

WOLFEBORO POLICE DEPARTMENT

SOP 1.12

Date Issued: 12/27/2019

Review: 02/24/2021

[Note: This written directive is for the internal governance of the Wolfeboro Police Department and, as provided by RSA 516:36, is not intended and should not be interpreted to establish a higher standard of care in any civil or criminal action than would otherwise be applicable under existing law.]

**By Order of:
Dean J. Rondeau, Chief of Police**

DEATH OR HOSPITALIZATION OF AN EMPLOYEE

Purpose To provide appropriate emotional care for the seriously injured, ill, or deceased employee's family.

Policy It shall be the responsibility of the Wolfeboro Police Department to provide liaison assistance to the primary family of an officer who:

- Dies in the line-of-duty
- Is hospitalized for an indefinite period
- 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 family.

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

Line-of-Duty Injury or Illness: For the purpose of this policy, a line-of-duty injury or illness shall be an injury.

Survivors: Primary family members of the injured or deceased officer, including spouse, children, grandchildren, parents, grandparents, siblings, fiancé, and/or significant others.

Beneficiary: Those designated by the officer as recipients of specific death benefits.

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Benefits: Financial payments made to the family to assist with financial stability following the loss of a loved one.

Funeral Payments: Financial payments made to the surviving families of an officer killed in the line-of-duty, which are specifically earmarked, for funeral expenses.

Notification of Chief

The Chief and Captain shall be notified of the death or hospitalization of a member immediately and a designee appointed as a liaison.

Under no circumstances should the name of the deceased member be released to the media before the immediate family is notified

Notification to the Family

The following steps should be made, if applicable, in notifying family of the death or hospitalization of a member:

Step	Action
1	Medical personnel should be available, if needed, especially if there is knowledge of a medical problem with a family member
2	The Chief or his designee should make the notification with a member of NEPBA local #39. The Department Victim Advocate should also be present if possible. Notification should not be delayed, if the family needs to get to the hospital prior to the death of the member
3	Inform members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slowly and clearly of the information available • If details are known advised the family • Never give the family a sense of false hope • Use words such as “died” and “dead” rather than sayings like “gone away”
4	Police vehicles should transport them to the hospital If they insist on driving, an officer should accompany them in the car
5	The notification officer should notify the hospital that the family is in route
6	If the family lives outside of the Wolfeboro area, the Chief or designee shall: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact the local police agency for assistance in the notification • Work with that agency to assist in anyway
7	In the event of an on-duty death, the external monitoring of police frequencies may be extensive. Communications regarding notifications should be restricted to the telephone or cell phone

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	whenever possible. If the media has somehow obtained the officer's name, they should be advised to withhold the information, pending the notification of the next of kin.
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Assistance for Affected Officers

- Officers who were on scene or who arrived after an officer was critically injured or killed should be relieved as soon as possible
- Police employees who may have been emotionally affected by the serious injury or death of another officer should be referred to counseling.

Family Assistance at the Hospital

A hospital liaison shall be designated. The hospital liaison is responsible for coordinating the activities of hospital personnel, the officer's family, police officers, the media, and others. These responsibilities include:

- Arrange with hospital personnel to provide for appropriate waiting facility for the family, the Chief of Police, the notification officer, and only those others requested by the immediate family.
- Arrange with the hospital personnel to provide a separate area for fellow officers and friends to assemble.
- Arrange with hospital to provide a media/press area.
- Work with medical personnel to relay pertinent information regarding an officer's condition to the family on a timely basis and before such information is released to others.
- Ensure that the family is updated regarding the incident and the officer's condition upon their arrival at the hospital.
- Arrange transportation for the family back to their residence

The notification officer(s) should remain at the hospital while the family is present and assist them in any way possible

Support of the Family During the Wake or Funeral

The Chief of Police, or a designee, will meet with the officer's family to determine their wishes regarding departmental participation or assistance in the preparation of the funeral or services. All possible assistance will be rendered.

Continued Support for the Family

The department liaison officer acts as a long-term liaison with the surviving family. The department liaison officer ensures that close contact is maintained between the department and the survivors and that their needs are met for as long as they feel the need for support.

Members of the department are encouraged to reach out to the family, and

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they should be included in department activities and functions, if possible.

**Survivor
Benefits**

Survivor benefits if applicable
Contact Town Manager or Finance Director regarding Town Benefits.

**Providing
Support
during
Criminal Legal
Proceedings**

If criminal violations surround the death, the family will be informed of all developments prior to any press release.
The assistance of the State, County, and Town Victim/Witness Advocate will be sought and contact information provided.

**Line-of-Duty
Deaths in
Other NH or
NE Agencies**

The Chief, or his designee, shall be notified immediately.
The Chief will act as liaison with the NH Association of Chiefs of Police and order flags at half mast or black ribbons to be worn.
Black looped ribbons can be worn by civilian personnel.
The Chief will make arrangements, if possible, to send a representative from the department to a NH agency or to an out of state agency.