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Death Investigations and Reports		



Cross Reference: 2.01, 2.02, 3.01, 4.02, 5.04, 6.02, 8.06

Patrol SOP: 2.02

I. Definition

A. In-Custody/Detention-Related Death

The death of a person while being taken into custody, while in custody, or while being detained by Division personnel. This includes a death involving or caused by a police-involved vehicular pursuit, stopping tactic, or use of force.

II. Policy Statements

- 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

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. Document the notification on the run or a file-only run.

c. Communications Bureau Supervisor

Follow the guidelines listed in the United States Department of State Consular Notification and Access manual.

B. Suspicious Death

1. Notify the Homicide Unit ***when any of the following apply:***
 - a. ***There are visible signs of trauma, or reports of foul play or suspicious activity.***
 - b. ***The decedent is in a state of decomposition that prevents injuries from being readily identified.***
 - c. ***The decedent is under the age of 18.***
2. Consider the area a serious crime scene and refer to the “Serious Crime Scenes and Guard Duty” directive.

C. Apparent Suicide

1. ***Notify the Coroner’s Office.***
2. ***Remain on scene with the Coroner’s Office Investigator until the scene is cleared.***
3. ***If the investigator suspects foul play, he or she will contact the Homicide Unit.***
 - a. ***If a firearm is used to facilitate the suicide, once the scene is released, collect and submit the firearm and any property related to the use of the firearm to the Property Control Unit (PCU) in a “Hold for Evidence” status and list “Homicide Unit” as the responsible officer.***

D. Overdose Death

1. ***Notify the Drug Crimes Bureau and provide the following information:***
 - a. ***The identities and contact information of witnesses who were present when the overdose occurred or information about who supplied the drugs to the decedent.***
 - b. ***The presence of a suspect or if a suspect can be identified as the supplier.***
 - c. ***The presence of physical evidence such as illegal substances, cell phones, or surveillance video.***
2. ***Complete an Accidental Overdose Incident report as appropriate.***

E. 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 on-duty Assault/Homicide Section supervisor.
4. Assault/Homicide Section Supervisor
 - Follow the procedures outlined in the Assault/Homicide Section SOP and cooperate with the independent agency.
5. Firearms/Police-Involved Death Review Board
 - a. Firearms/Police-Involved Death Review Board Chairperson
 - 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 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.

F. 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 **PCU**, note the property number in the *incident report*, and **list the Homicide Unit as the responsible officer**.
 - (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 **it is** 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.