notifications shall be made by contacting the law enforcement agency in that jurisdiction and requesting that a personal notification be made.
 - m. In the event a member other than the Chief of Police makes the

notification, the notifying member shall submit an Intra-Departmental Memorandum to the Chief of Police specifying the identity of the persons notified, as well as the time and location of the notification.

- n. The notifying member should remain with the decedent's family until the arrival of a suitable assisting person, so as not to leave the family unattended during this critical time.
- o. If young children are at home, the notifying member must arrange for childcare needs. This may involve co-worker's spouses, transportation of children to relative's home, or similar arrangements.
- p. The notifying member should obtain the name of a department member preferred by the family to act on their behalf as the Family Liaison Officer.
- q. The employee identified as the Family Liaison Officer should act in that capacity until the completion of the post funeral reception.

VII. Assistance for affected members

- A. The death or serious injury of a coworker in the line of duty can be one of the most traumatic events that an officer can experience.
 - 1. Members who were on the scene or who arrived moments after a member was critically injured or killed should be relieved as quickly as possible.
 - 2. The department will host a Critical Incident Debriefing for police witnesses and other members who may have been emotionally affected by the serious injury or death of another member. This meeting will be conducted by a trained mental health professional. All members shall also be provided the opportunity to participate in psychological or peer support services through the Town of Macedon's Employee Assistance Program or the Human Resources Department.

VIII. Assisting family members at the hospital

- A. Whenever possible, the Chief of Police should join the family at the hospital in order to emphasize the agency's support. The first Supervisor arriving at the hospital other than the Chief of Police should become the Hospital Liaison. The Hospital Liaison shall be responsible for coordinating the arrival of immediate family, departmental personnel, the media and others, and assume the following responsibilities:
 - 1. Arrange a private waiting area for immediate family. The desires of the family members should be followed with regard to their accessibility to other officers and friends.
 - 2. Arrange a media staging area away from the family.
 - 3. Ensure that immediate family is provided with appropriate assistance at the hospital.
 - 4. Ensure that medical personnel provide pertinent medical information on the member's condition to the family before any other parties.

5. Assist family members, in accordance with their desires and hospital policy, in gaining access to the injured or deceased member.
 - a. If it is possible for the family to visit the injured member before death, they should be afforded that opportunity. A police official should “prepare” the family for what they might see in the emergency room and should accompany the family into the room for the visit if the family requests it. Medical personnel should advise the family of visitation policies and, in the event of death, explain why an autopsy is necessary.
 6. Take all personal effects of a deceased member for return to the family at a later time. A written inventory will be made of all the property collected from the employee’s personal locker and work area. If the death resulted from a felonious act, advise the immediate family that personal property on the deceased employee’s person at the time of the death may be released by the District Attorney’s Office. The supervisor at the scene of the incident will secure the member’s duty weapon and badge.
 7. Provide hospital personnel with all necessary information on billing for medical services. The Hospital Liaison should ensure that all medical bills are directed to the appropriate departmental authority and that they are not forwarded to the member’s family or significant other.
 8. Arrange transportation for the immediate family members and other family upon their departure from the hospital.
- B. The notifying officer should remain at the hospital while the family is present. He/she should not be overly protective of the family. This includes sharing specific information as to how the member met his or her demise, as well as allowing the family time with the injured or deceased member.
- C. Once all appropriate notifications have been made, the Notice of Critical Injury or the Death and Funeral Notice should be completed by an employee designated by the Chief of Police as the Public Information Officer.
1. This form is an official public notification of the death of a Law Enforcement employee. It should be completed as soon as practical and as completely as possible. It is the document from which all information will be taken for press releases, teletype and fax notifications, etc. Having all recipients receive the same information at the same time from the same official source is crucial to an effective evolution of events. If there are aspects of the initial release that are unanswered, usually viewing and funeral arrangements, they can be addressed as “pending”, and an updated notice sent out when the family makes it wishes known.

IX. Support for the survivors during a funeral or wake

- A. The following services will be offered to and provided for the family unless they request otherwise:
1. Ensure the needs of the family come before the wishes of the department.
 2. Assist the family in working with the funeral director regarding funeral arrangements.

