

PROVIDENCE POLICE DEPARTMENT

HEADQUARTERS

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CHIEF OF POLICE



TYPE OF ORDER	NUMBER/SERIES	ISSUE DATE	EFFECTIVE DATE
General Order	330.21	4/14/2023	4/17/2023
SUBJECT TITLE		PREVIOUSLY ISSUED DATES	
Next-of-Kin Notifications		3/10/2020; 11/14/2016; 5/10/2013	
REFERENCE		RE-EVALUATION DATE	
CALEA 55.2.6		3/10/2026	
SUBJECT AREA		DISTRIBUTION	
Law Enforcement Operations		All Personnel	

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the notification of the next-of-kin of deceased, seriously injured, or seriously ill victims.

POLICY

It is the policy of the Providence Police Department that death, serious injury, or serious illness notifications be carried out promptly; in-person whenever practicable; and in a considerate, professional manner. Accordingly, the release of information to the media regarding the identities of victims will only be made by those persons within the Department who have been specifically delegated with the authority to do so, and will be delayed until it can be confirmed internally that the proper notifications have been made.

PROCEDURE

I. METHOD OF NOTIFICATION GUIDELINES

- A. Every reasonable effort shall be made to notify the next-of-kin of a deceased, seriously injured, or seriously ill victim.
- B. Next-of-kin notifications shall be made in-person whenever practicable.
- C. All in-person next-of-kin notifications shall be made utilizing two (2) sworn officers. It is recommended that:
 - 1. A uniformed officer is present when an in-person notification is made.
 - 2. A supervisor is present when an in-person notification is made.
- D. Officers given the notification assignment should outline the notification process with each other, identifying which officer will actually make the

notification while the other officer serves in an observer/support capacity, prior to contacting the next-of-kin.

- E. Officers must be cognizant of the following possibilities when delivering a notification:
 - 1. The next-of kin or other family member may become distressed and/or despondent as a result of the notification, and require medical assistance.
 - 2. Officer safety issues may arise as a result of a family member becoming angry and/or violent during the notification process.

The observer/support officer must carefully monitor and assess the notification process as it unfolds and be prepared to call for additional assistance (i.e., medical personnel, a clergy member, a family friend or relative, or additional officers) when deemed necessary.

- F. Notifications should be made in a comfortable setting. Adults should be encouraged to sit prior to the notification. Officers are advised to consider the surroundings and family members present. It is also advised that younger children not be present during the notification.
- G. A simple, straight-forward approach should be used when making such notifications. As an example, the notifying officer must use the term “death” or “has died” and avoid the use of euphemisms such as “passed on”, “succumbed”, or “expired”, which can confuse the family as to the meaning of a death notification.
- H. Avoid using police terms and any graphic details regarding the incident leading up to the notification.
- I. Avoid disclosing information that could jeopardize any possible investigative process.
- J. Initiate whatever contacts are necessary to assure that the next-of-kin is left in stable, capable care. Officers must be prepared to stay with the survivor until relieved by another person. Do not deliver the death notice and expect to leave immediately. Officers are expected to be stable, supportive, and understanding to the needs of the family members.

II. IN-STATE NOTIFICATIONS

- A. In situations where the victim’s next-of-kin lives in the State of Rhode Island, the investigating officer’s supervisor will be responsible for ensuring that a next-of-kin notification is made by Department personnel and, whenever practicable, in person.
- B. The details of the notification must be documented in the applicable incident report.

III. OUT-OF-STATE NOTIFICATIONS

- A. In situations where the next-of-kin lives out-of-state, the supervisor in charge of the investigation will ensure that a teletype requesting a next-of-kin notification is sent via R.I.L.E.T.S. or another appropriate method to the police department of the city/town where the next-of-kin resides.
 - 1. The supervisor may contact the assisting agency by telephone should the need arise.
- B. The teletype shall include all the information necessary to make the notification as well as the name and contact information of the Providence Police officer who has been designated as the contact person for the notifying police department and/or next-of-kin.
- C. The details of the notification must be documented in the applicable incident report.

IV. NOTIFICATION REQUESTS FROM OTHER AGENCIES

- A. Any sworn or civilian employee who receives a next-of-kin notification request from another law enforcement agency shall immediately notify the Officer-In-Charge (OIC) of the Patrol Bureau.
- B. The OIC will be responsible for obtaining all of the necessary information to make the notification, including the name and department telephone number of the police officer from the outside agency who has been designated as the contact person.
 - 1. If the notification request is from an out-of-state agency, the OIC shall request that the agency confirm their request via teletype.
- C. The notification will be made in accordance with Section I, above.
- D. The details of the notification must be documented in the CAD system in lieu of documenting it in an incident report.

APPROVED:



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