



**Las Cruces Police Department
GENERAL ORDERS
FIELD OPERATIONS VOLUME 2
GO-204 DEATH NOTIFICATIONS
Revised 11/9/2012**

204 DEATH NOTIFICATIONS

PUPOSE

The purpose of this General order is to establish procedures and guidelines for making a death notification. (This General Order does not cover officer/employee death notifications to family. That is covered in General Order 140, Officer Death or Trauma.)

POLICY

It is the policy of the Las Cruces Police Department (LCPD) to deliver death notifications in a professional and compassionate manner.

APPLICABILITY

This General Order applies to all commissioned employees. This General Order supersedes all previous versions.

REFERENCES

N/A

204.01 PROCEDURES

- A. Death notifications shall be coordinated with the supervisor and lead detective for the incident.
- B. Whenever possible, death notifications shall be made in person.
- C. A Police Chaplain should be requested to assist the officer making the death notification. The officer making the death notification shall consult with the Police Chaplain prior to contacting the next of kin in order to discuss the circumstances of the death and how to assist the next of kin. The officer should assist and follow the guidance of the Police Chaplain but shall be the person making the death notification.
 - 1. If a chaplain is not available to deliver the death notification, the officer shall deliver the death notification with a second officer.
- D. An officer making a death notification shall ensure that the person(s) being notified receives all allowable critical information including:



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1. The location of the incident
 2. The officer's and lead detective's name
 3. Contact telephone number
 4. Telephone number of the Victim Assistance Unit (VAU). (The VAU shall follow-up with the next of kin the next day by making contact with the person having been notified and determining whether or not additional assistance is needed).
- E. Officers making a death notification should ask if there is anyone whom he or she can call to be with the person(s) being notified. Calls to clergy, family, and friends that the person being notified requests for support are permissible.

204.02 SUSPICIOUS DEATHS

A death notification given when the death is of a suspicious or criminal nature shall be done by a detective involved with investigating the death. The same procedure as section 204.01 shall be used. Having a detective present allows the detective to observe the person(s) being notified of the death for their reaction to the news and then determine if any questions need to be asked to aid the investigation.

204.03 GRIEF REACTION

A person being notified of a death may get angry with the person delivering the notice. This is a grief reaction and should not be taken personally by the officer. Explain that you understand their anger and empathize with them. The officer should use tact and sensitivity to deal with the anger while at the same time preserving officer safety.

204.04 TELEPHONE NOTIFICATIONS

- A. Using the telephone to deliver a death notification is permissible but should only be done as a last resort. The officer shall ensure the information being given is comprehended by the receiver, answer any questions asked, and make any telephone calls for support if needed. The officer shall provide the same information outlined in section 204.01D. The officer making the notification shall document the name, address, and telephone number of the person being notified.
- B. When a death notification must be made to a person who resides outside of the department's jurisdiction consider having a law enforcement officer from the person's



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to be notified jurisdiction. Typically, a teletype through NCIC will need to be sent to the other jurisdiction containing the death notification and contact information for the lead detective. The Mesilla Valley Regional Dispatch Authority (MVRDA) or the department's NCIC coordinator will assist the officer in sending a teletype.