



Abilene Police Department Operating Procedures

Subject:

Chaplaincy, Family Assistance, Officer Death & Injury Protocols

Issued:

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Chaplaincy Purpose

The Chaplaincy program is a volunteer program intended to provide support and ministerial services for members of the Department, their immediate family members, retired members of the Department and volunteers in times of serious injury, illness and death of loved ones, upon request, and other circumstances when needed.

Chaplain Qualification and Selection

Persons eligible and qualified to be a chaplain:

- A. Must show compassion, understanding, love of others and easily relate to people;
- B. Maintain high spiritual and moral standards and
- C. Must be in good standing with a recognized religious body.
- D. Must be a licensed minister of a recognized denomination

Persons wishing to volunteer as a police chaplain:

- A. Must submit a letter of recommendation from their local church;
- B. A sworn officer must submit a letter or receive a letter of recommendation from their supervisor;
- C. Final approval and selection lies with the Chief of Police or his designee.

Chaplain Guidelines

Chaplains will provide assistance or spiritual guidance without regard to race, sex, rank or religious affiliation.

Chaplains will, at an appropriate time, ascertain if the individual has a specific religious preference or a specific person of the clergy they wish to be notified. If so, the chaplain will contact the requested person.

Chaplains will maintain strict confidentiality of identity of persons contacting them and the content of such contacts except as immediately necessary to protect any person from serious bodily injury or death. Chaplains who violate confidentiality will be subject to immediate removal from program.

Persons selected to be a chaplain will be required to make a commitment of at least one year to the program and will be subject to call out any time. A call out list will be maintained in the Communications section of the Department.

Chaplains will complete an activity report of the services they have rendered and provide the report to the Victim's Advocate Coordinator, who will maintain records to document program activities.



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Chaplain Services and Responsibilities

Notification of death or serious injury

- A. Upon request by a Department representative, a chaplain shall assist in the notification of family members concerning the death or serious injury to a member of the Department.
- B. Depending on the circumstances of each incident, the chaplain will respond either to the scene, the home or the hospital.

Funerals

- A. Officiate, assist or work in cooperation with other members of the clergy, upon request, for funerals of members of the Department, their immediate family members, volunteers or retired members of the Department.
- B. When possible, attend, as a representative of the Department, funerals of law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty.

Counseling

- A. Upon request, the chaplain will be available to counsel with any employee of the Department, their immediate family, volunteers or retired members of the Department.
- B. The content of the communication between the chaplain and the person being counseled is confidential.
- C. If deemed necessary by the chaplain, an individual seeking counseling may be referred to other professional sources.

Public Ceremonies - upon request, chaplains will be available to lead in the invocation or benediction of banquets and ceremonies related to the Department.

Hospital Visitation

- A. When possible, chaplains will visit employees of the Department, their family members, volunteers and retired members who are in the hospital.
- B. If an employee of the Department is facing surgery, the chaplain, upon request, will visit with the employee or their family members and offer support.
- C. If a member of another law enforcement agency is in a local hospital, the chaplain, upon request, may visit them.



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Home Visitation

- A. A chaplain will, upon request, make a home visit to employees of the Department who have been injured, disabled or are suffering from a serious illness.
- B. The purpose of the home visit is to offer encouragement to the employee and his/her family during a recovery.
- C. If unable to make home visits, a chaplain will attempt to contact the employee or family during a recovery.

Assisting other Law Enforcement Agencies - Upon the request made by another law enforcement agency, chaplains may be available to offer assistance for employees of said agency. Such assistance may include injury and death notifications, funerals, counseling and other duties of the clergy.

Duties of the Chaplain

- A. Provide leadership for the Volunteer Chaplaincy Program. Such leadership includes direction and coordination of the Chaplaincy Program.
- B. Be available to assist Department employees in emergency situations within Department guidelines. These may include either natural or man-made disasters.
- C. Attend seminars, workshops or courses designed to advance skills in counseling, crisis intervention, stress burnout, grief recovery, suicide prevention and other topics directly related to law enforcement.
- D. Develop instructional materials related to the problems and concerns that affect employees and their families that could be used for in-service training.
- E. Be a liaison to all other support programs in the Department.

Request for Service

Any employee of the Department may request services of the Chaplain Program by contacting Communications. Chaplains will be available during the hours they volunteer as reflected in the call out roster in the Communications Division.

Departmental Responsibilities

The Department will provide office space and funding through the budget for supplies, equipment and training as needed.



