

	Policy & Procedures				No.	
	Subject:					
	Line of Duty Death or Serious Bodily Injury					
Issuing Authority:				Effective Date:	Review Date:	
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Revision & Reissued Dates:						

CANTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide direction for the Canton Police Department to provide appropriate emotional care for the seriously injured, ill or deceased employee's family. 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 agency.

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.

II. POLICY

It shall be the responsibility of the Canton Police Department to provide liaison assistance to the primary family of an officer 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 surviving family.

It is the responsibility of the subject officer's supervisor to notify the Chief of Police of the incident as soon as possible. Immediately upon notification of the incident, the Chief of Police shall appoint an officer in charge, to coordinate all departmental functions regarding the incident.

III. DEFINITIONS:

- A. Line-of-Duty Death: Any action, felonious or accidental, which claims the life of a Canton Police Officer who is performing work related functions either while on or off-duty.

- B. Line-of-duty Injury or illness: For the purposes of this policy a line-of-duty injury or illness shall be an injury or systemic illness serious enough that it requires hospitalization or time away from the department is ordered by a physician for an indefinite period.
- C. Survivors: Primary family members of the injured or deceased officer, including spouse, children, grandchildren, parents, grandparents, siblings, fiancé, and/or significant others.
- D. Beneficiary: Those designated by the officer as recipients of specific death benefits.
- E. Benefits: Financial payments made to the family to assist with financial stability following the loss of a loved one.
- F. Funeral Payments: Financial payments made to the surviving families of an officer killed in the lineof-duty which are specifically earmarked for funeral expenses.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. Officer in Charge (OIC)

1. In order to prevent duplication of efforts, maintain order, and ensure that the process works for the benefit of the officer or his or her family, the Deputy Chief of Police shall coordinate all departmental functions regarding the incident.
2. The OIC shall make assignments of tasks and responsibilities to department personnel, including METROLEC's Peer Support Unit (PSU) and Honor Guard members. Those persons shall report the status of their tasks to the Deputy Chief. Department personnel shall not perform incident related tasks without the approval of the Deputy Chief or a Lieutenant.
4. The Deputy Chief and the Lieutenants shall be thoroughly familiar with the concept and procedures of Peer Support Unit, the Honor Guard and other internal and/or external organizations involved in the process.
5. Personnel assigned to tasks regarding this policy shall be placed on special assignment and not available for routine calls until relieved of duty.
6. In the event the officer has multiple families and/or an adversarial relationship exists between the families, the Deputy Chief will make every effort to assign a separate liaison for each family.

B. Death or Life Threatening Injury Notification

1. The name of the injured or deceased officer will be released by the by the Chief of Police only after notification of the primary family members is made.
2. The notification plan will be formulated using the most recent confidential Line-of-

Duty Death or Injury Information provided by the deceased or injured officer.

3. If there is knowledge of a medical condition with a primary survivor, medical personnel will be dispatched to the residence to coincide with the notification along with the notifying personnel.
4. Notification will always be made by two or more persons. The Chief of Police, his representative, and/or pre-selected persons of the officer's choice will notify the family if time to assemble these persons exists. Delays in developing the appropriate notification team must be weighed against the importance of the timely notification of the primary family.
 - a. If the above suggested persons are not readily accessible, notification shall be made by a supervisor on duty. The opportunity to get the family to the hospital prior to the passing of the officer is significantly more important than who delivers the notification.
 - b. If the family wishes to go to the hospital, they may be transported via Department vehicle. It is recommended that the family not drive themselves to the hospital.
 - c. If the primary survivors are not in close proximity to Canton, the OIC shall request personal notification from a public safety agency from the jurisdiction where the survivors are. The OIC is permitted to assist in making transportation arrangements to Canton but may not assume responsibility for travel expenses on behalf of the Police Department without the authorization of the Chief of Police.
5. As soon as a law enforcement family sees you, they will know something is wrong.
 - a. Ask to be admitted to the house. Do not make a notification on the doorstep.
 - b. Gather everyone in the home and ask them to sit down.
 - d. Inform them slowly and clearly of the information you have regarding the incident.
 - e. It is important to use the officer's name during the notification.
6. If the officer has already died, relay that information. Do not give the family a false sense of hope.
7. Notifying personnel must be prepared for unexpected responses from survivors to include hysteria and possible verbal, physical attack, anger, fainting or shock, etc.
8. Notifying personnel must be reassuring to the survivors. The most acceptable comment to newly bereaved people is something such as "I'm so sorry this has happened" and "The Canton Police Department family share your loss and pain and we will do

