

Supporting our people: death or unexpected life-threatening injury or illness of an employee

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The aim of this policy is to support next of kin, family and colleagues following an unexpected immediately life-threatening injury, illness or death of one of our staff.
- 1.2 It applies to an event at, or outside of work and to both operational and non-operational events.
- 1.3 Much of the content in this policy should be considered as guidance only, on the basis that every situation requires a tailored and compassionate response. Where matters reflect significant legal duties or what might be expected of us in any later inquest or proceedings, the terms 'must' (e.g. a legal duty to prioritise), 'should' (preferred by policy) or 'may' (discretionary in the circumstances) have been applied.
- 1.4 It is important to respond quickly as events unfold. To manage the pace and clarity of information shared to prevent additional distress to those involved, especially with the use of social media.

2 Immediate management coordination

- 2.1 Each event must be considered on a case-by-case basis. The type of incident, where it occurred and in what context will influence managers immediate actions. The following section details the general response to a notification. This policy also provides bespoke considerations for specific occurrences, including:
 - (a) Occurrences on Brigade premises.
 - (b) Death of an employee outside of work.
 - (c) Suspected suicide and attempted suicide.
 - (d) Operational incidents.
- 2.2 Additional guidance for incidents and events involving mass casualties is contained in Appendix 3: Mass casualty events.
- 2.3 The Duty Assistant Commissioner (Duty AC) will be the coordinating officer for the immediate response and be responsible for these policy arrangements.
- 2.4 At an appropriate time, the Duty AC will hand over responsibility to the relevant Head of Service. This will normally be between 24 and 48 hours after the event, but timescales may vary depending upon the circumstances.
- 2.5 The Duty AC should take overall responsibility for delivering these policy arrangements using their available officer and staff resource, taking account of their training, experience and local knowledge. The Duty Deputy Assistant Commissioner (DAC) will normally coordinate the tactical delivery of these arrangements.
- 2.6 Consideration should be given to scheduling ongoing coordination group meetings to ensure all key stakeholders remain informed of progress and next steps. This should be from point of notification to the date of the funeral where applicable, or until such time local management agree no further meetings are necessary. This can be delegated to local managers at the appropriate time.

Notification of occurrence

- 2.7 The Control Commander (CC) should be notified of any event involving the death or life-threatening injury of one of our staff. This includes where managers are advised directly by the next of kin or others of a death or life-threatening injury that has occurred outside of work.

- 2.8 Control should then notify the Duty AC, Duty DAC and Officer of the Day (OOD). Duty officers will convene a virtual meeting with key stakeholders and agree next steps, including further communications as outlined in the Duty Officer Briefing below.

Confidential fact finding

- 2.9 In the event of a death, life threatening injury or attempted suicide, confidential internal fact finding can be instigated by the Duty AC and provided by People Services.
- 2.10 Where required, initial liaison with the Police and other external agencies should be through the Duty National Interagency Liaison Officer (Duty NILO). Confirmation of accurate details relating to the event should be a priority.
- 2.11 Until the cause of death has been determined by a medical practitioner or His Majesty's (HM) Coroner, extreme care must be taken with the language used in any internal and external communication/briefings.
- 2.12 It is imperative, prior to any internal communications being published, that the Brigade informs, or makes every effort to confirm that the next of kin have been informed first. The Duty NILO can liaise with Police to ensure this has been done for all events that occur off duty, where appropriate.

Duty officer briefing

- 2.13 As soon as practicable the Duty AC should convene and chair a meeting to inform and brief key stakeholders. The following attendees should be considered; however the make-up of this meeting should be at the discretion of the Duty AC.
- (a) Duty Brigade Manager.
 - (b) Duty DAC.
 - (c) Officer of the day (OOD).
 - (d) Duty Brigade Control Senior Commander and/ or Control Commander.
 - (e) Duty NILO.
 - (f) Duty Staff Officer.
 - (g) Duty Press Officer.
 - (h) Duty Counselling and Trauma Services (CTS) Officer.
 - (i) Duty Chaplain.
 - (j) Duty Operational Resilience Support Officer (ORSO) as loggist and Resilience ORSO as secretariat.
 - (k) General Counsel, if likely to result in an investigation by the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) or Health and Safety Executive (HSE).
 - (l) Relevant line managers e.g. Head of Service, Team Leader, borough and station manager, if available.
- 2.14 This group will continue to meet at regular intervals until deemed no longer necessary by the Duty AC.
- 2.15 The draft agenda for this meeting is provided in Appendix 1 – Duty officer briefing.

