


# TEXARKANA POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDERS MANUAL

<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>Line of Duty Death</b>		
<b>NUMBER</b>	1102.14	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE</b>	February 15, 2011
<b>Scheduled Review Date</b>	March 01, 2022	<b>ISSUE DATE</b>	February 15, 2011
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<b>APPROVED BY</b>		(Reserved for Expansion)	

## I. Purpose and Scope

- A. The Texarkana Police Department recognizes the law enforcement profession is inherently dangerous. This policy establishes procedures and guidelines that provide for the proper support and emotional care for an officer's family following a line of duty death. The procedures and guidelines contained within this policy defines the Department's responsibilities to provide tangible and intangible emotional support during this traumatic period of readjustment for the surviving family.

## II. Policy

- A. It shall be the policy of the Texarkana Police Department to provide liaison assistance to the immediate survivors of an officer who dies in the line of duty—whether feloniously or accidentally—while employed as an active member of the Agency. Such assistance includes a clarification and comprehensive study of the survivor benefits assigned to such a family.
- B. The assistance afforded such a family shall be provided whether the death was unlawful or accidental during an event the officer was performing a police-related function—either on or off-duty—provided the officer was an active member of the Department at the time of the tragedy. The Chief of Police shall reserve the right to institute certain provisions and guidelines contained within this policy for cases surrounding an officer's natural death.
- C. All members of the Agency shall recognize and adhere to the following guidelines established within this policy.

## III. Definitions

- A. **Line-of-Duty Death**—Any action, felonious or accidental, which causes the death of a Texarkana Police Officer who is performing a duty-related function either while on or off-duty.
- B. **Survivors**—Immediate family members of the deceased officer to include the officer's spouse, children, parents, siblings, fiancée and/or significant others.
- C. **Beneficiary**—Those designated by the affected officer as recipients of specific death benefits.
- D. **Benefits**—Financial payments made to the beneficiary to insure financial stability following the loss of a loved one.

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- E. **Funeral Payments**—Financial payments made to the surviving families of an officer killed in the line-of-duty specifically earmarked for funeral expenses.
- F. **Officer Information Packet**—Forms completed by each officer containing their personal information and preferences intended to be accessed only in the event of their death or serious life-threatening injury.
  - 1. The sealed envelopes are maintained in Central Records and Communication to facilitate easy access in an emergency. Officers should review the information packet annually on or about the employment anniversary to insure the information remains updated and current.

**IV. Procedure**

- A. The name of a deceased officer shall never be released to the media before the notification of survivors living in the area occurs and is confirmed.
- B. Should knowledge of a medical problem associated with an immediate survivor exist, medical personnel will be dispatched to the residence at the time the death notification is made.
- C. Such notifications shall always be made in person and never alone. The appropriate Shift Commander—along with a Department Chaplain—will normally function in tandem as the notification personnel; however, should neither of these persons be readily accessible, the notification should not be withheld pending their availability.
  - 1. Should an opportunity to get the family to the hospital prior to the officer’s death become available, personnel shall not wait for the appropriate delegation to gather. Normally, the instant the family sees a member of the Department at their residence or place of employment, the family member(s) will know something has happened.
  - 2. During the delivery of such notifications, the personnel delivering the message should ask admittance into the home. Death notifications shall not be delivered from a doorstep.
  - 3. Everyone within the home should be gathered in one location and asked to be seated. The delivery should be made slowly and clearly while providing the family with all of the information known about the incident. All death notifications should include the officer’s name.
  - 4. If the officer has already died, that information will be relayed to the family. Personnel delivering the notification should never give the family a false sense of hope. Death notifications should include the words “dead” or “died” instead of phrases such as “gone away” or “passed away”.
  - 5. Personnel delivering the notification who have been personally and seriously affected by the death should understand showing their individual emotion is very much acceptable. Notifications such as these should contain as much information as possible. Personnel should be prepared for a wide range of possible reactions from the family which may include hysteria, anger, fainting, shock and physical violence.
  - 6. Should the family wish to travel to the hospital, they should be transported within a Department vehicle. It is highly recommended the family members not be allowed to drive themselves to the hospital. Should there be serious resistance, and the family insists on driving themselves, the officer in charge of the death notification shall have another officer accompany them in the car and shall notify the senior officer at the hospital of the family’s impending arrival.
  - 7. Should there be young children inside the home, the Department will ensure childcare arrangements are made. This may involve the need for assistance from co-workers’ spouses

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and/or providing the children transportation to the home of a relative or other similar arrangement.

