This policy is primarily oriented toward dealing with the aftermath of the line of duty death of an employee. At the discretion of the Chief of Police or the Duty Chief, portions of this policy may be implemented for the death of an employee or retired employee due to other circumstances.

217.01 R Members are required to maintain an up-to-date Line of Duty Emergency Contact Form in their personnel file in the Fiscal Affairs Section. Additionally, an electronic copy will be maintained on the Secure Portal with limited access privileges. The information will be of great assistance to members' families and the Department in the case of an accident or death. These forms will be up-dated each year during annual evaluations.

217.02 GENERAL

Procedures to ensure the proper support and emotional care for a member's survivors following a line-of- duty death/injury:

A. The Department will provide liaison assistance to the immediate survivors of a member who dies or is critically injured in the line of duty. This assistance is provided whether the death or injury was by a criminal act, or accidental (i.e., automobile accident, hit by a passing vehicle during a traffic stop, training accident) while the member was performing a police-related function, either on or off-duty, and while he or she was an active member of the Department.

B. The Chief of Police may institute portions of this policy in cases of a member's death, from causes not related to duty.

C. The Department will also provide a clarification and comprehensive study of survivor benefits as well as emotional support during this traumatic period of readjustment for the surviving family.

D. Funeral arrangements of the deceased member are to be decided by the immediate family, with their wishes taking full precedence over any others.

E. Employees killed or seriously injured while committing unlawful acts, either on duty or off, will not be provided all the benefits and recognition called for in this policy. However, the Department will still work with survivors to ensure that appropriate arrangements are made.

217.03 Coordination of events following the line-of-duty death/injury of a Police Employee is an extremely important and complex responsibility. In order to provide the best possible services and support for the member's family, specific tasks may be assigned to selected members of the Department, identified as:

1. Notification Officer
2. Hospital Liaison Officer
3. Family Liaison Officer
4. Department Liaison Officer
5. Benefits Coordinator

217.04 R RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASSIGNMENTS (a member may be called upon to perform more than one role.)

A. NOTIFICATION OFFICER: It is the responsibility of the Watch Commander to properly notify the family of an employee who has suffered severe injuries or has died. The Watch Commander may personally make the notification with the assistance of another person or designate a Notification Officer to inform the survivors. The responsibilities include:

1. The name of the deceased member will not be released to the media, until the Department has notified the immediate family, and should be released only at the direction of the Chief or Duty Chief.

2. If there is knowledge of a medical problem with an immediate survivor, medical personnel should be dispatched to the residence to coincide with the death notification.

3. Notification will always be made in person and never alone. It is highly encouraged that the personnel making the notification be comprised of the male and female team whenever possible. The Chief of Police, his or her designee, Police Chaplain, close friend, or another police survivor could appropriately accompany the Notification Officer. However, if the aforementioned persons are not readily accessible, notification should not be delayed until a group can gather. If there is an opportunity to get a spouse or family member to the hospital prior to the death of a Department member, do not wait for a delegation to gather. The family should learn of the death from the Department, not from the press or other sources.

4. Never make a death notification on the doorstep. Ask to be admitted to the residence. Inform family members slowly and clearly of the information you have. If specifics of the incident are known, the Notification Officer should relay as much information as possible to the family. Be sure to use the member's name during the notification. If the member has died, relay that information. Never give the family a false sense of hope. Use words such as "died" and "dead" rather than "gone away" or "passed away."

5. If the family requests to visit the hospital they should be asked if transportation is needed or wanted. If the family would like transportation a member of the department will ensure that it is provided.

6. If young children are at home, the Notification Officer must arrange for babysitting needs. This may involve co-workers' spouses, transportation of children to a relative's home, or similar arrangements.

7. Prior to departing for the hospital, The Notification Officer should notify the hospital staff and the Hospital Liaison (by telephone if possible) that a member(s) of the family is enroute. The dispatcher should also be advised family is enroute.

8. The deceased or severely injured member's parents will also be afforded the courtesy of a personal notification whenever possible.

9. If immediate survivors live beyond the Wichita area, the Notification Officer will ensure that a message is sent to the appropriate jurisdiction, requesting personal notification. The Notification Officer should also call the other jurisdiction by telephone. Arrangements should be made to permit simultaneous telephone contact between the survivors and the Department.