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Death and Serious Injury Policy

The Department will provide assistance to the immediate family of a member of the Department who suffers a life threatening injury, illness or is killed in the line of duty. In such an event, the Department will provide a detailed comprehensive study of survivor benefits. The Department will also provide tangible and intangible emotional support during this traumatic period of readjustment of the surviving family. Funeral arrangements of an employee will be decided by the family and their wishes will take precedence over any Department procedure or policy concerning funeral protocol.

Family Notification Procedures

Coordination of events following a line of duty death or serious injury to a police officer is an extremely important and complex responsibility. Professionalism and compassion must be shown at all times to be a solemn obligation to the officer's family and the law enforcement community. In order to provide the best possible services and support to the family, specific tasks to be accomplished will be assigned to members of the Department.

The on-duty shift commander is responsible for completion of notification of the family (including parents if they live locally) of an officer who has been killed or has suffered a life threatening injury. Prior to notification, the shift commander will notify the Chief of Police, the officer's division commander, and the police chaplain or victims advocate.

The on-duty shift commander will assign an officer to notify the family. The police chaplain will accompany the officer and assist in the notification. In the event a police chaplain is unavailable, the shift commander will assign another officer to accompany the officer making notification. Notification will always be made in person and never alone.

The name of a killed or seriously injured police officer will not be released by any member of the Department until the immediate family and parents, if they live locally, have been notified.

If a survivor has medical problems, medical personnel will be called and asked to stage nearby (out of sight) while notification is being made.

The surviving parents, if they live in the local area, will be afforded the same personal notification. If they live outside the local area, the on-duty shift commander will assign the Communications Division to contact local law enforcement to make personal notification of the parents.



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Providing Assistance and Transportation

If the family requests to go to the hospital, they should be transported in an unmarked police unit. It is recommended the family not drive themselves to the hospital.

If there are small children present, the officer assisting the notification officer should make arrangements for child care by calling family relatives or friends.

Prior to leaving for the hospital, the notification officer should contact the hospital staff to notify them that the family is enroute. The notification team should remain with the family while they are at the hospital.

During the time an injured officer remains in critical, life threatening condition, the notification team will not leave the family unless relieved but instead will remain with the family to provide assistance in the event the officer dies.

When it appears an injured officer will be hospitalized for an extended period but will ultimately survive, after seeing to the needs of the family and providing the family with means to maintain contact with the Department, the notification team may leave. After that, the Department Resource officer will make periodic (at least daily) contact to provide assistance to the family.

Hospital Liaison Officer

The on-duty shift commander will designate an officer as Hospital Liaison officer. He will:

- A. Coordinate with hospital staff to provide appropriate waiting facilities for the family, the Chief of Police, the notification team and any other persons as requested by the family.
- B. Make arrangements for a separate area for fellow police officers and friends to assemble.
- C. Establish a press staging area.
- D. Gather enough information to brief the family on the officer's condition and the incident upon their arrival at the hospital.
- E. Ensure the family, if possible, is allowed to visit an injured officer before death.
- F. Request medical personnel relay pertinent information regarding the officer's condition to the family on a timely basis and before the information is released to others.
- G. If the officer has already died and the family requests to see the body, the request will be honored. No attempts should be made to restrict the family's access to the body.
- H. If the injury or death occurred while the officer was on duty, the Hospital Liaison officer will make arrangements with the hospital to ensure that all medical bills are directed to the City Risk manager's office.
- I. Make arrangements with the notification team, if still available, to transport the family back home. If the notification team has already left, the Hospital Liaison officer will notify the on-duty shift commander to make arrangements for transportation.



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Family Liaison Officer

The Chief of Police will designate an officer to be a Family Liaison officer. His purpose will be to render assistance to the family and to coordinate any Department participation in the funeral or services. An attempt will be made to assign an officer who enjoyed a close personal relationship with the officer and his family. The Family Liaison officer will:

- A. Ensure the needs and wishes of the family take priority over those of the Department, except as required for criminal justice purposes.
- B. Assist the family with funeral arrangements and make them aware of what the Department can offer should they choose to have police participation at the funeral. If they choose a police funeral, he should brief them on police funeral procedure.
- C. Keep the family informed concerning the death and any continuing investigation.
- D. Provide as much assistance as possible for out of town family members including travel arrangements, meals, lodging requirements and reservations, if necessary. Supervisors of all Department divisions should be contacted to generate volunteers to provide meals.
- E. Be constantly available to the family.