8. Surviving parents will be afforded the same courtesy of personal notifications if they reside in the same geographical area. Should the parents reside outside of the geographical area, the death notification shall be made by the public safety agency responsible for the delivery of notifications such as these within the respective area.

D. In the event of an on-duty death, external monitoring of police frequencies may be extensive. Whenever possible, communications regarding notifications should be restricted to telephone communication. Should the media happen to obtain the affected officer's name, they will be asked to withhold the information pending the notification of the officer's family.

**E. Assistance to Affected Employees**

1. Officers who were on the scene—or those who arrived moments after another officer was critically injured or killed—should be relieved of their duties as quickly as possible.
2. Police witnesses and other officers who may become emotionally affected by the circumstances will attend a Critical Incident Stress debriefing session conducted by a trained mental health professional.

**F. Assisting the Family at the Hospital**

1. The first supervisor—other than the Chief of Police or his/her representative—to arrive at the hospital shall become the Hospital Liaison. The Hospital Liaison shall be responsible for facilitating and coordinating information and activities of the hospital personnel, the officer's family, other police officers, the media and all other interested people. Although not inclusive, the following is a list of the Hospital Liaison's responsibilities:
  - a. Coordinate with the hospital personnel and ensure an appropriate waiting facility is arranged that can accommodate the Chief of Police, the Notification Officer and others identified and aligned with the immediate survivors.
  - b. Coordinate with the hospital personnel and ensure an appropriate area is secured that will allow fellow police officers to assemble.
  - c. Establish a press staging/assembly area. The Hospital Liaison should contact the Public Information Officer for assistance with media management and inquiries.
  - d. Ensure the medical personnel relay pertinent information surrounding the officer's condition to the family on a timely basis. Such information shall be supplied to the family before being released to others. The Hospital Liaison shall ensure the family receives updated information regarding the affected officer's condition upon their arrival at the hospital.
  - e. Ensure the appropriate administrative personnel within the hospital are notified to direct all medial bills relating to the affected officer to the Texarkana Police Department.
    - (1) It is imperative the family not receive any of these medical bills at their residence. This may require the Hospital Liaison to contact the hospital a second time during normal business hours to ensure proper billing occurs.
  - f. Arrange transportation for the family upon their return to their residence.

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2. If it is possible for the family to visit the affected officer before death, the family should be provided that opportunity. The Hospital Liaison should coordinate this effort with the medical personnel handling the affected officer's treatment.
  - a. The Hospital Liaison should ensure the family is prepared for the things they might encounter inside the emergency room. Upon the family's request, the Hospital Liaison should ensure a Department official accompanies the family into the room.
  - b. Medical personnel should advise the family of the hospital's visitation policies, and in the event of death, explain why an autopsy is necessary.
3. The Notification Officer should remain at the hospital during the period in which the family is present. Department personnel should avoid projecting an overly protective atmosphere towards the affected officer's family. Instead, the family should receive specific information regarding the circumstances that caused the traumatic event and afforded time with the deceased officer.

**G. Support of the Family During the Wake and Funeral**

1. The Chief of Police—or his/her designee—will meet with the affected officer's family at their residence in an effort to determine their wishes regarding the Department's participation in the preparation of the officer's funeral and other services. All possible assistance shall be rendered.
2. Upon the family's approval, the Chief of Police will assign a Family Liaison Officer. Simultaneously, the Chief will assign a Department Liaison Officer and a Benefits Coordinator.

**H. Family Liaison Officer**

1. The selection, function and responsibility of the Family Liaison Officer is critical during the wake of any such traumatic event. An attempt should be made to assign someone who enjoyed a close relationship with the affected officer and his/her family. Whenever possible, male/female teams should be utilized to act as Family Liaison Officers thereby preventing bonding between the survivor(s) and an individual officer during this vulnerable period of the survivor's life.
2. The Family Liaison Officer's position is not a "decision making" assignment. Instead, the Family Liaison Officer shall act as a facilitator between the family and the Department.
3. Although not inclusive, the following is a list of the Family Liaison Officer's responsibilities:
  - a. Ensure the needs and wishes of the family are placed in front of and take precedence over the wishes of the Department.
  - b. Assisting the family with the funeral arrangements and ensuring they are aware of what the Department can offer should they decide to have a police funeral. Should the family choose a police funeral, the Family Liaison Officer will brief the family of the procedures of a police funeral to include the presentation of the flag, the playing of Taps and the function of the firing party. Additional information regarding these procedures can be found in [\*General Order 1102.18---Honor Guard and Military Bearing\*](#).
  - c. Insuring the family remains informed concerning the death and the continuing investigation.
  - d. Providing as much assistance as possible to the family. Although not inclusive, such assistance includes overseeing travel and lodging arrangements for visiting family members, arranging food for the family, meeting the family's child care needs and issues surrounding transportation.

