



June 2012 Edition

CRISIS MANAGEMENT GUIDE FOR NWSA MEMBERS

In an Instant – Your Worst Nightmare Comes True

A snag falls, the wind shifts, a tire catches the edge of the road, a crew driver makes a bad decision and in an instant, your company finds itself in crisis. How you respond can make all the difference in the survival of all you have worked to build. (Quote from Leslie Habetler, a Crisis Manager)

What would you do if that phone rang for YOU today? ARE YOU PREPARED?

This is intended to be a guide only to help you during a time of crisis within your business. **We encourage you to create a customized program designed for your needs by contacting a professional crisis manager. Training for this kind of crisis is imperative, and anyone involved in your plan should have the appropriate training offered by a professional.** We have listed resources in the back of this guide.

You need to complete the plan by training your employees in implementation of your company's emergency plan. Trained employees, operating under a chain of command and following procedures in the emergency plan, determine the nature and extent of the emergency.

They are trained to carry out critical emergency-scene activities to ensure the safety of others, and communicate with professional responders in sharing critical information about the emergency.

Your company's plan should:

1. Identify potential emergencies that could affect the workplace including those working in the field.
2. Establish a chain of command with key personnel and assignments for responsibilities such as: (These are just some of the areas of immediate concern.)
 - Notifying appropriate agencies.
 - Family liaison Teams to work with victims' families.
 - Company liaison to work with other employees, and their families (keeping them updated ect). Coordinate with a counselor to help with employees and their families. (A minister or professional counseling service).
 - Have a Crisis Manager contacted to come in and handle the media if necessary and oversee the plan.
 - Have a plan to protect the workplace and lock it down if needed from the media and others while your folks are working through this crisis.
 - Employee Contact info – KEEP THIS INFORMATION UPDATED WHEN CHANGES HAPPEN. Things in life are always changing. Make a copy of the employee form enclosed and encourage them to share it with their family.

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IMPORTANT RESOURCE NUMBERS TO HAVE AVAILABLE:

Your Local OSHA:

Name: _____

Ph: _____

You're Workers Compensation:

Name: _____

Ph: _____

You're local Chapin:

Name: _____

Ph: _____

Chaplain Services

Corporate Chaplains of America

Ph: 1-919-570-0700

Corporate Office: North Carolina

For Family Support and Financial Assistance for Victims & Families:

Wildland Firefighter Foundation

2049 Airport Way

Boise, ID 83705

Ph: 1-877-336-2950

Contact: Vicki Minor or Burke Minor

For Media & Crisis Management:

Kelli Matthews
Turell Group
800 Willamette St. St. 770
Eugene, OR 97401
Ph: 458-205-8878 contact@turellgroup.com

Industry Professional with Experience:

Michelle or Bob Kruger
First Strike Environmental
256 Quarry Rd.
Roseburg, OR
Ph: 541-673-9892

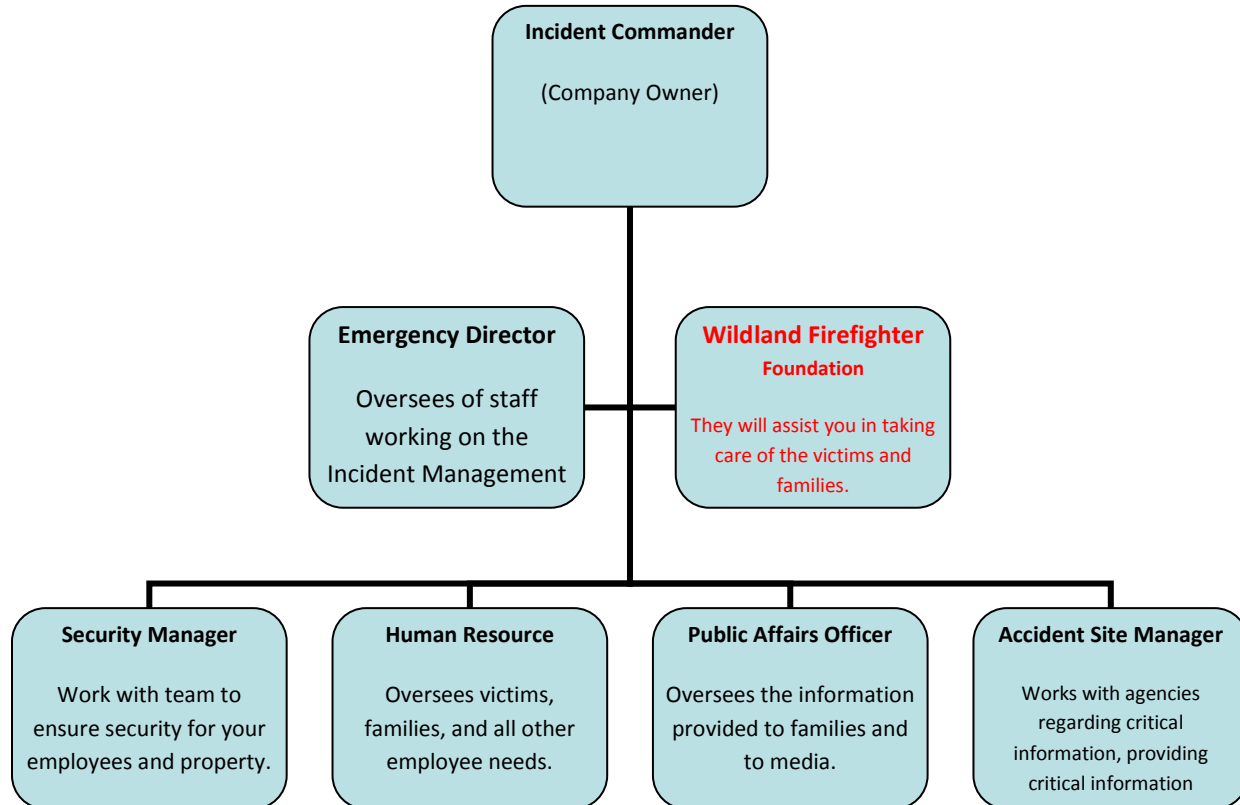
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1-541-923-0703

