
First Responder Down

809.1 POLICY

The Sidney Police Department will assist the survivors of member or former member of the department who passes away. This assistance is provided whether the death was a result of an in the line of duty death, natural death, or as a result of a suicide.

The Chief of Police will designate which portions of the policy will apply due to the situation.

809.2 COORDINATION OF EVENTS

Coordination of events following the line of duty death of a police officer is an extremely important and complex responsibility. Professionalism and compassion must be exhibited at all times as an obligation to the member's survivors and to the law enforcement community. In order to provide the best possible services and support for the members family, specific tasks may be assigned to selected members of the Sidney Police Department. Their titles are;

Notification Officer

Hospital Liaison Officer

Family Assistance Officer

Department Liaison Officer

Benefits Coordinator

An explanation of each of these responsibilities is contained in this order. A member may be called upon to perform more than one role.

The Chief of Police, or his/her designee, will meet with the officer's family at their home to determine their wishes regarding Departmental participation in the preparation of the funeral or services. All possible assistance will be rendered.

With the approval of the family, the Chief of Police will assign a Family Assistance Officer, Liaison Officer and Benefits Coordinator.

Police Officers are encouraged to maintain an up to date "Confidential Death Information" form. The information will be of extreme comfort to member's families and the Sidney Police Department in fulfilling the deceased officer's wishes.

Sidney Police Department

Sidney PD Policy Manual

First Responder Down

809.2.1 NOTIFICATION OFFICER

It is the responsibility of the Chief of Police or his designee to properly notify the next of kin of a member who had suffered injuries or died. The Chief of Police or designee may personally make the notification or choose a Notification Officer to inform the survivors.

Victim Services will be notified to assist with making the notification.

The name of the deceased officer will NOT be released by the Sidney Police Department before the immediate family is notified.

If there is knowledge of a medical problem with an immediate survivor, medical personnel should be available at the residence at the time of notification.

Notifications will be made in person and never alone. The Chief of Police or his or her designee, victim services, police chaplain, trained officer, close friend, or another police survivor will accompany the notification officer. A reasonable amount of time should be allowed to assemble the group to assist the notification officer. The family should learn of the death from the Sidney Police Department first and not from the media or other sources, if possible.

Never make a death notification on the doorstep. Ask to be admitted into the residence. Inform family members slowly and clearly of the death or injury. If specifics of the incident are known, the notification officer should relay as much information as possible to the family. Be sure to use the officer's name during the notification. If the member has died, relay that information. Never give the family a false sense of hope. Use words such as "died" and "dead" rather than "gone away" or "passed away".

If the family requests to visit the hospital, they should be transported by police vehicle. It is highly recommended that the family not drive themselves to the hospital. If the family insists on driving, a member of the notification group should accompany them in the family vehicle. If the family member(s) wish to drive themselves, they should be followed to ensure their safety.

If young children are at the home, the member of the notification group should try to assist in making arrangements for babysitting needs. This may involve co-workers' spouses, transportation of children to a relative's home, or similar arrangements.

Prior to departing for the hospital, the notification officer should notify the hospital staff and the hospital liaison (by telephone if possible) that a member(s) of the family is in route.

The deceased or severely injured officer's parents should also be afforded the courtesy of a personal notification whenever possible.

If immediate survivors live beyond Shelby County, the notification officer will ensure that the communication technician sends a teletype message to the appropriate jurisdiction, requesting a personal notification. The notification officer shall call the other jurisdiction by telephone in addition to the teletype message. Arrangements should be made to permit simultaneous telephone contact between the survivors and the Sidney Police Department.

Sidney Police Department

Sidney PD Policy Manual

First Responder Down

The Chief of Police, Captain, or Sergeant should respond to the residence or the hospital to meet with family as quickly as possible.

In the event of an on duty death, the external monitoring of the police frequencies may be extensive. Whenever possible, communications regarding notifications should be restricted to the telephone. If the media has obtained the officer's name, they will be advised to withhold the information, pending notification of next of kin.