3 Occurrences on brigade premises

Immediate scene response

3.1 The following priorities should be considered:

- (a) Immediate first aid provided by trained personnel.
- (b) Request an Ambulance through Control on extension 88555. Ensure someone is delegated to meet and liaise with oncoming ambulance and agencies.
- (c) Business continuity arrangements of the team or watch e.g. take fire appliances off the run.
- (d) Restrict access and egress to the premises/location, and personnel (and appliance) movements.
- (e) Deploy appropriate line managers (minimum station commander/FRS E) to attend the scene and manage on-scene response. Where local managers are not available consider the most appropriate alternative.
- (f) In the event of serious injury or death, staff must secure the area and preserve the scene for investigation.

The Duty AC should consider deploying an LFB Fire Investigation Officer to liaise with and support the Senior Accident Investigator (SAI) and other external investigators (e.g. Police/HSE) with scene preservation, collation of evidence and to provide advice and support to staff on the collation of contemporaneous notes.

- (g) Maintain a decision log and contemporaneous notes. Policy number 215 – Gathering and recording of information for proceedings applies. Consider mobilising a loggist to scene to support the senior manager/officer.
- (h) Inform Police via Control Commander where appropriate. Police officers attend all incidents of sudden or unexpected deaths that occur outside of a hospital or medical setting. Accordingly, the police will attend when there is a workplace death.
- (i) Inform a SAI and deploy them to scene.

Scene management

- 3.2 The managers deployed to scene should work to ensure an effective response to the event with primary concern for the welfare of the casualty/casualties, other staff on site and liaise with other agencies as required. They should provide regular updates to the Duty DAC.
- 3.3 Property services can be contacted through the helpdesk during office hours and by contacting the Duty Property Officer through Control out of hours. The department can, for events occurring on Brigade premises, arrange specialist cleaning, security or response and assist with relocating staff if required (e.g. decanting a station and relocating to another).

Stakeholders

3.4 The following stakeholders should be informed as soon as is reasonably practical.

- (a) Relevant Head of Service.
- (b) Relevant Director.
- (c) Director of People Services.

- (d) Assistant Director (AD) Health, Safety and Wellbeing¹.
- (e) Employee and industrial relations officer.
- (f) Appropriate representative bodies.
- (g) The Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
HSE must be informed if the death is the result of an accident, or injuries arising out of or in connection with work, as per guidance in Policy number 369. The Police will normally act on behalf of HM Coroner and liaise with the HSE.
- (h) Property services.
- (i) General Counsel.
- (j) Duty Systems Information Officer (for correct StARS administration).

4 Occurrences off brigade premises (on duty)

- 4.1 Where an event occurs on duty, but away from Brigade premises (e.g. staff undertaking a site visit) the response should be tailored to the circumstances and overseen by the Duty AC.
- 4.2 All aspects of Occurrences on Brigade premises should be considered and applied where appropriate.
- 4.3 Contact should be made and maintained with a representative for the premises or location where the incident or event occurred.
- 4.4 Consideration must be given to coordinating any third part communications that may speak to an event on their premises, to ensure this aligns with LFB's own comms strategy. The duty press officer will assist with third party liaison.

5 Occurrences outside of work

- 5.1 There are several ways the Brigade might be informed of an employee's death outside of work, including from another agency, the deceased's next of kin, or from another employee.
- 5.2 The Duty AC should always be notified as a priority, either directly via Control or through a line manager, and enact the relevant elements of this policy accordingly.
- 5.3 Where the next of kin have been notified by another agency, the Duty AC will agree a Brigade representative to contact the deceased's next of kin as outlined in the Family contact section below. Other staff and colleagues must not contact the deceased's family directly until the death has been confirmed, to avoid unnecessary upset.

6 Suspected suicide and attempted suicide

- 6.1 When a death or serious injury occurs because of a suspected suicide, there are some additional considerations that staff ought to be mindful of.
- 6.2 A Support After a Suicide Toolkit produced by the Samaritans is available to managers. This details postvention facilities and support available to all staff.

¹ AD Health, Safety and Wellbeing will support the investigation of any death which may be related to an accident at work and be responsible for notifying the HSE.

- 6.3 It is important to remember that suicide is complex and is rarely the result of one thing in isolation. A determination of suicide as a cause of death, can only be made by His Majesty's Coroner following an inquest.
- 6.4 Any death by suicide or attempted suicide, of a staff member on or off duty, must be reviewed as per LFB guidance note:
Investigating incidents where a staff member attempts to take or takes their own life.
- 6.5 A case officer should be appointed who is independent of the staff member's line management and any internal enquiries must not impede or interfere with any ongoing Police investigation.

