





## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL**

	<b>LINE-OF-DUTY DEATH/TRAUMATIC INJURY</b>	
	<b>POLICY NUMBER: 22-3</b>	ISSUING AUTHORITY 
	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2025</b>	Christine A. Elow Police Commissioner

### **I. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND GUIDELINES**

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines and provide direction for the Cambridge Police Department in providing appropriate emotional care for the seriously injured, ill, or deceased employee's family. In the event of a line-of-duty death (LODD) of a police officer, funeral arrangements are to be decided by the family of the officer with their wishes taking precedence over those of the department or City.

Although this policy is intended to address the line-of-duty death or injury of police officers, many provisions, including death notification and family assistance, may be applicable to any department employee regardless of whether the death is duty related.

### **II. POLICY**

It shall be the responsibility of the Cambridge Police Department to provide liaison assistance to the primary family of an officer who dies in the line-of-duty, who 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 is not limited to, the clarification and comprehensive study of survivor benefits and emotional support during this traumatic period for the surviving family.

It is the responsibility of the subject officer's supervisor to notify the chain of command of the incident as soon as possible. Immediately upon notification of the incident, the Police Commissioner shall appoint an officer in charge (OIC), typically the involved officer's unit commander, to coordinate all departmental resources and functions regarding the incident.

It is the policy of the Cambridge Police Department to:

- A. provide liaison assistance to the primary family of an officer who dies in the line-of-duty, who is hospitalized for an indefinite period, or requires repeated and/or intermittent hospitalization because of a line-of-duty injury or systemic illness;

- B. notify the Police Commissioner of the incident as soon as possible; and
- C. appoint an officer in charge (OIC), typically the involved officer's unit commander, to coordinate all departmental resources and functions regarding the incident.

### III. DEFINITIONS

- A. *Beneficiary*: Those designated by the officer as recipients of specific death benefits.
- B. *Benefits*: Financial payments made to the surviving family to assist with financial stability following the loss of a loved one.
- C. *Line-of-Duty Death (LODD)*: Any action, criminal or accidental, which claims the life of a Cambridge Police Officer who is performing work-related functions either while on or off-duty. This is to include emergency or non-emergency travel to and from their scheduled shift.
- D. *Line-of-Duty Injury or Illness*: For the purposes of this policy a line-of-duty injury or illness shall be an injury or systemic illness serious enough that hospitalization or time away from the department is ordered by a physician for an indefinite period.
- E. *Serious Injury*: Injury that creates a substantial risk of death or serious permanent disability, or results in long-term loss or impairment of any body part or organ.
- F. *Survivors*: Primary family members of the injured or deceased officer, including spouse or domestic partner, children, grandchildren, parents, grandparents, siblings, fiancé, and/or significant others.

### IV. PROCEDURES

- A. Officer in Charge (OIC)
  - 1. To prevent the duplication of efforts, to maintain order, and to ensure the process works for the benefit of the officer and family, the OIC shall coordinate all departmental functions regarding the incident. Whenever possible, the OIC should be at least the rank of Deputy Superintendent.
  - 2. The OIC shall make assignments of tasks and responsibilities to department personnel, including the Peer Support Unit, CISM, and Honor Guard members, who shall report the status of their tasks to the OIC. Department personnel shall not perform incident-related tasks without the approval of the OIC unless exigent circumstances exist.
  - 3. The OIC should have and make available to assigned personnel the communications equipment necessary for easy and prompt contact with all involved.
  - 4. Personnel appointed to the position of OIC shall be thoroughly familiar with the principles and procedures of Peer Support, CISM, Honor Guard, and other internal and/or external organizations involved in the process.

5. Personnel assigned to tasks regarding this policy shall be placed on special assignment and not available for routine dispatch until relieved of duty.
6. In the event the officer has multiple families and/or an adversarial relationship exists between the families, the OIC may assign a separate liaison for each family.
7. The OIC shall:
  - a. provide for the officer to be escorted at all times until this duty is relinquished. This shall include accompanying to hospitals, the Office of the Medical Examiner, and/or the family-chosen funeral home;
  - b. conduct or provide for a debriefing to be held in a timely manner for notification of personnel, officers at the scene, dispatchers, and friends of the department;
  - c. notify the FBI Uniform Criminal Justice Information Service Division of the death for statistical tracking of line-of-duty deaths;
  - d. provide for the transportation of family members when appropriate; and
  - e. if an injured officer and an injured suspect are sent to the same medical facility, the OIC shall send additional resources to maintain order and safety. If the medical facility is outside of the Cambridge jurisdiction, the OIC shall notify the local authorities for mutual aid.