10. The Chief or a Command Staff representative should respond to the residence or the hospital to meet with the family as quickly as possible.

11. In the event of an on-duty death, communications regarding notifications should be restricted to the telephone. If the media has obtained the member's name, they will be requested to withhold the information, pending notification of the family.

12. The Notification Officer(s) should remain at the hospital while the family is present, or make arrangements for relief if events take an extended time.

B. HOSPITAL LIAISON: The first Commander, other than the Chief or his/her representative, to arrive at the hospital becomes the Hospital Liaison. The Hospital Liaison is responsible for coordinating the activities of hospital personnel, the member's family, police officers, the press and others. These responsibilities include:

1. Arranging with hospital personnel to provide an appropriate waiting facility for the family, the Chief of Police, the Notification Officer, and any others requested by the immediate survivors.

2. Arranging a separate area for fellow employees to assemble.

3. Establishing a press staging area.

4. Ensuring that medical personnel relay pertinent information regarding a member's condition to the family on a timely basis and before such information is released to others.

5. In the case of a line of duty death, notifying the appropriate hospital personnel that all medical bills relating to the injured or deceased member are directed to the City of Wichita Safety and Risk Management Office. The family should not receive any of these bills at their residence. This may require the Hospital Liaison to re-contact the hospital during normal business hours to ensure that proper billing takes place.

6. Ensuring that the family is updated regarding the incident and the member's condition upon their arrival at the hospital, and arranging transportation for the family back to their residence.

7. Ensure that if it is possible for the family to visit the injured member before death, they are afforded that opportunity. A police official should prepare the family for what they might see in the emergency room and should accompany the family into the room for the visit if the family requests it.

C. OTHER AREAS OF CONCERN:

1. Hospital personnel should advise the family of visitation policies, and in the event of death explain why an autopsy is required.

2. Do not be overly protective of the family. This includes sharing specific information as to how the member met his or her death, as well as allowing the family time with the deceased member.

3. The Chief of Police, or a designee, will meet the member's family at their home to determine their wishes regarding Departmental participation in the preparation of the funeral or services. All possible assistance will be rendered.

D. FAMILY LIAISON OFFICER: With the approval of the family, the Chief will assign a Family Liaison Officer. The selection of a Family Liaison Officer is a critical assignment. An attempt should be made to assign someone who enjoyed a close relationship with the member and his or her family. When possible, male/female teams should be utilized as Family Liaison Officers. This is not a decision-making position, but a facilitator between the family and the Department. Responsibilities of the Family Liaison Officer include:

1. The Family Liaison acts as a long-term liaison with the surviving family to ensure that close contact is maintained between the Department and the survivors, meeting their needs as long as they welcome the support.

2. If no court proceedings surround the circumstances of the member's death, the Family Liaison will relay all details of the incident to the family at the earliest opportunity.

3. If criminal violations surround the death, the Family Liaison will:

   a. Inform the family of all new developments prior to press release.

   b. Keep the family apprised of legal proceedings.

   c. Introduce the family to the appropriate victims' assistance coordinators.

4. Encourage the family to attend the trial, accompany them whenever possible, and arrange for investigators to meet with the family at the earliest opportunity following the trial to answer all their questions.

5. Ensuring that the needs and wishes of the family come before the wishes of the Department to include the completion of the Survivors Intake Form available from the Administrative Services commander.

6. Assisting the family with funeral arrangements and making them aware of what the Department can offer if they decide to have police participation in the funeral. If they choose police participation, briefing the family on funeral procedure (i.e., presenting the flag, playing of taps, firing party).

7. Being constantly available to the family, providing a contact number to the family.

8. Determining what public safety, church, fraternal and labor organizations will provide in terms of financial assistance for out of town family travel, food for funeral attendees following the burial, etc.

9. Notifying "Concerns of Police Survivors" (C.O.P.S.), (573) 346-4911. Members are available to provide emotional support to the surviving families.