Persons in crisis

- 6.6 Suicidal crisis is a situation in which a person is attempting to kill themselves or is seriously contemplating or planning to do so.
- 6.7 If in direct contact with a colleague or person in crisis an ambulance must be requested through the Control Priority line on extension **88555** if in the workplace, or via 999. Utilising the Control Priority Line will ensure additional supporting resources are informed and mobilised.
- 6.8 Where possible persons in crisis should not be left alone. If you are remote from the person, ask them where they are and whether anyone is with them (i.e. family member, neighbour, colleague) so that information can be relayed to emergency services.
- 6.9 Further Mental Health crisis guidance is available on Hotwire including telephone support lines available 24/7.

7 Operational incidents

- 7.1 Following notification of this type of event on the incident ground, various other Brigade policies will normally be considered and where necessary enacted in consultation with the Duty AC and Commissioners Continuity Group (CCG). These include:
- (a) Policy number 699 - Strategic response arrangements
 - (b) Policy number 1034-ORPf - Major incidents investigations
 - (c) Policy number 368 - Health, safety and environmental event investigation policy
 - (d) Policy number 369 - Reporting of injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences

Emergency contact telephone facility

- 7.2 Incoming calls to the Brigade may come through Control emergency or administration lines situated at the London Operations Centre Merton. When this occurs, the call will be directed to the Control Commander for processing and onward notification to the Duty AC or Brigade Coordination Centre (BCC) when established.
- 7.3 The responsibility of the BCC is the handling of internal and external communications through establishing of a Media/Communications Cell. This cell will be responsible for implementing Policy number 136 – Emergency contact telephone facility for next of kin/close relatives of Brigade personnel. This will establish an Emergency Contact Facility (ECF) to enable next of kin or close relatives to contact the Brigade directly.

International deployments

- 7.4 Events that occur during international deployment are detailed within Appendix 4.

8 Family contact

- 8.1 Where there is an unexpected life threatening, illness, injury, or death of an employee there may be a need for the Brigade to convey the news to the next of kin. The key aim is to inform the next of kin expediently. This could mean via a phone call, if the individual is at imminent risk of death, or in person if time allows, before them being made aware by other sources, including news and social media. Consideration may also be given to utilising local police if appropriate.
- 8.2 Where a death has occurred and there is police involvement, it should be agreed who will take responsibility for informing the next of kin. It is recommended that notification of any serious injury or death occurring whilst at work is led by LFB officers, where practical. Police officers may assist Brigade officers in informing next of kin where appropriate.
- 8.3 Further guidance is available in the Breaking bad news guidance note which can be found in the 'Counselling and Trauma Service' section on hotwire.

Roles and responsibilities

- 8.4 The Duty AC will be responsible for the coordination and implementation of family notifications, specifically the next of kin. This role may be completed by the relevant Head of Service, in consultation with the Duty AC and Director of People Services.
- 8.5 An officer team should be nominated to notify (and support) the next of kin, namely the Notification Officer and Family Support Officer(s). These should ideally be from an established list of trained staff.

Notification officer

- 8.6 A Notification Officer should be appointed by the Duty AC. The role of the notification officer is to lead the initial contact with the next of kin, accompanied by the Family Support Officer.
- 8.7 These officers should maintain a balance of sensitivity, empathy and formality and perform the task with professionalism. Staff performing these roles should either be trained or else have appropriate input and support to undertake the roles.
- 8.8 The notification officer should consider, but not be limited to, the following:
 - (a) If English is a second language or if there are any other key sensitivities, to ensure appropriate support or advice is sought (see also 'Cultural sensitivities' below).
 - (b) Ensure that they are prepared with as much accurate and timely information as possible.
 - (c) News should be broken as soon as practicable and be open and honest, using clear plain language.
 - (d) Agree with the next of kin how and when names and details of individuals will be released to the media and staff.
 - (e) Offer to help the next of kin to contact family or relatives and be prepared to wait with them until they arrive.
 - (f) It may be helpful for a chaplain to accompany people talking to the family - if this is wanted by the family.
 - (g) Offer immediate practical help, for example assisting in visits to the hospital. This includes requesting additional officers/resources where appropriate.

- (h) At the next of kin's request be prepared to help if news needs to be conveyed to other family members.
 - (i) Complete notes and brief the coordinating officer on outcomes.
 - (j) Handover to Family Support Officer.
- 8.9 At the end of the notification meeting, the next of kin should be advised that the Family Support Officer will be the contact for ongoing support.