809.2.2 HOSPITAL LIAISON OFFICER

The first official officer, at the hospital, who has been designated by the Chief of Police, becomes the hospital liaison officer. The hospital liaison is responsible for coordinating the activities of hospital personnel, the member's family, police officer's, media and others. These responsibilities include:

- Arranging with hospital personnel to provide an appropriate waiting facility for the family, immediate survivors, the Chief of Police, and the notification officer.
- Arranging a separate area for fellow police officers to assemble.
- Establishing a media staging area. During business hours, the media staging area will be in the Customer Medical Office Building. If the critical incident happened after business hours, the media staging area will be in a designated area of the parking lot.
- Ensuring that medical personnel relay pertinent information regarding the officer's condition to the family on a timely basis and before such information is released to others.
- Notifying the appropriate hospital personnel that all medical bills relating to the injured or deceased officer are directed to the Family Assistance Officer. The Family Assistance Officer will need to contact the patient accounting center within five days after the incident, to have any and all medical bills directed to the Sidney Police Department.
- Ensuring that the family is updated regarding the incident and the officer's condition upon their arrival at the hospital.
- Arranging transportation for the family back to their residence.

If it is possible for the family to visit the injured officer before death, they should be afforded that opportunity. A police official should "prepare" the family for what they might see in the emergency room and should accompany the family into the room for the visit if the family requests it. Medical personnel should advise the family of visitation policies and, in the event of death, explain why an autopsy may be necessary.

The notification officer(s) should remain at the hospital while the family is present. Do not be overly protective of the family. This includes sharing specific information as to how the officer met his or her demise, as well as allowing the family time with the deceased officer.

Sidney Police Department

Sidney PD Policy Manual

First Responder Down

809.2.3 FAMILY ASSISTANCE OFFICER

The selection of a family assistance officer is a critical assignment. An attempt should be made to assign someone who enjoyed a close relationship with the member and his or her family. When possible, “teams” should be utilized as a family assistance officer(s), thus preventing bonding between the survivor(s) and member during a vulnerable time in the survivor’s life. The team may consist of but not limited to victim services, other officer’s that were close to the family/officer, “police wives”, and so forth.

This is not a decision making position, but a “facilitator” between the family and the Department.

Responsibilities of the family assistance officer(s) include:

- Ensuring that the needs of the family come before the wishes of the Department.
- Assisting the family with funeral arrangements and making them aware of what the Department can offer if they decide to have a police funeral. If they choose the latter, briefing the family on funeral procedure (i.e., presenting the flag, playing of taps, firing party).
- Apprising the family of information concerning the death and the continuing investigation.
- Providing as much assistance as possible, including overseeing travel and lodging arrangements for out of town family members, arranging for food for the family, meeting child care and transportation needs, etc.
- Being constantly available to the family.
- Determining what public safety, church, fraternal and labor organizations will provide in terms of financial assistance for out of town family travel, food for funeral attendees following the burial, etc

809.2.4 DEPARTMENT LIASION OFFICER

This position is will be a designee of the Chief of Police.

Responsibilities of the department liaison officer include:

- Working closely with the family assistance officer to ensure that the needs of the family are fulfilled.
- Handling the news media throughout the ordeal. If the family decides to accept an interview, a member should attend to “screen” questions presented to the family so as not to jeopardize subsequent legal proceedings.
- Meeting with the following persons to coordinate funeral activities and establish and itinerary:
 - Chief of Police
 - Funeral Director
 - Family priest or minister
 - Cemetery director

