**Line of Duty Death Notification Tip Sheet**

1. It shall be the responsibility of the Duty Officer to properly notify the next of kin of an emergency services personnel who has suffered severe injuries or has died. The Duty Officer may personally make the notification and/or designate a NOTIFICATION OFFICER to inform the survivors. You MUST familiarize yourself with the circumstances of the death and the personal data concerning the death BEFORE making the notification. By having a second person in attendance, the chief/Duty Officer will be available to leave shortly after to return to the scene if necessary. The second person remains to see what they can do for the surviving family, getting additional medical help for the survivors if needed, being the compassionate listener.

2. The name of the Injured or deceased MUST NEVER be released by the Department before the immediate family is notified. Do NOT tell neighbor(s) of the death before telling the family. If asked tell them you need to find the family regarding a medical emergency and ask if they know where they are.

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

4. Notification MUST ALWAYS be made in person and NEVER ALONE. Notification to the family will be done in a department uniform and in a marked department vehicle. The Chief of Department or a representative, chaplain, close friend, or another first responder's survivor could appropriately accompany the NOTIFICATION OFFICER. However, if the aforementioned persons are not readily accessible, notification should not be delayed until these people can gather. If there is an opportunity to get to the hospital prior to the death of the firefighter, DON'T WAIT for the delegation to gather. Attempt to bring the spouse to the hospital. The family should learn of the death from the Department FIRST and not from social media, texting, messaging, or the press or other sources. This is NOT the time to make idle promises to the family. ( ie. "We'll promote him posthumously", "We'll retire his badge" )

5. NEVER make a death notification on the doorstep. Ask to be admitted to the house. Ask the survivor if he would like to sit down. Inform family members slowly and clearly of the information that you have. If specifics of the incident are known, the NOTIFICATION OFFICER should relay as much information as possible to the family. Answer all questions honestly. Be sure to use the emergency services personnel’s first name during the notification. If the first responder 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". Offer to make phone calls, if the survivor wishes.

6. DO NOT take any personal clothing, jewelry, billfold, purse, etc. to the notification.

7. If the family requests to visit the hospital, they should be transported in a marked vehicle. It is highly recommended that the family NOT drive themselves to the hospital. If the family insists on driving, a uniformed first responder should accompany them in the family vehicle.

8. If young children are at home, the NOTIFICATION OFFICER must arrange for babysitting needs. This may involve co- workers' spouses known to the family, transportation of children to a relative's home, or a similar arrangement, transported by a marked vehicle.

9. 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 en route to the hospital.

10. The deceased or severely injured first responder's parents should also be afforded the courtesy of a personal notification if possible. Use a uniformed first responder with a department vehicle, if possible.

11. If immediate survivors live beyond the local area, the NOTIFICATION OFFICER will ensure that the appropriate jurisdiction is contacted requesting a PERSONAL notification.

12. The Chief or a high-ranking representative and a union official should respond to the residence or the hospital to meet with the family, as quickly as possible.

13. In the event of an on-duty death, the external monitoring of fire frequencies may be extensive. Communications regarding notifications should be restricted to the telephone whenever possible. If the media has somehow obtained the emergency services personnel’s name, they should be advised to withhold the first responder’s name, pending notification of next of kin. Members shall NOT give out any information of the incident. This will be done by the Chief or his designee.

14. In the event of a line-of-duty death the Chief or the DEPARTMENT LIAISON OFFICER will transmit a message prepared and/or approved by the Chief, similar to the following: "It is with deep regret that announcement is made of the death of (Rank, Name, Company) who lost his life in the line of duty while participating in operations on fire call (Number, Location, Date, and Time)". Record same in the Department log book. Death other than line of duty: "It is with deep regret that announcement is made of the death of Rank (Retiree) name, on/at time/date".

15. If family members arrive on the scene during on-going operations it is IMPORTANT to IDENTIFY them and keep them out of the direct flow of operations, particularly if the body is still trapped or on the scene. ( watch what is said around the family ) a. Secure the scene of the area where the incident occurred. b. Secure ALL gear, equipment involved in the area. c. Photograph the total area and equipment.

16. Assure notification of ALL off-duty and vacationing personnel.

17. Assure notification of city/county leaders.