EXAMPLE OF ICS SYSTEM FOR CRISIS MANAGEMENT



The size of Chain of Command will vary depending on the size of your company.

Again the goal of the Crisis Planning Process is to:

1. Involve Employees
2. Identify Possible Emergencies
3. Establish a chain of command
4. Completing “Contact Sheet” with names/all phone numbers/email and addresses of anyone to be involved in the Crisis Planning and Implementation.
5. Develop Procedures

In this Guide we will also give you some contact numbers to use for guidance and support. Your peers are with you during this time and will be willing to offer assistance if you ask.

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

Company Street Address Company Phone () -

Company City, State, Zip Company Fax () -

YOUR NAME _____

FORM UPDATED DATE BY INITIALS

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

Update your information (with Company Name payroll staff), whenever it changes.

1st Contact Name	Relationship
Street Address	Home Phone No.
Mailing Address, if different	Cell Phone No.
City, State, Zip	Work No.

2nd Contact Name	Relationship
Street Address	Home Phone No.
Mailing Address, if different	Cell Phone No.
City, State, Zip	Work No.

3rd Contact Name	Relationship
Street Address	Home Phone No.
Mailing Address, if different	Cell Phone No.
City, State, Zip	Work No.

COMPANY NAME

Company Street Address Company Phone () -

Company City, State, Zip Company Fax () -

ABOUT PAGES 2 – 4 OF THIS FORM

- **Please return pages 2 - 4 to us in a closed envelope** with your name and date on the outside (an envelope will be provided when you turn in the forms). We will not access this information unless you are hired by **Company Name** and are involved in an accident.
- If you are hired by our company, this form will be kept in your personnel file. Outdated forms may be shredded and discarded.
- If you are not hired by our company, this form will be kept until year-end, when it will be shredded and discarded.
- Update your information, with **Company Name** payroll staff, whenever it changes.
- If you would like a copy of this completed form, please request it before it is enclosed in the envelope.
- Share this information with your family and close friends.

FAMILY NOTIFICATION & ASSISTANCEList **anyone else** you want to help **make the notification** (a minister, for example)

Name	Relationship
Street Address	Home Phone No.
Mailing Address, if different	Cell Phone No.
City, State, Zip	Work No.

List your membership in community **organizations** that may provide assistance to your family

Religious Preference

Place of Worship/Name of Church:

Address:

List any **Insurance Policies** you have.

Company	Policy Number	Location of Policy

Do you have a **will**? Yes No

If yes, where is it located?

SPECIAL REQUESTS AND INSTRUCTIONSAre you a **veteran** of the U.S. Armed Services? Yes NoIf you are entitled to a military funeral, do you wish to have one? Yes No

EMPLOYEE BENEFICIARY DESIGNATION

ACCIDENTAL DEATH & DISMEMBERMENT INS. (The form may come from your carrier)

SUMMARY

This is only a summary. Please request the full Plan from **Company Name** for details (accidents covered, exclusions, injury benefit amounts, benefit reduction due to age, etc.)

- Plan Start Date: **DATE**
- Eligibility - You are eligible to participate in the Plan if you are an active, full-time employee or a seasonal employee.
- Coverage – An eligible employee is covered 24-hours a day, 365 days a year against covered accidents occurring in the course of business or pleasure. Coverage is provided for injuries caused by accidents that occur on or off the job, at home, while traveling...(See Plan for Details and Exclusions.)
- Cost – **Company Name** <could be different for each company pays \$0.10 per \$1,000> of earned gross wages by each employee.
- Employee Benefit -- <could be different for each company Principal Sum \$25,000>. The Plan will pay a percentage of the Principal Sum for dismemberment based on injury (See Plan Details)
- Additional Benefits – <could be different for each company> Coma Benefit, Conversion Privilege, Exposure and Disappearance, Rehabilitation Benefit, Seat Belt and Air Bag Benefit, Waiver of Premium Benefit.
- Beneficiary for accidental death – If you do not name a specific beneficiary, the Benefit payment will be held until a trust is set up by the state.

