
IOWA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



LINE OF DUTY DEATH MANUAL

APRIL 2025

Adoption of Line of Duty Death Manual

In my duties as Director of the Iowa Department of Corrections, I hereby adopt the attached *Line of Duty Death Manual* to provide support for employees and their families following a death in the line of duty.

Beth Skinner, Director

Signature on file at Iowa DOC

Beth Skinner, Director
Iowa Department of Corrections

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Date

LINE OF DUTY DEATH MANUAL

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LINE OF DUTY DEATH MANUAL

INTRODUCTION

Line of Duty Deaths occur when any staff member suffers loss of life during the commission of his/her duties whether on-site or off-site at the time of death.

The purpose of this manual is to provide the Iowa Department of Corrections guidelines in the form of a protocol manual for responding to and managing the various components following a death of an employee during the line of duty (LODD).

The intent behind this manual is to serve as guideline protocols as all aspects will not fit every situation; however, it has been created to help reduce the stress of managing such a crisis, limit the likelihood of unintentional omissions, reduce/relieve trauma reactions associated with a line of duty death, and protect the well-being of all those affected by preparing for such a crisis/loss in advance.

This manual follows from the moment the line of duty death occurs through monitoring additional needs of the survivors, staff and the Department as a whole in the aftermath of the crisis. This manual was created by a team of DOC staff who were involved in the LODD that occurred at the Anamosa State Penitentiary on March 23, 2021 when Registered Nurse Lorena Schulte and Correctional Officer Robert McFarland lost their lives and no such manual existed. This manual is dedicated in memory of Lorena Schulte and Robert "Bobby Mac" McFarland. Thanks to the team of dedicated staff who put forth the time and effort to create this manual which provides guidelines and details a best practice process using a holistic and consistent approach to responding to the death of an employee while on duty.

NOTE: There are some references to external resources or checklists which are not available on this public facing policy version.

DEFINITIONS

Beneficiary - "Beneficiary" is a person or persons designated by the employee to receive specific death benefits/Those designated by the officer as recipients of specific death benefits.

Benefits: Financial payments made to the family to ensure financial stability following the loss of a loved one.

Benefits Coordinator - A designated staff member within the Personnel/Human Resources Division who is responsible for working with survivors to ensure that survivors are aware of all benefits to which they may be entitled.

COPS - Concerns of Police Survivors (COPS): An organization that provides resources to assist in the rebuilding of the lives of surviving families and affected co-workers of law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty as determined by Federal criteria. Iowa has its own chapter - Iowa COPS

Crisis Management Briefing (CMB) - Crisis Management Briefing (CMB) is a meeting to share information about crisis events that have recently taken place or are ongoing. It can be delivered to a small or large group. *The purpose is for the dissemination of information and updates.* A CMB is not a debriefing or a time to process reactions and responses. Question and answer portions (if allowed at all) should be limited. As much as possible, questions that arise should be addressed one-on-one after the CMB concludes. CMB's can, and frequently should, be done more than once in the course of a critical incident. Regular and consistent briefing times can help address staff's need for information and build trust with leadership.

Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) - Is a group process conducted soon after a traumatic event with a small homogenous group (ex. all first responders) who experienced roughly the same level of exposure to the traumatic event. CISD's are conducted by staff or outside resources specifically trained in the CISD model. This early intervention process supports recovery by providing group support and linking employees to further counseling and treatment services if they become necessary.

Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)

Death Notification Team - A team of IDOC staff responsible for the notification to the next of kin per policy and procedures and specialized training protocols. The Death Notification Team should include a member of the Executive Team from the Institution/District along with an SST member trained in death notification. The team may also include the Family Liaison if that person has been identified, and/or a local chaplain. In the event an IDOC notification team is not available, a request should be made to the nearest law enforcement agency or fire department to conduct the in-person

death notification. Frequently, these public safety agencies have chaplains available to assist with such notifications. IDOC should provide this outside notifying agency with the name and phone number of the DOC assigned Family Liaison and the telephone number to the respective Warden's/District Director's office for the family to contact after notification.

Defusing - A shortened version of the Critical Stress Debriefing (CISD) conducted within a short time (usually within hours) following a critical event for a homogenous group (ex. all first responders) to help establish cohesion, observe symptoms of distress, and determine if further assistance is needed.