**B. Death or Life-Threatening Injury Notification**

1. The name of the officer will not be broadcast over any police radio, or similar channel, or shared via social media, by any officer prior to notification to the family as the press often monitors these platforms. In the event the media becomes aware of the officer's name or significant information, the OIC will direct the Public Information Officer, or designee, to request that information be withheld pending proper notification.
2. The notification plan will be formulated using the most recent confidential Line-of-Duty Death or Injury Next of Kin information provided by the officer.
3. Notification of the immediate family should be made as quickly as possible. Delays in developing the appropriate notification must be weighed against the importance of the timely notification of the primary family.
4. The name and rank of the injured or deceased officer shall be released to the public only after notification of the primary family members.
  - a. The OIC shall work with the primary family member(s) to confirm the photo of the deceased officer and what image will be released to the public.
5. Notification of survivors at their place of work or school should be made in private, with the survivor determining the information to be given to their employer or school.

6. If there is personal knowledge of a medical condition with a primary survivor, medical personnel will be dispatched to the residence to coincide with the notification along with the notifying personnel. Such response should be as subdued as possible unless exigency exists.
7. Notification shall always be made by two or more persons. The Police Commissioner or designee, and/or pre-selected persons of the officer's choice will notify the family if time to assemble these persons exists.
  - a. If the above-suggested persons are not readily accessible, notification shall be made by a supervisor-on-duty. The opportunity to get the family to the hospital prior to the demise of the officer is significantly more important than who delivers the notification.
  - b. If the family wishes to go to the hospital, they should be transported by department vehicle. It is highly recommended the family not drive themselves to the hospital.
  - c. If the primary survivors are not near Cambridge, or are outside the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the OIC shall request personal notification from a public safety agency from their locale. The OIC is permitted to assist in making transportation arrangements to Cambridge but may not assume responsibility for travel expenses on behalf of the Cambridge Police Department without the authorization of the Police Commissioner.
  - d. Personnel familiar to the officer's family are often valuable resources. Co-workers, work partners, Chaplains, and off-duty friends may provide a familiar, comforting presence and should be considered as part of the notification team.
8. As soon as most public safety families see notifying personnel, they will know something is wrong.
  - a. Ask to be admitted to the residence; notification should not be made in public view.
  - b. Gather everyone in the home and ask them to sit.
  - c. Inform them slowly and clearly of the information you have on the incident. Refrain from sharing traumatic details.
  - d. It is important to use the officer's first name, as well as the first names of their survivors, during the notification.
9. If the officer is traumatically injured, the notification should be made as efficiently as possible to help facilitate moving the family to the treating hospital. Do not offer any diagnoses of the officer.
10. If the officer has already died, this should be conveyed clearly. Do not give a false sense of hope.
11. Notifying personnel must be prepared for a full spectrum of unexpected responses from survivors which may include hysteria, verbal and physical attack, anger, blame, fainting, and shock. Preparation for and pre-staging of medical personnel may be considered.

12. Notifying personnel must be reassuring to the survivors. The most acceptable comment to newly bereaved people is something such as "I'm so sorry this has happened," and "the department will do everything we can to help you through this."
13. A thirty (30) day mourning period will be implemented by the department to include the wearing of mourning ribbons over badges. Resources will be made available to officers in crisis.
14. The Department shall endeavor to inform employees of the department of the death or critical injury after making appropriate familial notification and prior to releasing information to the media and public.
15. Once all proper notifications have been made, the Police Commissioner will authorize the Public Information Officer to release information to the media and public regarding the incident.

