
	MESQUITE POLICE DEPARTMENT
	204.00 DELIVERY OF DEATH MESSAGES
	Effective Date: August, 2011
	Approved: _____  Chief of Police

I. Communication Center Responsibilities

- A. A person or agency requesting police service shall be asked for information that will identify their relationship to the deceased. Information regarding the physical condition of the person or persons to receive the death message should be obtained if possible. A person with high blood pressure, heart trouble, etc., may need a relative, close friend, or a doctor present when they are informed of the death. In many cases, the caller may be able to furnish the name of a relative living in the general area. If a relative or a close friend can travel to Mesquite without an unnecessary delay, the officer may judge it better to delay the notification until the relative or friend arrives.
- B. A teletype from the local police agency verifying the death shall be required before notification is made.
- C. Communications Center personnel shall record all pertinent information on the call record. Routine dispatch procedures will be changed. The officer to be assigned the call will be given the information via telephone or MDC, at which time he will be given all information regarding the service request and a location to meet with a minister will be determined. The Public Safety Dispatcher will then attempt to contact a minister from the Mesquite Ministers Association Counseling List, which is kept in the Communications Center. The minister will be advised by telephone of the death message and will be asked to meet an officer at a predetermined time and location. There, the minister and officer may discuss the assignment before proceeding to the address.

II. Officer's Responsibilities

- A. The statement of fact regarding the death is the officer's responsibility. After this has been done, the minister will offer assurance and comfort and may also assist them in the notification of their own minister, relatives, etc. He may also choose to remain at the location after the officer has departed.
If no minister or designated alternate is available from the list provided by the Mesquite Ministers Association, the officer will then proceed to the address and notify the family himself. It is preferable to have two officers respond for notification if no minister is available.
- B. On arrival, the officer should use discretion when deciding to contact a neighbor who may provide facts regarding the physical condition of the person or persons to be informed of the death. This information may be important in organizing and formulating a plan of action. If a close friend or neighbor wishes to accompany the officer, the officer should give the request due consideration.
- C. Confronting the person to whom a death message is delivered is demanding and difficult for most police officers. As a general rule the following policy should satisfy the needs of all persons concerned:
 - 1. Greet and introduce yourself, the minister and others who may be with you, and ask permission to visit inside the home. If there are young children present, ask that they leave the room before proceeding.
 - 2. Next, request the person to sit down. The person will probably know by this time you have grave news. Then with genuine sincerity, tell them, "It is with deep regret that I have to inform you that (Name of Deceased) has died or has been

killed." Or you may say, "I'm very sorry to have to tell you that (Name of Deceased) has died or has been killed."

3. Before leaving, the officer should extend an offer of police assistance and grant any reasonable request. If none, the officer should excuse himself and leave.

EFFECTIVE: May, 1984; REVISED: September, 1990; FORMERLY: C/84-21, 76-21; REVISED: January, 1992; REVISED: January, 1996; REVISED: August, 2003; REVISED: August, 2011