

Georgia Department of Public Safety

Policy Manual

SUBJECT DEATH AND FUNERAL OF A MEMBER	POLICY NUMBER 5.06
DISTRIBUTION ALL EMPLOYEES	REVISED DATE 7/12/2022
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5.06.1 Purpose

The Purpose of this policy is to establish uniform guidelines for conduct concerning the deaths of departmental members both retired and active. The employees of the department are its most valuable resource and it is imperative that we provide support to them and their families at the time of their deepest sorrows. These procedures concern the time from the first notification until all possible assistance has been bestowed upon the family members.

5.06.2 Policy

It is the policy of the department to extend to its members, active or retired, and their families all possible assistance and support in times of death. This also covers timely notification of the death of members to other employees and retirees. It is also the policy of the department to display all possible respect to each of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice to their community and the state of Georgia.

5.06.3 Definitions

- A. Immediate Family – For the purposes of this policy, the term “immediate family” shall include the member’s spouse, children, parents, siblings, fiancée, and/or significant other.
- B. Civilian Crisis Assistance Officer (CCAO) – A member of the Human Resources Division, selected by the Director of Human Resources, to provide comfort and assistance to the immediate family of a deceased member of the Georgia Department of Public Safety.
- C. Critical Incident Support Team Member (CIST) – An employee who is trained to offer formal peer support and respond to various critical incidents, to include deaths of department members.

5.06.4 Procedures

- A. Notification
 - 1. All members shall immediately notify their Post Commander/Unit Supervisor upon receiving information that a retired or active member of the department has died. The Post Commander/Unit Supervisor shall notify their supervisor, the Human Resources Division, and the Public Information Office of the death of a

department member, active or retired.

2. The Public Information Office shall notify each member of the Command Staff, the Human Resources Director, and all department chaplains of the death.
3. The Post Commander/Unit Supervisor shall disseminate the news to all personnel under their command.
4. Public Information shall be responsible for the notification of all retirees.
5. If a retiree does not wish to be contacted regarding death notifications, or other matters, they may be removed from the call list upon submitting a written request to the Post Commander/Unit Supervisor. The Post Commander/Unit Supervisor will forward a copy of all such requests, through the chain of command, to the Human Resources Division.
6. When appropriate, a member(s) of CIST should be utilized during notification procedures. Troop Commanders, NCOs, and the CCAO shall coordinate with designated members or CIST coordinators to determine where peer support is needed during the notification process.

B. Retired Members

1. The Post Commander/Unit Supervisor shall insure that the immediate family is contacted to offer all possible assistance. This will include having a minimum of one member attend the funeral services. If an emergency arises where this is not possible, the Post Commander/Unit Supervisor will notify their supervisor, in writing, of the circumstances preventing attendance. Members are urged to attend the funerals of retired members, especially if their assignment was of the same Troop/Region or section.
2. If the immediate family requests the Georgia State Patrol Honor Guard to participate in the funeral service, the Post Commander/Unit Supervisor shall forward such request to the appropriate Division Director through the chain of command as soon as possible. The Division Director will determine if the Honor Guard may be called, if sufficient members are available, and relate the information back to the Post Commander/Unit Supervisor who will respond to the family.
3. If necessary, assign a minimum of two members for traffic control at least one hour prior to the funeral service, escorting the funeral motorcade, and insuring safe departure from the cemetery following interment. One assigned member should precede the funeral motorcade and the other should follow the motorcade. Marked patrol cars shall be used.

4. Responsibilities Regarding the Death of Retired Members

a. Troop/Region Commander

With regard to retirees, notify members to serve as pallbearers, if their service is desired, and confer with the appropriate Division Director as to the uniform to be worn.

b. Director of Human Resources Division

- 1) The Director of Human Resources will maintain the last known contact information of department retirees. This information will be updated upon written notification from a retiree, or their designee. Contact information for individual retirees will be provided to any member of the Command Staff upon request.
- 2) Upon request, assist the surviving dependents of the deceased retiree in collecting all monies due them from department related sources, which include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - a) Retirement System;
 - b) Workers' Compensation;
 - c) Group Insurance Policies;
 - d) Peace Officers' Annuity and Benefit Fund;
 - e) Department of Public Safety Credit Union;
 - f) Any State or Federal Line-of-Duty Benefits, and
 - g) Department Death Benefit Fund.

