

**SENECA FALLS POLICE DEPARTMENT
GENERAL ORDER**

General Order: 297	Rescinds: New Issue
Subject: Death or Serious Injury of Agency Personnel	NYS Accreditation: 18.1
Effective Date: 09/21/2016 By Order Of: Stuart W. Peenstra, Chief of Police	

I. PURPOSE

- A. To establish a plan to coordinate all of the events that follow the death or serious injury of an employee of the agency.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. Immediate Family: The employee's spouse or significant other, children of current and previous marriages or relationships, parents, siblings, and others recognized by the employee's spouse, children or parents as having had a close relationship with the employee.
- B. Line of Duty: Performance of service-connected duties.
- C. Serious Injury or Illness: Any injury or illness that may result in long term disability, permanent disfigurement, or pose a substantial risk of death.
- D. Suicide: The action of killing oneself intentionally.
- E. Serious Personal Incident: Death, serious injury, or serious illness.

III. POLICY

- A. The Seneca Falls Police Department will fulfill its responsibilities to its employees and the immediate families when there is a death or serious injury/illness to an employee of the department.
- B. Notification of the immediate family in the event of a death or serious injury/illness of an employee will be made promptly and in a dignified and respectful manner.
- C. Employees will not divulge to the news media the identity of any recently deceased or seriously injured employee, unless authorized by the Chief of Police, or his designee, and only after verification of notification of the deceased/injured employee's immediate family.
- D. All Seneca Falls Police Department employees will regard all serious personal incidents affecting any employee with equal gravity.
- E. The Seneca Falls Police Department recognizes its responsibility to all Co-Workers of an employee involved in a serious personal incident and will extend all reasonable measures to meet their emotional and physical needs.

IV. PROCEDURES

- A. Maintenance of Emergency Contact Notification Form.
 - 1. All employees will review and update their Emergency Contact Notification form at the time of their annual performance evaluation, or as significant life changes (marriage, divorce, death in family, ect.) occur to ensure that the information contained on this form is current and accurate should there be a serious personal incident involving the employee.
 - 2. The Emergency Contact Notification Form will be filed in the employee's Personnel Folder located in the Chief's Office as well as scanned into a computerized folder that all Supervisors can access should the need arise.

B. Notification Procedures.

In the event of a serious personal incident involving an employee, notifications will be made in the following manner.

1. The supervisor on duty will initiate notification of the Chief of Police and the Lieutenant as soon as reasonably possible.
2. The Chief of Police or Lieutenant will;
 - a) Determine the need for notification of other personnel or services (CISM, EAP, Clergy ect.) for support and assistance.
 - b) Review the employee's Emergency Contact Notification form and prepare for the notification of the immediate family.
 - c) Ensure that all available information relating to the incident is accurate and forwarded as soon as possible to the employee's immediate family.

Notification of the employee's immediate family will be made:

- 1) In person by the Chief of Police, Lieutenant or their designee if the family resides within Seneca County or an immediate surrounding county. The Seneca Falls Police Department Representative will be accompanied by the employee's selected department liaison.
- 2) By a commanding officer of the law enforcement agency in whose jurisdiction the family resides if outside the area. The agency will be given all available details concerning the incident and will be asked to confirm the notification and advise the Seneca Falls Police Department if contact was not made.
- d) Prepare and issue a news media release concerning the incident (when appropriate) with as much detail as available, releasable, and in accordance with the wishes of the immediate family.
- e) Authorize an e-justice file be sent to other law enforcement agencies, advising them of the death of the employee and to include any funeral arrangements if known. The notice should include the name and telephone number of a contact person to facilitate inter-agency communication.

C. Department assistance to a deceased employee's immediate family

1. The ranking Police Official at the hospital, or the Chief of Police's designee will:
 - a) At the convenience of the hospital staff, secure 2 rooms, 1 of which will be used by the bereaved, the other for the use of the Department Personnel.
 - b) Ensure that the assembled groups are briefed and updated on events as soon as possible.
 - c) Determine the religious background of a deceased employee to ensure that all religious matters (e.g., Last Rites, ect.) are properly attended to and that the appropriate clergy member is made available to the family.
 - d) Arrange with hospital billing department to have all expenses relating to medical services provided to the deceased employee sent directly to the department for payment and not to the employee's residence, when appropriate.
 - e) Assign the pre-selected employee listed on the deceased employee's Emergency Contact Notification Form to be the department's liaison to the immediate family.
2. The liaison will be removed from their regular duties and assigned to liaison duties for no less than 1 day following the deceased employee's funeral. The liaison will:
 - a) Act as the department's contact to the immediate family, coordinating the services of the Department with the wishes of the family. The liaison should be available to the family at all times during this time.
 - b) Ensure that all information concerning the details and events of the incident are accurate and are shared with the family in a sensitive and dignified manner

