

DAFI36-3002 4 FEBRUARY 2021

3.7. Casualty Notification Responsibility.

3.7.1. If the person(s) to be notified lives on or near the member's home installation:

3.7.1.1. The member's wing/delta/garrison, group, squadron commander, or designated officer, as determined by the installation commander, will effect personal notification to the NOK, provide all releasable circumstances surrounding the incident, and express condolences. **(T-1)**. Commanders will check with judge advocate and public affairs prior to releasing information. **(T-1)**. Work all notification team stand-ups through the CAR so AFPC/DPFCS is kept informed. **(T-1)**.

3.7.1.2. If someone other than the member's unit commander makes notification, the member's unit commander must personally visit the NOK as soon as possible. **Exception:** The installation commander may waive this requirement if the unusual circumstances of the casualty dictate. Contact AFPC/DPFCS prior to making the decision NOT to visit the NOK.

3.7.2. If the person(s) to be notified do not live on or near the member's home station:

3.7.2.1. AFPC/DPFCS assigns the Air Force activity (i.e., Regular Air Force, Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps, Air National Guard, or Air Force Reserve) nearest to residence(s) of the person(s) to be notified to accomplish the casualty notification. **(T-1)**.

3.7.2.2. Once the AFPC/DPFCS assigned notification team has completed the in-person casualty notification, the member's commander will make an official notification confirmation by phone to the NOK as soon as possible. **(T-1)**. **Exception:** When telephonic contact cannot be made to the NOK, the commander communicates through the most expedient means available.

3.7.2.3. AFPC/DPFCS provides the home station CAR the name and contact number of the notification officer. **(T-1)**. The CAR provides this information to the member's commander or designee, to facilitate a direct line of communication between the Notification Officer and the deceased member's commander.

3.7.3. The casualty notification duty:

3.7.3.1. Is performed on behalf of the Chief of Staff of the Air Force or Chief of Space Operations. **(T-1)**.

3.7.3.2. Has priority over all duties, except in emergencies. **(T-1)**.

3.7.3.3. Is accomplished in service dress uniform (unless AFPC/DPFCS waives this requirement) with the exception of the medical technician who may wear the uniform of the day; the medical technician remains in the vehicle unless required. **(T-1)**.

3.8. Notification Team Composition.

3.8.1. Field grade officers, of equal or higher grade than the member about whom they are making notification, are assigned the responsibility for personal notification as directed by the installation commander or AFPC/DPFCS. **(T-1)**. **Exception:** AFPC/DPFCS may assign other officers to notification duty. **Note:** Under no circumstances shall a notification officer make a notification alone. **(T-1)**.

3.8.2. Medical personnel capable of rendering medical assistance to the NOK, if needed, and an Air Force chaplain, if available, accompany the notification officer to attend to any reaction of the NOK. **(T-1)**.

3.8.3. Notification should not be delayed due to the inability to obtain a medical officer or chaplain.

3.8.3.1. The commander or notification officer may invite another person to accompany the notification team such as a friend, coworker, or leader from the member's faith community, known by the member's NOK, and whose presence may be comforting to the NOK if it does not delay the notification process. Minimal information is provided to the accompanying individual.

3.8.3.2. Public affairs officers should be requested to accompany the team when there are indications of a high level of media interest and the presence of media is likely.

3.8.4. When possible, the public affairs officer travels with the notification team, but waits in the vehicle until notification is made to the NOK and the notification officer requests public affairs assistance.

3.8.4.1. The notification officer will provide the NOK a copy of the public affairs Information Fact Sheet and provide the NOK with public affairs contact information. Public affairs officers will assist families in how to deal with the civilian media, offer assistance with any public statements, and the NOK's desires on how and when to answer media questions. **(T-1)**. The public affairs fact sheets are located in the *Casualty Operations Guide* on the Air Force Casualty SharePoint site.

3.8.4.2. When media is already at the NOK residence prior to or during the notification, the Public Affairs officer should act as the liaison between the media and the NOK, in keeping with the NOK's desires.

3.8.4.3. Casualty notification officers in remote areas who have no local public affairs officer will provide families with the name and contact information for AFPC/PA.