BENEFICIARY DESIGNATION FORM

INSURANCE COMPANY NAME

PRINT YOUR NAME _____		
Last	First	Middle

Death Benefits To Be Paid To:

Name	Relationship
This person is listed as my emergency contact <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No*	
*If you answered "No", complete the following contact information for your beneficiary:	
Beneficiary Street Address	Beneficiary Home Phone No.
Beneficiary Mailing Address, if different	Beneficiary Cell Phone No.
Beneficiary City, State, Zip	Beneficiary Work No.
Policyholder/Employer: Company Name	Policy Number: Policy Number

Employee Signature: _____ Date: _____

ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION

BASED ON PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE THE FOLLOWING ARE RECOMMENDED REGARDING THE ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION

- THE COMPANY NEEDS TO HAVE THE COMPANY DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE INVESTIGATION,IF NOT MANAGEMENT BY THE COMPANY;
- ALWAYS HAVE A TRAINED COMPANY IN-HOUSE PERSON/STAFF/EMPLOYEE/MANAGEMENT INDIVIDUAL INVOLVED AT ALL TIMES THROUGH OUT THE ENTIRE PROCESS.

The following forms and checklist are generic forms and may need to be customized for your needs.

Near-Miss

First Aid

FILE 801, If

BOXES BELOW

ARE CHECKED

Medical Care

Time Loss

Fatal

Management

Do we have:

Policy Enforcement

Hazard Recognition

Accountability

Supervisor Training

Corrective Action

Production Priority

Proper Resources

Job Safety Training

Hiring Practices

Maintenance

Adequate Staffing

Employee

Was the employee:

Following Procedure

Training

Previous Injury

Mental Ability

Physical Capacity

Equipment Use

Short Cuts

PPE Worn

Safety Attitude

INCIDENT INVESTIGATION FORM

Immediate supervisor should complete this form promptly with worker.

Company Name: _____

Employee: _____

Occupation/Department: _____

Where Incident Occurred: _____ Date/Time: _____ AM/PM

If injury, describe (Nature/Body part) _____

Treatment: None First Aid Only Doctor Hospital

Treating Physician: _____

Phone: _____

Witnesses: _____

Describe Accident/Incident Fully:

Identify factors which contributed to or caused accident (refer to list on left side of page):

Management:	Employee:
Equipment:	Environment:

Counter measures/best practices to prevent reoccurrence:	Who	By When

Safety Committee Review Date: _____

If accident/incident was caused by a person not employed by us, who?

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Date: _____ Supervisor's Signature: _____

COMPLETING THE ACCIDENT/INCIDENT ANALYSIS

All close calls, near-misses, incidents, and accidents should be analyzed for corrective action regardless of severity. Time and distance work against a thorough analysis as most people quickly forget important facts and key details.

Distance from the incident means loss of visual information, so complete the analysis at the scene as soon as possible. The S-767 should be completed by the immediate supervisor of the person(s) directly involved in the incident. A manager, safety committee, safety coordinator or analysis team can assist in the absence of the immediate supervisor. The S-767 asks no questions other than a brief description of an injury, if one occurred. Questions often provide closed answers, so the key items on the analysis document are designed to encourage open dialogue and communication about facts and details. This is the primary opportunity for those involved to gather key information for preventing similar incidents in the future.

A Successful Analysis Process: The person(s) conducting the analysis need to look at the systems/procedures/policies within the business that are not working and may have contributed in some way to the incident. Even minor contributions should be listed. The systems to review are: Management, Employee, Equipment, and Environment (MEEE). Review system items shown in the left margin of the Accident/Incident Analysis form **in relation to the incident**. These are areas to explore within these systems, they are not questions. Once the contributing system elements are identified, write them in the Counter measures/best practices box along with any other system changes that will prevent recurrence.

First Step - Care for the injured: Insure appropriate medical care or first aid is provided for anyone injured.

Second Step - Secure the scene of the accident: Make certain that key evidence is preserved so that all pertinent facts of the accident can be determined. In the case of serious accidents, photographs of the scene are a valuable tool in determining causes, particularly if the area needs to be put back in order quickly. Note the position of equipment and materials, presence or lack of equipment safeguarding, specific materials and chemicals involved, warning signs and any other physical evidence.

Third Step - Interview witnesses: Witnesses to the accident or persons having knowledge valuable to the analysis should be met with individually. Emphasis should be placed on determining the facts, not on placing blame. If the injured employee(s) is/are not seriously injured, they should be interviewed while awaiting transport for medical treatment. All questions should be open-ended (who, what, when, where, how and why), to encourage a detailed account of the facts. Yes and No questions should be avoided.

Fourth Step - Analyze data to determine causes and best practices to prevent recurrence: Refer to your notes from the scene of the accident and witness interviews. Work backwards from the accident to trace all causes to their source. It is helpful to have multiple people involved in determining possible solutions. Each cause identified presents an opportunity for intervention to reduce the potential for future accidents.