C. Assisting the Family at the Hospital

1. Arrangements should be made regarding appropriate waiting areas for the family separate from officers. Officers often have opinions and insights into circumstances that are not conducive to a grieving family.
2. It is important for the OIC to arrange a Hospital Liaison to provide information to the family and department personnel. The Hospital Liaison's duties include but are not limited to the following.
  - a. Provide the family with updates as soon as they arrive at the hospital.
  - b. Provide pertinent information on the officer's condition in a timely manner.
  - c. Be aware of the hospital's policy on visitation with the injured officer, or visitation with the decedent following death and be able to explain why involvement with the Medical Examiner is necessary.
  - d. Prepare the family for what they might see and accompany them when they visit the officer.
  - e. Notify the family and hospital admitting personnel that all medical bills relating to the care and treatment of the officer should be forwarded to the police department.
    - (1) Have essential information regarding the officer readily available. The officer's private residential address and next of kin information should be omitted on the admission record.
    - (2) Do not ask a family member to sign as guarantor or payment for treatment.
    - (3) Omit requests for insurance information.
3. If the injuries to the officer are likely fatal and it is possible for the family to visit their officer prior to death, they should be afforded the opportunity.

4. Peer Stress Unit members should be present the entire time the family is at the hospital and should be able to arrange whatever assistance the family may need in cooperation with the Hospital Liaison.
  5. The notifying personnel should be among those at the hospital.
  6. No promises should be made to the family by any person other than the Police Commissioner.
  7. The OIC, Hospital Liaison, or Peer Stress Unit will arrange for transportation of the family back to their residence or other desired reasonable destination.
- D. Support for the Family during a Wake or Funeral in Cases of Death
1. The OIC acts as a facilitator between the deceased officer's family and the department during the wake and funeral.
  2. The OIC is responsible for performing or assigning the following tasks.
    - a. Meeting with family members and explaining their responsibilities.
    - b. Being available to the family prior to and throughout the wake and funeral.
    - c. Supporting the needs and wishes of the family before those of the department.
    - d. Assisting the family in working with the funeral director regarding funeral arrangements.
    - e. Relaying any information to the family concerning the circumstances of the decedent officer's death and appropriate information regarding any investigation.
    - f. Determining the need for travel arrangements for out-of-town family members and any other special needs of the family during the funeral and reporting this information to the department liaison.
    - g. Briefing the family members regarding the procedures involved in the law enforcement funeral.
- E. Assisting Affected Employees of the Department
1. The department will provide peer support to all department members who may be affected by the death or serious injury of a fellow employee either through its own Peer Support Team or by an outside Peer Support Team, if required.
- F. Helping the Family with Legal and Benefits Matters
1. The benefits coordinator provides assistance by coordinating the delivery of municipal, state, federal and private benefits.
  2. The benefits coordinator is also responsible for:
    - a. filing injured-on-duty claims, if appropriate, and related paperwork;
    - b. presenting information on all benefits available to the family from:
      - (1) the municipality,

- (2) State Government,
    - (3) Federal Government, and
    - (4) private foundations;
  - c. documenting inquiries and interest in public donations to the family and establishing a mechanism for receipt of such contributions, as appropriate;
  - d. preparing all documentation of benefits and payments due, to include the nature and amount of benefits to be received by each beneficiary, the schedule of payments, and the name of a contact person or facilitator at each benefit or payment office;
  - e. filing all benefits paperwork and maintaining contact with the family to confirm that benefits are being received. A copy of benefits documentation should be provided to all affected parties and explained to each of them; and
  - f. advising the surviving family of the role of police associations and organizations and the nature of support programs that they sponsor for law enforcement survivors.
- G. Supporting the Family During Criminal Proceedings, If Any
- 1. The Cambridge Police Department shall support the family as much as possible in the following ways.
    - a. Staying in contact with family members in order to keep them abreast of criminal proceedings.
    - b. Accompanying family members to criminal proceedings, explaining the nature of the proceedings, and introducing them to prosecutors and other persons as required.
    - c. Identifying all support services available to family members and working on their behalf to secure any services necessary.
    - d. Maintaining contact with family members to provide emotional support and maintaining an ongoing relationship between the department and the immediate family.
    - e. Relaying the concerns and needs of the family to those individuals or organizations that may provide assistance and encouraging others to visit and help as necessary.
- H. Maintaining Long-Term Contact with the Family
- 1. The Commissioner or designee will maintain long-term contact with the family and will endeavor to provide any assistance that may be required and to keep informed of family needs.
- I. Reviewing Line of Duty Death or Serious Injury-Related Resources Periodically
- 1. The department will review and update these procedures periodically so that support information remains current.