Sidney Police Department

Sidney PD Policy Manual

First Responder Down

- Honor guard
- Directing the funeral activities of the Department and visiting police agencies according to the wishes of the family.
 - Issuing a teletype message to include the following:
 - Name of deceased
 - Date and time of death
 - Circumstances surrounding the death
 - Funeral arrangements (state if service will be private or police funeral)
 - Uniform to be worn
 - Expressions of sympathy in lieu of flowers
 - Contact person and phone number for visiting agencies to call to indicate their desire to attend or to obtain further information
- Establishing a command center if necessary, to coordinate information and response to the tragedy.
- Developing a policy for the wearing of badge memorial ribbons and use of patrol vehicle memorial sashes.
- Obtaining an American Flag. If the family wishes a flag presentation by the Chief of Police.
- Determining if the family desires a burial in uniform and selecting a member to obtain a uniform and all accouterments (except weapons) and deliver them to the funeral home.
- Assigning members for usher duty at the church.
- Arranging for the delivery of the officer's personal belongings to the family.
- Briefing the Chief of Police and staff concerning all funeral arrangements.
- Ensuring that the surviving parents are afforded recognition and that proper placement is arranged for them during the funeral procession.
- Arranging for EMS personnel on standby for the family, if necessary.
- Coordinating traffic management, with other jurisdictions during the viewing, funeral and procession, and arranging for a tow truck to be available along the procession route.
- American Flags along the funeral route to the cemetery.
- If possible, arranging an officer to remain at the family's home during the viewing and funeral.
- Maintaining a roster of all Agencies sending personnel to the funeral, including:
 - Name and address of responding agencies
 - Name of the Chief of Police or Sheriff

Sidney Police Department

Sidney PD Policy Manual

First Responder Down

- Number of officers attending
- Number of officers attending the reception after the funeral
- Number of vehicles
- Coordinating road patrol for our jurisdiction during the viewing and funeral proceedings.
- Acknowledging visiting and assisting departments.
- Arranging for routing residence checks for the survivors home for six to eight weeks following the funeral. This service is necessary since large amounts of money are passing through the residence and the survivors will be spending time away from the home dealing with legal matters

809.2.5 BENIFITS COORDINATOR

The benefits coordinator will gather information on benefits/funeral payments available to family.

The benefits coordinator has the Department's full support to fulfill this responsibility to the survivors and is completely responsible for filing the appropriate benefit paperwork and following through with the family to ensure that these benefits are being received.

The benefits coordinator is responsible for:

- Assist in working with the filing of Worker's Compensation claims and related paperwork.
- Contacting the appropriate offices without delay to ensure that the beneficiary receives death and retirement benefits, the member's remaining paychecks and payment for the remaining annual and compensatory time.
- Gathering information on all benefit/funeral payments, to include the Public Safety Officers Benefits Act, that are available to the family.
- Setting up any special trust funds or educational funds.
- Notifying police organizations such as Heroes, Inc, FOP, and so forth ensuring that any and all entitlements are paid to the beneficiary. These agencies may also offer legal and financial counseling to the family at no cost.
- Preparing a printout of the various benefits/funeral payments that due to the family, listing named beneficiaries and contacts at various benefits offices, and when they can expect to receive payment.
- Meeting with the surviving family a few days after the funeral to discuss the possible benefits they will receive. A copy of the prepared printout and any other related paperwork should be given to the family at this time.
- If there are surviving children from a former marriage, the guardian of those children should also receive a printout of what benefits the child(ren) may be receiving.
- Attention should be given to the revocation of health care benefits (i.e., health insurance – single or family)
- Assist family if no will has been prepared.

First Responder Down

- Meeting again with the family in about six months to ensure they are receiving benefits.

809.3 ASSISTANCE FOR AFFECTED MEMBERS

Officers who were on the scene or who arrived moments after an officer was critically injured or killed should be relieved of duty as quickly as possible.

Police witnesses and other officers who may have been emotionally affected by the serious injury or death of another officer will attend a Critical Incident Stress Debriefing held by a trained mental health professional.

809.4 CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR THE FAMILY

Members of the Sidney Police Department must remain sensitive to the needs of the survivors long after the officer's death. The grief process has no timetable. More than half of the surviving spouses can be expected to develop a posttraumatic stress reaction to the tragedy.

