



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY OPERATING PROCEDURES MANUAL		
CHAPTER 110	SEVERE ON-DUTY INJURY OR DEATH PROTOCOL	
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	Authorities:	Click here to enter text.
	Applicability:	All Department Employees
	Special Instructions:	Click here to enter text.

110.100 INTRODUCTION

The Department of Public Safety establishes a policy of ensuring assistance is provided to a deceased employee’s immediate family

110.300 GENERAL POLICY

- A. **Department commitment to assist the family.** In the event of a severe on-duty death or an on-the-job death or the death of an officer under any circumstance, the department will offer to provide coordinated assistance to the deceased employee’s immediate family.
- B. **Coordinator appointed.** The severely injured or deceased employee's Detachment Commander or civilian supervisor shall designate a Coordinator, within the department, to represent the family and the department in assuring that all assistance that may be required by the family is met.
- C. **Purpose of the coordinator.** The duties of the Coordinator are to assist the family in dealing with the department, the State of Alaska, and the Federal Government in processing benefit claims and with funeral and burial arrangements, as needed. The Coordinator must be sensitive to the wishes of the family and not force anything on to them and yet be prepared to assist them in making difficult decisions. The Coordinator will not make decisions or suggest options that are beyond their ability or designation to carry out. The Coordinator will advise the family of others with whom to engage such as pastor, lawyer, accountant, etc.
- D. **Focus of efforts.** Services provided to the severely injured or deceased employee’s immediate family may vary, depending on the needs; however, the following subsections shall be considered in offering assistance.

110.310 ON-DUTY INJURY OR DEATH NOTIFICATIONS

All necessary efforts will be made to make immediate notification to the next-of-kin. After the department determines who should be notified, law enforcement personnel will use all resources to make immediate notification to the next-of-kin and other family members. Having family members or clergy present during the notification of the next-of-kin is normally helpful, but may not be possible, due to the reports generated by the press. In either event, the employee making notification should be prepared to contact family or clergy immediately after the notification to have their assistance. The officer making notification will not leave the next-of-kin alone. They will provide the family all the assistance that they can until a Coordinator is

appointed. Any family members whom the next-of-kin wishes to have the department notify will be contacted.

Severely injured, on-the-job deaths, or deaths related to on-the-job activities require immediate notification to Workers Compensation. The Coordinator will work closely with the severely injured or deceased employee's supervisors to complete and submit the required form. See 110.330 B3.

A. Notification Procedures. In the case of the injury or death of a commissioned officer, the assigned support officer, if already assigned, should participate in or facilitate in the initial notification of the family. A timely notification is of the highest priority and supersedes most other considerations.

Notification should be made by at least two commissioned officers, preferably who are known by the family. Officers delivering the notification will be factual, brief, and available after the notification to provide for immediate transportation needs of the family, if any.

If the officer has already died, relay that information promptly. Do not give the family a false sense of hope. Notifying officers will give as much information as possible. Information delivered to the family will have been vetted to ensure 1) it has been verified, and 2) disclosure will not compromise any associated investigation. Notifying officers will be prepared to contact clergy or family members on behalf of the family, if requested.

B. Additional Death Notifications. Additional Considerations:

1. The name of the injured or deceased officer will be released by the PIO or another person designated by the Colonel only after notification of the primary family members.
2. If there is knowledge of a medical condition afflicting a primary survivor, medical personnel will be dispatched to the residence to coincide with the notification along with the notifying personnel.
3. As soon as most DPS families see 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.
 - c. Inform them slowly and clearly of the information you have on the incident.
 - d. It is important to use the officer's name during the notification.
4. Notifying officers must be prepared for unexpected responses from survivors to include hysteria and possible verbal or physical attack, anger, fainting, shock, etc.

110.320 NECESSARY DOCUMENTS/RECORDED RETENTION

A. Essential documents to obtain. The Coordinator will offer assistance to the family to secure required documents within two days after severe injury, death, including birth certificate, marriage license(s), divorce decree(s), will, any police reports, autopsy report, and/or military discharge (DD/214). These forms are necessary for the claiming of benefits.

B. The coordinator shall maintain records. The coordinator shall maintain all obtained records of benefit application, documents, condolences, and other information that may later assist the family.

110.330 MAJOR INCIDENT PLACED UNDER ABI JURISDICTION

A. Obtain certified copies of the death certificate. Once the mortuary has signed the death certificate, the Coordinator will obtain a minimum of 15 copies of the death certificate so copies can be provided to agencies as required.

B. State of Alaska. The Department of Administration, Division of Personnel – Public Protection Section, Payroll Supervisor shall be contacted to ascertain what paperwork is necessary for the family to receive all benefits to which they are entitled to receive from the State of Alaska and to assist in its timely completion.

1. The Coordinator will oversee that Division of Personnel provides an overview of state benefit entitlements such as SBS annuities, deferred compensation, retirement benefits, state insurance, etc., and the specific specialists to contact for each. If the family is uncertain how to proceed in this area, the coordinator shall suggest a financial advisor presence or shall refer them to their financial advisors for processing of benefits.
2. Benefits will be determined by cause of death; therefore, a certified copy of the death certificate is required to process death benefits.
3. On-duty death requires that worker's compensation forms, State of Alaska Report of Occupational Injury or Illness forms, and a Supervisor's Accident Investigation Report be completed.
4. If the deceased employee is overtime eligible, a timesheet reflecting their final pay period hours must be completed and promptly forwarded to the Department of Administration, Division of Personnel, Public Protection Section for unpaid compensation and terminal leave due the beneficiary (ies). The beneficiaries, prior to any compensation released by the State of Alaska, must complete an I-9 form.