Duty Officer - A local staff person, identified by the Warden/District Director as a Duty Officer, to be available to Institutions, Residential, Field, and Shift Supervisors in times of crisis and for consultation and notification during unusual management situations.

Family Liaison - A staff member who supports the family of someone whose death occurred during the LODD and is assigned by the Warden/District Director or Designee.

Role of Family Liaison: The Family Liaison role is critical in facilitating communication between the IDOC and the surviving family. They must be capable of ensuring the IDOC needs are met while providing assistance to the families. This role requires someone who can manage stressful and emotional situations.

Considerations for Selecting a Family Liaison

Honor Guard - A team of designated employees deployed to serve in representation of the department at specified events such funerals and memorial events.

HOVC Advocate- A victim advocate from a Homicide and Other Violent Crimes (HOVC) program who can provide assistance to family and staff with needs resulting from victimization.

Line-of-Duty Death (LODD): Any IDOC employee who suffers loss of life during the commission of work-related duties, whether on-site or off-site. Examples include: (1) death from a felonious act of another, (2) death when the employee is in an accident while on duty or in official travel status, and (3) death from natural causes while on duty.

Personal Injury - An injury resulting from an external force, an activity, or a disease caused by or resulting from a line of duty incident or an illness caused by line of duty work under hazardous conditions.

Public Information Officer (PIO) - A designated IDOC staff member who serves as the primary contact between the IDOC and the media/public.

RITS (Rest, Information, Transition Services) - A quick informational and rest session applied when staff come on or off shift, or are given a break during shift, after a major incident such as an LODD. The RITS serves a secondary purpose to screen individuals who may need additional assistance or resources. A RITS may be available 2-3 days, depending on the situation, and may be instituted again at critical times.

Staff Support Team (SST) - A team consisting of staff volunteers from a specific IDOC Institution or District who work under the guidance of SST Co-Coordinators to provide emergency, staff victimization, and peer support services.

Staff Support Team (SST) Coordinators - A two-person team responsible for the coordination of SST services in each IDOC Institution or District.

Statewide Staff Support Team (SST) Manager - A person designated to oversee the Staff Support Team program for the IDOC.

Survivor - The immediate family members of the deceased employee. Survivors may include spouse, children, grandchildren, parents, grandparents, siblings, fiancé or significant other.

NOTIFICATIONS

I. Pre-Notification

It is critical that all Institutions and Districts have Emergency Contacts information on file for all employees. Human Resources should maintain up-to-date information.

II. Incident Command/Duty Officer

- A. Alert the Institution's Warden /District Director or Designee of the employee's death;
- B. Alert the Institution/District SST Coordinator of the employees death;
- C. Follow other directives of IO-SE-06 and/or ICS/Emergency policies.

III. Executive Staff

- A. Contact DOC Director who will then assign the task of contacting Iowa COPS to determine if the LODD falls under their scope of services;
- B. Assign a Family Liaison using the Considerations for Selection of the Family Liaison as a guide;
- C. Contact the SST Coordinator to begin the process of planning for death notification and assignment of the Death Notification team;
- D. Upon confirmation from the Death Notification Team, notify the PIO that notification has been made.

IV. Public Information Officer

- A. Follow IDOC PIO procedures regarding public notification of the LODD.
- B. Assign an individual to begin a "tracking timeline" to record all tasks completed in managing the LODD.

V. Family Notification

The Warden/District Director and/or Designee, in conjunction with the SST Coordinator and assigned Family Liaison (if selected), may form the Death Notification Team. The DNT is responsible for Checklist for Family Notification:

- A. Gathering Emergency Contact Information from Human Resources;
- B. Planning in-person notification of the employee's immediate family;
- C. Providing information to the surviving family about the Family Liaison and other important contacts, such as Human Resources and COPS if applicable.
- D. Contacting the local Homicide and Other Violent Crimes Victim Advocate (if applicable).

VI. On-Site Staff Notification

The Warden/District Director/Designee shall provide Crisis Management Briefings (CMB) to each shift as needed. See Definitions for a clear understanding of what to include in a CMB.

The SST members are responsible for:

- A. Setting up a room for Crisis Management Briefing (CMB) and RITS;
- B. Directing on-site staff to the CMB and RITS room;
- C. Keeping the RITS room staffed and replenished with refreshments (SST Team).