F. DEPARTMENT LIAISON OFFICER: This is a position that is normally assigned to a Division Commander, because of the need to effectively coordinate resources throughout the Department. The Department Liaison Officer works closely with the Family Liaison Officer to ensure that the needs of the family are fulfilled. Duties include:

1. Preparation of a biography of the deceased, and obtaining photographs of the member for distribution to the media;

2. Coordination with the news media throughout the process. If the family decides to accept an interview, a member should assist the family, and guide them to avoid jeopardizing subsequent legal proceedings;

3. Meeting with the following persons to coordinate funeral activities and establish an itinerary;

   A. Chief of Police and Commanders,
   B. Funeral director,
   C. Family priest, minister, or other religious leader.
   D. Cemetery director,
   E. WPD Honor Guard

4. Directing the funeral activities of the Department and visiting police departments according to the wishes of the family;

5. Issuing a Teletype message to all law enforcement agencies, to include the following;

   A. name of deceased,
   B. date and time of death
   C. circumstances surrounding the death,

D. funeral arrangements (state if service will be private or a police funeral),
E. uniform to be worn,
F. expressions of sympathy in lieu of flowers, and
G. contact person and telephone number for visiting departments to call to indicate their desire to attend or to obtain further information,

6. Establishing a command center, if necessary, to coordinate information and response to the incident,

7. Notifying personnel by the Interwatch on the wearing of black badge bands,

8. Obtaining an American flag. If the family wishes a flag presentation by the Chief, notify the Chief's Office (consideration should be made to provide a flag to both the parents and the spouse),

9. Determining if the family desires a burial in uniform, and selecting a member to obtain a uniform and all accouterments (except weapons), and delivering them to the funeral home,

10. Assigning members for usher duty at the service location,

11. Arranging for the delivery of the member's personal belongings to the family in an appropriate container.

12. Ensuring that the surviving parents or other family are afforded recognition and that proper placement is arranged for them during the funeral, and the procession,

13. Coordinating traffic management with other jurisdictions during the viewing, funeral and procession, and arranging for a tow truck to be available along the procession route,

14. Assigning a member to guard the family home during the viewing and funeral,

15. Maintaining a roster of all Departments sending personnel to the funeral, including:

A. name and address of responding agencies,
B. name of Chief of Police,
C. number of officers attending,
D. number of officers attending the reception after the funeral, and
E. number of vehicles.

18. Acknowledging visiting and assisting departments,

19. Arranging for routine residence checks of the survivor's home by the Field Services Division for 6-8 weeks following the funeral.

G. BENEFITS COORDINATOR: Unless otherwise assigned by the Chief of Police, the Benefits Coordinator will be the Commander of the Administrative Services Bureau. The Benefits Coordinator will gather information on benefits, and funeral payments available to the family. The Benefits Coordinator, is responsible for filing the appropriate benefit paperwork, and following through with the family to ensure that these benefits are being received. These may include:

1. Filing Worker's Compensation claims and related paperwork,

2. Contacting the appropriate offices without delay to ensure that the beneficiary receives death and retirement benefits, the member's remaining paychecks, payment for the remaining vacation, and setting up Police Pension Benefits,

3. Gathering information on all benefits, and funeral payments, to include the Public Safety Officers Benefits Act, that are available to the family,
4. Setting up any trust or educational funds, or a fund to accept donations (the Wichita Municipal Federal Credit Union is suggested)

5. Notifying relevant organizations such as: Wichita Committee of 100, the Fraternal Order of Police, the Kansas Peace Officers Association, National Rifle Association, The American Police Hall of Fame, Veterans Administration, Social Security, International Association of Bomb Technicians and Investigators, National Tactical Officers Association, Concerns of Police Survivors. The Wichita Municipal Federal Credit Union, etc., of the member's death. These groups may offer financial assistance, legal counseling, and grief counseling to the family at no cost,

6. Preparing a document listing the various benefits/funeral payments that are due to the family, listing beneficiaries, and contacts at various benefits offices.

7. Meeting with the surviving family a few days after the funeral to discuss the benefits they will receive. A copy of the document, and any related paperwork should be given to the family at this time.

8. If there are surviving children from a former marriage, the guardian of those children should also receive a document showing benefits the child or children may receive.

9. Attention should be given to health care benefits. (Many providers allow only a 30-day grace period before canceling or imposing monthly payments upon survivors)

10. Meeting again with the family in about six months to ensure they are receiving benefits.

11. Maintaining relevant guidelines forms and contact information in the Administrative Services SOP to perform the function of Benefits Coordinator.

217.05 Members of the Department must remain sensitive to the needs of the survivors long after the member's death.

A. Survivors should continue to feel a part of the "police family." They should be invited to Department activities to ensure continued contact.