C. Veteran's Administration. If the deceased employee was in the armed forces, the Coordinator shall contact Veterans Administration to query what benefits the deceased employee or their beneficiary is entitled to receive. Possible benefits may include supplemental expenses, burial in a national cemetery, burial flag, etc.

D. Social Security. These benefits can be applied for locally by taking a copy of the death certificate, marriage license, DD/214, and divorce degree, if any, to the Social Security Office. In cases of dependent children by a former marriage, the custodial spouse is responsible for ensuring payment of social security benefits.

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E. Other potential organizations. The Coordinator will assist the family in searching for other sources of benefits, some examples of possibilities are:

1. Private insurance.
2. Alaska Police Officers Association, if the deceased was a member.
3. The Fraternal Order of Alaska State Troopers.
4. The National Troopers Coalition.
5. Fraternal organizations: Elks, Lions, Moose, etc.
6. North American Wildlife Officers Association
7. Police Corps (educational benefits and support services)
8. University of Alaska (no cost tuition and supplies for life for all dependents, including spouse)

110.340 CONTACTS WHEN OFFICER'S DEATH IS IN THE LINE OF DUTY

A. C.O.P.S. – CONCERNS OF POLICE SURVIVORS. Assistance and support for family members and relatives of officers killed in the line-of-duty is also available from Concerns of Police Survivors (C.O.P.S.). This is a national organization with an Alaska representative who can be contacted through the APD chaplain's office. Copies of C.O.P.S. publications have been provided to Division and Detachment headquarters of AST and AWT. C.O.P.S. can be reached at (573) 346-4911 or by mail at: Concerns of Police Survivors, Inc., PO Box 3199, Camdenton, Missouri, 65020. [C.O.P.S. Website](#)

B. Federal Government. The Federal government pays a duty award to the family of officers who lose their life in the line of duty in accordance with the Federal Public Safety Officers Benefits Act of 1976.

The Coordinator shall contact the Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program as listed below for current applications. [PSOB Website](#)

For more information call:

Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program Washington, DC.

Toll-free (888) 744-6513 or (202) 307-0635

or write:

Public Safety Officer's Benefit Program Bureau of Justice Assistance

810 7th St, N.W.

Washington, DC. 20531

Email: AskPSOB@usdoj.gov

110.350 FUNERAL SERVICE FOR OFFICERS

- A. *Coordinator may assist with planning the service.*** At the request of family members, the Coordinator may aid the family in planning the services. The mortuary may require prepayment of burial costs before mortuary personnel will sign the death certificate. The mortuary can assist with such sensitive factors as choosing a coffin, and type and location of service.
- B. *Additional planners may be need.*** Additional non-department planners may need to be included due to religious beliefs, fraternal organization procedures, etc.
- C. *A meeting of all planners will be held prior to the service.*** A meeting of all planners will be held prior to the service to discuss the following:
1. Notification of out-of-town personnel and agencies, past commissioners, retired personnel and other dignitaries;
 2. Determine and announce funeral uniform (see OPM 102.530) and assure that white gloves, black armbands, and black tunic braids are available in sufficient quantity;
 3. Where the service will be held and if the location is of adequate size and has VIP seating, etc.;
 4. If there is to be a procession of patrol cars, where they will stage, what route it will take, where will they park when they arrive;
 5. Names of pallbearers, where they will be posted, and their duties during the service;
 6. Formation of law enforcement personnel, location, and their movements during the service; and
 7. Grave site service, honor guard, weapons salute, musician, folding and presentation of the flag (if appropriate).
- D. *Rehearsal by those actively participating.*** The Coordinator will view the location of the service and arrange a rehearsal, whenever practicable, to ensure the tasks performed at the time of the service are carried out smoothly.
- E. *Videotaping of the service by the Department.*** With the approval of the family, the Coordinator will arrange for the department to videotape the service. If the services are taped, a copy of the tape will be sent to the Academy and a copy offered to the family.

110.360 RECOVERY OF DEPARTMENT EQUIPMENT ISSUED TO DECEASED EMPLOYEE

- A. *All property at the post or in vehicles to be secured.*** The Coordinator will assign someone to secure and return to the Coordinator, all department equipment and personal property of the deceased at their assigned post and within any assigned vehicle. The Coordinator will separate the department property from the personal property. The Coordinator will inspect all of the deceased's personal property and make arrangement for its return to the family as appropriate.

B. All property at the residence to be secured. All other issued equipment kept by the employee at their residence will be secured by the Coordinator, at an appropriate time, and will be checked with the property inventory form on file with supply.

C. A uniform may be used for the burial. Consistent with the family's wishes, uniform items of the officer may be used in conjunction with the burial.

110.900 DEFINITIONS

Immediate family – Spouse, domestic partner, parent, or children

Severe Injury – For purposes of this chapter severe injury has the same meaning as serious physical injury as defined under AS 11.81.900