Fifth Step - Follow up on corrective actions: This is usually the function of the safety coordinator or safety committee. At the next safety committee meeting, any accident analysis reports should be reviewed to ensure appropriate corrective actions (Countermeasures/Best Practices) were identified. Furthermore, steps should be taken to ensure that these actions have been implemented at the site of the accident as well as in any other areas appropriate in the organization. Any accidents or incidents occurring, for which a report was not completed, should be referred to the appropriate person responsible for completion of the report.

GUIDANCE FOLLOWING A FATALITY ACCIDENT/CATASTROPHIC INJURY

Dealing with the death of one or more of your employees is a traumatic event, and there are a

number of things you need to think about after the initial emergency response has begun. The following is a guide on what is required by law. It also provides other information to help you and your employees through this difficult situation. (This checklist assumes that emergency responders have already been called and have responded to the scene.)

On the day of the accident

- Secure the accident scene and limit access only to those people who are authorized to be there.
- Notify company executives/owners.
- Determine who within your organization is "in charge" of the accident scene and who will serve as the official company contact for information.
- Notify State OSHA within eight hours (sooner if possible) at_____.
- Determine who will notify immediate family members and confirm that it will be done with tact and good judgment.
- Preserve the accident scene and all pertinent physical evidence until your state OSHA or a designated law enforcement agency has completed their work.
- Work cooperatively with your state OSHA and all other law enforcement or fire department authorities. (In an emergency response, you surrender control of the area to these authorities.)
- Notify your worker compensation carrier. Many have safety, claims, and investigations professionals who can assist you. You also want to initiate the workers' compensation claims process. (Find out if your carrier has an Immediate Response Team and the number to call for that. Ph:_____)
- Document the accident scene, including the equipment or process involved, through photos, video tape, written observations, sketches, diagrams, measurements, etc.
- Collect the names and contact information of all witnesses including fellow employees, management, or the general public. Your state OSHA and SAIF will conduct investigations, so it may not be necessary for you to collect witness statements yourself. Be sensitive to the emotional impact that this accident may have on witnesses.
- Consider releasing workers to go home after they have provided their statements.
- Offer counseling assistance to affected employees. (Counseling services, Employee Assistance Programs, and local churches typically have counselors who can meet with your employees.)
- Prepare a plan to notify all management and employees about the situation.
- Prepare for the possibility of media inquiries. Designate an authorized person to speak to the media and make sure all employees know that this is the only person authorized to provide statements to the media.

During the next few days

- Complete a thorough accident analysis. (One of the primary reasons for this analysis is to seek information that will help protect other employees.)

- Once the major contributing factors are known, determine what steps are necessary to help prevent future injuries. (This may include employee and management training, system changes, procedure changes, accountability systems, etc.)
- Stay in contact with the family members of the accident victim. Offer counseling assistance and help explain any benefits that may be provided. (Also consider sending condolence cards, flowers, or consider assisting with meals and other efforts to help them through the difficult first few days.)
- Continue to offer counseling assistance to employees. Coach your supervisors about the potential psychological impact this can have on employees and make sure they are watchful for signs that employees may need counseling assistance.
- Provide information to employees, when known, regarding accident causes and steps taken to prevent future occurrences.

FAMILY NOTIFICATIONS

NWSA makes the following recommendations:

- **Contact your local “Fire Department Chaplin”, or your local sheriff’s office. They have been trained in these types of notifications.**
- **Send a company family liaison with them to make the notification.**
- **We DO NOT recommend that anyone make these notifications without someone that is trained/experienced in this. A local/municipal/Corporate Chaplin is highly recommended.**
- **The following a procedures that can be used, and some recommendations from the Wildland Firefighter Foundation on Death Notifications.**

PROCEDURAL COMPONENTS

Establishing a Family Support Team.

The company's family support team will be responsible for necessary functions before, during, and after the funeral of a deceased employee or the disabling injury of the company employee(s). Members of the family support team will handle the following responsibilities:

- a. Liaison between the team and the designated corporate official.
- b. Overall coordination of the team.
- c. Benefits coordination; only one company member should be authorized to work with the family on death and/or family health benefits.
- d. Transportation and lodging coordination for out-of-town family members.
- e. Hospital liaison to relay information between medical personnel and the family.
- f. Assist in coordinating funeral or memorial services and burial arrangements, traffic, honor guard, etc.
- g. Provide personal support for the immediate family. Personal support should include duties such as screening calls and visits, providing local transportation, providing support if desired with burial arrangements, etc.

Notifying Survivors

The company notification policy for survivors of fallen firefighters will include the following elements.

- a. HR will provide all personal contact information provided by the victim to the team.
- b. Designation of specific senior department personnel and their backups who will make the required notifications.
- c. Notification of immediate family members in person before the release of information to anyone else. If members live out of the area, arrangements will be made if at all possible for in-person notification by the local department designee.
- d. All notifications shall have two members of the company make the notification. The notification will not be held up, however, if the designated department members are not readily available.
- e. If needed, family members will be driven to the hospital and to the proper area in a company vehicle. If the family wants to drive themselves, a member of the company should accompany them.
- f. There is a Recommended Procedure for Death Notification included in this guide.

