

DALTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

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<i>Subject</i> Line-of-Duty Deaths or Serious Injuries		
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I. Policy

It is the policy of the Dalton Police Department to provide liaison assistance to the immediate survivors of an employee of the Department who dies or is seriously injured in the line of duty and to provide tangible and emotional support during this traumatic period of readjustment for the surviving family. The Chief of Police may institute certain parts of this order for cases of an employee's natural death.

II. Definitions

- A. *Line-of-duty death or serious injury* – Any action, felonious or accidental, which claims the life of or seriously injures an active duty Officer who was performing police functions, either while on or off duty. Also, any felonious action that claims the life of or seriously injures a non-sworn employee who was performing his / her assigned duties.
- B. *Survivors* – Immediate family members of the deceased employee, to include spouse, children, parents, siblings, fiancé / fiancée, and / or significant others.

III. Procedures

A. Death or Serious Injury Notification

The following procedures shall be adhered to in cases of line-of-duty deaths and in cases of seriously injured employees with poor prognoses of survival. These procedures should be followed, whenever possible, with the understanding that the wishes of the family take precedence over the desires of the Department. Department members providing services and assistance to family members and survivors shall take all possible measures to accommodate their needs, wishes, and desires but shall not make statements or commitments to family members that cannot be met.

1. The name of the seriously injured or deceased employee shall not be released to the media or other parties before immediate survivors, living in the area, are notified.
2. The Chief of Police, Division Commander, or Watch Commander shall designate an Officer to inform the immediate family of the employee's

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condition or death. If not immediately available, the senior ranking Officer on duty shall make the appointment.

3. Notification of the immediate family should be made as soon as possible and, if possible, coincidental with command staff notifications.
4. Notification of family in the immediate area should be made in person and, whenever appropriate, with another person, such as a police Chaplain. Whenever the health of immediate family members is a concern, emergency medical services personnel shall be requested to stand by.
5. If the opportunity to get the family to the hospital exists, notification Officers shall inform the hospital liaison Officer that the family is on its way. In such cases, immediate transportation shall be provided for the family rather than waiting for any other members of the Departmental delegation to arrive. If the employee has died, notification shall be made to the survivors in as forthright and empathetic a manner as possible.
6. Communication of information concerning the employee and the incident shall, whenever possible, be restricted to the telephone to avoid interception by the media or others. Should the media obtain the employee's name prematurely, the ranking Officer shall request that the information be withheld until proper notification can be made.
7. The notification Officer shall be responsible for identification of additional family 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.
8. The notification Officer shall submit a written report to the Chief of Police specifying the identity, time, and place of family notified.

B. Assisting Family at the Hospital

Whenever possible, the Chief of Police shall join the family at the hospital in order to emphasize the Department's support. The next highest-ranking Officer to arrive at the hospital shall serve as or designate a hospital liaison Officer, who shall be responsible for coordinating the arrival of immediate family, Departmental personnel, the media, and others and assume the following responsibilities:

1. Arrange for waiting facilities for immediate family and a press staging area. The desires of the family should be followed with regard to their accessibility to other employees, friends, and the media.
2. Ensure that medical personnel provide pertinent medical information on the employee's condition to the family before any other parties.
3. Assist family members, in accordance with their desires, but subject to approval of medical providers, in gaining access to the injured or deceased employee.

RESTRICTED LAW ENFORCEMENT DATA

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4. Provide hospital personnel with all necessary information on billing for medical services. The liaison Officer should ensure that all medical bills are directed to the appropriate Departmental authority and that they are not forwarded to the employee's family or other survivors.
5. Arrange transportation for the family and other survivors upon their departure from the hospital.
6. Ensure that immediate family members are provided with appropriate assistance at the hospital.

C. Appointment of the Department Coordination Personnel

In the case of a line-of-duty death, the designated Departmental Officer(s) shall begin serving in the following capacities: Department liaison, funeral liaison, benefits coordinator, and family support advocate. In addition, the Chief of Police or his / her designee shall:

1. Make additional personnel assignments to assist in handling incoming phone calls and inquiries and to direct the public to appropriate personnel.
2. Ensure that the employee assistance program is utilized, if necessary, to assist surviving family members and emphasize the family's right to psychological services.
3. Ensure that other employees are provided the opportunity to participate in critical incident stress debriefings.