B. Members of the Department are encouraged to keep in touch with the family. Close friends, co-workers and officials should arrange with the family to visit the home from time to time, so long as the family expresses a desire to have these contacts continue.

217.06 FUNERAL PROTOCOL

A. All members shall maintain an excellent personal appearance. Uniforms and equipment must be in outstanding condition.

B. Uniforms
   1. Dress will be Class A, including a long sleeve shirt and tie, with the uniform hat (optional).
   2. A black band will be worn across the badge, with the exception of Honor Guard members who will wear the Honor Guard Badge.

C. Funeral Services
   1. Upon entering the building, uniformed personnel will remove their uniform hats and place them under their left arm, hat brim forward, and move in an orderly manner to the place reserved for them.
   2. Uniformed personnel will sit with their hats upright on their laps, maintaining a military bearing throughout the service.
   3. After the service, uniformed personnel will rise as directed and place their hats under their left arm. They will hold their hats in this position until they have arrived outside.
   4. Upon leaving the building, uniformed personnel will replace their hats and assemble in formation facing the hearse.
   5. The Honor Guard
      a) Will form two ranks facing each other, leaving an aisle through which the pallbearers and casket may pass.
      b) While waiting in formation, members will stand at parade rest.
   6. When the casket comes into view, the formation will be called to attention. The next command will be "Present Arms." All members salute and hold this salute until the casket is placed in the hearse, and the door is closed. At this time, the command, "Order Arms" will be given and members will return their hands to their sides.
   7. After the doors of the hearse are closed, the Honor Guard commander will then dismiss the formation with the command, "Officers Dismissed". The members will break ranks and leave in a quiet and orderly manner.
   8. Members will then take their assigned places in the motorcade and proceed to the cemetery.

217.07 GRAVESITE SERVICES

A. Members will report to the places that have been reserved for them immediately upon arrival at the gravesite. If indoors, members will remove their hats and hold them under their left arm. All members will sit with hats on laps, maintaining a military bearing throughout the services. If services are held outdoors, members will wear their hats.

B. Survivors should be asked in advance of the funeral as to whether or not a 21 – gun salute will be given.

C. Should a 21-gun salute be given, just prior to the 21-gun salute and taps, the command "Law Enforcement Detail, Attention" will be given, followed by the command for "Present Arms", (salute). Members will stand at attention facing the casket. When the 21-gun salute and taps have concluded, the command "Order Arms" will be given and members will return their hands to their sides. The command "Officers Dismissed" will then be given. Members will then break ranks, and may return to their assigned vehicles.

217.08 HONORS ACCORDED

A. Any Wichita Police Department employee who dies honorably in the line of duty will be accorded full honors if requested by the survivors. These may include a casket watch during viewing, standing guard over casket, honor guard, pallbearers, taps, military style flag fold and presentation, and funeral escort.

B. The Honor Guard commander is responsible for coordinating and directing the activities of the Honor Guard, casket watch, pallbearers, bugler, and flag presentation.

217.09 CASKET WATCH

A. The casket watch is usually comprised of officers from the Honor Guard. However, volunteers may stand watch at the discretion of the Honor Guard commander.

B. Officers who are assigned to the casket watch must present an excellent uniform appearance and conform to all current grooming regulations.

C. A class "A" uniform will be worn for the casket watch. The casket watch will consist of one officer, 24 hours a day, from the time the employee is laid in state, until interment.

D. If the family wishes, an informal watch can take place after the viewing has been concluded for the day.

217.10 HONOR GUARD

Members of the Honor Guard will conform to the Honor Guard Policy, WPD Policy # 208.

217.11 PALLBEARERS

A. If the family requests pallbearers be provided by the Honor Guard, they will be selected by the Honor Guard commander.

B. Pallbearers will be under the direction of the Honor Guard commander. They will report to the funeral home for instructions and seating arrangements.

217.12 PROCEDURAL VARIATION

A. The procedures outlined in this policy shall be followed in most cases. Any changes made necessary by a shortage of staffing, the unusual size of the funeral, the type of service, the physical arrangement of the place of service, or for any other reason shall be made by the Department Liaison Officer.

B. Any additional honors to be accorded to deceased members or to deceased members of other law enforcement agencies shall be at the discretion of the Chief of Police.