



*Alexandria Police Department*  
**Directive 11.24**



# LINE OF DUTY SERIOUS INJURIES AND DEATHS

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### 11.24.01 POLICY/PURPOSE

The policy of this Department is to provide assistance to the immediate family of an employee who is seriously injured or killed in the line of duty. While this policy is primarily written for circumstances related to sworn officers, due to the increased likelihood of their involvement in tragic situations, elements of the policy may also be used to address the following events, at the discretion of the Chief of Police or designee:

- Serious injury or death of an off-duty officer;
- Serious injury or death of a retired sworn officer;
- Serious injury or death of a civilian employee, on or off-duty.

The Guidelines that follow are intended to expedite this assistance to reduce trauma experienced by the affected family.

The purpose of this directive is to describe guidelines for Departmental response to serious line of duty injuries, line of duty deaths, and deaths from natural causes.

**11.24.02 DEFINITIONS**

**Line of Duty Injury** - Any injury sustained by an on-duty sworn officer or any injury sustained by an off-duty sworn officer providing law enforcement related services.

**Line of Duty Death** - Any death sustained by an on-duty sworn officer, or any death sustained by an off-duty sworn officer providing law enforcement services.

**11.24.03 RULES & RESPONSIBILITIES****[22.2.4]**

- A. *The Watch Commander will be notified when the need exists to check on the welfare of an employee at their home to ensure that he/she and/or a supervisor are present during the status check.*
- B. In the event of a Line of Duty Death or serious injury a Benefits Coordinator (BC), designated by the Chief of Police, will provide the family with information regarding any benefits they may be due and prepare any documentation necessary to obtain those benefits.
- C. A Family Liaison Officer (FLO), designated by the Chief of Police, will have duties which include but are not limited to:
  1. Ensure the **NEEDS OF THE FAMILY** *are a priority as related to the needs or wishes of the Department.*
  2. Meet with the family regarding funeral arrangements and advise them what the Department can provide. In some cases a family may elect to have a private service. We may need to assist with the private service and a memorial service for that officer;
  3. Transport the family from the hospital to home, and anywhere else they request;
  4. Ensure babysitters, if requested, are available for family members *during* the wake and funeral service. Possible sources of babysitters could be police employees' family members, or the community or church of the deceased family;
  5. Coordinate with the Benefits Coordinator to find out what financial assistance are available for out-of-town family and for feeding funeral attendees after the funeral;
  6. Ensure the family, including parents, receive recognition, and that they have proper placement in the funeral procession and the funeral;
  7. Ensure the family is briefed on the funeral *procedures*;
  8. Ensure the family is not left alone. Someone should be with the family 24 hours a day. If the family refuses, an officer *will* be assigned to the residence and remain outside;

9. Ensure someone is always at the home even when the family is not. This may mean posting an officer outside the home while the family is away for meetings or appointments;
  10. Meet with the family while at the hospital or at their home immediately after they return from the hospital; and
  11. Contact Concerns of Police Survivors (COPS) at their national office (573-346-4911) and coordinate a meeting with a local COPS representative for the family.
- D. The Family Liaison Officer does not necessarily have to be a member of the Critical Incident Stress Management Team (CISM).
1. He or she should be aware that the CISM Team is available for debriefings and to help with family support at the hospital, wake, funeral, and the period following the funeral.
  2. The Family Liaison Officer should know the deceased officer and be aware of the family relationships, but should not be so emotionally involved as to be ineffective. The Family Liaison Officer acts as a FACILITATOR between the family and the Department. This is NOT a decision making position.
  3. The Family Liaison officer will be issued a portable telephone and will provide the family with the number.
- E. When an employee is killed or seriously injured on or off-duty, *unless otherwise noted*, the appropriate commanding officer or designee will:
1. Make immediate verbal notification to the Chief of Police, City Manager, and all other ranking officials of this Department, as necessary. Prior to ending the tour of duty a written memorandum will be forwarded to the Chief of Police. The memorandum will include the date, location, cause and extent of injuries. Serious injury in this instance means an injury that could result in death or disability.
  2. Notify family members and significant others as soon as possible. The notification will be made by the Chief of Police or designee and an employee who is also a friend of the family; and if available, a department chaplain. In the absence of the Chief of Police or designee, the deputy chief or the captain having first knowledge of the facts will make the notification.
  3. *The Watch Commander will coordinate on-duty personnel notification with the DEC supervisor. The Watch Commander will notify each on-duty supervisor who will in turn notify their on-duty staff of the death or serious injury of the employee.*  
*Department employees are cautioned to limit and carefully craft their personal communications and notifications of the incident to those other than on-duty personnel. The goal is to ensure timely and appropriate notification to family members and others close to the employee.*
  4. Notify the commander of the Critical Incident Stress Management Team (CISM).
  5. *As soon as possible, relieve the employees' work group and other close friends who are working and have them respond to headquarters to receive further information and CISM services.*

