

**SAN DIEGO POLICE DEPARTMENT  
PROCEDURE**

**DATE:** MAY 16, 2017

**NUMBER:** 5.06 – HUMAN RESOURCES

**SUBJECT:** DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEE DEATHS

**RELATED POLICY:** N/A

**ORIGINATING DIVISION:** HUMAN RESOURCES

**NEW PROCEDURE:**

**PROCEDURAL CHANGE:**

**SUPERSEDES:** DP 5.06 – 12/06/13

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**I. PURPOSE**

This Department procedure establishes guidelines for assisting with funeral arrangements in the event of an employee death.

**II. SCOPE**

This procedure applies to all members of the Department.

**III. BACKGROUND**

- A. In the event of the death of an active, reserve, or retired officer, or civilian employee, funeral arrangements may include participation by Department personnel, including uniformed officers.
- B. Requests by the decedent's family for assistance and/or participation by Department personnel will be directed to the Medical Assistance Unit. The Medical Assistance Sergeant is designated as the Bereavement Assistance Officer (BAO). The duties of the BAO include funeral coordination and counseling of the surviving members of the family concerning City death benefits.
- C. Funeral procedures must remain flexible and the wishes of the deceased employee's family are of the highest priority.

- D. Commanding officers will allow maximum attendance of on-duty personnel at the time, recognizing that minimum field staffing levels must be maintained.

#### **IV. DEFINITIONS**

- A. Line of duty death - a sworn regular or reserve member of the Department has died as a direct and proximate result of a personal injury sustained in the line of duty. This would also include officers who, while in an off-duty capacity, act in response to a violation of the law.
- B. Non-line of duty death - a sworn, reserve or civilian member of the Department, whether on-duty or off-duty, has died by accidental or natural means.

Suicide for the purposes of this procedure will be treated as a non-line of duty death.

#### **V. LINE OF DUTY DEATH OF ACTIVE AND RESERVE OFFICERS**

- A. The Medical Assistance Unit, at the request of the deceased officer's family, shall have primary responsibility for the planning and conduct of police officer funerals.
- B. Participating officers may include pallbearers, honor guards, motorcycle escort, and other uniformed officers.
  - 1. Uniformity in conduct and wearing of the uniform will be stressed.
    - a. Officers attending the funeral in uniform shall wear their Class "A" uniform.
    - b. Pallbearers and honor guards will wear white gloves.
  - 2. A 1/2" inch strip of black tape will be worn horizontally across the center of the badge under the following conditions:
    - a. From the time of death until sunset on the day of the funeral.
    - b. At the discretion of the Chief of Police.
- C. The BAO shall initiate a Department Announcement including the date, time, and locations of the funeral services, and other details, as appropriate.
- D. The BAO shall work in conjunction with the following agencies and Department entities (with responsibilities as indicated):

1. San Diego Police Officers Association (POA) - family assistance, insurance, and federal death benefits.
2. Risk Management - Workers' Compensation benefits, payment of accrued wages, sick leave, vacation, insurance, retirement, and applicable death benefits.
3. Funeral Director - overall planning of funeral services.
4. Criminal Intelligence Unit - provides security at all police officer funerals.
5. Traffic Division - planning and staffing of motorcycle escort and traffic related contingency plans.
6. Decedent's command - in most cases, the BAO will request assistance from the command involved to do the following:
  - a. A close friend of the deceased officer assigned to assist with family matters and other arrangements, as necessary;
  - b. Sufficient number of officers (preferably friends/squad members) to act as pallbearers and ushers.
7. The BAO shall designate a uniformed officer to take charge of the uniformed officers attending the services, both at the church and at the gravesite, when applicable.

**VI. NON-LINE OF DUTY DEATH OF ACTIVE AND RESERVE OFFICERS AND CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES**

- A. The Medical Assistance Unit, at the request of the deceased employee's family, shall have primary responsibility for the planning and conduct of employee funerals.
- B. Participating officers may include pallbearers and other uniformed officers.
  1. Uniformity in conduct and wearing of the uniform will be stressed.
    - a. Officers attending the funeral in uniform shall wear their Class "A" uniform.
    - b. Pallbearers will wear white gloves.

