

# EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE & PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

## 8.1 Support Services for Employees

**Principle:** The City of Lakewood recognizes that a wide range of personal problems, such as emotional or mental stress, marital or financial difficulties, or drug and/or alcohol dependency, can affect an employee's performance while on the job. While these personal problems may not be directly related to their job responsibilities, the impact which they bring to an employee's life does not stop once the employee arrives at their job place. Although some individuals are able to overcome these types of difficulties on their own, many others need support and assistance. The Lakewood Police Department has developed a Peer Support Program, in addition to other human resources services. Lakewood Police Department will utilize counseling services of an internal Peer Support Team to afford emotional, moral and psychological support of department counselors. These individuals, as peer support group counselors, will assist co-workers with crisis intervention and stress management needs within strict confidentiality as outlined in RCW 5.60.060. Furthermore, authorized Peer Support Team counselors shall not be subject to disclose or testify to any internal investigation when such communication is privileged and acquired in their role as a Peer Support counselor.

## 8.2 Line-of-Duty Deaths or Serious Injury

**Principle:** When a life is given or seriously jeopardized in the line-of-duty, the traumatic impact on the Police Department member's loved ones and the department itself is often devastating. It is the intent of this Standard to provide some clear guidelines to be applied in these dire situations in order to attempt to reduce stress and provide tangible and emotional support for the surviving family and department members.

### Definitions:

- A. Line-of-Duty Death or Serious Injury: The death or serious injury of an active member of the Lakewood Police Department during the execution of his/her duties, whether on or off-duty.
- B. Survivors: Immediate family members include spouse, children, parents, siblings, fiancée and/or significant other.

### Practices:

Employee Emergency Records: All members of the Lakewood Police Department shall complete an Employee Notification Form when they start working for the department. The forms will be confidential, sealed, and secured in a locked cabinet located at the police department. Peer Support/Command staff will have access to these forms in situations of death or serious bodily injury to an employee. Employees are required to update personal address and telephone information within 10 days of any changes. During annual performance evaluations, supervisors will address if any changes need to be made as part of the evaluation process.

**Other Practices:** The Line of Duty Death (LODD) manual has outlined the following practices that should be adhered to in situations involving a line-of-duty death or serious injury. These practices will be followed whenever possible with the understanding that the wishes of the family take precedence over the desires of the agency. Members providing services and assistance to family members and survivors shall take all possible measures to accommodate their needs, wishes and desires, but should not make promises to family members that they are not sure can be met.

- A. Family Notification:
  - 1. Who: Notifications will be conducted by members outlined in the Emergency Notification Form.
    - a. Preferred Member: A member of the Peer Support Team will contact the person(s) listed on the member's Employee Notification Form as the preferred notification person in order of priority. If the person is unavailable or will have an extended response time, the next person(s) will be contacted. If a preferred notification person is on-duty, all efforts should be made to relieve the preferred notification person from duties, at least temporarily, in order for the notification to be provided. If at all possible, notifications should be done with two people.

2. When: The notification of the immediate family in the area should be done as soon as practical.
  3. How: The notification of the immediate family in the area should be done in person whenever practical. Whenever the health of an immediate survivor is a concern, emergency medical services personnel shall be requested to stand-by. It is important that the members providing the notification have adequate information regarding the incident to answer basic questions and are kept up to date on any changes which occur.
    - a. Transport to the Hospital: When a member has been seriously injured, arrangements will be made to provide transportation to the hospital for family members.
  4. **THE NAME OF THE DECEASED OR SERIOUSLY INJURED MEMBER SHALL NOT BE RELEASED TO THE MEDIA OR OTHER PARTIES BEFORE IMMEDIATE SURVIVORS ARE NOTIFIED.** Communication of information concerning the member and the incident shall, whenever possible, be restricted to an MDC and/or telephone to reduce the risk of the information being intercepted.
  5. All Lakewood Police Department members should keep in mind that a required operational notification to other department members can also be a notification to a close friend. Every effort should be made to ensure that personnel making any operational notifications have sufficient information regarding the incident to answer basic questions.
  6. Other Lakewood Police Department members involved in the incident resulting in death or serious injury should be afforded an opportunity to contact their family as soon as practical.
- B. Assisting Survivors at the Hospital: Whenever possible, the agency's Chief shall join the family at the hospital in order to emphasize the agency's support. The LODD Incident Commander shall designate a department employee as hospital liaison. The hospital liaison shall be responsible for coordinating the arrival of immediate survivors, departmental personnel, the media, and others. The Hospital Liaison will also assume the following responsibilities.
1. Arrange for waiting facilities for immediate survivors and a press staging area. The desires of the surviving family members should be followed with regard to their accessibility to other officers and friends.
  2. Ensure medical personnel provide pertinent medical information on the injured member's condition to the family before any other parties.
  3. Assist family members, in accordance with their desires, in gaining access to the injured or deceased member.
  4. Provide hospital personnel with all necessary information on billing for medical services. The hospital liaison will ensure that all medical bills are directed to the appropriate departmental authority and that they are not forwarded to the member's family or other survivors.
  5. Arrange transportation for the family and other survivors upon their departure from the hospital.
  6. Ensure that immediate family members are provided with appropriate assistance at the hospital.
- C. Department Liaison: The LODD Incident Commander shall designate a department member to serve in this capacity. The LODD Incident Commander will provide the Departmental Liaison's name and contact telephone(s) numbers to the family in writing. The Department Liaison will work closely with the Family Liaison to ensure the needs of the family and department staff is fulfilled. This may include but is not necessarily limited to:
1. Family Assistance:
    - a. Travel Arrangements: Provide oversight of travel and lodging arrangements for out-of-town family members.
    - b. Media Coordination: Work with the department Public Information Officer (PIO) or designee to

coordinate departmental responses to media inquiries. Assist family members in dealing with general media inquiries and inform them of the limitations on what information they should provide to the media.

