



Jeffrey R. Gahler,
Sheriff

HARFORD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

Death or Critical Injury of Agency Member

Distribution:	All Employees	Policy Number:	ADM 0506
Responsible Unit:	Services and Support Bureau	Rescinds:	MAN 2000
Original Issued Date:	12/16/21	Revision #:	1
		Latest Revision Date:	01/08/25
Latest Required Review was Completed:	01/08/25	Next Review Due:	12/31/27

1. Purpose

To provide members of the Harford County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) with guidelines and protocols regarding the death or critical injury of Agency members.

2. Policy

The HCSO will provide compassionate support to members and their families following the death or critical injury of an Agency member.

3. Procedures

A. Death Notification

1. Upon confirmation of an Agency member's death, notification by telephone will be conducted by the Shift Supervisor to the following:
 - a. Sheriff;
 - b. Chief Deputy;
 - c. **Line of Duty Team (LODT) Commander;**
 - d. Command Staff;
 - e. Director, Office of Media and Public Relations (OMPR);
 - f. **Critical Incident Stress Management Team Coordinator (ADM 0505);**
 - g. Other law enforcement agencies (after surviving family has been notified) by way of a **Maryland Electronic Telecommunications Enforcement Resources System** message; and
 - h. **Harford County Department of Emergency Services to ensure no further information about the incident is sent out via informational emails regarding the member's information, status, or destination.**

2. The on-scene supervisor at the location of death will:
 - a. Ensure the member is not left alone during transport; and
 - b. Prioritize a deputy to be with the deceased member until LODT arrival.

B. Family Notification

1. Immediately following notification of the appropriate members, the Sheriff or designee will designate a member to conduct the notification.
 - a. A member of the LODT will accompany the notification personnel.
2. If a member is critically injured, the family will be immediately transported to the medical facility, if they desire.
 - a. A member of the LODT will accompany/transport/respond to the medical facility and assist with the transport if needed.

C. Communications and Director of the Office of Media and Public Relations

1. Communications regarding Agency deaths or critical injuries will not be conducted over email and will be limited to telephone or in-person, when practical.
2. All contact with the media will be conducted by the OMPR or designee.
3. The name of the member will not be released to the news media prior to the immediate family being notified.
4. If the news media already has the member's name, the OMPR will request for the media to withhold this information pending notification of the family.

D. Family Assistance at the Hospital

1. Shift Supervisor will:
 - a. Coordinate the arrival of family, Agency officials, LODT, news media and other persons as required; and
 - b. Coordinate with medical facility personnel for the following:
 - i. Segregated areas for family, Sheriff, LODT, and other people as requested by the family; and
 - ii. News media staging area.

E. Family and Staff Support During the Viewing and Funeral

1. Position Designations

- a. Upon a member's death, the Sheriff or designee will assign Agency members to the following positions:
 - i. Funeral Liaison Commander (Command Staff Member);
 - ii. **LODT Commander**; and
 - iii. Family Support Deputy (any member requested by the family).

F. Funeral Liaison Commander

1. **The Funeral Liaison Commander ideally is not selected from within the LODT and will function as the operational portion of the funeral detail.**
2. **The Funeral Liaison Commander will direct funeral activities of the Agency and visiting jurisdictions.**
 - a. **Coordinate all official law enforcement and/or correctional notifications and arrangements for the law enforcement or correctional funeral, including scheduling honor guard, pallbearers, traffic control, and serving as liaison with visiting jurisdictions.**
3. The funeral arrangement decisions will remain with the surviving family.

G. **LODT Commander**

1. **The LODT Commander will operate independently from the Funeral Liaison Commander, assisting with the desires of the family to include the following:**
 - a. **Assist with arrangements for travel and lodging for out-of-town attendees;**
 - b. **Ensure that the residence of the deceased member will receive routine checks during scheduled viewing and funeral times;**
 - c. **Constantly being available to the surviving family and funeral director regarding funeral arrangements; and**
 - d. **Meet with the surviving family and funeral director regarding funeral arrangements.**
2. **The funeral arrangement decisions will remain with the surviving family.**

H. Family Support Deputy

1. The Family Support Deputy will work closely with the Funeral Liaison Commander **and the LODT** to ensure the needs and requests of the family are fulfilled regarding funeral arrangements.
 - a. **A member of the LODT can assist in this role, however this role should be filled by someone outside of the LODT if possible.**

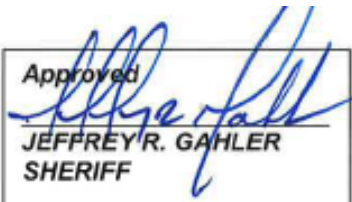
2. The Family Support Deputy will be responsible for the following:
 - a. Keeping the family advised of developments in the case prior to the news media being informed by the Agency;
 - b. Accompanying the surviving family to any criminal proceedings; and
 - c. Assisting the family with their continuing needs.

I. Human Resources

1. Will make appropriate referrals under the guidelines of the Harford County Government Employee Assistance Program for members close to the incident and for the family, if desired.
2. Will file Injured Workers' Insurance Fund claim and related documents.
3. The Human Resources Director will be liaison with the Harford County Human Resources Department to ensure the following are completed:
 - a. Gathering information on all benefits and funeral payments available to the family;
 - b. Preparing documentation of the benefits and funeral payments due to the family; and
 - c. Filing all benefit related documentation and following through with the family to ensure these benefits are received.

4. Summary of Changes

- A. On 1/8/25 a 3-year review was conducted with the following edits:
1. Section 3.A.1. - added the Critical Incident Stress Management Team Coordinator in compliance with policy ADM 0505;
 2. Section 3.F.2. – Changed “the Human Resources Director will be responsible for the following:” to “the Human Resources Director will be liaison with the Harford County Human Resources Department to ensure the following are completed;”
 3. Added the duties of the Funeral Liaison Commander: and
 4. Throughout the document included the use of the Line of Duty Team.


Approved
JEFFREY R. GAHLER
SHERIFF
DATE 1.31.25