Family support officer

- 8.10 The Family Support Officer (FSO) will provide longer-term support to the next of kin and family and will be the primary LFB point of contact. They should be an appropriate middle manager and where possible should be based in the relevant area or department.
- 8.11 Consideration should be given to dividing the FSO and staff support roles, so that the same officer is not used for both. These roles can be consuming and emotionally challenging. Ideally the FSO role should be undertaken by someone from the local team, but not in the immediate line management chain, for example a SC from elsewhere in the borough.
- 8.12 The FSO should:
- (a) Receive a handover of the support provided to date and be advised of any outstanding requests that the next of kin may have to enable them to establish a plan of support.
 - (b) Ideally, contact the next of kin within 24 hours of the Notification Officer's first meeting with the family.
 - (c) Provide an appropriate level of support for the next of kin and family. This may include for example, providing practical information and solutions, signposting to relevant help and support and giving updates on reviews or investigations.
 - (d) Maintain notes of meetings and requests from the family and ensure relevant duty officers and heads of service are kept up to date.
 - (e) Liaise with, and where necessary through, the Police Family Liaison Officer where one has been appointed.
 - (f) Contact internal and external stakeholders including Pensions, Representative Bodies and Firefighters charity to ascertain appropriate contacts, support and information available to the next of kin.
 - (g) Arrange with the next of kin, to return any staff members personal items, where necessary.

Cultural sensitivities

- 8.13 Different cultures respond to death in different ways. It is therefore important to clarify preferences with the employee or their next of kin.
- 8.14 It is also important to check religious or cultural aspects that may be observed by the family and understood and respected.
- 8.15 The Inclusion Team in People Services can be contacted for support and advice regarding aspects of cultural, religious and diversity matters.
- 8.16 The Metropolitan Police Service's 'Delivering the Message' information line (0800 032 9990) provides 24-hour telephone access to recorded information advising how to break bad news including religious and cultural factors.

9 Informing the watch or team

- 9.1 Immediate work colleagues should be informed as quickly as possible once information has been confirmed, to prevent inaccurate and insensitive information sharing.
- 9.2 It should be impressed upon colleagues and the immediate team, the need to liaise with the family through the Family Support Officer, and to prioritise the family's wishes prior to publishing any wider internal or external communications.
- 9.3 Colleagues should be reminded of the need to avoid sharing information via social media to prevent unnecessary and unintentional upset.

Creating a supportive environment

- 9.4 All people respond to and deal with notifications of serious injury and/or death differently. Some will prefer to be alone, some will have an openly visible reaction, others may internalise their thoughts and feelings.
- 9.5 It is recommended that managers create an initial environment that provides individuals time and space to consider what has occurred and its impact. To this end, local managers are encouraged to act decisively in the best interests of those involved.
- 9.6 The support and considerations detailed below may be required for a number of days following the initial notification.
 - (a) Use local managers whenever possible and appropriate.
Immediate line managers will know their team and inter-relationships best, so should be consulted as far as is reasonably practical regarding the best means of communicating information.
 - (b) Officers should make any necessary arrangement to avoid disruptions and consider a colleague to support where appropriate.
 - (c) Ensure a safe and managed space to provide the information. For example, take appliances off the run, prevent standby moves and pre-arranged overtime, and restrict visitors. Such requests can be made via RMC and Control.
 - (d) Cancel outside activities e.g. HFSVs and community events
 - (e) Cancel training and other events for relevant staff members and return to the base location. Some staff may wish to remain on duty and continue their routine work. It is suggested that all work is suspended as a baseline, allowing the team or watch to determine between themselves, how and when to return to a 'normal' routine following the event. These wishes can then be accommodated where desired on an individual or team basis.
 - (f) Ensure managers are prepared with as much accurate and timely information as possible.
 - (g) Appropriateness of watch or team remaining on duty, or other teams/watches coming on duty later that day/week.
 - (h) Use and potential attendance of CTS, Chaplaincy, Mental Health First Aider or PIOSS trained officer. In liaison and agreement with the watch or team.
 - (i) Detail support offered by the Brigade and signpost mental health services.
 - (j) Where a member of staff has died, advise that the deceased's details will be removed from the StARS rota book.

It is important that this is done efficiently, by ICT, to ensure personal finances, outstanding wages and miscellaneous matters are optimally managed as these form part of the individual's estate and LFB will seek to minimise any delay in providing these to the next of kin.

- (k) Securing the employee's personal belongings and returning to the family via the Family Support Officer at the appropriate time. Lockers should not be opened, or personal items handled without consent from the next of kin, and in liaison with the Police where appropriate.
- (l) Change of watch arrangements and informing on-coming watches.

