

SECTION 18 – Death or Serious Injury of Agency Personnel

New York State Law Enforcement Accreditation Program

18.1 Death or Serious Injury of Agency Personnel - Procedures

ADMINISTRATION

STANDARD 18.1 The agency has a written directive that outlines their response to the death or serious injury of any member of the department whether in the line of duty or otherwise. The written directive must include guidelines for:

- A. Personal notification of the family in a timely manner;
- B. Media Coverage;
- C. Transporting family members to hospitals and providing support;
- D. Funeral procedures (degree of ceremony based on incident type and/or family's wishes);
- E. Assisting the family during any court proceeding stemming from the incident;
- F. On-going support/services for seriously injured employees;
- G. On-going support/services for family members;
- H. Support/services for members of the department affected by the incident.

Commentary: Having a plan in place to coordinate all of the events that follow the death or serious injury of a member of the agency is an important component to administrators' maintaining professionalism and focus during an emotionally difficult time. The plan will ensure that services and support are already identified so they may be offered in a timely manner to both members of the officer's family and the officer's colleagues within the department.

Appropriate services may include assisting the family at the hospital, supporting the family at the funeral and burial, helping the family with legal and benefits matters, counseling the family regarding finances and other possible problems, supporting the family during criminal proceedings (if any), providing ongoing support to the seriously injured employee, and maintaining long-term contact with the family to stay informed of their needs. Appointing one individual member of the department as a single point of contact to the family and/or employee is ideal and should be considered if agency resources allow.

If an agency is limited in available resources, they may utilize their municipality's EAP or other outside resources to meet this standard.

Compliance Verification Strategies

Assessors may seek to verify compliance with this standard by using one or more of the strategies listed below. There may be other strategies identified by the agency which could also be acceptable.

1. A copy of the directive is available for review.
2. Interviews with agency personnel to verify their knowledge of and understanding of the directive.