everything we can to help you through this"

C. Assisting the Family at the Hospital

1. Arrangements regarding appropriate waiting facilities for the family and fellow police officers are outlined in the appendixes of the Line of Duty Death and Injury S.O.P.
2. An Emergency Department Liaison (EDL.) will be appointed by the OIC to act as information liaison for medical personnel to the family of the officer and fellow police officers. It is recommended that the EDL be an agency individual who has a rapport with emergency department personnel and practices.
3. The duties of the EDL include but are not limited to the following:
 - a. The EDL will ensure the family is updated as soon as they arrive at the hospital.
 - b. The EDL will insure that pertinent information on the officer's condition is relayed on a timely basis. He or she shall also make the family and fellow police officers aware of hospital policy about visitation with the injured officer and/or visitation with the body following the passing, and explain why involvement of the Medical Examiner's Office is necessary.
 - c. The EDL should prepare the family for what they might see and accompany them to the hospital emergency department.
 - d. The EDL will be responsible for notifying the emergency admitting personnel that all medical bills relating to the care and treatment of the officer should be forwarded to the Canton Police Department.
 - 1) This will require the EDL to have essential information regarding the officer. The officer's residence address and next of kin information should be omitted on the admitting form.
 - 2) Do not ask a family member to sign as guarantor of payment for treatment.
 - 3) Do not request any insurance information.
3. If the injuries to the officer are likely fatal and it is possible for the family to visit their officer prior to death, they should be afforded the opportunity. There is definite need to touch and hold the body while there is still life, and being present when death occurs can be comforting to the family.
4. PSU members will be present the entire time the family is at the hospital and should arrange whatever assistance the family may need in cooperation with the EDL.
6. The personnel who made the initial notification should be among those at the hospital.
7. Any promises, such as, "We'll promote him/her posthumously." or "We'll retire his/her badge", shall not be made to the family by any person except the Chief of Police.
8. PSU members will make arrangements for transportation of the family back to their residence or other desired reasonable destination.

D. Support for the Family during a Wake or Funeral

1. The following services will be offered to and provided for the family unless they request otherwise.
2. Unless the family requests otherwise, PSU members will act as the liaison for the family. Although the liaison should know the deceased officer and be aware of the family relationships, the liaison should not be so emotionally involved with the loss that he or she would become ineffective. The duties of the liaison shall include but not limited to the following:
 - a. Insure the needs of the family come before the wishes of the department.
 - b. Meet with the family and relate the duties of the liaison or allow the family to designate the person, if appropriate, they wish to perform the tasks.
 - c. Meet with the family regarding funeral arrangements.
 - 1) Since many officers will not have prearranged their wishes for the handling of their own funeral, the family will most likely need to decide all aspects of the funeral.
 - 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.
 - f. The liaison should become familiar with all information concerning the death and the continuing investigation in order to answer family questions.
 - g. The liaison will be available to the family throughout this traumatic process.
 - h. The liaison will ensure surviving parents or surrogate parents are afforded recognition and will have proper placement arranged for them during the funeral and funeral procession.
 - i. If the funeral is a Line-Of-Duty funeral, the liaison 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.
3. A command level officer or the public information officer will be designated to handle the media 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.
4. In the event of a line-of-duty death, PSU members will ensure the home is prepared for the influx of visitors following the funeral. Food and babysitting will be provided by the Canton Police Department community.
5. In the event of a line-of-duty death, PSU members will offer to remain at the home and screen telephone calls.
6. In the event of a of line-of-duty death, the PSU, or other agency designee will provide a list of churches with seating capacities large enough to accommodate attendance at

the funeral.