- Survivors should continue to feel a part of the "police family".
- Members of the Sidney Police Department are encouraged to keep in touch with the family. Close friends, co-workers and officials should arrange with the family to visit the home from time to time so long as the family expresses a desire to have these contacts.
- The Chief of Police should observe the officer's death date with a short note to the family, flowers on the grave and/or wreath placement at the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial.
- Holidays may be especially difficult for the family, particularly if small children are involved. Increased contact with the survivors and additional support is important at these times.
- The Family Assistance Officer acts a long term liaison with the surviving family to ensure that close contact is maintained between the Sidney Police Department and the survivors and that their needs are met for as long as they feel the need for support.
- If no court proceedings surround the circumstances of the officer's death, the Chief of Police or his designee will relay all the details of the incident to the family at an appropriate time.

If criminal violations surround the death, the Chief of Police will:

- Inform the family of all new developments prior to a press release.
- Keep the family apprised of legal proceedings.
- Introduce the family to the victims' assistance specialists of the court.
- Encourage the family to attend the trial, and accompany them whenever possible.
- Arrange for detectives to meet with the family at the earliest opportunity following the trial to answer all their questions.

First Responder Down

809.5 FUNERAL PROCEDURES

All Honor Guard/Officers will maintain an excellent personal appearance. Uniforms and equipment must be in outstanding condition.

Uniforms

- Long sleeve shirt and tie.
- Members of the Honor Guard, officer's and pallbearers will wear white gloves.
- A black sash will be worn across the badge.

Funeral Services

- Honor Guard and officers who attend the funeral services will report to a pre-designated assembly point away from the place of the services for inspection and briefing.
- From the assembly point, members will march to the place of the service, timing their arrival to permit immediate entry.
- Upon entering the building, members will remove their uniform hats, place them under their left arm, hat brim forward, and move in an orderly manner to the place reserved for them.
- Members will remain standing until all members are in their places and the command, "BE SEATED" is given.
- Members will sit with their hats upright in their laps, maintaining a military bearing throughout the service.
- At the end of the service, members, upon receiving the command, "OFFICERS RISE", will rise in unison and place their hats under their left arm preparatory to filing past the casket. They will hold their hats in this position until they have passed the casket and arrived outside.
- Upon leaving the building, members will replace their hats and assemble in formation at right angles to the hearse.
- Two ranks will be formed facing each other, leaving an aisle through which pallbearers and casket may pass.
- Members will be formed by height. They will normally be dressed at extended intervals but may be dressed at close intervals if space is limited.
- While waiting in formation, members will stand at parade rest.
- When the casket comes into view, the formation will be called to attention. The next command will be "PRESENT ARMS". All members salute and hold this salute until the casket is placed in the hearse. At this time, the command, "READY, FRONT", will be given and members will return their hands to their sides.

Sidney Police Department

Sidney PD Policy Manual

First Responder Down

- After the doors of the hearse are closed, the command “FIRST RANK (passenger side of hearse). RIGHT FACE” and “SECOND RANK, (driver side of the hearse) LEFT FACE”, is given so that the two columns are facing the hearse.
- The commander will then dismiss the formation with the command, “OFFICERS DISMISSED”. The members will break ranks and leave in a quiet and orderly manner.
- Members will then take their assigned places in the motorcade and proceed to the cemetery.

Gravesite Services

- Members will report to the places that have been reserved for them immediately upon arrival at the gravesite. If indoors, members will remove their hats and hold them under their left arm. All members will sit with hats in their laps, maintaining a military bearing throughout the services. If services are held outdoors, members will wear their hats.
- Just prior to the 21 gun salute and taps, the command, “OFFICERS RISE” will be given. Members will stand at attention facing the firing team or bugler. When the 21 gun salute and taps have been concluded, the command “OFFICERS DISMISSED” will be given. Members will then break ranks and return to their assigned vehicles.

809.5.1 SUGGESTED ORDER OF EVENTS

Suggested Order of Events

First, the honor guard designee escorts the family to the staging area, meeting up with the casket.

The Chief of Police is advised to start the ceremony. At this point, the honor guard (casket detail, pallbearers) performs its duties. They accompany the casket to its place of honor, and the honor guard presents the colors.