Notifying Members of the Company

Once the family has been notified, members of the company should learn of the incident from the company before they hear about it through the media. The company procedures ensuring notification

shall include the following:

- a. Notifying all on and off-duty officers
- b. Notifying all chaplains/ professional counselors
- c. Work with Media Manager in preparing a short summary of known facts about the incident and the deceased and/or critically injured for the Incident Commander and all other spokesperson to use.
- d. Working with the personnel officer, to confirm the basic information about the firefighter(s), including:
 1. Correct spelling of name
 2. Age
 3. Next of kin.
- e. Preparing a memo to all members of the company that includes confirmed information.
- f. Keeping all members informed of funeral arrangements and memorial services.
- g. Consider posting a blog with updated information or a password only for employees/families on home page to update them.

Notifying Others

Other members of the community need to be notified after the family and the members of the company. Each community will need to tailor this list to its unique circumstances, but should include the following:

- a. Work with Media Manager to make sure a short summary of known facts about the incident and the deceased and/or critically injured is available for the Chief and all other spokespersons to use.
- b. Establishing a priority checklist of whom to call that includes name and title, office and home contact information, etc. For example:
 1. Elected officials
 2. Employee Assistance Program Officers
 3. Safety Officer
 4. Public Safety Officers' Benefit staff
 5. Other cooperating organizations

Working with the Media

It is recommended for a catastrophic incident that you bring in a media specialist to assist in this area.

The company should take steps to ensure notification of the family before giving any information to the

media. It is recommended that if necessary you consider hiring a media specialist for this. Procedures will include:

- a. Give no personal information out to the media, even if they are on the scene, until confirmation that family notification has occurred.
- b. Use only the information developed for the incident and deceased and/or critically injured report.
- c. Prepare and clear with the Incident Commander and his/her designated notification supervisor a written statement that will be delivered.
- d. Set up a media meeting, either at the hospital or other location.
- e. Designate a company backup to handle coverage of the incident if it is still ongoing so the primary public information officer can concentrate on handling information on the fatality.

Dealing with the Hospital

The critically injured firefighter will be transported to a local hospital. If this is a burn case, we suggest asking that they be transported to a recognized burn center (A list is included in this guide). The company's established procedures for dealing with local hospitals will include:

- a. The designated company representative will meet with hospital officials to discuss appropriate waiting areas for family, coworkers, and the media should a line-of-duty death occur.
- b. Only EMS personnel who know hospital personnel and procedures will be used as a resource.
- c. The company will ensure that the hospital information liaison has access to medical personnel to obtain information for the family and to provide approved information to the media coordinator.
- d. There will be a company member available to the family at all times to assist them and ensure their privacy.
- e. A member of the company will be assigned to ensure collection of the deceased's personal property.
- f. The company will make all necessary arrangements for transportation for the family back to their residence.

If the critically-injured firefighter must be transported to a medical center out of the local area, the company will follow all necessary procedures to assist the family in that location including:

- a. Helping arrange transportation for the firefighter and the family, as required.
- b. Contact cooperating organization officials in the area where the firefighter is being

- transported and arrange support for the family.
- c. **Make contact with the Wildland Firefighter Foundation for assistance in this area.**

Assisting the Family Before and During the Funeral

The company will ensure that the family's wishes come first. The company's established procedures will include:

- a. Meeting with the family to explain what support the company can offer.
- b. Giving the family a pager or cell phone number where a company liaison can be reached at any time.

Assisting the Family after the Funeral

The company will maintain contact with the family and establish procedures to ensure

Ongoing support, including

- a. Inviting the family to future company events.
- b. Ensure that all death benefits have been processed.
- c. Calling up or checking with the family on a regular basis.
- e. Respect the wishes of the family regarding contact.
- f. Referring the family to the Wildland Firefighter Foundation for information on its Survivor Support Network.

ROLES FOR FAMILY LIAISONS

The family liaison is a facilitator for exchanging information between the family and the agency. It is her/his priority to ensure that all possible assistance is considered and utilized as resources become available.

The family liaison should be aware that the position is not one of a decision maker, but rather a facilitator.

RESPONSIBILITIES COULD INCLUDE:

- Accompany the Representative for the notification, if possible
- Transport family to hospital, if appropriate
- Notify the hospital that the family is coming in
- Make sure all family members have been notified
- Arrange for childcare in the case of small children being involved at home
- Communicate directly with the Representative appointed contact for all Requests/actions
- Ensure that needs of the family come before the wishes of the agency or company and that they are met, if at all possible
- Provide for family welfare with food availability and adequate lodging for family members
- Provide assistance with lodging/travel for out of town relatives, child care/transportation when possible, be a force if needed
- Be available by phone/pager at all times so there is an immediate line of communication between the company or agency and the family. Specify contact times “I’ll call you at 10:00 whether I have information or not.” Be sure to follow through on the call back time.
- Arrange for the family to have clergy support, if requested
- Arrange for the family to have mental health/counseling support, if requested
- Assist the family with funeral arrangements (i.e. travel caskets, etc.) and make them aware of what the company or agency can provide if they choose to have a ‘Fire Service’ memorial – brief the family on that process.
- Keep the family informed of information regarding the death and continuing investigations
- Be available to screen media requests
- Arrange for the delivery of employee’s personal belongings to the family, preferably in a red pack
- Ensure parents receive recognition and that proper placement is arranged for them during the memorial service
- Make sure families are included in invitations for agency/company functions in the future
- If the continuing investigation results in criminal or other allegations, inform the family of all new developments prior to press release and keep the family apprised of legal proceedings.
- Arrange for investigators to meet with the family at the earliest opportunity and before the initial report is released
- Follow up with family throughout the year: anniversaries of death/birthdays, send cards, invite family to company/agency functions.