Wider team impact

- 9.7 Once the immediate colleagues and manager have been informed, consideration should be given to a wider group comprising local stations or colleagues from the same department, former team or watch members and other notable staff members or groups that may be affected by the occurrence e.g. Firefighter trainee course colleagues, retired colleagues, voluntary work, equality groups, sports sections etc.
- 9.8 A list of staff identified as being potentially significantly impacted by the occurrence should be sent to CTS as soon as practicable to enable an initial contact. This list should, where possible, be compiled in a priority order, to allow CTS to focus their resources accordingly.
- 9.9 It should be noted that the specific occurrence type may trigger high emotions in particular individuals.

10 Ongoing support

- 10.1 It is important to consider ongoing support for all staff involved in an event. This includes the individual's watch or team, the notification officer, FSO, and immediate line management who are overseeing and supporting our staff/the individual's family.

Post Critical Incident Contact (PCIC)

- 10.2 Psychological first aid (Demobilising) delivered by managers immediately at the end of a critical incident or event is an important measure that promotes normal and appropriate processing of traumatic events.
- 10.3 Peer Trauma Defusers can help make sure staff get the help and guidance they need as soon as possible if they experience a traumatic event.
- 10.4 Managers can request attendance of a Peer Trauma Defuser 24/7 via the OOD if urgent, or via email PCIC@london-fire.gov.uk.

Post critical incident contact

- 10.5 The death of or life-threatening injury to an operational member of staff on duty is an automatic trigger to instigate the Procedure for Post Critical Incident Contact (PCIC). PCIC can provide Peer Trauma Defusers to carry out defusing with all attending operational staff, and where relevant control officers and fire investigators, normally three to ten days after the incident.
- 10.6 PCIC contact reinforces normal processing and aims to prevent the development of longer-term complications such as post-traumatic stress disorder it also aims to complement the operational defusing.

- 10.7 Events such as a death or life-threatening injury of a work colleague can have a significant psychological impact on those directly involved in the immediate watch or team to colleagues across the Brigade. To assist staff Policy number 915 – Recognising and coping with potentially traumatic events provides advice and guidance.
- 10.8 Consideration should be given to preventing automatic notifications and reminders relating to the individual, for example pay notifications, sickness, DNA etc.

The Firefighters Charity

- 10.9 The Firefighters Charity provides a range of support services for all staff working in the Fire and Rescue Service and their families. Their Advice, Information and Support Service supports individuals in areas including financial, psychological and bereavement support. They also offer recuperation, rehabilitation and nursing services, registered home visitors/community case workers and volunteers handle cases locally to respond to beneficiary need.

Bereavement support

- 10.10 Further support is available here:
- <https://www.widowedandyoung.org.uk/>
 - <https://www.gov.uk/bereavement-support-payment> for full financial benefit, claims should be made within three months.

11 Communications

- 11.1 Communications should be sensitive to the circumstances of the death and managers should ascertain through the Family Support Officer, the wishes of the family regarding how staff are informed regarding the employee's death. They should also ascertain their wishes regarding Brigade contact and once known, funeral arrangements.
- 11.2 Release of staff names to the media and brigade staff should only occur in liaison with the Director of Communications, after the family have been notified and agreed to the release. The Police must also approve the release of information if the incident is being investigated by them.

Use of social media

- 11.3 Significant caution should be exercised when using social media, or its use avoided entirely, to reduce the risk of an uncontrolled notification, or upset to the next of kin. The information posted may be inaccurate, inappropriate, or insensitive. News media may also pick up details and compromise the Brigade's position.
- 11.4 Staff should be reminded that the Brigade notification protocols in place including liaison with the next of kin are there to protect the immediate family and as a result, they must not post anything on social media which might cause additional distress.
- 11.5 Material acquired by a staff member during the course of their work such as photographs or videos, both at incidents and on Brigade premises must not be published in any form (including websites and social media sites), or shared electronically, even privately with other staff, unless authorised by the Coordinating Officer or Communications Department.
- 11.6 Staff should be reminded that all media enquiries should be referred to the Press Office press.office@london-fire.gov.uk or Duty Press Officer.
- 11.7 Further details on the use of social media are also available in Policy number 425 – Contact with media and online communications.

11.8 The Communications team will monitor social media in the period following the occurrence.

Group memberships (including WhatsApp)

11.9 Staff should bear in mind that next of kin may retain individual staff members technology, log in details and mobile phone. This means they will have access to any private groups including 'chat groups' which include other Brigade staff.

11.10 Where possible, staff should consider that the spouse/partner and/or family may have access to new and future messages and are advised not to delete contact details or content relevant to injured or deceased colleagues, but to open new groups if desired.