- c) Arrange transportation for the immediate family to and from the hospital.
 - d) Request that special Police attention be directed to the family's residence(s).
 - e) If the death resulted from a criminal act, advise the immediate family that any personal property on the deceased employee's person at the time of death would need to be released by the District Attorney's office. NOTE: The supervising officer at the scene will secure the member's duty weapon and badge.
 - f) Have the employee's personal property collected from the employee's locker and ensure that all property is logged on a written inventory and returned to the employee's family.
 - g) Assist with travel or lodging information and arrangements for out-of-town family.
 - h) Assist the immediate family with all funeral and memorial arrangements.
 - i) Arrange an Honor Guard when appropriate and Department funeral escorts as desired by the family.
 - j) Assist the family in filing for Police Benefits and/or compensation due to them.
 - k) Ensure that services such as Victims Assistance, Peer Support ect. Are made available to the immediate family if requested.
 - l) Seek assistance for the immediate family with such needs as transportation, food and meal preparation and child care ect.
3. The Chief of Police may:
- a) Authorize the wearing of the Department Uniform for burial, when appropriate, if the family so desires.
 - b) Authorize the wearing of a mourning band over any member's badge from the time of death to the end of the tenth day following the funeral.
 - c) Request that flags flown over the Police Department be lowered and flown at half-staff from the time of death to the day following the funeral.
 - d) Assign a member of the department to coordinate any responses or responding units from other agencies. It will be the responsibility of this member to record names and addresses of responding agencies and to assist the family with appropriate acknowledgements. Any participation in the funeral ceremonies by these agencies will be coordinated at Vince's Park or other location determined by the Chief of Police, and will serve as an assembly area for law enforcement agencies. The coordinating member's name and phone number will be included in the departments e-justice file listing funeral arrangements.
 - e) Prepare condolence cards for issuance to all members of the immediate family and as appropriate and in accordance with the family's wishes, send flowers or donations.

D. Department Assistance to the Immediate Family at the Memorial, Funeral and Interment Services. The Department will:

- 1. Provide transportation for the immediate family to and from the services when needed.
- 2. Ensure special attention is given to family residences, and address any other family needs (e.g., special assistance for elderly or handicap family members).
- 3. The services of an Honor Guard, Color Guard, pallbearers, police escort, ect. As appropriate and in accordance with the families wishes.
- 4. Security Services at each facility, church, funeral home ect. If such action is warranted under the circumstances of the incident.

E. Department Assistance to the Immediate Family after Interment.

- 1. Explain benefits and compensation available and due.
- 2. Provide phone numbers to contact for benefits.
- 3. Assist with the filing of all required forms.

- 4. Contact the Immediate family at appropriate intervals following the funeral to ensure