C. Death of an Active Member

1. Death of an Active Duty Member

- a. The Director of Human Resources will designate a Civilian Crisis Assistance Officer (CCAO) immediately upon being informed of the Member's death.
- b. The CIST Coordinator, or assistant, will notify the needed CIST member(s) immediately upon an active department member's death. Designated CIST members will respond accordingly and work closely with the CCAO.
- c. If the family requests the involvement of uniform members regarding the funeral services (other than mere attendance), the CCAO will contact the respective Division Director of the uniform division.

2. Notification of Immediate Family

- a. Should the death of an active member occur in the line of duty or where the Department has knowledge prior to the family, supervisors should be governed as follows:
 - 1) A member shall make all such notifications. If at all possible, this should be a supervisor.
 - 2) The notification should be as expedient as possible to minimize the chance of the family learning of the death from other sources.
 - 3) If a Uniform Crisis Assistance Officer is reasonably available, they should be called upon to assist.
 - 4) The supervisor should call upon local resources (church, relatives other than the immediate family, close family friends, etc.) when making the

initial notification.

- 5) The notification will be made in person and should be done in a private setting.
 - a) If the immediate family resides, or is located, outside of the state, the State/Highway Patrol, or other police agency, in the other state may be called upon for assistance.
- 6) The immediate family should not be left unattended after the initial notification.
- 7) A member(s) of CIST should be actively involved in the notification process if appropriate.

3. Crisis Assistance Officer

Civilian Crisis Assistance Officer (CCAO)

- a. The Director of Human Resources shall designate a Civilian Crisis Assistance Officer (CCAO), who should be a member of the Human Resources Division.
- b. The CCAO will work to ensure the needs of the family are addressed and the Department is represented in the most positive light.
- c. The Civilian Crisis Assistance Officer shall consult with the respective Division Director in distributing a Department Announcement including the date and time of the funeral services, locations, and other details as appropriate.
- d. The CCAO will need to be well versed in coordinating State, Federal, and Departmental death benefits. They should also be familiar with all resources the Department has available to assist families in this time of crisis.
- e. The Civilian Crisis Assistance Officer shall work in conjunction with all the appropriate units/persons in order to assist the surviving members in receiving all the benefits to which they are entitled. The main areas of responsibility are as follows:
 - 1) Family assistance, insurance, federal death benefits, and
 - 2) Worker's Compensation benefits, payment of accrued wages, accrued annual leave, insurance policies, and retirement benefits.
- f. The CCAO remains the primary Department liaison for the immediate family member(s) for a minimum period of one year from the date of the Member's death to ensure family needs are addressed through the Human Resources Division, and, when necessary, through the Commissioner's Office.
- g. The CCAO provides information to the immediate family members on court proceedings, investigative updates, legal proceedings, and other victim assistance.
- h. The CCAO, through the Director of Human Resources, may contact the Commissioner directly when needed.

- i. The CCAO provides guidance to the Command Staff and the Human Resources Division on matters such as:
 - 1) Police Week Memorial Services in May;
 - 2) Other services of honor for the deceased member;
 - 3) Holidays, and
 - 4) The anniversary of the member's death.
- j. Although the CCAO will remain the primary Department liaison for immediate family members for at least one year from the date of the member's death, it shall be incumbent upon designated members of CIST and other members of the Department, as appropriate, to offer a favorable, indefinite relationship with immediate family members.