12 HR administrative processes

12.1 People Services should be notified as soon as practicable regarding a death in service and in turn they should notify:

- (a) Payroll Services.
- (b) The London Pensions Partnership (LPP) or Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).
- (c) Establishment and Performance Team.
- (d) IT Service Desk.
- (e) General Counsel.
- (f) Procurement (car schemes).
- (g) Property Help Desk.
- (h) Training Operations.
- (i) Other LFB teams as appropriate.

12.2 On receipt of the death certificate to the HR Services Leavers team, the notification processes will commence for release of final pay. The certificate will be passed onto LPP for processing.

12.3 Managers are advised to confirm with Payroll Services what memberships the employee held (Pension, LFB Welfare Fund etc.) as there may be benefits funds available for the family.

12.4 For a deceased member of operational staff Form F121 for return of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will be sent by HR Services on official notification of the death to the employees' manager. The supplier will gift the helmet to the family. The family should be consulted as to if this something that they would like.

Administrative procedures for the next of kin

12.5 It is important that the Notification Officer and Family Support Officer, in liaison with HR can support and signpost the next of kin to the key administrative processes and steps the family and Brigade will need to follow. Great care should be taken throughout to ensure a high level of support to the bereaved family to ensure any processes are handled as sensitively and respectfully as possible.

12.6 The first immediate action for the family will be to obtain a medical certificate from a GP or hospital doctor to register the death and obtain a death certificate. The death should then be registered with the local Registrar within five days who will issue the death certificate. If the death has been reported to HM Coroner, the death cannot be registered until HM Coroner gives permission.

- 12.7 The death certificate will be required by LFB to enable the process of any outstanding payments and pension to be released. A copy will be required for the HR Services Leavers team who will pass the copy onto the London Pensions Partnership (LPP) if the employee was a member of a pension scheme.
- 12.8 Copies will be required for any benefit funds available from Trade Unions or the LFB Welfare Fund (if the deceased was a member) as an individual as nominated by the deceased employee may be entitled to claim certain benefits from these organisations.

Release of available funds

- 12.9 In the event that a member of staff dies and depending on the memberships that the deceased employee held (and in some instances when they joined) there may be immediate funds available for the next of kin or requested beneficiary.
- 12.10 If they were an active member of a pension scheme either firefighter or local government a lump sum death in service benefit may be payable to their nominee if they have made such a declaration, and if not, any death in service benefit payment will be subject to legal process as part of the deceased member of staff's estate. This will be actioned on the Brigade's Pension provider (currently London Pensions Partnership) being officially notified of the death and receiving the death certificate. HR Services will facilitate this notification.
- 12.11 If they were a member of a Trade Union, the next of kin may be eligible for financial assistance under an appropriate benefits scheme. The Family Support Officer should contact an appropriate Trade Union representative to see if the employee was a member and ascertain if there might be financial support available.
- 12.12 If the deceased was a member of the LFB Welfare Fund, incorporated within the membership subscription for those under 65 is inclusion in a death benefit scheme by way of contribution to funeral costs to which the nominee may be entitled.

13 Funeral arrangements

- 13.1 In the event of the death of a member of staff, the family support officer will be responsible for discussing funeral arrangements with the family, guiding them through options and then liaising with relevant departments.
- 13.2 There are different provisions available depending on the circumstances. Further guidance is available in Policy number 815 - Brigade funeral arrangements. Chaplains can also provide advice about funerals and can lead a funeral if desired.
- 13.3 All LFB premises are permitted to fly flags at half-mast for any death in service of an LFB employee. Direction will be provided via an internal communication message.

14 Remembrance

- 14.1 Some staff might feel a strong need or desire to do something in memory of their deceased colleague as a way of coping and coming to terms with what has happened.
- 14.2 LFB can support this by offering ideas and opportunities to help that are appropriate, proportionate, and sensitive to colleagues and receive family consent.
- 14.3 Online tribute pages, condolence books, memorials and fundraisers are also helpful ways to remember and celebrate the life of a colleague.

- 14.4 Managers should be sensitive about setting a precedent that may be hard to follow or overshadow a family's efforts.
- 14.5 Where an operational member of staff has died in the execution of their duty, consideration should be given to contacting the Firefighter's Memorial Trust. The criteria for the inclusion of names on the roll of honour for the Firefighters Memorial in London and the Book of Remembrance can be found at the Firefighters Memorial website.

Appendix 1 – Duty officer briefing

The following draft agenda template may be of use when holding the first meeting in response to a notification of death or unexpected life-threatening injury or illness of an employee. The agenda may be tailored by the chair as required.