3. The department should only make the family aware of what they can offer in the way of assistance if the family decides to have a Line-Of-Duty funeral.
 - a. If the funeral is a Line-Of-Duty funeral, the Family Liaison Officer will ensure the family is briefed on the funeral procedure including the 21-gun salute, presenting the flag, playing of taps, etc. The family has the option of excluding any portion of the funeral procedure. (Attachment #4)
4. A Sergeant or a Public Information Officer will be designated by the Chief of Police to handle the media relations throughout this traumatic ordeal. In the event the family should decide to grant an interview, this officer would attend and offer to screen all questions presented to the family to guard against jeopardizing upcoming legal proceedings.
5. In the event of a line-of-duty death, the family will be provided a list of churches, or other venues, with seating capacities large enough to accommodate attendance at the funeral.
6. In the event of a line-of-duty death, department vehicles and drivers will be made available to the family if they desire transportation to and from the funeral home.
7. In the event of line-of-duty death, members will be responsible for providing the family access to other public safety survivors or other support groups to include but not limited to Concerns of Police Survivors and/or other recognized police survivor organizations.
8. Security services such as explosive device searches and sweeps will be conducted at each facility, church, funeral home etc. if such action is warranted under the circumstances of the incident.

X. Providing support for survivors during criminal legal proceedings

- A. If criminal conduct resulted in the member's death, the family will be informed of all developments prior to any press release by the Chief of Police or his/her designee. If no court proceedings surround the circumstances of the member's death, the Chief of Police or his/her designee will relay all details of the incident to the family at the earliest opportunity.
- B. Additionally, the Chief of Police or his/her designee shall:
 1. Accompany surviving family members to criminal proceedings, explaining the nature of the proceedings and introducing them to prosecutors and other persons as required.
 2. Introduce the family to the victims' assistance specialists of the court.
 3. Arrange for investigators to meet with the family at the earliest opportunity following the trial to answer all their questions.

XI. Ongoing support for survivors

- A. Members of the Macedon Police Department shall remain sensitive to the needs of the deceased member's family long after the member's death. Survivors should continue to feel they are a part of the "police family." They should be invited to department activities to ensure continued contact.
- B. Members are encouraged to keep in touch with the family. Close friends, co-workers, and officials should arrange with the family to visit the home from time to time so long as the family expresses a desire to have these contacts continue.
- C. The Chief of Police should observe the member's death date with a short note to the family, flowers on the grave and/or wreath placement at the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial.
- D. Holidays may be especially difficult for the family, particularly if small children are involved. Increased contact with the survivors and additional support is encouraged at these times.
- E. The Chief of Police shall ensure that close contact is maintained between the Macedon Police Department and the deceased member's family and that their needs are met for as long as they feel the need for support.
- F. The Chief of Police or his/her designee, accompanied by Human Resources personnel, shall meet with surviving family a few days after the funeral to discuss the benefits they will receive. The Chief or his/her designee shall also document inquiries and interest in public donations to the family, and establish a mechanism for receipt of such contributions, as appropriate.

XII. Line of duty serious injury

- A. Absent the injured officer's ability to make the notification himself/herself, the officer's family shall be notified of his or her serious injury by a Sergeant at the time of the incident. The same notification procedures as outlined above in Section VI subdivision A shall be followed.
- B. The Chief of Police, or his/her designee, shall provide support to the family of the injured member depending on the nature and severity of the injury.

XIII. Ongoing support for seriously injured members

- A. The Chief of Police or his/her designee, working in conjunction with Human Resources personnel, shall meet with the injured member, or their family members, to ensure that the member receives the benefits that he/she is entitled to receive.

XIV. Memorial

- A. For all line-of-duty deaths, the Macedon Police Department will:
 - 1. Dedicate a plaque in honor of the deceased member. The plaque will to be given to

the immediate family at an appropriate time or during a dignified occasion.

2. Ensure that the appropriate Department Chaplain arranges an annual memorial service to honor all those employees who have given their lives in service to the department.

By Order of the Chief of Police

John P Colella

John P Colella (May 12, 2020)

John J. Colella

Chief of Police

Dated this 8th day of May, 2020