KNOWLEDGE OF BENEFITS

- Gather information on benefits and funeral payments available to the family
- Help the family compile miscellaneous information in order to complete various forms and arrangements
- Act as liaison to personnel to receive all appropriate paperwork
- Make sure appropriate paperwork is filled out thoroughly
- Follow up with family to make sure benefits are being received

MISCELLANEOUS CONSIDERATIONS

- It may be helpful for the family to identify a “spokesperson”. This will help facilitate consistent information sharing
- A single point of contact for liaisons at the agency/company provides tremendous assistance. The coordinator takes on the role of gathering information, responding to questions, and sometimes fighting the battles for the families.

Recommended Procedures for Death Notification

Information Provided by the Wildland Firefighter Foundation and the National Fallen
Firefighters Foundation

The principles of death notification:

In person

in time,

in pairs,

in plain language,

and with compassion.

Introduction

The purpose of this information is to help those who must notify survivors of the death of a family member due to a Wildland fire incident.

Death notification is acknowledged to be one of the most difficult tasks faced by anyone, because learning of the death of a loved one often is the most traumatic event in a person's life.

The moment of notification is one that most people remember very vividly for the rest of their life -- sometimes with pain and anger.

Some survivors hear the news first through the media or a reporter calling, and then have flash-backs to that moment for years. Others tell how they were stunned to hear the person who was killed referred to as "the body" only minutes after the death. This information suggests ways to notify survivors effectively and sensitively -- including tips on what not to do or say.

Notification is an exceedingly important duty. Besides being sensitive, notifiers have to be prepared in case a survivor goes into shock and requires emergency medical treatment.

Notifiers also can provide very important information to survivors, including details about how death occurred. They can volunteer to notify others and provide other invaluable support.

The principles described here are simple: Notification should be done in person, in time, in pairs whenever possible, in plain language, and with compassion.

The recommended procedures were developed by people with much experience

in death notification, and with help from survivors who have been through it. As one of the survivors put it, "Please remember you are assisting innocent victims of circumstance." If you have any suggestions about how to improve these guidelines, please contact the Wildland Firefighter Foundation office.

Basic Death Notification Procedures

These are some of the cardinal principles of death notification. Some of the points overlap and all will be refined by the notifiers experience and judgment.

"In Person"

Always make death notification in person -- not by telephone.

It is very important to provide the survivor with a human presence or "presence of compassion" during an extremely stressful time. Notifiers who are present can help if the survivor has a dangerous shock reaction -- which is not at all uncommon -- and they can help the survivor move through this most difficult moment.

Arrange notification in person even if the survivor lives far away.

Contact a medical examiner, law enforcement department, and local fire department in the survivor's home area to deliver the notification in person.

Never take death information over the radio.

Get the information over the telephone, or it might leak out to family through the media or private parties listening to radio. If radio **dispatchers** start to give information over the radio, stop them and call in.

“In Time” -- and with certainty

Provide notification as soon as possible -- but be absolutely sure, first, that there is positive identification of the victim. Notify next of kin and others who live in the same household, including roommates and unmarried partners.

Too many survivors are devastated by learning of the death of a loved one from the media. Mistaken death notifications also have caused enormous trauma.

Before the notification, move quickly to gather information.

Be sure of the victim's identity. Determine the deceased person's next of kin and gather critical information -- obtain as much detail as possible about the circumstances of the death, about health considerations concerning the survivors to be notified, and whether other people are likely to be present at the notification.

“In Pairs”

Always try to have two people present to make the notification.

Ideally, the persons would be a Firefighter, in uniform, and the other person such as a chaplain, victim service counselor, family doctor, clergy person, or close friend. A female/male team often is advantageous.

It is important to have two notifiers. Survivors may experience severe emotional or physical reactions. (Some even strike out at notifiers.) There may be several survivors present. Notifiers can also support one another before and after the notification.

Take separate vehicles if possible.

The team never knows what they will encounter at the location. One

might need to take a survivor in shock to a hospital while the other remains with others. (Shock is a medical emergency.) One notifier may be able to stay longer to help contact other family or friends for support. Having two vehicles gives notifiers maximum flexibility.

Plan the notification procedure.

Before they arrive, the notifier team should decide who will speak, what will be said, how much can be said.

“In Plain Language”

Notifiers should clearly identify themselves, present their credentials and ask to come in.

