
	GAITHERSBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT		
	Notification of Next-Of-Kin		
	GENERAL ORDER 607.8	Related CALEA Standards:	
Effective Date 06/23/2016	54.1.1, 55.2.6, 82.2.1		
Authorized by: Mark P. Sroka CHIEF OF POLICE		SIGNATURE <i>Mark Sroka</i>	DATE 06/23/2016

I. DEPARTMENT POLICY

It is the policy of the department to assist with other agencies and citizens requests for next-of-kin emergency notifications. Subject to the availability of personnel, emergency messages of any legitimate type, as defined by the employee receiving the message, will be delivered. Any message pertaining to a death, serious injury, or serious illness will be delivered, in person, by an officer. Members are expected to deliver these notifications with compassion, professionalism and in a helpful manner.

II. NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES

A. Procedures

Notifying the next-of-kin in a case where there is a death, serious injury, and/or serious illness, can place the officer in a delicate and uncomfortable situation, therefore the procedures listed below should be followed whenever possible and practical.

1. Whenever possible, notifications will be promptly made *in-person* by the investigating officer, unless relieved of the responsibility by an investigator.
2. The presence of clergy, a relative or close friend should be obtained whenever possible prior to notification, however, if this cannot be accomplished, the member should offer reasonable assistance to the next-of-kin in contacting one of the aforementioned persons.
3. Members should ask the next-of-kin to step inside the residence and should refrain from making the notification outside the residence.
4. The person receiving the notification should be advised of the means used in transmitting the notification to the department (i.e., teletype, or call from another law enforcement agency, unverified telephone call to the Department, etc.).
5. If an officer will be making a notification on behalf of another

officer or agency, the officer should obtain all available pertinent information in order to assist the relative to whom the message is to be relayed, and to ensure that the information being delivered is accurate.

6. Notifications of next-of-kin will be coordinated with any investigators on the scene, as generally they will take care of this function, during their follow-up investigation.
7. If an officer cannot locate the next-of-kin upon arrival at the residence, the officer should attempt to ascertain the next-of-kin's whereabouts from neighbors, co-workers (if known), etc.
8. If the officer determines the next-of-kin to be in a location outside this jurisdiction, but within the County, the officer will advise PSCC so that an officer from that district can be dispatched.
9. If the officer determines the next-of-kin to be in a location outside the County, the officer will ensure that the agency requesting notification is advised so that the requesting agency can make other arrangements.
10. If the Public Information Officer is unavailable, officers of the rank of Sergeant and above have the authority to provide statements to the media in accordance with the provisions of this directive and the Department's media policy (**General Orders in the 1200 series**).
11. The media will not be given a victim's name until the next-of-kin is notified, whether the victim is deceased or not.
 - a. Members of the media seeking information prior to the next-of-kin notification will not be given the victim's name or address, but will be given general information, such as race, sex, approximate age, and town of residence.
12. After the next-of-kin has been notified, the media may be given the victim's name and the street name where they live(d), and a synopsis of how the death or serious injury occurred, *unless the disclosure of this information would adversely effect an on-going investigation.*

III. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

A. Field Reports

1. If an officer notifies a next-of-kin pursuant to an incident for which he/she is writing a report, the report will indicate the name, address, and phone numbers of the person that was notified.

B. Teletypes

1. If an officer makes a notification pursuant to a teletype, the officer will ensure that a reply teletype is sent back to the requesting agency with the results.