

City of Johns Creek Police Department

<i>Subject:</i> Line of Duty Deaths, Death of Agency Member, Funeral Protocol		<i>Number:</i> 03-18
<i>Reference:</i>		<i>Amends:</i>
<i>Effective:</i> 08/11	<i>Review Date:</i> Annually	<i># of Pages:</i> 9

PURPOSE:

Establish procedures that will ensure the proper support and emotional care for an employee’s family following a line-of-duty death or other non-active duty death. Establish procedures regarding funeral protocols for agency employees.

POLICY: (03-18)

It is the policy of the Johns Creek Police Department to assist the immediate survivors of any member who dies in the line of duty. This assistance will be provided whether the death was unlawful or accidental (automobile accident, hit by passing vehicle during traffic stop, training accident, heart attack on duty, etc.) while the employee was performing a police related function, either on or off duty, and while the employee was an active member of the police department. The Chief of Police may institute certain parts or all of this policy for cases of an employee’s natural death or during non-active duty. The department will also provide a clarification and comprehensive study of survivor benefits as well as other tangible and intangible emotional support during this traumatic period of adjustment for the surviving family. The family will decide funeral arrangements for the deceased employee, with their wishes taking precedence over the department’s wishes.

Scope:

This policy and procedure is applicable to all departmental personnel

PROCEDURES:

Coordination (03-18-01)

Coordination of events following a line-of-duty death of an employee is an extremely important and complex responsibility. Everyone must exhibit professionalism and compassion all times as an obligation to the employee’s survivors and the law enforcement

community. In order to provide the best possible service and support for the employee's family, selected members of the department may receive assignments of specific tasks designated by the Chief of Police.

Critical Notification Form (03-18-02)

All members of the department will be required to complete a critical notification form and review and update the form at least annually. This review will be completed during the annual performance evaluation review. The form will include information to assist the agency in notifying family members, choosing pall bearers, requests or wishes on type of funeral service and the agency's level of involvement, if any. The form will also include any veteran information, if applicable. The form will be maintained in the police records personnel file and in other locations which allow for easy access to all supervisors and command staff.

Family Notification (03-18-03)

- A. It shall be the responsibility of the Chief of Police to notify or designate someone to notify the next of kin of an employee suffering severe injuries or death. The Chief of Police may personally make the notification or designate another employee to inform the survivors, based on the information found in the critical incident form. The department must never release the name of the deceased employee before notification to the immediate family. If there is knowledge of a medical problem with an immediate survivor, medical personnel should be available at the residence to coincide with the death notification. Personnel **must always** make the notification in person and never alone. The Chief of Police or a representative, Police Chaplain, close friend, or another police survivor could appropriately accompany the notifying employee. However, personnel should not delay notification to wait for a gathering of the aforementioned people. If an opportunity exists to get to the hospital prior to the demise of the employee, do not wait for the delegation to gather.

- B. The family should learn of the death from the department first and not from the press or other sources. Never make a death notification on the doorstep; request admittance into the house. Inform family members slowly and clearly of the information that you have. If personnel know specifics of the incident, the person notifying the family should relay as much information as possible to the family. Personnel should use the employee's name during the notification. If the employee has died, relay that information. Never give the family a false sense of hope. Use words such as "died" and "dead" rather than "gone away" or "passed away." If the family requests to visit the hospital, they should receive transport by police vehicle. It is highly recommended that the family **not** drive themselves to the hospital. If the family insists on driving, an employee should accompany them in the family car. If young children are in the home, the employee making the notification must arrange for babysitting needs. This may involve co-workers' spouses, transportation of children to a relative's home, or other similar arrangement. Prior to departing for the hospital, the employee making the notification

should notify the hospital staff and the employee assigned as liaison to the hospital (by telephone if possible) that a member(s) of the family is en route.

- C. Personnel should afford the deceased or severely injured employee's parents the courtesy of a personal notification if possible. If immediate survivors live beyond the metropolitan area, the employee making the notification will ensure that the Communication Center sends a teletype message to the appropriate jurisdiction requesting a **personal** notification. The employee making the notification may choose to call the other jurisdiction by telephone in addition to the teletype message. Arrangements shall be made to permit simultaneous telephone contact between the survivors and the Johns Creek Police Department.
- D. The Chief of Police or a high-ranking representative should respond to the residence or the hospital to meet with the family as quickly as possible. In the event of an on-duty death, the external monitoring of police frequencies may be extensive. Communications regarding notification should be restricted to the telephone whenever possible. Personnel should advise the media, if they have obtained the employee's name, to withhold the information pending notification of the next of kin.