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- e. Remaining constantly available to the family. The Family Liaison Officer(s) will be issued a Department cellular phone to facilitate communication with the family.
- f. Arranging and coordinating for financial assistance from public safety organizations, churches, businesses and fraternal organizations regarding out of town travel and food for funeral attendees following the burial.
- g. Ensuring the organization Concerns of Police Survivors (C.O.P.S.) is notified of the circumstances surrounding this traumatic event. This organization can be contact at (573) 346-4911 or at <http://www.nationalcops.org>.
- h. Assisting the survivor(s) with the completion of the C.O.P.S. Family Contact Form which can be located after accessing the above website.
- i. The Family Liaison Officer(s) acts as a long-term liaison with the surviving family to ensure close contact is maintained between the Department and the surviving family so their needs are met for as long as the family feels the support is needed.
- j. The Family Liaison Officer(s) will provide all relevant information borne from any court proceeding surrounding the circumstances of the officer's death to the family at the earliest opportunity. Should criminal violations surround the officer's death, the Family Liaison will ensure the following obligations are met:
  - (1) Inform the family of all new developments prior to the information's release to the media;
  - (2) Keep the family apprised of the legal proceedings;
  - (3) Introduce the family to the victims' assistance specialists available through the Prosecuting Attorney's Office and the court system;
  - (4) Encourage the family to attend the trial and accompany them whenever possible; and
  - (5) Arrange for investigators to meet with the family at the earliest opportunity following the trial to answer any questions the family might have.

**I. Department Liaison Officer**

- 1. To provide for the effective coordination of resources throughout the Department, the position of Department Liaison Officer will normally be assigned to a Division Commander.
- 2. Although not inclusive, the following is a list of the Department Liaison Officer's responsibilities:
  - a. Work in tandem with the Family Liaison Officer(s) to ensure the needs of the family are fulfilled.
  - b. In conjunction with the Public Information Officer, ensure the news media is managed throughout the event. Should the family decide to submit to an interview with the media, the Public Information Officer should attend the interview and "screen" the questions presented to the family so as not to jeopardize the investigation and subsequent legal proceedings.
  - c. Meeting with the following people to coordinate funeral activities and establish an itinerary:
    - (1) The Chief of Police and Division Commanders;

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- (2) The Funeral Director;
  - (3) The family's minister or priest;
  - (4) The Cemetery Director; and
  - (5) The Honor Guard Supervisor.
- d. Directing and coordinating the funeral activities of the Department and the visiting police departments in accordance with the family's wishes. The Department Liaison Officer will ensure the Chief of Police and all Division Commanders are briefed regarding the funeral arrangements.
  - e. Preparing a teletype release that includes the following information while ensuring the teletype is properly disseminated:
    - (1) The name of the deceased officer;
    - (2) The date and time of the officer's death;
    - (3) The circumstances surrounding the officer's death;
    - (4) Information regarding funeral arrangements to include whether the service will be private or a police funeral;
    - (5) Indicate the type of uniform to be worn;
    - (6) Information relating to the expression of sympathy in lieu of flowers; and
    - (7) Contact information of those who will be instructed to provide additional information to visiting police departments and a request for an indication of their desire to attend.
  - f. If necessary, establish a command center to coordinate information in response to the tragedy.
  - g. Issuing an administrative order reflecting the wearing and display of mourning badges.
  - h. Should the family desire a flag presentation from the Chief of Police, ensure the Chief of Police is briefed concerning this request and an American Flag is obtained.
  - i. Determining if the family desires a burial in uniform. Should the family desire such a burial, notify the Services Division Commander and request a uniform and all accouterments and ensure these are delivered to the funeral home. **Department weapons are not considered accouterments.**
  - j. Assigning officers for usher duties at the church.
  - k. Arrange for the delivery of the affected officer's personal belongings to the family.
  - l. Ensuring the surviving parents are afforded the proper recognition during the ceremony and the proper positioning arrangements are made for them during the funeral and procession.
  - m. Arranging the availability of a physician should any of the family members suffer from a medical condition.