6. *The Watch Commander will call back an Incident Commander to coordinate further department notifications and any needed department response to the incident. Within family wishes, it is recommended to handle viewings, funeral arrangements and receptions similar to a special event.*
7. Provide transportation for immediate family members and significant others to the hospital, if needed.
8. Ensure that all work related injury forms have been completed and submitted as required by department policy and the City's Administrative Regulations.

#### **11.24.04 GUIDELINES**

- A. Notification/Family/Significant Others Support Services:** The following procedures will be followed for line of duty deaths, or any death sustained by an off-duty sworn officer providing law enforcement services:
1. A Personal Data form (F-OMB-5051) will be maintained in every member's personnel file. Form F-OMB-5051 should be used to obtain information for notification of family in case of death or serious injury.
  2. The names of the deceased will not be released to the news media until the survivors (spouse, significant other, children, siblings, parents) living in the area are notified. For survivors living outside the area, the Chief of Police, or designee, should request a personal notification by members of the local law enforcement agency.
  3. If there is knowledge of a medical problem with an immediate survivor then medical personnel should be readily available when notification is made.
  4. Notification will be in person and not by phone. If possible, the following personnel should accompany the informing officer: Chief of Police, or designee, Department of Human Services Mental Health worker, chaplain, priest, pastor, etc. Notification should not be postponed if these people are not available. The injured or dead officer's name should be used. The use of the words "dead" or "died" is preferred over "passed away" or "expired."
  5. The informing officer will advise the family of the specifics of the incident and should be prepared for the various responses the family may have: anger, fainting, hysteria, physical violence, shock, or no apparent reaction.
  6. If the officer is still alive, the family will be taken to the hospital IMMEDIATELY. If the family refuses or insists on driving their own vehicle an officer should accompany them or be provided if the family requests the children not go to the hospital.
  7. The officer making the notification will advise the officer in charge at the hospital that he/she is en-route with the family. This notification should be made by telephone, if possible.

**B. Assisting the Family at the Hospital:**

1. The Chief of Police, or designee, **SHOULD BE** at the hospital and coordinate with the hospital. An update should be given to the family as soon as they arrive.
2. Two separate waiting facilities will be designated: one for the family and one for co-workers.
3. *Attempt to coordinate family visits with the investigating detective.* Allow the family to visit the injured/deceased officer. **DO NOT BE OVERLY PROTECTIVE OF THE FAMILY.** "Prepare" the family for what they may see. **If the family requests**, they should be accompanied while they visit.
4. A separate area for the press should be established. It is recommended that the family *use discretion in granting an interview with the press.* Keep the press away from the family; all inquiries should be handled by the PIO.
5. Personnel who made the notification should be at the hospital.
6. The hospital should be instructed that the family **SHOULD NOT** receive any of the hospital bills at their residence. ALL hospital bills should be sent to the City's Risk Manager.

**C. Funeral Considerations For Line Of Duty Deaths:** It should always be remembered that a funeral for a line of duty death is a **family funeral** first, and a Police Department funeral second. The wishes of the family always take precedence over the Department's wishes in regard to funeral arrangements. The Department should assist and advise the family when appropriate. The Chief of Police may appoint a coordinator for the funeral.