D. Department Liaison

The Department liaison Officer shall serve as a facilitator between the family and the Department. The Department liaison Officer shall be the Division Commander or his / her designee of the deceased employee's division. This Officer shall work closely with the funeral liaison Officer to ensure that the needs and requests of the family are fulfilled. This includes, but is not necessarily limited to, the following:

1. Providing oversight of travel and lodging arrangements for out-of-town family members.
2. Identifying alternative churches and reception halls that will accommodate the employee's funeral. These alternatives shall be presented to the family who will make the final determination.
3. Coordinating all official law enforcement notifications and arrangements, to include the Honor Guard, pallbearers, traffic control, and liaison with visiting law enforcement agencies.
4. Assisting family members in dealing with general media inquiries and advising them of Department concerns on what they may say to the media specifically.
5. Providing liaison with the media, to include coordination of any statements and press conferences. The Department liaison Officer shall also ensure

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that members of the Department are aware of restrictions regarding release of any information that might undermine future legal proceedings.

6. Ensuring that security checks of the survivors' residence(s) are initiated immediately following the incident and for as long as necessary thereafter.

E. Funeral Liaison

The funeral liaison Officer shall serve as facilitator between the decedent employee's family and the Department during the wake and funeral. The funeral liaison Officer shall be the deceased employee's immediate Supervisor. The funeral liaison Officer is responsible for:

1. Meeting with family members and explaining his / her responsibilities to them.
2. Being available to the family prior to and throughout the wake and funeral.
3. Ensuring that the needs and wishes of the family are known to the Department.
4. Assisting the family in working with the funeral director regarding funeral arrangements.
5. Subject to executive privilege, as provided by law, relaying any information to the family concerning the circumstances of the decedent employee's death and appropriate information regarding any investigation.
6. Determining the need for travel arrangements for out-of-town family members and any other special needs of the family during the funeral and reporting this information to the Department liaison.
7. Briefing the family members on the procedures involved in the law enforcement funeral.

F. Benefits Coordinator

The benefits coordinator shall be the Chief of Police's Administrative Assistant. The benefits coordinator is responsible for:

1. Filing workers' compensation claims and related paperwork.
2. Presenting information on all benefits available to the family.
3. Documenting inquiries and interest in public donations to the family and establishing a mechanism for receipt of such contributions, as appropriate.
4. Preparing all documentation of benefits and payments due to survivors, to include the nature and amount of benefits to be received by each beneficiary, the schedule of payments, and the name of a contact person or facilitator at each benefit or payment office.

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5. Filing all benefits paperwork and maintaining contact with the family in order to ensure that benefits are being received. A copy of benefits documentation shall be provided to all survivors affected and explained to each of them.
6. Advising the surviving family of the role of police associations and organizations and the nature of support programs that they sponsor for law enforcement survivors.

G. Family Support Advocate

The family support advocate shall be a Department Chaplain. The family support advocate serves in a long-term liaison and support capacity for the surviving family. The duties of this individual include:

1. Providing contact with surviving family members in order to keep them abreast of criminal proceedings relating to the death of their family member.
2. Accompanying surviving family members to criminal proceedings, explaining the nature of the proceedings, and introducing them to prosecutors and other persons, as required.
3. Identifying all support services available to family members and working on their behalf to secure any services necessary.
4. Maintaining routine contact with family members to provide companionship and emotional support and maintaining an ongoing relationship between the Department and the immediate family.
5. Relaying the concerns and needs of the family to those individuals or organizations that may provide assistance and encouraging others to visit and help, as necessary.

H. General Funeral Procedures

1. Uniforms
 - a. Class A – Official Dress Uniform described in policy GO89-3.3, Uniform and Employee Appearance Standards.
 - b. Members of the Honor Guard shall wear the uniform described in policy GO89-3.3, Uniform and Employee Appearance Standards.
 - c. A black sash shall be worn across the badge.
2. Funeral Services
 - a. Personnel who attend the funeral services shall report to a pre-designated assembly point away from the place of services for inspection and briefing.
 - b. From the assembly point, personnel shall march to the place of service, timing their arrival to permit immediate entry.