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- n. Coordinating a traffic management plan with other jurisdictions during the viewing, the funeral and the funeral's procession.
- o. Assigning an officer to remain at the family's residence during the viewing and funeral.
- p. Acknowledge visiting and assisting departments while ensuring a roster of all visiting departments is maintained and includes the following information:
  - (1) The name and address of the attending agencies;
  - (2) The name of the attending agencies' Chiefs of Police;
  - (3) The number of officers attending;
  - (4) The number of officers attending the reception after the funeral; and
  - (5) The number of vehicles involved in the procession.
- q. In conjunction with the Family Liaison Officer(s), ensure the necessary arrangements concerning food and lodging have been secured.
- r. Arrange for routine checks of the family's residence by the Uniform Patrol Division for 6-8 weeks following the funeral. This service is necessary due to the large amount of money likely to pass through the residence following the officer's death.

**J. Benefits Coordinator**

- 1. The Benefits Coordinator will gather information concerning benefits and funeral payments made available to the family. The Benefits Coordinator has the Department's full support needed to fulfill this responsibility to the survivors. The Benefits Coordinator shall be completely responsible for filing the appropriate benefit paperwork and following through with the family to ensure those benefits entitled are being received.
- 2. Although not inclusive, the Benefits Coordinator shall be responsible for the following:
  - a. Filing Worker's Compensation claims and related paperwork.
  - b. Contacting the appropriate City offices and retirement system without delay to ensure the beneficiary receives death benefits, retirement benefits, the officer's remaining paychecks and payment for the officer's remaining accrued leave time.
  - c. Gathering information on all benefit and funeral payments available to the family to include the Public Safety Officers Benefits Act.
  - d. Assisting the family with establishing any special trust funds or educational funds requested by the family.
  - e. Notifying police organizations such as the Arkansas Municipal Police Officers Association of the officer's death and ensure all benefits in which the family is entitled are received by the beneficiary.
  - f. Generate a document containing the various benefits and funeral payments due to the family. Such a document should contain the named beneficiaries, the contact information affiliated with each organization responsible for payment of the entitlement and the date the beneficiary can expect to receive the entitlement.

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- g. Meeting with the surviving family a few days after the funeral to discuss the benefits in which they are entitled. The document generated pursuant to paragraph (f) above should be given to the family at the time this meeting takes place.
    - (1) If there are surviving children from a former marriage, the guardian of such children should also receive a copy of the document that defines the entitlements the children are eligible to receive.
    - (2) Attention should be given to the revocation of health care benefits. Most providers allow a 30 day grace period before cancelling or imposing additional monthly payments upon the survivors.
  - h. Six months after the funeral, the Benefits Coordinator should meet with the family again to ensure they are receiving the entitled benefits.
3. For additional information regarding death benefits, refer to [General Order 1101.16--Line of Duty Death and Disability Benefits.](#)

**K. Continued Support for the Family**

- 1. All members of the Agency must remain sensitive to the needs of the surviving family long after the officer's death. The grieving process has no timetable, and more than one-half of surviving spouses can expect to develop a post traumatic stress reaction following the tragedy.
- 2. Survivors should continue to feel as though they are a continued part of the Department's "police family". They should continue to be invited to attend Department activities in an effort to facilitate continued contact and support.
- 3. Members of the Agency are encouraged to remain in-touch with the surviving family. As long as the family expresses a desire, close friends, co-workers and officials should make arrangements to visit the family at their residence from time to time.
- 4. The Chief of Police should observe the officer's death date with a short note to the family, placing flowers on the officer's grave or some other means of observance.
- 5. Holidays may be especially difficult for the family particularly if small children are involved. Increased contact with the family and additional support is important during these periods.

**V. Honors Accorded**

- A. If requested by the surviving family, any Texarkana Police Officer who dies in the line of duty will be accorded full honors.
  - 1. Full honors include the use of the Texarkana Police Department Honor Guard, casket watch during the viewing, pallbearers, firing squad, the playing of Taps, American Flag folding ceremony and presentation and motor escort.
- B. If requested by the surviving family, any retired Texarkana Police Officer who has died will be accorded limited honors.
  - 1. Limited honors in these circumstances will include the playing of Taps, American Flag folding ceremony and its presentation as well as a motor escort.
- C. If requested by the surviving family, any Texarkana Police Officer who dies by a method other than in the line of duty will be accorded limited honors.

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1. Limited honors in these circumstances include the casket watch during viewing, the playing of Taps and a motor escort.
- D. The Chief of Police, or his designee, reserves the right to amend this section when deemed necessary.

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