D. Flags at Half-Staff

- 1. When an active member of the uniform division dies, flags will be flown at half-staff at all department facilities throughout the entire day of interment, upon the direction of the Commissioner.
- 2. When an active member of this department is killed in the line of duty, immediately upon confirmed notification of their death, flags will be flown at half-staff until the end of the day of interment.
- 3. Flags will be flown at half-staff upon orders from the Governor of the State of Georgia for the period so designated.
- 4. Flags will be flown at half-staff upon orders from the Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety for the period so designated.

E. Conduct at Funerals

- 1. Appearance at Funeral
 - a. Members shall make certain that vehicles, uniforms, and leather are properly cleaned and shined upon their attendance at a funeral.
 - b. Uniform members shall remain as one unit and be seated together at churches or chapels, when possible.
- 2. Uniformity of Dress
 - a. At Funerals of Active Duty members
 - 1) Uniformity in conduct and wearing of the uniform will be stressed.
 - 2) Uniform members serving as pallbearers shall wear the Class "A" Uniform and white gloves.
 - 3) A black memorial band or a 1/2" strip of black tape will be worn horizontally across the center of the badge under the following conditions:

- a) Line of Duty – From the time of death until sunset on the day of the funeral.
 - b) Active Duty – On the day of the funeral until sunset.
 - c) At the discretion of the Commissioner.
 - b. Sworn members shall wear the Class A uniform to all active member law enforcement funerals.
 - c. For all other funerals members shall wear the authorized uniform-of-the-day. If any other uniform is to be worn (ex. Class A) the Division Director of the division where the funeral services are being held will designate the proper uniform.
 - d. The hat, gun belt, and sidearm shall be worn during all funeral services.
 - e. Upon entering the church, sworn members shall remove their hats and cradle them along their left forearm in a manner in which the plane of the brim is held parallel to the floor with the hat badge facing forward.
 - f. The hat, gun belt and sidearm shall be worn at all graveside services.
 - g. Non-uniform members shall wear appropriate dress indicating proper respect.
3. When Serving as a Pallbearer
- a. The CCAO shall advise the highest-ranking officer acting as a pallbearer of the arrangements with the funeral director. The officer shall instruct the detail accordingly.
 - b. Generally, even if not at the specific request of the family, attending members are regarded as honorary pallbearers. Unless specifically noted, uniform members shall serve as honorary pallbearers and be governed as provided for in the Policy.
4. Authority of Ranking Officer
- a. The highest-ranking officer in attendance at the funeral shall be in charge of the uniform members and their actions. At their discretion, this authority may be delegated to someone having more expertise in this area.
 - b. In the instance of two or more officers of equal rank, the officer having the greatest degree of supervisory authority in the area where the funeral is held, i.e. Troop/Region Commander, Assistant Troop/Region Commander, Post/Unit Commander, shall be in charge.
 - c. When possible, the uniform members shall form two lines from the church or chapel to the hearse. They shall fall-in as directed by the officer in charge and maintain a professional demeanor.
 - d. The officer in charge shall assume a position in front of the detail.
 - e. As the casket exits the church, the officer shall call the detail to "Attention" and remain so until the family has passed. The next command shall be

“Parade Rest.”

- f. When “under arms” as the casket approaches, the ranking officer shall give the order “Present Arms.” All uniform members shall give the hand salute and hold the salute until the casket and family have passed and the ranking officer gives the command “Order Arms.”
- g. When members are not “under arms” and the casket is draped with the flag of the United States, the uniform members shall salute on the command of “Present Arms” and hold the salute until the casket is approximately six paces past the formation. At this time the ranking officer shall give the command “Order Arms.”
- h. To dismiss, the officer shall call the detail back to attention and give the command “Fall-out” or “Dismissed.”

5. Military Funerals

When the military has charge of the graveside service, the DPS ranking officer shall “echo” the commands of the military’s ranking officer and the department members will move off the department’s officer’s commands.

6. Authority to Attend Certain Funerals

When uniform members attend the funeral of a local law enforcement officer, the same procedure as provided for in the aforementioned paragraphs shall apply.

7. Other

Attendance on duty, in uniform, of funerals of persons not connected with the Department shall require permission from the attendee’s supervisor.