

## Line-of-Duty Deaths or Serious Injuries

### 1028.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

It shall be the responsibility of the Urbana Police Department to provide liaison assistance to the family of an officer who dies in the line of duty or who is hospitalized for an indefinite period of time 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 surviving family.

#### 1028.1.1 DEFINITIONS

**Line of Duty Death:** Any action, felonious or accidental, which claims the life of an Urbana Police Officer who is performing work related functions.

**Line of Duty Injury or Illness:** Any injury or systemic illness serious enough that hospitalization or time away from the department is ordered by a physician for an indefinite period.

**Survivors:** Primary family members of the injured or deceased officer, including spouse, children, grandchildren, parents, grandparents, siblings, fiancé, and/or significant others as indicated on the employee notification form.

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

**Benefits:** Financial payments made to the family to assist with financial stability following the line of duty death.

**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.

**Police Officer Line of Duty Death Information Packet:** This packet is a compilation of pages, which details the officer's wishes in the event of a line of duty death. This packet will be provided to new officers during intake and must be completed expeditiously and returned the lieutenant in charge of new officers. The packet(s) will be secured and maintained by the Chief's administrative assistant and will not be examined unless an event occurs. It will be the responsibility of each officer to provide any necessary updates to the packet.

### 1028.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Urbana Police Department to make appropriate notifications and to provide assistance and support to survivors and coworkers of a member who dies in the line of duty.

It is also the policy of this department to respect the requests of the survivors when they conflict with these guidelines, as appropriate.

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#### **1028.3 PROCEDURES**

Refer to “Recommended Procedures for Line of Duty Deaths or Serious Injuries” found on the internal website under Cops Only.

Under no circumstances should an employee of UPD make initial contact with the deceased or injured’s family unless directed to by a commanding officer. Once all the proper notifications are made, then employees are encouraged to support the family.

#### **1028.4 BENEFITS LIAISON OFFICER**

#### **1028.5 CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR THE FAMILY**

Members of the department must remain sensitive to the needs of the survivors long after the officer’s death. The grief process has no timetable and survivors may develop a complicated grief process.

Members of the department are encouraged to keep in touch with the family. Close friends, co-workers and staff should arrange with the family to visit the home from time to time, so long as the family expresses a desire to have these contacts continue.

The department should maintain close contact with the family as long as the family feels need for the support. The family will let it be known when they are ready to move on without the assistance of the department.

#### **1028.6 SUPPORT FOR THE FAMILY AWAITING TRIAL FOR THOSE RESPONSIBLE**

This is a very important part of the grieving process, and there are a number of things that should be done to ensure that the family feels involved.

1. The family should be met with and the circumstances surrounding the officer’s death should be explained to them. If there are investigative reasons why certain details cannot be released prior to the trial, this should be explained to them.
2. The family should never hear of court or parole hearings from the media first. It is the responsibility of the department to keep the family advised of all legal proceedings. The Chief should appoint an officer to handle this responsibility.
3. Family members should be encouraged to attend the trial so they feel they are representing the deceased officer’s interests.
4. A department representative should be assigned to accompany the family throughout the trial. This officer can explain the proceedings to the family and advise them of testimony that may be upsetting to them. The officer should remember not to be overly protective of the family. It is the decision of the family as to whether or not to attend the trial.
5. Members of the department should be encouraged to attend the trial. This is not only comforting to the family but also may be beneficial to the members of the department that were close to the deceased officer.

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#### **1028.7 POST INCIDENT STRESS OF DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL**

Family members, friends and close associates of the deceased officer will experience various levels of grief. The need for the police department to arrange for psychological assistance or post incident debriefing cannot be stressed strongly enough. Although officers deal every day with man's inhumanity to man, the loss of a co-worker is often the most traumatic experience that an officer may experience in his or her career.

Counseling for all employees can be provided through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

#### **1028.8 DEPARTMENT CHAPLAIN**

#### **1028.9 PROCEDURAL VARIATION**

The procedures that have been outlined in this directive will be followed in most cases. Any changes that are made necessary by shortage of manpower, the unusual size of the funeral, the type of service, the physical arrangement of the place of the service or for any other reasons, shall be made by the Officer in Charge (OIC) in conjunction with the Chief of Police.

At the discretion of the Chief of Police, department honors may be accorded to deceased/retired members of the department and employees.