Do not make the notification at the doorstep. Ask to move inside, and get the survivor seated in the privacy of the home. Be sure you are speaking to the right person. You may offer to tell children separately if that is desired by adult survivors.

Relate the message directly and in plain language.

Survivors usually are served best by telling them directly what happened. The presence of the team already has alerted them of a problem.

Inform the survivor of the death, speaking slowly and carefully giving any details that are available. Then, calmly answer any questions the survivor may have. Begin by saying, “I have some very bad news to tell you,” or a similar statement. This gives the survivor an important moment to prepare for the shock.

Then, avoid vague expressions such as “Anne was lost” or “passed away.”

Examples of plain language include: “Your daughter was in a burn over and she

was killed.” “Your husband was in an engine rollover and he died.” “Your father was in an air craft crash and he died.”

Call the victim by name -- rather than “the body.”

Patiently answer any questions about the cause of death, the location of the deceased’s body, how the deceased’s body will be released and transported to a funeral home and that an autopsy will be performed. Inform the survivor that there could be a delay before the body is released due to:

- *Remote location of incident
- *Coroners availability in rural communities
- *Multiple fatalities
- *Investigation

If you don’t know the answer to a question; don’t be afraid to say so. State that you will get back to the survivor when more information is available, and be sure to follow through.

There are few consoling words that survivors find helpful -- but it is always appropriate to say, “I am sorry this happened.”

“With Compassion”

Remember: Your presence and compassion are the most important resources you bring to death notification.

Accept the survivor’s emotions and your own. It is better to let a tear fall than to appear cold and unfeeling. Never try to “talk survivors out of their grief” or offer false hope. Be careful not to impose your own religious beliefs.

Many survivors have reported later that statements like these were **not** helpful to them: “He died doing what he loved”, “She would have wanted to go this way”, “It was God’s will,” “She led a full life,” and “I understand what you are going through”.

Plan to take time to provide information, support, and direction. Never simply notify and leave.

Do not take a victim’s personal items with you at the time of notification.

Survivors often need time, even days, before accepting the victim’s belongings. Eventually, survivors will want all items, however. (UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES should a victim’s belongings be delivered in a trash bag.) If at all possible we would suggest they be placed in a “red bag” for delivery to the family. Tell survivors how to recover items if they are in the custody of law enforcement officials.

Give survivors helpful guidance and direction

Survivors bear the burden of inevitable responsibilities. You can help them begin to move through the mourning and grieving process by providing immediate direction in dealing with the death.

Offer to call a friend, family member, or religious official who will come to support the survivor -- and stay until the support person arrives. Inform survivor that a family liaison has been contacted and will be arriving to continue assistance.

Offer to help contact others who must be notified (until a support person arrives to help with this duty.)

Survivors may have a hard time remembering what is done and said, so write down for them the names of all who are contacted.

Inform the survivor of any chance to view the deceased’s body.

Be available to transport the survivor or representative for identification of the victim, if necessary. Explain the condition of the deceased’s body and any restrictions on contact that may apply if there are forensic concerns. Explain that an autopsy will be done.

Viewing the deceased’s body should be the survivor’s choice. Providing accurate information in advance will help a survivor make that decision. The condition of the body of some people killed in wildland fire incidents is horrific. If the family desires to view the body, a discussion between the family and the medical examiner may be in order. (**Denying access to see the body is not an act of kindness.**)

Follow Up

Always leave a name and phone number with survivors.

Plan to make a follow-up contact with the survivor the next day.

If the death occurred in another county or state, leave the name and phone number of a contact person at that location. Assure the families that a liaison will be coming to help assist them, if in fact; the death notification person is not the liaison.

Most survivors are confused and some might feel abandoned after the initial notification. Many will want clarifications or may need more direction on arrangements that are necessary.

Following up can be the last step in completing a “person-centered” and sensitive death notification that is truly helpful to survivors.

The notification team should be sure they are clear on any follow-up assignments they need to carry out.

Death Notification in the Work Place

Survivors often must be notified at their work place. Here are several tips to help apply the basic principles described above to a work place notification.

Ask to speak to the manager or supervisor, and ask if the person to be notified is available. It is not necessary to divulge any details regarding the purpose of your visit.

Ask the manager or supervisor to arrange for a private room in which to make the notification.

Follow the basic notification procedures described above: in person, in time, in pairs, in plain language, with compassion.

Allow the survivor time to react and offer your support.

Transport the survivor to his or her home, or other location, if necessary.

Let the survivor determine what he or she wishes to tell the manager or supervisor regarding the death. Offer to notify the supervisor, if that is what the survivor prefers.

Death Notification in a Hospital Setting

Firefighters and medical examiners may be called on to do death notification at a hospital after an accident or a burn over, for example.

It is a very good idea for hospitals and other officials to determine general procedures and protocols in advance, so all parties are familiar with their duties and roles.

The principles of death notification described above all apply in the hospital setting.