2. A 1/2" inch strip of black tape will be worn horizontally across the center of the badge under the following conditions:
  - a. On the day of the funeral until sunset.
  - b. At the discretion of the Chief of Police.
- C. The BAO shall initiate a Department Announcement including the date, time, and locations of the funeral services, and other details, as appropriate.
- D. The BAO shall work in conjunction with the following agencies and Department entities (with responsibilities as indicated):
  1. San Diego Police Officers Association (POA) - family assistance, insurance, and applicable death benefits.
  2. Employee Organizations (MEA, AFSCME Local 127) - family assistance, insurance, and applicable death benefits.
  3. Risk Management - Workers' Compensation benefits, payment of accrued wages, sick leave, vacation, insurance, retirement, and applicable death benefits.
  4. Funeral Director - overall planning of funeral services.
  5. Traffic Division - provides necessary escort to gravesite services, when applicable. Additional participation by the Traffic Division will be at the discretion of the Chief of Police.
  6. Decedent's command - in most cases, the BAO will request assistance from the command involved to do the following:
    - a. A close friend of the deceased officer assigned to assist with family matters and other arrangements, as necessary.
    - b. Sufficient number of officers (preferably friends/squad members) to act as pallbearers and ushers.
  7. The BAO shall designate a uniformed officer to take charge of the uniformed officers attending the services, both at the church and at the gravesite, when applicable.

**VII. DEATH OF RETIRED EMPLOYEES**

- A. The Medical Assistance Unit will be responsible for the Department Announcement, which will contain the retired employees years of service, rank upon retirement, and pertinent funeral service information.
- B. Requests by the decedent's family for assistance and/or participation by Department personnel will be directed to the Medical Assistance Unit.
- C. Participation of Department personnel will be at the discretion of their commanding officer.
  - 1. Uniformity in conduct and wearing of the uniform will be stressed.
    - a. Officers attending the funeral in uniform shall wear their Class "A" uniform.
    - b. Pallbearers will wear white gloves.
  - 2. A 1/2" inch strip of black tape will be worn horizontally across the center of the badge under the following conditions:
    - a. On the day of the funeral until sunset.
    - b. At the discretion of the Chief of Police.

**VIII. DEATH OF AN EMPLOYEE'S DEPENDENT**

In the event of the death of an employee's dependent, Risk Management and the appropriate employee organization should be contacted for assistance and determination of exact benefits that may be applicable.

**IX. AMERICAN FLAG**

The American flag will be lowered to half-mast at all police facilities under the following conditions:

- A. Line of duty death of any San Diego County active or reserve officer - the flag will be lowered to half-mast from the time of death until sunset on the day of the funeral.
- B. Non-line of duty death of any Department employee - the flag will be lowered to half-mast on the day of the funeral until sunset.

C. At the discretion of the Chief of Police.

**X. TRANSPORTATION**

When Department vehicles are utilized for transportation, supervisors are to ensure that maximum occupancy in each vehicle is established prior to departure for the services.

**XI. LINE OF DUTY FUNERALS FOR OTHER AGENCIES WITHIN SAN DIEGO COUNTY**

- A. Officers will be encouraged to attend as staffing permits. In order to ensure that adequate field staffing is maintained and sufficient equipment is available for oncoming shifts, on-duty personnel who wish to attend must obtain approval from their commanding officer.
- B. The Department BAO/Medical Assistance Sergeant will serve as, or identify, a coordinator for attending officers and complete and coordinate the following:
  - 1. Issue a Department Announcement with details of the funeral including the time and location where officers will meet prior to traveling to the funeral; and,
  - 2. Identify the officer to assume charge of personnel and vehicles, to and from the funeral site, when applicable.
- C. All sworn personnel should wear their Class "A" uniform and conform to Department grooming standards.

**XII. LINE OF DUTY FUNERALS FOR AGENCIES OUTSIDE OF SAN DIEGO COUNTY**

- A. Participation of on-duty sworn personnel will consist of two SDPD Honor Guard members. Participation of other on-duty sworn personnel will be at the discretion of the Chief of Police. The Chief of Police will have the sole discretion in determining how many additional officers will represent the Department. The San Diego Police Department will be represented at line of duty funerals located within Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, and Riverside Counties. Any other locations will be at the discretion of the Chief of Police. The Medical Assistance Unit will assist in the planning for personnel to attend services requiring overnight travel. Personnel attending services requiring overnight travel should refer to Administrative Regulation 90.30 for further information.

- B. The BAO will serve as, or identify, a coordinator for attending officers. The BAO will complete and coordinate the following:
  - 1. Issue a Department Announcement (only funerals within Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, and Riverside Counties, unless authorized by the Chief of Police) with details of the funeral including the time and location; and,
  - 2. Identify the officer to assume charge of personnel and vehicles, to and from the funeral site.
- C. The representative officers will be carried in an 11-86 status and overtime will not normally be authorized.
- D. The Medical Assistance Unit will establish and maintain a list of volunteers to participate in other agency funerals. The number of volunteers authorized to use Department vehicles will be at the discretion of the Chief of Police.
- E. Officers will use a marked patrol unit and ensure the unit is clean prior to departure.
- F. Sworn personnel will wear their Class "A" ceremonial uniform and will conform to Department grooming standards.
- G. Off-duty personnel may attend funerals requiring overnight travel at their own expense.

**XIII. DISCRETION OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE**

- A. The protocol in this procedure is subject to change at the discretion of the Chief of Police.