



General Order Number: 08-23	Effective Date: August 13, 2012
Division: Health and Safety	
Chapter: Death or Significant Injury/Illness Assistance Policy	
By Order of the Fire Chief: Marc S. Bashoor	Revision Date: N/A

POLICY

To ensure needs of all employees, sworn, civilian, and volunteer, active and retired, their family, and the Department are met regarding significant illness/injury or death to personnel. Procedures outlining notifications are clearly defined.

DEFINITIONS

Department Representative - A member/employee of the Department identified by the Duty Chief to serve as the initial Department liaison.

Family Liaison Officer - An individual appointed by the Fire Chief or Volunteer Chief, responsible for providing support to the employee/member and his/her family. For long term recovery of employee/member/family, representatives from the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) Local 1619, the Prince George's County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association (PGCVFRA), or other representatives will be made available as deemed necessary.

Hospital Liaison Officer - An individual appointed by the Fire Chief or Volunteer Chief, responsible for coordinating and communicating needs between the family, hospital, and the Department. This liaison remains until employee/member is discharged from hospital.

Personnel - Sworn/civilian employees or volunteer members of the Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department.

PROCEDURES / RESPONSIBILITIES

The Incident Commander (IC) is responsible for making notification to the Watch Office/Staffing Officer whenever a significant illness/injury or death occurs on an incident. In absence of a chief officer, the highest ranking officer/firefighter shall make immediate notification to the Watch Office/Staffing Officer.

If the illness/injury or death does not occur on the scene of an emergency incident, the Watch Office/Staffing Officer must be contacted to make immediate notifications.

Family members of Department personnel may contact the Watch Office/Staffing Officer as well. The Watch Office/Staffing Officer will make immediate notifications.

These procedures are to be carried out with compassion for the employee/member, as well as his/her family. In addition, this procedure allows for continued follow-up for the employee/member and his/her family after the incident has occurred.



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND FIRE/EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER

In order for this policy to be effective, an employee/member's emergency notification information must be kept current.

The Fire/EMS Department will work together with any affected Volunteer Fire Department(s) and/or IAFF Local 1619, so that all parties are provided with the necessary support and resources.

Procedures

- All notifications to the family will be made in person, whenever possible. If necessary, the phone is an acceptable alternative, if it is believed that the delay in making personal notification will result in family members, or the next of kin, being notified through an inappropriate means or media reports.
- **Notifications MUST NOT be made over the radio.**
- No notification is to be released to other members of the Fire/EMS Department, the public, or the media until the member's next of kin has been notified.
- If the patient is conscious, alert and oriented, the Department Representative may assist with notifying his/her family members, as requested by the patient. If needed, family member contact numbers may be available on file at the Watch Office.
- If the patient is unconscious or seriously injured, defer to the Duty Chief, for appropriate family notification procedures.
- The Duty Chief may seek assistance from another Department Representative if the Duty Chief is needed to complete tasks related to command of an incident scene.
- The Duty Chief is to ensure notification is made to President of IAFF, Local 1619 or his/her designee for career personnel.
- The Duty Chief is to ensure notification is made to President of PGCVFRA or his/her designee for volunteer members.
- After the next of kin have been notified, the Fire Chief, in the case of career employees, or the Volunteer Chief (in coordination with the Office of the Fire Chief), in the case of volunteer members, will determine how additional information will be released.
- Members will not release any information regarding the injury, illness, or death. The use of social media websites should be cautioned in order to avoid family members receiving notifications in an improper manner. All inquiries will be routed to the Fire/EMS Department's Public Information Officer, who will follow the direction of the Fire Chief, or Volunteer Chief, respectively.
- If the patient is likely to be admitted to the hospital, the Risk Management Commander will be notified and may assign an office representative to report to the hospital to assist with completion of necessary reports for billing and insurance purposes.
- Assistance from the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation may be requested by the Fire Chief or Volunteer Chief in the event of a Line-of-Duty Death of an employee/member.
- If an employee/member becomes seriously ill, injured or dies while on duty, the employee/member's supervisor, i.e., incident commander, senior officer/firefighter in the station, or another available supervisor, must contact the Watch Office/Staffing Officer via telephone.
- The Watch Office/Staffing Officer will immediately contact the Duty Chief.



- The Duty Chief will immediately initiate the notification check list (Attachment #1).
- Additional considerations for the Fire Chief, or Volunteer Chief, include:
 - Notifications will be made in accordance with General Order 01-05 Notification Procedures.
 - Notification of appropriate Fire/EMS Department officials, volunteer organization officials, IAFF Local 1619, senior County Government officials, senior municipal government officials, as applicable.
 - Activation of the CISM Team.
 - Relieving the affected station(s) from duty.

Support Roles

Department Representative

- The Department Representative is designated by the Duty Chief, responsible to:
 - Remain available at the hospital to address any patient needs or requests.
 - Communicate any changes in patient status and/or location to the Duty Chief.
 - Relay any needs expressed by the patient's family (transportation, accommodations, provisions, etc.).
 - May assist the patient in completing necessary paperwork such as injury packet.
 - Notify the Duty Chief when the patient is due to be released from the hospital.