VII. Off-Site Staff Notification

The Deputy Warden/District Director or Designee will:

- A. Consult with SST Coordinator on time and location set-up for a Crisis Management Briefing (CMB) and the RITS room;
- B. Utilize Gov Delivery to send out an "All Staff" message informing them of a date and time for a Crisis Management Briefing (CMB);
- C. Determine who, from Executive staff, will provide information at the CMB for off-site staff coming in.

INCIDENT PROCESSING

I. Facility Operations

Facility operations will follow the IDOC Emergency Response Plan and guidelines for response as outlined in IDOC Policy IO-SE-06. The following is additional guidance in the event of a Line-of-Duty Death for circumstances not covered in the IDOC Emergency Response Plan.

Site Supervisor/Staffing Resource Officer

- A. Protection of Personal Effects (outside of any law enforcement involvement - i.e., lockers, desks, etc.)
 - 1. Secure belongings - After confirming with law enforcement that certain items belonging to the employee are not needed as evidence, the Incident Commander shall assign staff to safeguard the employee's personal effects until they may be turned over to the next of kin.
 - 2. Contact Family Liaison for return of items - The Family Liaison shall return personal effects to the next of kin and make arrangements to collect IDOC-issued equipment at the appropriate time.
- B. Assess staffing needs - See IDOC Policy IO-SE-06
- C. Coordination of internal/external resources - See IO-SE-06
- D. Relief staff (keep facility operations running) - See IO-SE-06

II. Defusing/Debriefing (See AD-PR-25)

When it is known that a LOD Death has occurred, the Warden/District Director or their designee shall inform the local Staff Support Team Coordinators. The local Staff Support Team Coordinator shall contact the Director of Victim & RJ Programs and notify them of the LOD Death. If local Staff Support Team Members are directly involved in the incident which resulted in a LOD Death, or were a first responder to the incident which resulted in a LOD Death, alternative Staff Support Team Members shall be utilized.

- A. Defuse 1st Responders

1. With the help of the Incident Commander and Security office, staff who were directly involved in the incident which resulted in a LODD, or who were a 1st responder to the LODD, shall be identified.
 2. A lead Staff Support Team Member shall either lead or coordinate an outside resource to facilitate a Defusing before 1st Responders leave site if possible. The SST Coordinator shall appoint the Lead SST Member.
 3. Defusings may be conducted individually, or in a group setting, in a room that allows for privacy.
- B. Rest - Information - Transition Services (RITS)
1. Staff Support Team Members shall designate a room for the purpose of providing information, refreshment and resources. Staff Support Team Members shall coordinate the provision of beverages and food for the RITS room. This room may also be used for CBM's.
 2. The Lead Staff Support Team Member shall coordinate staffing of the RITS room.
 3. iii. Information gathered by Staff Support Team Members shall be utilized to determine if and what type of additional resources may be beneficial to staff.
- C. Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD)
1. The SST Coordinator, with the assistance of the SST Statewide Manager, and in consultation with the Warden/District Director or Designee shall determine if CISD services would be beneficial, and, if so, request the assistance of a CISD service provider.
 2. When it is determined that a CISD is warranted, a Critical Incident Stress Debriefing shall be held for 1st Responders and staff directly involved in the incident which resulted in the LOD Death. It is recommended the CISD be held off site if possible. The CISD shall be conducted by a trained CISD facilitator.
 3. A Critical Incident Stress Debriefing may be held for members of the Management Team when possible. This should be held off-site if possible and conducted by a trained CISD facilitator.

FAMILY SUPPORT

I. DOC/DCS Director – Funeral Support/Planning

The IDOC Director/Warden/District Director and/or their Designees (Executive Team) shall consult with the Death Notification Team to determine if the surviving family is interested in COPS involvement.

- A. If the family says “yes” to Iowa COPS involvement, then COPS formal request should be made by the DOC Director within 24 hours.
- B. The designated Family Liaison will then coordinate communication with COPS and inform the Executive team of developments.
- C. If the surviving family declines COPS involvement, follow the Alternative Directions for the Family Liaison.

II. Family Liaison

The Family Liaison is responsible for the following. If the surviving family chooses not to have a Family Liaison, the Warden/District Director or Designee shall assign a staff member to carry out these duties as needed.