3.8.5. Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape (SERE) Psychologist or member may be requested to accompany a notification team in circumstances when there are indications the member is missing--captured or detained.

3.8.6. The SERE Psychologist or member assists families in understanding the conditions their loved one may be dealing with in captivity or detention and works with the Public Affairs officer in providing assistance to families dealing with the media.

3.8.7. On Regular Air Force and Space Force installations, notification team members assemble in the CAR's office within one-hour after receiving notification from the CAR.

3.8.8. The CAR immediately contacts AFPC/DPFCS to advise if there is a delay or issue in assembling the notification team and obtaining support.

3.9. Arranging Transportation for the Notification Officer or Team.

3.9.1. The CAR, with help from the Logistics Readiness Squadron vehicle dispatcher, provides a military vehicle, sedan, mini-van, or other appropriate vehicle for the notification officer. **(T-3)**.

3.9.1.1. Geographically separated unit commanders should establish arrangements for use of a government vehicle if available.

3.9.1.2. AFI 24-301, *Ground Transportation*, provides for use of base vehicles for official government use.

3.9.1.3. Notification officers must use military vehicles when available; otherwise, use of a privately owned vehicle is authorized. **(T-3)**.

3.9.2. When travel must be performed using a privately owned vehicle, the notification officer submits Optional Form (OF) 1164, *Claim for Reimbursement for Expenditures on Official Business*, to their servicing Financial Services Office for reimbursement of expenses.

3.9.3. Reimbursement of expenses is chargeable to unit operation and maintenance funds.

3.10. Communication Support for Notification Officer and Team.

3.10.1. The Force Support Squadron or geographically separated unit commander, with the help of support agencies, if required, ensures the notification officer or team has the means to immediately communicate with their installation casualty office and AFPC/DPFCS should they encounter obstacles which prevent effecting and confirming notifications in a timely manner.

3.10.2. The immediate availability of means to communicate for notification officers and teams with their installation casualty office and AFPC/DPFCS is essential should the notification officer or team encounter obstacles which prevent effecting and confirming notifications in a timely manner.

3.11. Location of the NOK.

3.11.1. If the reporting installation is not making notification, the CAR assigned notification responsibility or AFPC/DPFCS will provide the notification officer the last known address(es).

3.11.2. Encourage the notification officer to contact local law enforcement officials if assistance is necessary to protect the notification team in a dangerous area, when weather conditions may endanger the lives of the team, or to help the officer locate the NOK with rural route or post office box addresses.

3.12. Inability to Locate the NOK.

3.12.1. If individuals to be notified are not at home, the notification officer should contact neighbors, law enforcement agencies, or the local postmaster for information regarding the person's whereabouts.

3.12.2. If the notification officer or team cannot locate the persons to be notified, or they have moved from the area, the notification officer should immediately telephone AFPC/DPFCS for further guidance and provide the information concerning attempts to contact them. AFPC/DPFCS can be reached at DSN 665-0102 or 1-800-525-0102.

3.13. Preparing the Notification Letter.

3.13.1. When the member's commander or designated representative personally notifies the NOK, a notification letter is not required.

3.13.2. When AFPC/DPFCS directs an installation or officer at a geographically separated unit to make a casualty notification, AFPC/DPFCS completes the appropriate notification letter and emails it to the installation CAR or officer at the geographically separated unit (See *Casualty Operations Guide*).

3.13.3. The installation CAR or officer at the geographically separated unit signs the notification letter and scans or emails it to AFPC/DPFCS. **(T-1)**. (**Note:** For ANG units, the CAR will complete the appropriate notification letter.)

3.13.4. When circumstances prevent AFPC/DPFCS from providing the letter, the notification officer or CAR completes the letter using the instructions in the *Casualty Operations Guide*. **(T-1)**.

3.13.5. Telephonic notification does not preclude the requirement for a circumstance or condolence letter, as appropriate.

3.14. Making the Notification.

3.14.1. As a minimum, the notification officer must:

3.14.1.1. Be as compassionate as possible. **(T-1)**.

3.14.1.2. If telephonic notification, advise the caller of the DAF's progress in notifying other NOK (i.e., tell them if a notification team is on the road). **(T-1)**.