Family Liaison Officer

- A Family Liaison Officer will be appointed by the Fire Chief. In the case of a volunteer member, the Office of the Fire Chief will coordinate with the Volunteer Chief to assign a Family Liaison Officer.
- The Family Liaison Officer is responsible for coordinating the following:
 - Transportation of the next of kin to and from the hospital.
 - Child care for the employee/member's or next of kin's dependent children.
 - Meals for the next-of-kin and their dependents.
 - Quality of care assurance, including liaison with the medical facility staff.
 - Identification of lodging for the next of kin, if necessary.
 - Transportation for the employee/member to rehabilitation, physical therapy, etc.
 - Household assistance.
 - Arrangements for counseling for the employee/member and/or next of kin, as necessary.
 - Identification and contact with a chaplain if requested by the next of kin.

Hospital Liaison Officer

- A Hospital Liaison Officer will be appointed by the Fire Chief. In the case of a volunteer member, the Office of the Fire Chief will coordinate with the Volunteer Chief, to assign a Hospital Liaison Officer.



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND FIRE/EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER

- The Hospital Liaison Officer will be responsible for coordinating the following:
 - Visitor activities at the hospital.
 - Establish a private area for the family to congregate.
 - Any specific requests of the patient and/or family.
 - Requests of the hospital staff are appropriately addressed.
 - Status reports to the Office of the Fire Chief with permission of the patient and/or next of kin.

REFERENCES

Line of Duty Death Procedures/Guidelines maintained in RMSO

FORMS / ATTACHMENTS

Attachment #1 - Duty Chief Notification Checklist

Attachment #2 - Hospital Liaison Checklist

Attachment #3 - Emergency Contact Information Form

Duty Chief Notification Checklist

- Notification to Executive Officer
- Notification to Deputy Chief
- Notification to PIO
- Notification to Safety Officer _____
- Notification to Chaplain
- Notification made to President IAFF Local 1619
- Notification made to PGCVFRA
- Entry in command officers log
- Notification EMS duty officer _____
- Notifications made to Direct Supervisors

HOSPITAL LIAISON OFFICER

- Have a member of the Department drive the family to the hospital and stay for as long as possible.
- Collect immediate family member's information (phone numbers, addresses and clergy).
- Work with the hospital staff to secure a private room where the family can gather. This should be separate from the general waiting area, if possible.
- Assist the family as a liaison in dealing with the hospital staff.
- Provide assistance to the family in making calls to relatives and close friends.
- Answer incoming calls or get messages to the family at the hospital.
- In cases of extended hospitalization, offer to assist with day-to-day tasks such as home maintenance, arranging child care, or bringing meals and other necessities to the family.
- If a firefighter is taken to a specialty hospital outside the local area, the Department should consider asking the local Department to assist in supporting the family while the firefighter remains hospitalized.
- Encourage the family to spend time with the injured firefighter, regardless of the type of injury.
- If a firefighter is badly burned or disfigured, help prepare the family for what they will see (always allow the family to make the decision).
- If it is possible for the family to visit their firefighter prior to death, they most certainly should be afforded that opportunity. **IT IS THE FAMILY'S RIGHT** to visit their loved one. The Hospital Liaison should "prepare" the family for what they might see in the emergency room and accompany the family into the room for the visit if the family requests it. **DO NOT BE OVERLY PROTECTIVE OF THE FAMILY.** There is a definite need to touch and hold the body while there is still life, and being present when death occurs can be comforting to the family (always allow the family to make the decision).
- Have someone available to drive the family home from the hospital. Offer to continue to help with continuing visits as much as resources allow.
- Keep Executive Officer apprised of situation and needs.
- The Hospital Liaison will insure that pertinent information on the firefighter's condition is relayed on a timely basis. They shall also make the family and fellow members aware of hospital policy about visitation with the injured firefighter and/or visitation with the body following the demise.

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY FIRE/EMS DEPARTMENT
PERSONNEL RECORD/RISK MANAGEMENT

EMERGENCY CONTACT/CALL BACK INFORMATION SUPPLEMENTAL FORM

- ◆ Please use this supplemental form to provide information on additional contact persons should you become involved in a personal emergency while on duty that requires notification. This form will also be used in case of a County emergency and personnel call back is required.

EMPLOYEE'S NAME _____ ID _____
Last First MI

EMPLOYEE'S CALL BACK INFORMATION

HOME PHONE _____ WORK PHONE _____
PAGER _____ CELL PHONE _____

PERSONAL EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

ADDITIONAL CONTACT NAME _____ RELATIONSHIP _____
ADDRESS _____
HOME PHONE _____ WORK PHONE _____
PAGER _____ CELL PHONE _____

ADDITIONAL CONTACT NAME _____ RELATIONSHIP _____
ADDRESS _____
HOME PHONE _____ WORK PHONE _____
PAGER _____ CELL PHONE _____

ADDITIONAL CONTACT NAME _____ RELATIONSHIP _____
ADDRESS _____
HOME PHONE _____ WORK PHONE _____
PAGER _____ CELL PHONE _____

ADDITIONAL CONTACT NAME _____ RELATIONSHIP _____
ADDRESS _____
HOME PHONE _____ WORK PHONE _____
PAGER _____ CELL PHONE _____