1. Teletype notification of a line of duty death should be sent nationwide. Many jurisdictions send officers great distances to attend these funerals. The Teletype should include information about the viewing, funeral services, and interment. Specific information should be included in the teletype, including location, parking, reporting and staging times, color guard instructions, motor instructions, etc.
2. A Program is a meaningful addition to the funeral service. The program could include background information on the slain officer, a photograph of the officer, acknowledgments, prayers, and directions to a reception location. The Public Information Office can assist in arranging production of the program.
3. Initial wake and funeral arrangements have to take into account many items; the following should be considered:
  - a. The Department should be attentive to any special needs of the family, such as the transportation of out-of-town family members who will be arriving in the area. Transportation to and from the funeral home for the family should also be provided.
  - b. If burial will be in uniform, the Department needs to ensure that the correct size uniform is taken to the funeral home.
  - c. Condolences and messages to the family should be directed "Care of Alexandria Police Department (Headquarters address)." The home

address and telephone number of *the* injured or *deceased* officer's family must never be released. Inquiries can be directed to the Family Liaison Officer.

#### 4. Logistical Arrangements for Wake/Viewing

- a. Ensure all Department personnel are notified of the date and times for the wake/viewing.
- b. Traffic control and assistance should be provided by the Department prior to, during, and after viewing hours.
- c. Honor guard generally stands guard at the foot and head of the casket during the viewing hours. This is done only if agreed to by the family. The Department *flag* can be posted at the foot of the casket and displayed so that the badge on the flag faces outward.
- d. The Department should provide transportation for the family to the funeral home and back home after the viewing. The Department may wish to consider assigning a sufficient number of officers and vehicles to the family for several days to assist with all transportation matters.

#### 5. Logistical Arrangements for the Funeral Service

- a. A decision concerning uniform of the day should be made and disseminated to all personnel. It is preferable to have officers in long sleeve shirt, tie and traditional hat.
- b. Color guards and officers at the funeral need to be given specific instruction on where to assemble. Officers also need to be instructed on what commands will be given by the color guard coordinator.
- c. Arrangements need to be made for use of a public address system for those officers who cannot be seated in the church. Alexandria officers should always be seated inside the church before other jurisdictions. Preference may also be given to the unit or section of the deceased.
- d. Traffic control during the funeral can be relegated to the Office of *the* Sheriff.
- e. Several pews need to be reserved for the family, significant others, VIPs such as City officials, chiefs of police, and other constitutional officers.
- f. Officers should cover their breast badges with a mourning band from the time of death until a specified time period. Usually the period is until the day after burial, or for a 30-day period for one of ours, at the discretion of the Chief of Police.

#### 6. Protocol For the Use and Presentation of the Flag.

- a. The flag should be placed on the casket with the stars on the left is shoulder, and the label facing up. During the graveside service, the honor guard will hold the flag at waist level just above the casket.

- b. The flag should not be lowered into the grave or allowed to touch the ground. At the conclusion of the graveside service, the flag should be taken from the casket and folded as detailed below.
- c. The flag folding should be a distinctive feature of the ceremony. When the flag is folded it should be given to the Chief of Police by the Honor Guard Commander. The Chief of Police will then present the flag to a family member. Whenever the flag is handed from one person to another, the relinquishing officer will salute the accepting officer.
- d. It is permissible to present more than one flag to the family of the officer. If the family requests more than one flag, subsequent flags will be presented already folded in the same manner as the initial flag.

#### **D. Post Funeral Support:**

1. Routine checks of the survivor's home will be made for eight (8) weeks following the funeral.
2. The Benefits Coordinator will meet with the surviving family within two (2) days of the death. The Benefits Coordinator will provide the family with information on all the benefits available to the family from outside sources and from personal insurance policies. This officer will assist with the filing of appropriate forms and following through with the family to ensure that the benefits are received.
  - a. A list of benefits should be provided to the family. The list should include the organization's name, address, phone number, and contact person, if available.
  - b. Surviving children from a previous marriage should be provided with a list.
  - c. The family should be advised of the loss of health benefits after thirty (30) days.
3. If criminal violations surround the death, the family should be informed of developments prior to any press release.
  - a. The survivors should be informed of, transported *to*, and accompanied to any court proceedings.
  - b. **DO NOT BE OVERLY PROTECTIVE OF THE FAMILY.** They should be allowed to hear all of the testimony.
4. If there are no court proceedings surrounding the circumstances of the officer's death, then all details of the incident will be relayed to the family.

