EMS Standard Operating Procedures

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<th>Line of Duty Death (LODD)/ Serious Injury</th>
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Purpose:

The purpose of this document is to provide a guideline for an organized response to a Death or Serious Injury within our department and identify all functions to plan and administer ceremonial events as well as the logistics of death benefits. This response will be performed to appropriately honor the fallen provider. For purposes of this policy a Line of Duty Death (LODD) is defined as the death of an employee who is directly involved in performing EMS operations at the time of his/her death or traveling to or from his/her location of assignment. Pertinent aspects of this SOP will also be used to address serious injuries leading to hospitalization of department members.

Policy:

Pre-incident Planning

The pre-incident planning for all department deaths includes gathering information about personnel, education related to the current SOP, and identifying resources.

A potential situation that could occur due to our large service area is a LODD outside of our immediate area. In this instance there are many unique situations that will require extra attention. Department administrative staff as well as the West Des Moines EMS Honor Guard Executives will be educated in this area and will be able to provide the appropriate guidance and direction.

Personal Information Document

Personal Information Documents for all members of the department will be prepared. They will include such items as emergency contacts and other critical information. These documents will be prepared during an employee’s initial orientation and reviewed during the annual appraisal.
process. At a minimum an employee will provide emergency contact information. Additional
information at the employee’s discretion may be included.

(Refer to Appendix-Personal Information Document)

**Initial Actions for LODD and Significant Injury**

An emotional and tense situation occurs at an incident with a death, probable death, or injuries
severe enough that they will likely lead to the death of an employee. Immediate actions need to
be taken to control the situation and to prepare for the events which will take place.

(Refer to Appendix- LODD Checklist)

**Institute a strict radio/communication policy.**

This should be done by the Shift Supervisor on duty. This should include limiting social media,
texting, and e-mail. This should serve to minimize the event that family members of the deceased
and media would receive notification prior to contact/notification by department administration.

**Assign a Public Information Officer**

Expect a significant media event. Prepare a scripted initial notification for media. Schedule a
press conference for a more formal notification once additional information becomes available
and NOK have been notified.

**Begin Notifications**

1. **Department Administration**

The Shift Supervisor on duty will notify department administrative staff. A plan to notify family
members should immediately be developed by administrative staff. Department member’s
Personal Information Document should be made available at this time.

   a. Department administrative staff will assure the following are notified:
      a. Mayor and City Council
      b. Alliance Board Members
      c. City Manager’s Office
      d. Human Resources

2. **EMT’s Family**

Divisional Chief (or higher) and an additional representatives from the agency should notify the
family in person of death and facts related to the incident. Have a medic unit nearby but out of
sight. A family liaison should be assigned and remain with and/or be available to the family and
should be the conduit for all information to/from the family. If the designated emergency contact
is not within a reasonable distance for a timely in person notification local law enforcement
should be utilized to assist. A follow up phone call and visitation to family members should be arranged for at the earliest convenience.

3. All Agency Personnel

Agency personal will be notified by a method determined by administrative staff.

4. County Coroner

County coroner should be notified and informed of LODD. Person preforming the notification should confirm that the proper protocol for autopsy will be followed as this is important for obtaining certain benefits. If the coroner does not require an autopsy one may be requested by the family.

5. Contact Support Agencies

West Des Moines EMS Honor Guard

IAFF 3586 President

State and National EMS Agencies and Organizations

Department Insurance Carrier

US Department of Justice- Public Safety Officer’s Benefits Program (see appendix for information and checklist)

National EMS Memorial Service (NEMSMS), 1-877-230-3147

Contact neighboring departments to inform them of the situation and possible need for mutual aid response.

Investigative Issues

A thorough investigation into the cause of the fatality/injury should be conducted by law enforcement including the possibility of criminal activities. Legal representation may be required. A full autopsy should be conducted by the coroner.

1. Conduct a thorough investigation with the assistance of local law enforcement.

2. Collect appropriate statements from individuals.

3. Recover and secure all protective clothing and equipment.

5. Make every attempt to have an autopsy performed. It is an essential step to ensure that an accurate cause of death is recorded.

6. Obtain at least six (6) certified copies of the autopsy report and death certificate. These may need to be requested by the family.

**Post Incident Issues**

The West Des Moines Honor Guard will be made available to assist the family in planning the funeral/memorial as they choose. This may include agency involvement, transportation, meals, childcare, etc. The Honor Guard member assigned Family Liaison should be the interface between the family, the agency and others.

Monitor department members closest to the incident to see how they are dealing with the loss. Provide for critical incident stress debriefing and grief counseling for the agency as needed. Consideration may also have to be given to allow members time off to cope with the tragedy. If needed contact Iowa CISM at 1.877.225.2476

**Benefits**

There are multiple financial benefits available for families and dependents following a LODD. There are specific protocols and polices that need to be followed to ensure that the deceased remain eligible for these benefits. Documents have been included in the appendix to provide assistance in this process.

**Appendix**

1. LODD Checklist
2. Personal Information Document
3. PSOB Fact Sheet
4. PSOB Checklist
5. IEMSA Accidental Death Policy
6. IPERS Death Benefit
7. NAEMT Death Benefit