Public Information Liaison Officer

The Chief of Police will designate an officer with experience to represent the family of an officer severely injured or killed in the line of duty to ensure media requests and information are properly vetted. The officer will act to ensure the needs of the officer's family are met and to ensure information given out is accurate and done in a timely manner.

Personnel Resource Officer

The officer designated as Personnel Resource officer will:

- A. Notify Concerns of Police Survivors (C.O.P.S.) whose members are available to provide emotional support to surviving families.
- B. Gather information on all benefits available to the family and will be responsible for filing the appropriate paperwork to ensure the benefits are received.
- C. Visit the family during the time funeral arrangements are being made to brief the family on benefits available to them. He should visit the family periodically after the funeral to ensure the entitled benefits are received in a timely manner.



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Criminal Proceedings

During criminal proceedings, the Family Liaison officer will:

- A. Inform the family of all developments prior to press release.
- B. Keep the family updated of legal and parole proceedings.
- C. Introduce the family to victim assistance specialists of the court.
- D. Encourage the family to attend the trial and accompany them to answer questions they may have about the proceedings.
- E. Arrange for the investigators to meet with the family at the earliest opportunity after the trial to answer questions they may have.
- F. If the death was not criminal and no court proceedings are anticipated, the Family Liaison officer should provide all details of the death to the family at the earliest opportunity.

Police Funeral Procedures

The Department will commemorate the death of an active or retired member of the Department, in good standing, as determined by the Chief of Police, by rendering departmental honors in tribute to the deceased officer. As approved by the Chief of Police and upon request or approval of the surviving family, certain ceremonial honors may also be rendered.

Departmental Honors

In the event of the death of an active or retired officer, the following departmental honors may be rendered:

- A. All flags at police facilities will be flown at half-staff for the period of time from the death until immediately following the committal service.
- B. All members of the Department will have their badges shrouded with a black mourning band.
 1. To honor an active member, the band will be worn from the time the officer is reported deceased until immediately following the committal service.
 2. To honor a retired member, the band will be worn when attending the funeral or memorial service.



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Ceremonial Honors

- A. The Chief of Police, or his designee, will arrange for a ceremonial casket guard to remain with the casket at the funeral home and during funeral or memorial services.
- B. A ceremonial honor guard will be formed and will be responsible for:
 1. An official departmental burial flag to drape the casket.
 2. A casket guard one hour prior to the memorial service.
 3. The presenting of colors at the grave site or memorial service.
 4. A flag folding ceremony and presentation of the burial flag(s) to the surviving spouse and parents of the deceased officer.
 5. The playing of Taps.
- C.
 1. A twenty-one gun salute.
 2. The playing of bagpipes.
 3. Officer's last call.

Department Liaison Ceremonial Event Coordinator

The Chief of Police may appoint one officer to serve as Department Liaison officer who will:

- A. Direct the funeral activities of the Department and visiting law enforcement agencies according to the wishes of the family.
- B. If the family desires burial in uniform, one uniform and all accessories (except weapons) will be delivered to the funeral home.
- C. Generate a list of names and contact the pallbearers.
- D. Establish a list of volunteers to perform a twenty-four hour casket watch and viewing of the deceased at the funeral home. The casket watch will be separate and apart from the honor guard.
- E. Ensure all arrangements have been coordinated with:
 1. Family of the deceased officer,
 2. Funeral director,
 3. Chaplain and the clergy,
 4. Ceremonial honor guard,
 5. Traffic sergeant to arrange for funeral escort and route.
- F. Prepare an Order of Events schedule and provide one to those persons listed in E above.
- G. Give the funeral information to the Communications Division to teletype to other law enforcement agencies.
- H. Designate an officer to advise outside agencies of the funeral and internment site of any special arrangements.
- I. Arrange for the delivery of the officer's personal belongings to the family.



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Funeral Protocol

The design of the funeral or memorial service will be dependent upon the preferences of the family and any Department participation will conform accordingly. Members of the Department who attend the funeral services will report to a pre-designated point away from the place of services for inspection and briefing. The uniform to be worn will be the Class A uniform or Command Dress.

Funeral Escorts

In the interest of serving employees while also insuring consistency and fairness to our citizens, the Department will authorize on-duty funeral escorts for the following circumstances of death:

- A. Any active city employee;
- B. Any retired employee of the Department, civilian or sworn;
- C. A service man or woman who died while protecting our country.