#### **E. FOLLOW-UP:**

1. The Family Liaison Officer and Benefits Coordinator should remain in contact with the family and offer departmental support for as long as the family feels the need.
2. Monthly phone calls are appropriate during the first year, then dwindling off to quarterly.

3. The officer's death date should be observed annually by sending a note to the surviving family members (parents, spouse, children).

**BY AUTHORITY OF:**

**Earl L. Cook**  
**Chief of Police**



**APPENDIX A****LINE OF DUTY DEATH CHECKLIST****A. Death or Critical Injury Notification**

1. Make necessary notifications to Police Department:
  - a. Chief of Police and Deputy Chiefs
  - b. Each Deputy Chief should notify their unit commanders. The unit commanders should start a notification process to all employees under their command.
  - c. Media Officer
  - d. CISM Team Commander
  - e. Risk Manager for the City
2. *Make other official notifications via VCIN to*
  - a. *Virginia State Police (VSP)*
  - b. *Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)*
3. Maintain confidentiality of victim's identity until notification of family.
4. Notification to family as soon as possible by Chief of Police, or designee. CISM, Department of Human Services, clergy may also be involved. Have medical assistance attending for family notification, if necessary.
5. Family is taken to hospital, if employee is still alive (they may still want to go to the hospital if the officer is deceased.)
6. Provide babysitter, if necessary.
7. Private area is provided to family at the hospital.
8. Separate area established for media.
9. Prepare family for what they may see.
10. Family Liaison Officer (FLO) designated by the Chief of Police.
11. Benefits Coordinator (BC) designated by the Chief of Police.

**B. Wake and Funeral Checklist**

1. Nationwide Teletype is sent reference officer's death.
2. The needs of the family come before those of the Department.
3. FLO meets with family to assist with funeral arrangements.
4. Honor guard.
5. Motorcycle escort.
6. Babysitters are provided.
7. Security is maintained at family's residence.
8. Transportation provided for family, if requested.
9. FLO meets with BC to find what assistance is available for funeral.
10. FLO makes contact with Concerns of Police Survivors (COPS). COPS National office is 573-346-4911. Also contact the local COPS chapter closest to where the family lives (either Richmond-area COPS or Washington, D.C., COPS).
11. Chief of Police issues instructions regarding uniform of the day.
12. Logistical support at church is provided.
13. Parking and seating is reserved for family and VIP.
14. Medic standby.
15. Portable toilets for funeral.
16. Tow truck and motorcycle mechanic for funeral.

17. Refreshments
18. Public address system.
19. Taps and 21 gun salute. (US Capitol Police can provide these services).
20. Pallbearers can be the honor guard, or the family may wish to choose others. If the honor guard does not act as pallbearers they can assist at the church by giving out programs and seating attendees.
21. Arrangements need to be made so as many officers as possible can attend the funeral services. Other police agencies can be used to assist with traffic direction along the funeral route, assist with day-to-day calls for service, and assistance immediately following the funeral.
22. The funeral route from the church to the cemetery may involve a final drive by police headquarters. There should be black bunting draped over the entrance to the Police Department. Any employees present at the Department should stand outside and salute as the hearse passes.
23. Reporters and television crews should be placed in a central location, but at a discreet distance from the family. This location needs to take into account a large number of people from the media.

#### **C. Post Funeral Support**

1. Routine checks are made of survivor's home.
2. BC meets with family within two (2) days of the death to advise of benefits available.
3. Family is advised of imminent loss of health benefits.
4. Family is briefed on future court proceedings, if any.

#### **D. Follow-Up**

1. FLO and BC remain in contact with family for as long as family feels the need.
2. Employee's death is observed annually.
3. A Public Information Officer will be designated by the Chief of Police, or his/her designee, to handle the media. If the family agrees to an interview this officer should screen the questions so that upcoming legal proceedings are not jeopardized.