

At-A-Glance Death Notifications

- Another role that Law Enforcement Personnel sometimes play is to deliver death notifications to next of kin.
- Bringing bad news to an individual or family can be emotionally burdensome for the law enforcement personnel.
- Talk to your line supervisor or your agency's mental health professional or consultant if you find yourself experiencing unwanted thoughts, feelings, reactions.

Tips on delivering death notifications:

- If at all possible, notification should be made by a team.
 - An officer and a police chaplain or victim advocate can be an effective combination.
- Notification should be made face to face, not by telephone.
 - If the visit is done very late at night or early in the morning, you may want to have someone call ahead and tell the family that an officer will be there soon with some news.
 - Ask to speak privately with the primary adults in a household, and be sure to confirm their identity and their relationship with the deceased. They can decide how to tell children, adolescents, and the frail elderly.
 - The family you are visiting will realize that you are bearing bad news, so tell them as quickly you can,
 - be direct and clear, and be ready to give them details if they ask.
- Provide your business card (or that of the chaplain or victim advocate) so they have someone to contact for additional information.
- The range of reactions can be quite broad: People may faint, cry, or refuse to accept the news. Stay with the survivors until the emotional situation appears stabilized.
- If you are notifying an individual with no other family or friends on-site, suggest that he or she call someone, and offer to stay until the person called arrives.