7. 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.
8. In the event of line-of-duty death, PSU members will be responsible for providing the family access to other public safety survivors or other support groups through but not limited to Concerns of Police Survivors.
9. The Canton Police Department will send PSU members or other officers on routine residence checks by the officer's or survivors' home for as long as is reasonable following the incident. Officers conducting the residence checks will also inquire if any harassing telephone calls are being received. A PSU member or police officer will be assigned to remain at the residence continually during the time that survivors are attending the funeral and related functions.

E. Providing Information and Assistance Regarding Benefits to the Surviving Family in the Event of a Line-of-Duty Death.

1. A PSU Benefits Officer or other individual will gather information regarding all department, association, and Federal benefits available to the surviving family and ensure the department's full support pursuing these benefits. The benefits officer member is responsible for filing appropriate paperwork and following through with the surviving family to ensure benefits are being received.
2. A benefits officer should visit with the surviving family to discuss the benefits within a few days following the funeral. A prepared printout of the benefit payments due the family, listing named beneficiaries, contacts at various benefit offices, and when they can expect to receive the benefit should be given to the family. This same explanation procedure should be repeated within a month following the funeral since the initial contact is clouded by the emotional numbness of the family during the first benefits meeting. A follow up will be made every six months until the surviving family receives every possible benefit.
3. If there are surviving children from a former marriage, the guardian of those children should also receive a printout of benefits to which the child or children are entitled.
4. A benefits officer should pay special attention to the problems with possible revocation of health benefits to the surviving family. The Town of Canton may require survivors to contact the Town of Canton Human Resource Department within thirty (30) days if they wish to continue coverage.

F. Providing Departmental Support During Criminal Legal Proceedings

1. If criminal violations surround the death, the family will be informed of all developments prior to any press release.
2. If there are not any court proceedings surrounding the circumstances of the officer's

death the department will relay that information to the surviving family as soon as it becomes known.

G. Providing Extended and Follow-up Support

1. PSU personnel will encourage and assist the family with obtaining peer support and/or professional counseling services.
2. It is of paramount importance to help the primary surviving family maintain a relationship with the agency if they desire. To that end, the following suggestions are made.
 - a. PSU personnel should schedule follow-up visits with the primary surviving family for at least two years following the line-of-duty death, to include monthly phone calls and greeting cards on special occasions and holidays.
 - b. PSU personnel will ensure primary family members are invited to all memorial services or other agency functions deemed appropriate.
 - c. PSU personnel will provide the primary family members with information from organizations such as Concerns of Police Survivors (COPS) and other recognized police survivor organizations.

6. Line-of-Duty Deaths in other Massachusetts Agencies (new 12/02)

1. When any member of the Canton Police Department becomes aware of a law enforcement line-of duty death within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, they should immediately notify the Office of the Chief of Police. If he/she are not available after normal business hours, including weekends or holidays, the highest ranking on-duty supervisor should be notified.
7. As soon as practical after notification of a law enforcement line-of-duty death, the Chief of Police shall cause notification to be made to all Canton Police Department personnel. The notification should include an order to lower the department flags to half-staff and for personnel to wear mourning ribbons.
8. Flags shall be lowered to half-staff and mourning ribbons worn until after the funeral of the involved officer.
9. The Chief of Police may order observances as deemed appropriate on a case by case basis in the event of unusual line-of-duty death circumstances occurring within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, or occurring outside of the state
10. Mourning ribbons will be worn on badges for period of 7 days from the time of the officers burial.

