


<p>Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services</p>  <p>Internal Investigative Unit Procedures</p>	Procedure Number: A01.A.14.004.001/IIU.270.0001	
	Title: Death Notifications	
	Effective Date: July 1, 2007	
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.01 Purpose.

This document establishes procedures for a Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (Department) Internal Investigative Unit (IIU) investigator to follow when the investigator is required to notify the next of kin of the death of a family member or other relative.

.02 Scope.

This directive applies to all IIU investigators.

.03 Policy.

- A. An IIU investigator making a death notification to the decedent's next of kin shall make the death notification in a professional manner.
- B. An IIU investigator making a death notification to the decedent's next of kin shall have sufficient information concerning the decedent and the circumstances of the death to:
 - (1) Ensure notification is made to the proper individual;
 - (2) Answer reasonable questions from the individual notified concerning the incident;
 - (3) Advise the individual of procedures for claiming the decedent's remains and personal property; and
 - (4) To the degree possible, provide the individual being notified with information concerning support services and organizations to assist with dealing with the emotional trauma of the incident.

.04 Authority/Reference.

- A. Correctional Services Article, §10-701, Annotated Code of Maryland.
- B. Secretary's Department Directive 04-2005 dated March 10, 2005.

.05 Definitions.

A. In this document, the following terms have the meanings indicated.

B. Terms Defined.

- (1) “Investigator” means a Department employee permanently assigned to, or on special assignment to assist, the IIU with the responsibilities specified under Correctional Services Article, §10-701(a)(3), Annotated Code of Maryland.
- (2) Next of Kin.
 - (a) “Next of kin” means a decedent’s closest surviving relative in the order listed under §.05B(2)(b) of this document.
 - (b) “Next of Kin” includes, but may not be limited to:
 - (i) Spouse;
 - (ii) Parents;
 - (iii) Siblings;
 - (iv) Children;
 - (v) Legal guardian; or
 - (vi) Other situation that established a relationship with or responsibility for the decedent similar to those described under §.05B(2)(b) of this document.

.06 Responsibility/Procedure.

A. Preparing to Make a Death Notification.

- (1) Before making a death notification, an investigator shall:
 - (a) Obtain accurate information as to the decedent’s:
 - (i) Full name;
 - (ii) Age;
 - (iii) Race;
 - (iv) Sex; and
 - (v) Residence;

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- (b) Obtain accurate information about the circumstances of the incident resulting in the death that may be provided to the next of kin and not jeopardize any investigation of the incident; and
- (c) Obtain accurate information to properly identify the decedent's closest next of kin for notification, to include:
 - (i) Name;
 - (ii) Relationship to the decedent;
 - (iii) Residence;
 - (iv) Availability of other surviving relatives or individuals who may be available to assist the individual notified; and
 - (v) Other information that may be useful to aid with the notification by addressing existing conditions that may aggravate making the death notification.
- (2) When possible, an investigator should arrange for a chaplain to assist with making a death notification.

B. Making a Death Notification.

- (1) The individual assigning the death notification to an investigator may not make the assignment using the police radio.
- (2) When possible, an investigator shall make a death notification in person.
 - (a) Only under extreme circumstances shall an investigator make a death notification by telephone.
 - (b) If it is necessary that another agency make a death notification, the investigator making the request shall:
 - (i) Provide the agency with the information under §.06A(1) of this document;
 - (ii) Request that the agency make the death notification in person; and
 - (iii) Request that the agency making the death notification advise the investigator immediately after the death notification is completed.
- (3) When possible, two investigators, a male and a female, shall conduct a death notification.
- (4) Before an investigator makes contact with an individual to make a death notification, the investigator shall make every effort to ensure that the individual to be notified is the decedent's closest next of kin.
- (5) An investigator making a death notification shall:

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- (a) Upon arrival, display identification and verbally identify the investigator as a Department investigator;
- (b) Determine that the individual is the decedent's next of kin;
- (c) Whenever possible, make a death notification in a private setting away from the public to:
 - (i) Ensure there are no interruptions; and
 - (ii) Provide a safe environment for the individual notified to react to the notification without undue embarrassment;
- (d) If more than one of the decedent's next of kin are at the location, bring the appropriate individuals together to make the notification;
- (e) When informing the next of kin of the relative's death, speak slowly and clearly and use plain language avoiding police jargon and graphic details to prevent misunderstanding and confusion by the next of kin and:
 - (i) Use the decedent's name or relationship to the next of kin when making the actual notification;
 - (ii) Provide the next of kin time to comprehend the information provided;
 - (iii) Be aware that there are any number of ways the individual may react to the information and be prepared to control the situation;
 - (iv) Respond to questions from the individual concerning the incident; and
 - (v) Assess the next of kin in terms of emotional stability and the need for continued assistance for the individual;
- (f) To the degree possible, arrange for other individuals close to the next of kin to be present for continued support; and
- (g) Provide, in writing if necessary, information concerning details needed by the next of kin to arrange:
 - (i) For disposition of the decedent's remains;
 - (ii) Obtaining the decedent's personal items;
 - (iii) Personal identification necessary for the next of kin; and
 - (iv) The investigator's identification information and contact information.

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- (6) Before leaving a next of kin subject to a death notification, an investigator shall, to the extent possible, provide for the continued personal safety of the individual and others present by:
 - (a) Evaluating:
 - (i) The emotional and physical state of the next of kin;
 - (ii) The presence of small children under the care of the next of kin;
 - (iii) Evidence of drug and alcohol abuse;
 - (iv) Financial issues; or
 - (v) Personal living condition; and
 - (b) Arranging for other family members, neighbors, friends, faith representatives, or support services and referrals available to assist the individual notified.
- (7) If at the time of a death notification the investigator made arrangements to address concerns for the well-being of the next of kin subject to a death notification, the investigator shall:
 - (a) Re-contact the next of kin within 24 hours of the time the death notification was made; and
 - (b) If there is continued concern for the personal safety of the next of kin, to the extent possible, arrange for appropriate support services.

.07 Attachments.

There are no attachments to this document.

.08 History.

- A. This document replaces IIU Death Notification dated August 8, 2002.
- B. This document supercedes any current IIU policy or procedure with which it may be in conflict.