After this ceremony, the funeral service itself begins. Following is an example of the order of events.

- (a) Invocation
- (b) Prayer
- (c) Opening remarks/greetings
- (d) Special music
- (e) Scripture reading/clergy remarks
- (f) Speakers
 - - Mayor
 - Local elected officials
 - State or Federal Official
 - Family representative(s)
 - Department representative's friends

Sidney Police Department

Sidney PD Policy Manual

First Responder Down

- Eulogy – Chief of Police, dignitaries, and/or family
- (a) Special music
- (b) Presentations
- (c) Closing remarks/prayer
- (d) 21 Bells/21 gun salute (also may be performed at cemetery)
- (e) Bagpipes play (Amazing Grace, for example)
- (f) Final Radio Call ceremony – (also may be performed at the cemetery)
- (g) Honor Guard retires the colors
- (h) Bagpipes play as the pallbearers remove the casket
- (i) Dismissal instructions

809.5.2 LAST CALL - END OF WATCH DISPATCHER

Last Call – End of Watch : Dispatch

The Chief of Police will designate a dispatcher to perform the “Last Call – End of Watch” transmission, in the event that an officer(s) die in the line of duty. This may be done by the most senior dispatcher or a dispatcher from the deceased officer(s) shift.

Dispatch; Stand by on all radio traffic.

Dispatch; Station to (officer(s) unit number)

Wait five seconds.

Dispatch; Station to (officer(s) unit number and title/name)

Wait five seconds.

Dispatch; Station to (officer(s) unit number and title/name)

Wait five seconds.

Dispatch; Unit number is 10-7, out of service.

Pause for 3 seconds.

Dispatch; Unit number, you will be missed by all. Thank you for your service, loyalty, and dedication.

Pause for 3 seconds.

Dispatch; Unit number, you served our department from (hire date) to (date of passing away).

Pause for 3 seconds

Dispatch; End of Watch, may you watch over us. We will take it from here. You will not be forgotten. We ask everyone for a moment of silence.

Pause for 10 seconds.

Sidney Police Department

Sidney PD Policy Manual

First Responder Down

Dispatch; You may resume radio traffic.

809.6 HONORS ACCORDED

Any Sidney Police Department Officer who dies in the line of duty will be accorded full honors, if requested by the survivors. This will include the casket watch during the viewing, honor guard, pallbearers, firing squad, taps, military flag fold and presentation and motor escort.

The Honor Guard Commander is responsible for coordinating and directing the activities of the Honor Guard, casket watch, pallbearers, firing squad, bugler, and flag presentation.

Casket Watch

- The casket watch is usually comprised of officers from the Honor Guard. However, departmental officers may volunteer to stand watch at the discretion of the Chief of Police. Officers who are assigned to the casket watch must present an excellent uniform appearance and conform to all current grooming regulations.
- The dress uniform dress jackets, white shirt, tie dress pants, hat and white gloves, will be worn for the casket watch. The watch will be divided into shifts with two officers standing 30 minutes at a time.
- If the family wishes, an informal watch can take place after the viewing has been concluded for the day.
- The casket watch moves in slow cadence. This includes marching, movements and saluting. The official will post the watch and the officers will position themselves at or near the head and feet of the deceased officer.

Honor Guard

- Members of the Honor Guard will assemble at a location near the service (church, funeral home, or cemetery) for inspection by the Honor Guard Commander.
- Commands will be executed by the Honor Guard Commander.

Pallbearers

- If pallbearers are requested by the family, they will be selected by the Chief of Police if not noted in the line of duty packet..
- Pallbearers will be under the direction of the Honor Guard Commander. They will report to the funeral home as directed for instructions and seating arrangements.

Procedural Variation

- The procedures outline in this Order shall be followed in most cases. Any changes made necessary by a shortage of manpower, the unusual size of the funeral, the type of service, the physical arrangement of the place of the service or for any other reason shall be made by the Chief of Police.

Any additional honors to be accorded to the deceased officer or deceased officer of other law enforcement agencies shall be at the discretion of the Chief of Police.

