

Columbus Police Division Directive	EFFECTIVE	NUMBER
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Death Investigations and Reports		



I. Definition

A. In-Custody/Detention-Related Death

1. The death of a person while in the process of being taken into custody, while in custody, or while being detained by Division personnel, but not involving or caused by a police-involved vehicular pursuit, stopping tactic, or use of force.
2. The proximate death of a person after being released from detention or police custody.

II. Policy Statement

- A. Sworn personnel will not normally be involved when a death is from apparent natural causes and a hospice organization is involved and available. Responding personnel shall provide the appropriate assistance requested, which may include notifying hospice personnel not already present.
- B. Sworn personnel becoming aware of the death of a mentally or developmentally-disabled person shall notify the coroner, regardless of the circumstances.
- C. Statements obtained from Division personnel as a result of an order to comply with questioning during an administrative investigation of an in-custody/detention-related death will not be shared with or used in any criminal investigation or proceeding involving the personnel so ordered to answer questions. Personnel who are the focus of a criminal investigation may invoke their constitutional rights.
- D. The decision to conduct an administrative investigation into a proximate, detention-related death of an individual shall be made by the Chief of Police after a briefing on the circumstances.

III. Procedures

A. Death of a Foreign National

1. Responding personnel shall notify a Communications Bureau supervisor, regardless of the circumstances.
2. Communications Bureau personnel
 - a. Upon notification from sworn personnel that a death of a foreign national has occurred, notify a Communications Bureau supervisor.

- b. The Communications Bureau supervisor shall follow the guidelines listed in the United States Department of State Consular Notification and Access manual.
 - c. Document the notification on the run or a file-only run.
- B. Suspicious Death or Suicide
1. Notify the Homicide Unit.
 2. Consider the area a serious crime scene and refer to the “Serious Crime Scenes and Guard Duty” directive.
- C. Sudden Infant Death
- Notify the Homicide Unit.
- D. In-Custody/~~Detention~~-Related Death
1. Involved Personnel
 - a. Notify Communications Bureau personnel.
 - b. Consider the area a serious crime scene and refer to the “Serious Crime Scenes and Guard Duty” directive.
 2. Communications Bureau Personnel
 - a. Dispatch personnel to render assistance and/or to secure the scene as necessary.
 - b. Make notifications required by the Emergency Notification Guide.
 3. Investigative Duty Desk Personnel
- Notify the Critical Incident Response Team.
4. Critical Incident Response Team
 - a. Conduct a criminal investigation.

Cooperate with the appropriate law enforcement agency if the deceased was also in its custody. The agency that had custody of the deceased at the time of death will be the primary investigating agency.
 - b. Distribute the completed investigative package as follows:
 - (1) Maintain the original in the Homicide Unit.
 - (2) Forward three copies to the Firearms/Police-Involved Death Review Board Chairperson.
 - (3) Forward one copy to the appropriate law enforcement agency if it was a joint investigation.
 - (4) Forward one copy to the appropriate county prosecutor.
 5. Firearms/Police-Involved Death Review Board
 - a. The chairperson shall review all information concerning the incident and determine if a full board review is required.
 - b. If a review is conducted by the board, prepare and forward a summary of the findings together with the original investigative **package** through the involved personnel’s chain of command to the deputy chief.

6. Internal Affairs Bureau Supervisors

If directed by the Chief of Police, conduct an administrative investigation.

7. Chain of Command

- a. Review the investigative package.
- b. Determine whether the actions of the involved personnel were within Division policy.
- c. Make a recommendation regarding corrective or disciplinary action when appropriate.

8. Deputy Chief

- a. Review the investigative package.
- b. Determine whether the actions of the involved personnel were within Division policy.
- c. Make a determination regarding corrective or disciplinary action.

9. Chief of Police

- a. Make a final determination if departmental charges will be filed.
- b. Cause involved personnel to be notified of the final determination.

E. Apparent Natural Deaths - No Hospice Organization Involved

1. Responding Personnel

- a. Ensure that a doctor or medic has made the death pronouncement.
- b. Complete a DOA Incident Report.
- c. Notify the Coroner's Office of the death.
 - (1) If the coroner releases the body, request the coroner's permission to release all personal property from the body to relatives at the scene.
 - (2) If the coroner orders that the body be transported to the morgue, collect personal property and list it in the narrative section of the report.
 - (a) If the value of cash is \$500 or more, submit all property to the Property Control Unit, note the property number in the Incident Report, and forward a copy of the property slip to the Homicide Unit.
 - (b) If the value of cash is less than \$500, note the amount in the Incident Report narrative and release the property to the transporting attendant.
- d. Notify relatives of the death.
 - (1) Relatives are responsible for contacting a funeral home to make arrangements for the body to be transported, if released by the coroner.
 - (2) If relatives are not present and cannot be located, notify the Coroner's Office to make arrangements for the body to be transported.