- A. If the Executive Team has determined COPS may be involved, the following are the responsibilities of the Family Liaison:
 - 1. Schedule a meet with the surviving family and the COPS representative;
 - 2. Follow the direction of the COPS representative in coordinating the various honors and benefits;
 - 3. Coordinate with Homicide Victim Advocate for support.
- B. If the Executive Team has determined that COPS will not be involved, the following are the responsibilities of the Family Liaison:
 - 1. Offer the use of the IDOC Honor Guard to the family for the funeral. Follow IDOC Policy AD-PR-21.
 - 2. Provide the family with information about honors and benefits that may be applicable.

3. Be available to assist the surviving family members with information, support, and referrals as needed.

III. Long-Term Support – Family Liaison

- A. With COPS Involvement, the Family Liaison shall coordinate communication with the family as needed about the following:
 1. Federal and Law Enforcement Benefits
 2. Memorials
 3. Annual Police Week and National Law Enforcement Memorial events in Washington, D.C.
- B. With no COPS Involvement
 1. Be available as needed to respond to questions and concerns from the surviving family;
 2. Collaborate with the Donations and Events Coordinators to gather information about requested memorials, tributes, fundraisers or other events.
 3. Communicate with the surviving family members about these events and determine if the family grants permission. If they decline, it is recommended the memorial/tribute or fundraiser be canceled to respect the family's wishes.

HUMAN RESOURCES

I. Family Beneficiary

- A. Coordinate with the Family Liaison to confirm the LODD employee's beneficiary.
- B. Review benefits with the Beneficiary and/or appropriate surviving family member.
- C. Ensure the issuance of the LODD employee's final paycheck.

- II. DOC Benefits
 - A. Review Benefits with the Benefits Checklist
 - B. Benefit Providers
 - 1. Notify benefit providers following the Benefits Checklist.
 - 2. Finalize returned benefits information.
 - 3. Review the Benefits Checklist to ensure all providers were contacted and all benefits information has been received.

MEMORIALS AND TRIBUTES

- I. The Executive Team of the Institution/District shall assign local staff to manage donations and requests for events.
- II. Donations Coordinator - Responsibilities include:
 - A. Log donations using the Donations Log.
 - B. Coordinate with the Family Liaison to schedule and disperse donations.
 - C. Coordinate and disperse donations that are made for Institution/District and/or staff.
- III. Event Coordinator - Responsibilities include:
 - A. Log events using the Events Logging form.
 - B. Track fundraisers and memorial events/ceremonies
 - C. Contact Family Liaison for surviving family permissions and to notify them of planned events.

VICTIM ADVOCACY

- I. Office of Victim and Restorative Justice Programs (OVRJP)

The responsibilities of the Office of Victim and RJ Programs (OVRJP) include the following:

- A. Determine the family's need for a local victim advocate who specializes in Homicide and Other Violent Crimes services. This would normally be applicable in cases of a LODD due to the felonious act of another. If the LODD of an employee was the result of an accident, victim advocacy services are likely not appropriate.
- B. Ensure the surviving family is provided with:
 1. Information about victim advocacy services and coordinate the referrals for services as requested;
 2. Court advocacy services as needed, such as, (1) court accompaniment, (2) assistance with preparing Victim Impact Statements, or (3) delivery of the Victim Impact Statement.
 3. Victim registration information:
 - a. Ensure all families who wish to be registered for notification are registered with the IDOC and the Board of Parole, and
 - b. Provide the survivors with information about the Victim Information and Notification Everyday (VINE) automated notification system: www.vinelink.com.
 4. Victim Rights information should include:
 - a. Registration and notification services;
 - b. No Contact Orders, when applicable;
 - c. Victim Impact and Victim Input statements;
 - d. How restitution is ordered and collected; and
 - e. Information about case development and post-conviction victim services.

Pre-Incident Planning

The effectiveness of this Manual is dependent upon good pre-incident planning. It is recommended this includes policy updates and training. Specific recommendations are:

- A. Human Resources updates on Emergency Contact information and Beneficiary updates.
- B. Training in the following areas;
 - 1. Death Notification
 - 2. Resiliency training for all staff
 - 3. Family Liaison training
 - 4. LODD Manual training for Executive Staff, Duty Officers, Supervisory staff, and SST teams.