Agenda

1. Confirmation of attendees and Chair (including those not currently present who are/will be required)
2. Confirmation of minute taker (to include producing action log)
3. Any urgent matters
4. Overview of incident/event
5. Confirmation of death/initial facts (this will normally be undertaken by the Duty NILO in conjunction with Duty DAC/AC)
6. Welfare
7. Communications
8. Actions
9. AOB

Example action tracker

To compliment minutes during initial meeting (amend as required)

Event description:				Date:
Item	Action	Owner	Due by	Comment (update when action completed)
1				
2				
3				
4				
Date:				
5				
6				
7				
8				

Appendix 2 – Counselling and Trauma Service

- 1 Counselling and Trauma Service (CTS) provide professionally accredited counselling to all staff to help with their psychological well-being. CTS are available for management consultation and advice on a 24-hour basis, including guidance regarding the breaking bad news process. The duty Staff Counsellor can be contacted via OOW (Control). CTS can also be contacted during office hours on extension 35555.
- 2 CTS's definition of a critical incident includes death or serious injury to operational staff on duty, any serious Road Traffic Collision (RTC) involving a Brigade appliance or any incident where operational staff are trapped or missing. Further details regarding classification of critical incidents can be found in Policy number 915 – Recognising and coping with potentially traumatic events.
- 3 CTS can provide support to coordinating officers and those notifying the next of kin (first and second officers).
- 4 They can also provide ongoing support to the visiting officer throughout the duration of contact with the family, liaising as to their counselling needs, bereavement support or signposting requirements for local support.
- 5 On occasion a member of CTS may also undertake the role of first or second officer to assist with breaking the bad news. This would be agreed in consultation with the Head of CTS.
- 6 At the same time CTS will be participating in parallel activities to support the welfare of Brigade employees. Depending on the nature of the event and numbers involved CTS will initiate the following support responses as appropriate:
 - Provide a strategic overview of the psychological/welfare needs of all staff that may be involved or affected.
 - Provide telephone support and advice to senior operational colleagues.
 - Plan and implement further support to families in the short term. for example, visits, telephone support, advice etc.
 - Liaise with managers in planning appropriate response for support to staff/watches which may include telephone contact, face-to-face counselling and/or station visits.
 - Activate programmes of support to staff.
 - Support line managers in monitoring and appropriately responding to the psychological/welfare needs of watch/team staff, including crisis response to individual operational staff where necessary.
 - Prepare for CTS's Procedure for Post Critical Incident Contact (PCIC). Please see paragraph 8.1.
- 7 Further details including guidance notes can be found on the CTS hotwire page.

Appendix 3 – Mass casualty events

This appendix details frameworks and protocols to consider in relation to major incidents and the death of operational staff.

Mass Casualty Framework

The London Mass Casualty Framework is intended to be a scalable framework, providing strategic direction for a range of scenarios, up to the reasonable worst case. The framework helps to develop local plans and provides a foundation for managing mass casualty events, which are characterized by a large number of casualties exceeding the capacity of normal major incident procedures. The Mass Casualty Framework v3.3 Oct2019 can be found at https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/london_mass_casualty_framework_v3.3_oct_2019.pdf.

Civil Contingencies

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 establishes a comprehensive framework for emergency planning and response in the UK. The Act focuses on preparedness, response, and recovery from a wide range of emergencies, including natural disasters, terrorist attacks, and pandemics. The CCA can be found at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/36/contents>.

Mass Casualty Bureau

A Mass Casualty Bureau (MCB), often activated during major incidents like mass shootings or large-scale disasters, is a specialized unit established by the police to manage information related to missing persons, survivors, evacuees, and witnesses. Its primary function is to gather and process information rather than provide general incident details.

Major Incident Public Portal

The Major Incident Public Portal (MIPP) is a website that will give the public access to various forms in the event of a terror attack, major disaster or a high-profile incident such as a murder. It allows people to send information, reports, images and video footage directly to the police casualty bureau and major incident teams. It can also be used if there's an incident that involves mass casualties and someone wants to report a person missing who is believed to be involved.

The information regarding the MCB and MIPP can be found in the Mass Casualty Framework, with the access link above.

Workplace related death protocol

The Work-related Deaths Protocol (WRDP) in England and Wales is a framework that ensures a joint investigation of deaths in the workplace, involving the police, enforcing authorities (like the Health and Safety Executive - HSE), and prosecutors. This protocol aims to facilitate thorough investigations and, when appropriate, prosecutions related to workplace fatalities. This Framework can be found at <https://www.hse.gov.uk/enforce/wrdp/>.