Family Assistance at the Hospital (03-18-04)

- A. Other than the Chief of Police, the first employee to arrive at the hospital, or an employee designated by the Chief, assumes the duties of liaison between the hospital and the family of the deceased or severely injured employee. This liaison is responsible for coordinating the activities of hospital personnel, the employee's family, police employees, the press, and others.

These responsibilities include:

1. Arranging with hospital personnel to provide an appropriate waiting facility for the family, the Chief of Police, police officials, and only those others requested by the immediate survivors.
2. Arranging a separate area for fellow police employees and friends to assemble.
3. Establishing a press staging area.
4. Ensuring that medical personnel relay pertinent information regarding the employee's condition to the family on a timely basis and before such information is released to others.
5. Notifying the appropriate hospital personnel that all medical bills relating to the injured or deceased employee is directed to the Police Department. The family should not receive any of these bills at their residence. This may require the employee designated as liaison to contact the hospital during normal business hours to ensure that proper billing takes place.
6. Ensuring that the family is updated regarding the incident and the employee's condition upon their arrival at the hospital.

7. Arranging transportation for the family back to their residence.

B. If it is possible for the family to visit the injured employee before death, they should receive 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. The employee who notified the family and accompanied them to the hospital should remain at the hospital while the family is present. The employees should not be overly protective of the family. This includes the sharing of specific information on how the employee met his demise, as well as allowing the family time with the deceased employee.

Support of the Family during memorial service, funeral or wake (03-18-05)

The Chief of Police, or a designee, will meet with the employee’s family at their home to determine their wishes regarding departmental participation in the preparation of the funeral or services. The family will receive all possible assistance. With the approval of the family, the Chief will designate a member of the department to act as liaison for the family during this time. The selection of this liaison is a critical assignment. The department will attempt to assign someone who enjoyed a close relationship with the employee and the family. This is not a decision-making position. This is a role of “facilitator” between the family and the Police Department.

Some of this person’s responsibilities will be:

1. Ensure the needs of the family come before the wishes of the department
2. Assist the family with funeral arrangements and making them aware of what the department can offer if they decide to have formal police department funeral or memorial service. If they decide to have a formal police department funeral, brief the family on funeral procedures, 21 Gun Salute, presentation of the flag, playing of taps, last radio call, etc.
3. Apprise the family of information concerning the death and continuing investigation, if applicable.
4. Providing as much assistance as possible, including overseeing travel and lodging arrangements for out of town family members, arranging for food for the family, meeting child care and transportation needs, etc.
5. Being constantly available to the family
6. Determining what public safety, church, fraternal and labor organizations will provide in terms of financial assistance for out of town family travel, meals, etc. for funeral attendees following the burial, etc.
7. Being available to the department at all times (radio, cell phone, etc.)

Department Liaison (03-18-06)

- A. The Division Commander, or a member of the department designated by the Chief of Police, will act to coordinate resources throughout the department. This employee's responsibilities include:
1. Working closely with the employee assigned as the liaison for the family to ensure that the needs of the family are fulfilled.
 2. Handling the news media throughout the ordeal. If the family decides to accept an interview, an employee should attend to "screen" questions presented to the family so as not to jeopardize subsequent legal proceedings.
 3. Meet with the following persons to coordinate funeral activities and establish an itinerary:
 - a. Chief of Police
 - b. Division Commanders
 - c. Employee's Unit Supervisor
 - d. Funeral Director
 - e. Family Clergy, Priest or Minister
 - f. Cemetery Director
 - g. Honor/Color Guard Commander
 4. Directing the funeral activities of the department and visiting Police Departments according to the wishes of the family and the information found within the critical information form.
 5. Issue an Administrative Message through GCIC to include the following:
 - a. Name of deceased employee
 - b. Date and time of death
 - c. Circumstances surrounding the death
 - d. Funeral arrangements (private or police)
 - e. Uniform to be worn
 - f. If expressions of sympathy in lieu of flowers
 - g. Contact person and phone number/email
 6. Obtain an American flag. If the family wishes a flag presentation by the Chief, notify the Chief's office.
 7. If the family desires a burial in uniform, select an employee to obtain a uniform and all accoutrements (except weapons) and deliver them to the funeral home.
 8. Assign employees for usher duty at service.
 9. Arrange for the delivery of the employee's personal belongings to the family.
 10. Brief the Chief and staff concerning all funeral arrangements.