Here are a few points to be sure to remember:

- Find a quiet room for the notification and be sure survivors are seated. (Do not notify in a crowded hall or waiting room.)
- Arrange for a doctor to be present or available shortly to answer medical questions. Doctors should be in *clean uniform*.
- Inform simply and directly.
- Provide assistance and guidance:
- Ask if survivors wish to spend time with the body of the deceased.
- Explain the procedure if identification of the deceased is necessary. Explain about autopsy or organ donation, if appropriate.
- Volunteer to help notify others. Make a list of any calls made.

If there are media calls, refer them to the investigating officer or (if available) a victim service advocate.

Do not leave survivors alone. Be sure someone is there to accompany them.

Contact the survivor the next day.

“Debriefing” for Death Notification

Members of a notification team should meet as soon as possible to debrief the situation:

Verify with the Liaison their responsibility to carry out follow-up tasks to help ease the pain and suffering of survivors.

Review the notification: what went wrong, what went right, how it could be done better in the future.

Share personal feelings and emotions of the notification team.

Death notifications are, without a doubt, stressful and difficult and sometimes very depressing.

Be frank and honest. Share your concerns with one another. Discuss any feelings team members have about the death and notification. For example, the notification experience may have triggered emotions and stress related to a notifier's own loss of a loved one.

Support one another.

General Information on

How Survivors Respond to Death Notification

Physical Shock:

Persons learning of the death of a loved one may experience symptoms of shock such as tremors and a sudden decrease in blood pressure.

Shock is a medical emergency -- help should be summoned.

Some of the factors that affect stress reactions are:

- * the intensity of the event (for example, violent death vs. heart attack),
- * the survivor's ability to understand what's happening,
- * and the survivor's equilibrium.

Whenever possible, notifiers should be aware of any available background information about the survivors, including medical or emotional history.

Other general reactions to death notification:

Even if there is no physical shock response, death notification must be considered a crisis for the survivors. They will have a need to express feelings; a need for calm and reassuring authority; a need for help in determining what happens next; and a need to begin restoring control by making some choices -- naming a support person to call, for example, or selecting a funeral home.

These needs can be met through the humane, patient, and non-judgmental approach of notifiers. Allow survivors to express their grief freely. Take the time to give them adequate information about the death and about official procedures subsequent to the death.

BURN CENTERS

Approved by the American Burn Association

Arizona	California	Oregon
<p><u>Phoenix</u></p> <p>Arizona Burn Center Maricopa Medical Center 2601 East Roosevelt Phoenix, AZ 85008</p> <p>Ph: 602-344-5726</p>	<p><u>Sherman Oaks</u></p> <p>The Grossman Burn Center Sherman Oaks 4910 Van Nuys Blvd. Ste. 306 Sherman Oaks, CA 91403</p> <p>Ph: 818-981-2050</p>	<p>Portland</p> <p>Oregon Burn Center Legacy Emanuel Hospital 2801 N. Gantenbein Ave. Portland, OR 97227</p> <p>PH: 503-413-4232</p>
	<p><u>Orange</u></p> <p>University of California Irvine Medical Center 101 The City Drive South Orange, CA 92868</p> <p>Ph: 714-456-5304</p>	
	<p><u>San Francisco</u></p> <p>Bothin Burn Center St. Francis Memorial Hospital 900 Hyde St. San Francisco, CA 94109</p> <p>415-353-6255</p>	
	<p><u>Los Angeles</u></p> <p>So. CA Regional Burn Center 1200 North State Street, 12th Floor Los Angeles, CA 90033</p> <p>Ph: 323-226-7991</p>	
	<p><u>Sacramento</u></p> <p>University of California Davis Regional Burn Center UCD Medical Center 2315 Stockton Boulevard</p> <p>Ph: 916-734-3636</p>	

Colorado	Nebraska	Texas
<u>Denver</u> Univ. Hospital Burn Unit U of Colorado Health Science Center 4200 East 9 th Avenue Denver, CO 80262 Ph: 303-372-0001	<u>Omaha</u> Nebraska Health System Clarkson Hospital Univ. Hosp. Burn Center Omaha, NE 68106-1018 Ph: 402-552-2876	Dallas SW Regional Burn Center Parkland Memorial Hospital University of Texas 5323 Harry Hines Blvd. Dallas, TX 75235-9136 Ph: 214-590-7635
	<u>Lincoln</u> St. Elizabeth Regional Burn Center 555 South 70 th Street Lincoln, NE 68210 Ph: 402-219-7680	<u>Galveston</u> Univer. Of Texas Medical Branch Blocker Burn Center 301 University Blvd. Galveston, TX 77555 Ph: 409-772-2023
		<u>Lubbock</u> Timothy J. Harnar Burn Center 603 Indiana Ave. Lubbock, TX 79417 Ph: 806-743-3406
Florida	Utah	Washington
Gainesville University of Florida Shands Burn Center 1600 SW Archer Rd. Gainesville, FL 32610 PH: 352-395-0200	Salt Lake City University of Utah Hospital 50 North Medical Drive Salt Lake City, UT 84132 Ph: 801-581-2700	Seattle Univ. of WA Burn Center/Harborview 325 Ninth Avenue Seattle, WA 98104 Ph: 206-731-3000
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