Mutual aid

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 (Section 13) mandates that fire and rescue authorities in the UK must collaborate to provide mutual assistance, especially in major incidents. This is achieved through "reinforcement schemes" where authorities agree to support each other in fulfilling their statutory duties.

related to fire prevention, firefighting, and other emergency response functions. This Act can be found at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/21>.

Appendix 4 – International deployments

United Kingdom international search and rescue (UK-ISAR) team responds to international sudden onset disasters on behalf of the UK government to carry out urban search and rescue and other activities deemed appropriate. UK-ISAR is a co-operative group of several UK fire and rescue services (FRS) under the governance of the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC). The LFB USAR response team are a key component providing operational search teams on UK-ISAR deployments. Should a death or life-threatening injury to a member of staff take place whilst on deployment there are established NFCC procedures and protocols in place for the management of such an event. The details of the incident once confirmed will be provided from West Midlands Fire Service (Command and Control) who will immediately advise the duty Resource Support Officer (RSO) at LFB via the London Operations Centre (LOC).

The RSO will then notify the Duty AC, Duty DAC and Officer of the Watch - OOW (Control). The Brigade protocols will then be invoked for breaking bad news as at Section 6. Close co-ordination will be required with UK-ISAR representatives including the LFB ISAR team leader and the appropriate AC, DAC and Brigade officers visiting the next of kin (first/second/visiting officer) in order to support the next of kin, to keep informed of any appropriate welfare actions or logistical arrangements (such as transportation of the employee back to the UK) along with any ongoing investigations in accordance with NFCC procedures. Further details about international urban search and rescue deployments can be found on the Hub - Casualty Care and Search and Rescue Product Packs.

Assignments where employees may be required to undertake official deployments for purposes not directly UK-ISAR related (such as supporting Fire Aid projects) should be reviewed with the LFB ISAR team at planning stage to ensure that suitable insurance cover is in place for the assignment. In the event of an incident involving the death or life-threatening injury of an employee for a Brigade deployment, the notification to the duty RSO may be provided directly by the LFB ISAR team leader. On receipt of notification, the RSO will notify the Duty AC, Duty DAC and OOW (Control). The Brigade protocols will then be invoked for breaking bad news as at Section 6. The LFB ISAR team will provide advice and support as appropriate to the managers involved in the process including the officers visiting the next of kin to provide support.

Appendix 5 – Useful contacts

Metropolitan Police Service's 'Delivering the Message'

Metropolitan Police Service's 'Delivering the Message' information line 0800 032 9990.

This provides 24-hour telephone access to recorded information advising how to break bad news. This can be listened to as a series of selectable training modules:

1. General information
2. Grief reactions in next of kin
3. Notifying specific family members
4. Informing children
5. Informing children of varying ages
6. Religious and cultural factors

Alternatively, relevant sections can be used as reminders and listened to immediately prior to a visit.

Other organisations

Organisation	Contact Information
gov.uk	• www.gov.uk/after-a-death • www.gov.uk/register-offices • Tell Us Once Service
Cruise Bereavement Care	• www.cruse.org.uk • Helpline: 0808 808 1677
The Bereavement Advice Centre	• www.bereavementadvice.org • Advice line: 0800 634 9494
Ataloss.org Signpost website for the bereaved	• www.ataloss.org
The Samaritans	• www.samaritans.org • Free call line 24 hours: 116 123 email support: jo@samaritans.org
Mind	• www.mind.org.uk • Infoline: 0300 123 3393
Papyrus Prevention of young suicide	• www.papyrus-uk.org • Hope link: 0800 068 41 41
Calm - leading a movement against suicide	• www.thecalmzone.net • Helpline: 0800 58 58 58
Money Advice Service	• What to do when someone dies
Citizens Advice Service	www.citizensadvice.org.uk
ACAS	• Managing bereavement in the workplace – a good practice guide
Firefighters Charity	• www.firefighterscharity.org.uk • 01256 366 566
LFB Welfare Fund	• www.lfbwelfarefund.com • 020 7407 3964

Document history

Assessments

An equality, sustainability or health, safety and welfare impact assessment and/or a risk assessment was last completed on:

EIA	08/09/26	SDIA	L - 23 /09/25	HSWIA	10/11/25	RA	N/A
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Audit trail

Listed below is a brief audit trail, detailing amendments made to this policy/procedure.

Page/para nos.	Brief description of change	Date

Subject list

You can find this policy under the following subjects.

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Freedom of Information Act exemptions

This policy/procedure has been securely marked due to:

Considered by: (responsible work team)	FOIA exemption	Security marking classification