3.14.1.3. Be alert to the needs of the NOK and represent the DAF in a professional manner. **(T-1)**.

3.14.1.4. Avoid using acronyms, slang, or military terminology. **(T-1)**.

3.14.1.5. Introduce themselves and any other members of the team to the NOK. **(T-1)**.

3.14.1.6. Verify the identity of the individual being notified by confirming their full first, middle, and last name. **(T-1)**.

3.14.1.7. If at least one person to be notified is home, the notification officer states they have an important message to deliver and asks permission to enter the residence. **(T-1)**.

3.14.1.8. Without reading from the notification letter, verbally relay to the NOK the information contained in the letter, if applicable. **(T-1)**. Paraphrase any additional circumstances described in the notification letter (see *Casualty Operations Guide*). **62 DAFI36-3002 4 FEBRUARY 2021**

3.14.1.8.1. Be articulate and speak as naturally as possible. **(T-1)**.

3.14.1.8.2. Do not extend overly sympathetic gestures that may be taken the wrong way. **(T-1)**.

3.14.1.8.3. Do not physically touch the NOK in any manner other than to assist in an emergency. **(T-1)**. If necessary, summon the medical representative on the team or local emergency personnel.

3.14.1.8.4. Avoid making detailed statements about the incident. **(T-1)**.

3.14.1.8.5. Inform the NOK, if stated in the notification letter, that the deceased or missing member's commander will send a letter explaining and confirming the circumstances surrounding the incident, if applicable. If the notification officer is the member's commander or a designated representative and has first-hand knowledge of the circumstances, he or she may give the NOK additional releasable information after discussion with JA and PA.

3.14.1.8.6. Inform the NOK and those eligible for casualty assistance, as indicated in the notification letter, that a CAR will contact them within 24 hours to arrange for a casualty assistance visit at their convenience. **(T-1)**.

3.14.1.8.7. Inform the NOK, if stated in the notification letter, that a mortuary affairs representative will contact them regarding mortuary affairs within two hours of notification. **(T-1)**.

3.14.1.9. Give the notification letter to the NOK, if applicable. **(T-1)**.

3.14.1.10. If the NOK has questions or needs additional assistance, refer them to AFPC/DPFCS. **(T-1)**. A technician will put the NOK in touch with the member's commander.

3.15. Information Not Discussed With NOK. The notification officer should limit the discussion to the information contained in the notification letter and not discuss matters they are not qualified to discuss. Notification officer should not disclose:

3.15.1. Questions about survivor benefits, burial, or similar matters.

3.15.2. Compensation-related questions dealing with insurance, gratuities, unpaid pay and allowances. The CAR providing assistance will address these subjects.

3.15.3. Questions relating to mortuary affairs. The mortuary affairs representative will address these issues.

3.15.4. Questions relating to line of duty, negligence, errors in judgment, or the responsibility of other personnel concerned with the incident.

3.15.5. Questions related to changes in status, benefits, entitlements, or similar matters associated with missing members. AFPC/DPFCM and the CAR provide guidance and assistance on these issues.

3.15.6. The notification officer's prior experiences or personal conjectures.

3.16. After the Notification. The notification officer will:

3.16.1. Confirm the NOK's address is correct and obtains their telephone number for future contact.

3.16.2. If at all possible, does not leave the NOK alone. **(T-1)**. Encourages the NOK to contact a relative, neighbor or friend to stay with them, and remain with them until someone arrives to support them after they depart.

3.16.3. Summon emergency medical assistance if warranted. **(T-1)**.

3.17. Verifying the Notification.

3.17.1. Immediately after departing the location, but before the notification officer returns to their base, home, or unit, contact AFPC/DPFCS to report the following information:

3.17.1.1. Time notification was completed. **(T-1)**.

3.17.1.2. Confirmed name, address, and telephone number. **(T-1)**.

3.17.1.3. Any unusual events or comments. **(T-1)**.

3.17.1.4. Name(s), relationship to the member, address(es), and telephone number(s) for others to be notified by the PNOK, the Air Force, or the Space Force. **(T-1)**.

3.17.2. The notification officer should return to the CAR's office to provide the above information.