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- c. Upon entering the building, personnel shall remove their uniform hats, placing them under their left arm, hat brim forward, and move in an orderly manner to the place reserved for them.
- d. Members shall remain standing until all members are in their places and the command, "*BE SEATED*," is given.
- e. Members shall sit with their hats upright in their laps, maintaining a military-style bearing throughout the service.
- f. At the end of the service, personnel, upon receiving the command, "*OFFICERS RISE*," shall rise in unison and place their hats under their left arm, preparatory to filing past the casket. They shall hold their hats in this position until they have passed the casket and arrived outside.
- g. Upon leaving the building, personnel shall replace their hats and assemble in formation at right angles to the hearse.
 - (1) Two ranks shall be formed facing each other, leaving an aisle through which pallbearers and the casket may pass.
 - (2) Personnel shall be assembled by height. They will normally be dressed at extended intervals but may be dressed at close intervals if space is limited.
 - (3) While waiting in formation, personnel shall stand at parade rest.
- h. When the casket comes into view, the formation shall be called to attention. The next command shall be "*PRESENT ARMS*." All personnel salute and hold this salute until the casket is placed into the hearse. At this time, the command, "*READY, TWO*" shall be given, and personnel shall return their hands to their sides.
- i. After the doors of the hearse are closed, the command "*FIRST RANK, (passenger side of hearse) RIGHT FACE*" and "*SECOND RANK, (driver's side of hearse) LEFT FACE*," is given so that the two columns are facing the hearse.
- j. With the command, "*OFFICERS DISMISSED*," the members shall break ranks and leave in a quiet and orderly manner.
- k. Members shall then take their assigned places in the motorcade and proceed to the cemetery.

3. Gravesite Services

Personnel shall report to the places that have been reserved for them, immediately upon arrival at the gravesite. If indoors, personnel shall remove their hats and hold them under their left arm. All personnel shall sit with hats in laps throughout the services. If services are held outdoors, personnel shall wear their hats.

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4. Honors Accorded

- a. Any Officer who dies in the line-of-duty shall be accorded full honors, if requested by the survivors. This shall include the casket watch during viewing, pallbearers, and motor escort.
- b. The Department liaison of the employee who died in the line-of-duty shall be responsible for notifying the Honor Guard Commander and shall coordinate and direct the actions of the casket watch, pallbearers, and rifle squad. The Department liaison shall coordinate any motor escort.
- c. Members from other public safety agencies may be used to staff the casket watch, rifle squad, and / or motor escort. The Honor Guard Commander shall be responsible for coordinating and assigning tasks to members from other public safety agencies.
- d. Casket Watch
 - (1) The casket watch is usually comprised of Officers from the Honor Guard, however, volunteers may stand watch at the discretion of the Honor Guard Commander. Officers who are assigned to the casket watch must present an excellent uniform appearance and conform to all current grooming regulations. Any Officer standing casket watch shall pass a visual inspection by the Honor Guard Commander or his / her designee prior to deployment.
 - (2) The Honor Guard uniform shall be worn by members of the Honor Guard for the casket watch. If non-Honor Guard members are used, long sleeve shirt and tie, uniform hat, and white gloves shall be worn.
 - (3) Officers shall position themselves at or near the head and feet of the deceased Officer. The watch shall be divided into shifts with two (2) Officers standing generally twenty (20) minutes at a time.
 - (4) If the family wishes, an informal watch can take place after the viewing has been concluded for the day.
- e. Pallbearers
 - (1) If pallbearers are requested by the family, the Honor Guard or other Department members shall serve in this capacity.
 - (2) Pallbearers shall be under the direction of the Honor Guard Commander. They shall report to the funeral home as directed for instructions and seating arrangements.

I. Procedural Variations

1. The procedures outlined in this directive shall be followed in most cases.

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Any changes made necessary by a shortage of manpower, 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 Department liaison.

2. The Chief of Police may institute certain parts of this order for cases of an employee's natural death or the death of a retiree of this Department.
3. Any additional honors to be accorded to deceased employees of the Department or to deceased members of other public safety agencies shall be at the discretion of the Chief of Police.

This policy supersedes any previous policies issued.

BY ORDER OF

CHIEF OF POLICE

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