APPENDIX 1

Line of Duty Death or Injury

BENEFITS AND ASSISTANCE SUMMARY INDEX

Town of Canton
Town of Canton Optional Life Insurance
Commonwealth of Massachusetts Public Employee Retirement Administration Commission
Home Rule Petition
Social Security
Public Safety Officer's Benefit (PSOB)
Personal Life Insurance
Fraternal Order of Police
Veterans Administration Benefits
Education Benefits for Dependent Children
Concerns of Police Survivors (COPS)
National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial
Massachusetts Law Enforcement Officers Memorial
Other Social and Fraternal Organizations
Home Rule Petition
Where to find documentation necessary for application of benefits

The following are potential benefits and/or assistance that may be available to the surviving family of a fallen Canton Police Officer. Some benefits may also be available to an injured officer and his or her family. The specific amounts of cash payments are not listed because they are subject to change. However, contact information is provided so the current payment may be ascertained.

I. Town of Canton Life Insurance

The Town of Canton provides basic life and accidental death and dismemberment insurance for every employee. The death benefits are payable to the beneficiaries named on the insurance enrollment documentation. In addition, to the basic coverage some employees are enrolled in optional coverage insurance.

Contact information: Town of Canton Human Resource Director's Office
781-821-2936

II. Town of Canton Optional Life Insurance

In addition, to the basic coverage some employees are enrolled in optional coverage insurance.

Contact Information: Town of Canton Human Resource Director's Office
781-821-2936.

III. Comm. of Mass Public Employee Retirement Administration Commission (PERAC)

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Public Employee Retirement Administration Commission will provide payments to the beneficiaries upon the death of a member or retired member of the system. Additionally, the system may pay a disability benefit to a member who incurred a permanent total disability or a permanent partial disability while performing the duties of a police officer provided the officer has complied with the conditions as set forth in the statutes.

Contact Information: Five Middlesex Avenue, Suite 304 Somerville, MA 02145
Phone 617-666-4446, Fax 617-628-4002
www.mass.gov/perac

IV. Home Rule Petition

Another option is to file a Homerule petition to cover the officer for 100 percent of his base pay. This option is reserved only for officers that are injured in the line of duty due to a violent armed encounter and each situation will be handled on case by case basis. Since you will need help filing this special legislation, it is best to partner with your State Senator or State representative from the beginning.

V. Social Security

The United States Social Security may provide benefits for members or their beneficiaries in case of death or disability of the member.

Contact Information: Social Security Administration
1 Edgewater Dr. Suite102 Norwood, MA 02062
Phone 1-800-772-1213
www.socialsecurity.gov

VI. Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program (PSOB)

The U.S. Department of Justice's Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program (PSOB) provides death and education benefits to survivors of fallen law enforcement officers, firefighters, and other first responders, and disability benefits to officers catastrophically injured in the line of duty.

Federal statute may provide the following benefits:

- A one-time death benefit to the survivors of a public safety officer who is killed in the line of duty
- Payments to officers who are permanently or totally disabled due to an injury sustained in the line of duty
- Education benefits to dependents of public safety officers who are kill or disabled in the line of duty.

Forms will be completed by the Canton Police Department and forwarded to the U.S. Department of Justice for processing and payment. Exclusions to this benefit would come if there was misconduct on the part of the officer, intoxication, performing duty in a grossly negligent manner, or if claimant was a substantial contributing factor to the death of the officer. If the documentation is submitted in order payment of this benefit can be expected within 90 days.

Contact Information: Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program
1-888-744-6513
AskPSOB@usdoj.gov

VII. Personal Life Insurance

Many officers may have their own additional independent Life Insurance Policies. During this stressful time, families may not remember about this policy. The Canton Police Department family liaison should gently remind families that their loved ones may have purchased additional policies.

VIII. Veterans Administration Benefits

Many police officers have served their country prior to joining the Canton Police Department. The Veterans Administration offers many benefits including but not limited to paying for a headstone for the deceased veteran. They will also provide a military honor guard as well as playing bugler to play Taps.

IX. Fraternal Order of Police

X. Education Benefits for Dependent Children

XI. Concerns of Police Survivors (COPS)

XII. National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial

XIII. Massachusetts Law Enforcement Officers Memorial

IVX. Other Social and Fraternal Organizations

X. Where to find documentation necessary for application of benefit