compensation is being realized

- F.** If Death Occurs in the Line of Duty, the Department Will;
 - 1. Dedicate a plaque in honor of the deceased employee to be displayed at the department.
 - 2. Provide a similar plaque to be given to the immediate family at an appropriate time.
 - 3. Retire the deceased employee's badge number
- G.** Department Support and Services for a Seriously Injured Employee
 - 1. Ensure that Services such as CISM, EAP, Peer Support, Victims Assistance ect. Is available to a seriously injured employee and their immediate family.
 - 2. Assign a Department liaison to coordinate ongoing assistance to the injured employee and the employee's family.
 - 3. Provide assistance in filing for any benefits and compensation due to the injured employee.
- H.** Department Support for the Immediate Family if Death was the result of a Criminal Act.
 - 1. Authorize various employees to accompany family members to any court proceedings concerning the incident.
 - 2. Monitor the defendant's process through the judicial system and keep the immediate family informed of all pending legal proceedings concerning the incident.
 - 3. Provide transportation to the immediate family if needed.
 - 4. Explain the rights of the immediate family as victims including access to benefits from the Crime Victims Compensation Board.
 - 5. An Investigator and the District Attorney will at their earliest possible convenience following the arrest in the incident, meet with the immediate family to explain the case and answer any questions or concerns the family may have.
- I.** Officer Benefits:
 - 1. Workers Compensation-Benefits from this source are administered by the Worker's Compensation Board that has a district office in Syracuse, New York. Circumstances will dictate the degree of assistance needed in submitting the various forms, which are:
 - a. Form C-2, Employer's Report of Injury/Illness. To be submitted within 10 days after an incident occurs.
 - b. Form C-24-, Employer's Statement of Wage Earnings.
 - c. Form C-61, Supplemental Report of Employer in Death Case.
 - d. Form claim for compensation and Notice of Commencement of Third Party Action. To be served on the Chairman, Worker's Compensation Board, the Employer and the Employer's insurance carrier within 30 days after action has been commenced.
 - e. Form C-61, Claim for Compensation in Death Case. Necessary Supporting documents include:
 - i. Medical report from the doctor who treated the deceased.
 - ii. Proof of relationship such as birth certificate, marriage certificate, adoption papers, ect.
 - iii. Death Certificate.
 - iv. Itemized Funeral Bill.
 - f. Form C-65, Proof of Burial and Funeral Expenses-By Undertaker. To be executed, notarized, and returned for submission with Form C-61.

2. New York State Retirement System-Benefits from this source may be obtained through the Town Supervisor's Office, who notifies the New York State Employees Retirement System by submitting a form entitled "Notification of Death". This is accompanied by a certified copy of a New York State Department of Health "Certificate of Death". In an Application for Accidental Death Benefit, the retirement system requires a statement covering the accident and any other accident sustained by the member for a period of one year prior to the member's death, together with a schedule of lost time due to each and the reasons for each absence. If a report was filed with the Worker's Compensation Board, the retirement system requires a copy of the report, plus a complete description of the member's activities for the three day period prior to death. The retirement system also requests a copy of the autopsy report, the death certificate and any public safety laboratory report concerning blood alcohol content.
3. Public Safety Officer's Benefits Program-Administered by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, a federal agency located in Washington, DC; this program provides a cash benefit to the survivor of a police officer killed in the line of duty. The amount is presently fixed at \$330,604.00. In order to apply for this benefit, two forms must be submitted;
 - a. The Report of Public Safety Officer's Death-Signed by the Chief and must include the following documentation:
 - i. A copy of the investigation report signed by the investigating officer and notarized. If an investigation was not conducted, there must be a detailed statement of the circumstances, signed by the Chief and notarized.
 - ii. A copy of the autopsy report, signed by the pathologist who performed the autopsy and, either notarized or with the Medical Examiner's raised seal. If an autopsy was not performed, a notarized statement to that effect, signed by the medical Examiner or the Chief will suffice.
 - iii. A copy of any toxicology report (blood/urine analysis) signed by the toxicologist of record, either notarized or bearing the Medical Examiner's raised seal. If a toxicology analysis was not performed, a notarized statement to that effect, signed by the Medical Examiner or the Chief will suffice.
 - iv. A copy of the death certificate, bearing the raised seal of the Medical Examiner or the Department of Health.
 - b. The Claim for Death Benefits-Completed and signed by the claimant. If an authorized representative signs for the claimant, an affidavit by the claimant authorizing such action must be included. The following documentation is required:
 - i. A copy of the decedent's marriage certificate, bearing the raised seal of the issuing office.
 - ii. A copy of the birth certificate for each surviving child, regardless of age, which identifies, by name, both parents and which bears the raised seal of the Department of Health. For a child over the age of 18, who is not a full-time student and who is capable of self support, a notarized statement acknowledging such status shall be provided by that person.
 - iii. Any information, forms or questions may be downloaded from the Public Safety Officers Benefit Program website: <https://www.psob.gov/index.html>.
 - iv. Administrators of this federal program have asked that the agency representative assisting the family in preparation of a claim insure that documentation is complete and properly certified, so that delays in processing the claim will not be incurred. They suggest that both the agency

and family material be submitted in one package to the following address:
Public Safety Officer's Benefits Program
Law Enforcement Assistance Administration
633 Indiana Avenue, N. W.
Washington, DC 20131