- c. Funeral Arrangements: Work with the Family Liaison to identify facilities that will accommodate the law enforcement funeral. These alternatives will be presented to the family who will make the final determination.
- d. Security: Ensure that security checks of the survivor's residence are initiated immediately following the incident and for as long as necessary thereafter.
- e. Employee Assistance Program: Recommend that the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is implemented to assist surviving family members and emphasize the family's right to free short-term confidential counseling services.

2. Department Assistance:

- a. Funeral Arrangements: Coordinate all official law enforcement notifications and arrangements to include the honor guard, pallbearers, traffic control, area coverage by neighboring agencies, and liaison with visiting law enforcement.
- b. Critical Incident Debriefing(s): Coordinate Critical Incident Debriefing(s) for all members involved in the incident, which resulted in the member's death or serious injury.
- c. Employee Assistance Program: Ensure that all department employees involved in the incident which resulted in the member's death or serious injury are provided information regarding the Employee Assistance Program and facilitate its use for interested employees.
- d. Peer Support: Ensure all department employees involved in the incident which resulted in the member's death or serious injury are provided information regarding Peer Support and facilitate its use for the interested employees.

- D. Family Liaison: The LODD Incident Commander shall designate a department member to serve in this capacity. The LODD Incident Commander will provide the Family Liaison's name and contact telephone number(s) to the family in writing. The Family Liaison will work closely with the Department Liaison to ensure that the needs of the family are fulfilled. It is intended that the Family Liaison is the primary department representative to have contact with the family regarding procedural matters. This may include but is not necessarily limited to:

1. Funeral Arrangements:

- a. Meet with family members and explain what law enforcement funeral consists of and determine if the family wants this type of funeral. Assist in making the necessary arrangements for whatever memorial service is selected.
- b. Be available to the family prior to and throughout memorial service proceedings to ensure that their needs are addressed.

2. Providing Investigation Information: Relay any information to the family concerning the circumstances that resulted in the member's death or serious injury and appropriate information regarding any investigation.

3. Coordinate Benefits:

- a. Assist with filing compensation claims and related paperwork.
- b. Present information on all benefits available to the family.
- c. Provide a contact person in Human Resources to assist with any benefits questions.

- d. Assist with benefits paperwork and maintain contact with the family in order to ensure that benefits are being received. A copy of the benefit's documentation should be provided to all survivors affected and explained to each of them.
- e. Documenting inquiries and interest in public donations to the family and establishing a mechanism for receipt of such contributions, as appropriate.

### **8.3 Employee Assistance Program**

**Principle:** Personal problems are a part of everyone's life. Some of these problems become overwhelming and can interfere with job performance or with home life. Asking for help can be the first step toward resolving a problem and a positive way to overcome a negative situation. The City of Lakewood makes the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) available to all city employees in order to help them resolve problems. Additional assistance is available through the Peer Support Program.

#### **Practices:**

- A. Referrals: Participation in EAP is voluntary. It will be the responsibility of supervisors at all levels to assess job performance and, when appropriate, encourage employees to seek assistance through the EAP if the assistance is beyond the supervisor's normal counseling duty.
  - 1. Mandatory: Mandatory referrals will not occur.
- B. Supervisor Training: The Lakewood Police Department recognizes that supervisors have an important role in helping employees identify when EAP may be a positive option and in supporting an employee that selects this option. All supervisors will receive training regarding EAP and its effective use.

### **8.4 Physical Requirements**

**PHILOSOPHY:** The Lakewood Police Department has established the following principles and practices in an attempt to provide employees guidelines that will help to insure the integrity, health, and duty fitness of employees.

#### **8.4.1 Physical Examinations**

**Principle:** A fitness for duty certificate signed by the consulting physician may be required upon return from a prolonged absence due to injury or illness, generally of at least two weeks' duration. When the City has a reasonable basis for a concern that an employee cannot perform their essential job functions, a fitness for duty exam may be required. The City may require an examination at its expense, and on compensable time (including workers' compensation), performed by a physician of its choice, to determine when the employee is capable of performing the essential functions of the position, as well as any applicable limitations or restrictions.

- A. Physical examinations required by the department shall be paid for by the department.
- B. Employee initiated physical examinations are at the employee's expense, unless otherwise provided for in their medical plan.
- C. The City of Lakewood periodically sponsors various medical examinations at little or no cost to the employee.

#### **8.4.2 General Health and Physical Fitness**

**Principle:** Employees are required to maintain a level of fitness that permits them to effectively carry out their duties and responsibilities. Also refer to LPIG Collective Bargaining Agreement Article 14. An employee's work and attendance records are monitored for signs of health problems related to fitness. The city provides a wellness program that encourages good health and fitness.