11. Ensure that the surviving parents receive recognition and arrange for their proper placement during the funeral and procession.
12. Arrange for a stand-by doctor for the family if necessary.
13. Coordinate traffic management (with other jurisdictions if necessary) during the viewing, funeral, and procession. Arrange for a tow truck to be available along the procession route.
14. Assign an employee to remain at the family home during the viewing and funeral.
15. Maintain a roster of all departments sending personnel to the funeral, including:
 - a. Name and address of responding agency
 - b. Name of Chief of responding agency
 - c. Number of employees attending the funeral
 - d. Number of vehicles
 - e. Number of employees attending reception after funeral
16. Assist in making the necessary accommodations (food / lodging, etc.).
17. Acknowledge visiting and assisting departments.
18. Arrange for routine residence checks of the survivor's home for 6-8 weeks after the funeral by the Patrol Division. This service is necessary since large amounts of money are passing through the residence and the survivors will be spending much time away from the home dealing with legal matters.
19. Arrange for collection of department issued equipment (vehicle, weapons, radio, etc.)

Benefits Coordination (03-18-07)

A member of the department, designated by the Chief, will gather information on all benefits / funeral payments available to the family. This person should have the department's full support to fulfill this responsibility to the survivors and has the responsibility for filing the appropriate benefit paperwork and following through to ensure the family receives these benefits. Responsibilities consist of the following:

1. File Worker's Compensation claims and related paperwork.
2. Contact the City of Johns Creek Risk Manager, Finance Department, Benefits and Pension Sections immediately to insure that the beneficiary receives death and retirement benefits, remaining paychecks, and payment for annual leave and compensatory leave.
3. Gather information on all benefit / funeral payments that are available to the family.
4. Set up any special trust funds or educational funds.
5. Notify all appropriate police organizations, particularly those that may offer a "line of duty" death benefit, of the death to ensure beneficiaries receive all entitlement payments. These agencies may offer legal and financial counseling to the family at no cost.
6. Meeting with the surviving family a few days after the funeral to discuss the benefits they will receive.
7. If there are any surviving children from a former marriage, meeting with their guardian to advise what benefits the child/children will receive.

8. Advising surviving family of status of health benefits and if a 30-day grace period exists before cancellation after an employee's death.
9. Meet again with the family approximately six months after the employee's death to ensure they have received the appropriate benefits.

Continuing Support for the Employee's Surviving Family Members (03-18-08)

Members of the department must remain sensitive to the needs of the survivors long after the employee's death. The grief process has no timetable and survivors may develop a complicated grief process. Expect more than half of the surviving spouses to develop a post-traumatic stress reaction to the tragedy. Survivors should continue to feel a part of the "police family." Invite survivors to police activities to ensure continued contact. Members of the force are encouraged to keep in touch with the surviving family. Close friends and co-workers of the employee 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. The Chief of Police should observe the employee's death date with a short note to the family and / or flowers on the grave. Holidays may be especially difficult for the family, particularly if small children are involved. Increased contact with the survivors and additional support is important at these times. If no court proceedings surround the circumstances of the employee's death, relay all details of the incident to the family at the earliest opportunity.

If criminal violations surround the death of the employee, the department will:

1. Inform the family of all new developments prior to press release.
2. Keep the family apprised of legal and parole proceedings.
3. Introduce the family to the "Victim / Witness Program".
4. Encourage the family to attend the trial, and accompany them whenever possible.
5. Arrange for investigators to meet with family at the earliest opportunity following the trial to answer all their questions.

Funeral Protocol (03-18-09)

Uniform for funerals will be a long sleeve shirt, tie and hats. Members of the honor guard and pallbearers will wear white gloves. All employees will wear a black sash across the badge. Command staff will wear dress uniform.

