

## 227.EMERGENCY NOTIFICATIONS



### RICHFIELD POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICY

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Authority: Chief Jay Henthorne

*NOTE: This policy is for internal use only and does not enlarge an employee's civil or criminal liability in any way. It should not be construed as the creation of a higher standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party claims. Violations of this policy, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this Department, and then only in a non-judicial administrative setting.*

### I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to establish guidelines and procedures to be utilized by Department personnel when making emergency notifications.

### II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Richfield Police Department to assist the public and other law enforcement agencies in locating and notifying persons of situations which may require their immediate attention. Notifications of injury, illness, or death **shall** be made only by sworn police personnel.

### III. PROCEDURE

#### **DEATH NOTIFICATIONS**

In any death where the medical examiner's office is involved, authorization to make the death notification **shall** be obtained from the medical examiner prior to making any notification.

In any death where multiple law enforcement agencies are involved, the duty supervisor **shall** coordinate the notification process with other agencies so that multiple notifications to the same individual are not made.

Identifying information on deceased persons **shall** not be released to the media until next-of-kin have been notified except by the express consent of the Chief of Police.

Before making a death notification, the essential details surrounding the victim's death must be gathered and organized. The officer should, for example, record such details as the deceased's full name, age, sex, race, home address, location of death, nature of death, time of death, location of the body, and other pertinent details surrounding the death. Notification should not be done until the investigating officers can reasonably verify the identity of the deceased.

The deceased's closest relative should be determined as quickly as possible. If the closest relative is not available and there will be some delay in contacting that person, the next closest relative should be the person notified. If possible, the notifying officer should also gather some information about the survivor to facilitate the notification process.

Death notifications should be made in person. Any death notification made by telephone **shall** be approved by the duty supervisor.

If at all possible, the officer should be accompanied by another individual or officer during a death notification. A second individual is important when: several family members are involved; the notification may elicit anger or overt physical reactions, or; the possibility exists that family members may be physically overcome by the news and may require medical attention.

A death notification should be delivered in a prompt and considerate manner. As the notifier, the officer should deliver this personal news in a concise, straightforward and compassionate way, and be prepared to provide basic information or referral services if necessary. The officer should approach the notification realizing the need to spend as much time as necessary to calm and comfort the survivor. The officer should assist the survivor in gaining access to support persons or services which may be needed.

The Richfield Chaplains are a resource available to officers to assist in making death notifications. In situations when there is a language barrier, outside resources may also be used.

If the person to be notified resides in another jurisdiction, the police/sheriff department in that jurisdiction should be contacted and the notification process coordinated with that agency. In this case, the on-duty shift supervisor or designee should make telephone contact with the agency and relay the necessary information.

### **INJURED OR ILL PERSONS**

In cases where a person is hospitalized, an employee from the attending hospital will usually make the necessary notification to the next of kin.

In those cases where this Department is requested by another agency to make an injury or illness notification or in those cases where the identity is known and the next of kin resides in the City, notification should be made as soon as possible. The notification may be done in person or by telephone, depending upon the seriousness and other circumstances of the particular incident.

The officer making the notification should provide only information of which the officer has personal knowledge, such as hospital location and method of transportation. Information regarding the person's physical condition should be minimal and opinions should be avoided.

In the event the person to be notified resides in another jurisdiction and telephone notification is impractical or not possible, the police/sheriff department of that jurisdiction should be contacted and requested to deliver the notification. In this case, the duty supervisor or designee should make telephone contact with the agency and relay the necessary information.

By Order Of:



Chief of Police