Sidney Police Department

Sidney PD Policy Manual

First Responder Down

If an officer dies due to suicide, after leaving the department on a medical retirement, after retirement, or so forth, Honors Accorded to that officer will be at the discretion of the Chief of Police on a case by case basis.

809.6.1 DEATH BENEFITS

DEATH BENEFITS;

- Educational Benefits – The children and spouse of an officer who dies in the line of duty, and who is admitted to any State university or college (community college, state community college, university branch or technical college), shall not be required to pay any tuition or any student fee for up to four years of education, which shall be at an undergraduate level. www.ohiohighered.org 614-466-6000
- Kids Chance, Inc. – Scholarship program designated to help children who have had a parent killed or permanently disabled in a work related accident. Children ages between 16 and 22. www.kidschance.org 877-933-0222.
- Workers Compensation – Workers Compensation benefits are payable to beneficiaries of ALL agency personnel providing the following criteria as outlined in “A”, are met.
- Should death be caused by or related to an industrial injury or disease, worker’s compensation will be paid to the spouse for life duration unless remarriage occurs and to dependent children until age 18 or beyond age 18 if disabled, or until age 25 is full time students.
- If the spouse remarries, they will receive an amount equal to two years compensation.
- Rate; 2/3 of the decedent’s average weekly wage.
- Maximum burial allowance is \$5000.00.
- To receive workers’ compensation benefits the surviving spouse must take the initiative and file a workers’ compensation claim thru a workers’ compensation attorney to receive any compensation. www.ohiobwc.com 800-644-6292
- Additional Benefits – Peer Support Organization – Works with law enforcement agencies, police organizations, mental health professional, and local peer support organizations to provide assistance to surviving families. – www.nationalcops.org/chap.htm 800-784-2611
- Ohio Victims of Crime Compensation Program – Victims of criminally injurious conduct and their dependents for a wide variety of out of pocket expenses. Enabling all victims to have the opportunity to be represented by the attorney of their choice with attorney fees paid from the reparations fund. www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/victimscompensation
- Funeral and Cremation Benefits – This program provides dignified and honorable tributes, at no cost, for career and volunteer law enforcement officers who fall in the line of duty. www.dignitymemorial.com 800-344-6489

Sidney Police Department

Sidney PD Policy Manual

First Responder Down

- Concerns of Police Survivors – 800-784-2677 www.nationalcops.org or cops@nationalcops.org
- Shelby County Victim Services – They will assist in various ways; therapy for family members at no cost, assist in filing paperwork with victim compensation – \$8000.00 for funeral cost and medical bills, willing to assist at the funeral and afterwards with family members.

Federal Benefits

- Hometown Heroes Survivors Benefits Act - \$328,612.73 awarded to beneficiary.
- Filing a claim – www.psob.gov or call 888-744-6513
- COBRA Act of 1985 – Guarantees that the employer of the deceased officer must make available to the surviving spouse and their dependent children the same type of health insurance as was provided prior to the officer's death. Coverage is available for up to 36 months.
- Public safety officers' educational assistance program – Tuition, defray educational expenses, including tuition, room and board, books, supplies, and education related fees. – www.psob.gov – 888-744-6513
- Wives Behind the Badge – Scholarships are open to the spouses/registered domestic partners and dependent children of local, state, and federal law enforcement officers. – www.wivesbehindthebadge.org 661-202-8604
- One Time Death Benefit – In addition to the monthly benefits survivors receive, the deceased workers' eligible spouse is entitled to a one time death payment. If there is no such spouse, this payment can be made only to a child entitled to survivors benefits. 800-772-1213
- NRA Death Benefit – If a police officer, with or without compensation, is feloniously killed in the line of duty and is a current member of NRA, the surviving spouse/family is entitled to a \$25,000.00 death benefit. 877-672-3006
- Officer Down Memorial – www.odmp.org
- Go to the resource drop down section. Proceed to the survivor benefits section. Click on the State of Ohio, this area show all of the benefits and contact numbers.