Funeral Services (03-18-10)

Employees who attend the funeral services will report to a previously designated assembly point away from the place of services for inspection and briefing. From the assembly point, employees will march to the place of service, timing their arrival to permit immediate entry. Upon entering the building, employees will remove their uniform hats, place them under their left arm, hat brim forward, and move in an orderly manner to the place reserved for them. Employees will remain standing until all employees are in their places and the command, "*Be*

Seated,” is given. Employees will sit with their hats upright in their laps, maintaining a military bearing throughout the service.

At the end of the service, upon receiving the command, “*Employees Rise,*” employees will rise in unison and place their hats under their left arm preparatory to filing past the casket if observing this tradition. If not observing this tradition, the employees will exit in an orderly manner, holding their hats under their left arms until exiting the church / chapel. Upon leaving the building, employees will replace their hats and assemble in a formation at right angles to the hearse. Two ranks should form facing each other, leaving an aisle through which pallbearers and the casket may pass. Employees should form by height and placed at extended intervals unless space is limited. While waiting in formation, employees will stand at parade rest.

When the casket comes into view, the formation will receive a call to attention. The next command will be “*Present Arms.*” All employees will salute and hold this salute until placement of the casket in the hearse. At this time, the command “*Ready, Front*” will occur and employees will return their hands to their sides. After the doors of the hearse are closed, the commands “*First Rank*” (passenger side of the hearse), “*Right Face*” and then, “*Second Rank*” (driver side of the hearse), and then, “*Left Face*” are given so both columns face the hearse. The commander will then dismiss the formation with the command “*Employees Dismissed.*” The employees will then break ranks and leave in a quiet and orderly manner. Employees will then take their assigned places in the motorcade and proceed to the cemetery.

Grave Side Services (03-18-11)

Employees will report to the places reserved for them immediately upon arrival at the gravesite. If indoors, employees will remove their hats upon entering and hold them under their left arms, sit with the hats in their laps, maintaining a military bearing throughout the services. If holding services outdoors, employees will wear their hats. Just prior to the 21-gun salute and taps, the command “*Employees Rise*” (if inside) or “*Attention*” (if outside) will be given. Employees will stand at attention facing the firing team or bugler. When the 21-gun salute and taps have concluded, employees will receive the command “*Employees Dismissed*” and the employees will then break ranks and return to their assigned vehicles.

Honors Accorded (03-18-12)

Any employee who dies in the line of duty will receive full honors if requested by the survivors. This will include a “Casket Watch” during viewing, honor guard, pallbearers, firing squad, taps, military flag-fold and presentation, and motor escort. Any additional honors provided to deceased members or employees of the department, or to deceased members of other law enforcement agencies, shall be at the discretion of the Chief of Police. The Honor Guard Commander has responsibility for coordinating and directing the activities of the Honor Guard, Casket Watch, pallbearers, firing squad, bugler, and flag presentation.

Casket Watch (03-18-13)

The Casket Watch is usually comprised of employees from the Honor Guard. However, volunteers may stand watch at the discretion of the Honor Guard Commander. Employees assigned to the Casket Watch must present an excellent uniform appearance and conform to all current grooming regulations. The dress uniform, including hat, blouse, and white gloves, will be worn for the Casket Watch. The watch will divide into shifts with two (2) employees standing thirty-minute shifts. If the family wishes, an informal watch can take place after the viewing concludes for the day. The Casket Watch moves in slow cadence. This includes marching, movements, and saluting. The Honor Guard Commander will post the watch and the employees will position themselves at or near the head and foot of the deceased employee.

Honor Guard (03-18-14)

Members of the Honor Guard will assemble at a location near the service (church, funeral home, chapel, or cemetery) for inspection by the Honor Guard Commander. The Honor Guard Commander will execute all commands.

Pallbearers (03-18-15)

If the family requests pallbearers, the Chief of Police will select employees. Pallbearers come under the direction of the Honor Guard Commander. They will report to the funeral home, or a previously designated place for inspection, instructions, and seating arrangements.

Procedural Variation (03-18-16)

Personnel shall follow the procedures outlined in this section in most cases. The Chief of Police shall make any changes because of a manpower shortage, the unusual size of the funeral, the type of service, the physical arrangement of the place of service, or for any other reason shall be made by the Chief of Police.

Post Actions (03-18-17)

Supervisors and members of JCPD shall monitor employees in the period following the incident to ensure any concerns are referred to the proper counseling, EAP and/or guidance is provided as necessary.