

# *The Air Force's Personnel Center*

---



## **Casualty Notification During Coronavirus COVID-19**

**AFPC/DPFCS  
1-800-525-0102, Option 1, Option 1  
Apr 2020**

---



# Overview

- **Purpose of Notification**
- **Notification Responsibility**
- **Selection of Unit to Effect Notification**
- **Method of Notification & Team Composition**
- **Transportation**
- **Location of the Next of Kin (NOK)**
- **Inability to Locate NOK**
- **Notification Letter**
- **Preparing for Notification**
- **Making the Notification**
- **Informing the NOK**
- **Not Discussed With NOK**
- **Verification of Notification**
- **AFPC Contact Information**



# Purpose of Notification

---

- To provide dignified, compassionate and humane notification to family members and other designated persons as promptly as possible after a member is placed in a casualty status
- In-person notifications will continue within CONUS, Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico or other US Territories and OCONUS CDC/Department of State Level 1 or Level 2 travel health notice locations and where permissible in accordance with state/local restrictions
- Due to COVID 19, where in-person notifications cannot be made in Level 1 or Level 2 travel health notice locations, telephonic notification will be executed to avoid delaying NOK knowing the fate of their loved ones (all attempts should be made for face-to-face notification first)
- All notification in Level 3 locations (OCONUS) will be made via telephone



# Notification Responsibility

---

- Is on behalf of the Air Force Chief of Staff
- Casualty Notification duties have priority over all duties, except emergencies
- Is accomplished in service dress uniform
- **\*\*\*UPDATE\*\*\*** To limit force exposure, teams will be limited to no more than **two** personnel. **Teams should not include medical representatives until the National Emergency is terminated.**



# Selection of Unit to Effect Notification

---

- **The Air Force will task the activity nearest the NOK's residence to accomplish the casualty notification. Includes:**
  - **Active Duty Bases**
  - **Geographically Separated Units (GSU)**
  - **Air National Guard (ANG) Units**
  - **United States Air Force Reserve (USAFR) Units**
  - **Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps Detachments**



# Method of Notification & Team Composition

- An Air Force representative notifies the NOK of deceased, Duty Status-Whereabouts Unknown (DUSTWUN) and missing members in person whenever feasible:
  - Member's commander
  - Notification team **(No More Than Two-person team)**
- Field grade officer (Major or above) of equal or higher grade than the service member
- One other military member **(DO NOT include a Medical representative until the National Emergency is terminated)**
  - Never make a notification alone
  - **Have a hard copy of the AF/A1 Casualty and Mortuary Affairs Program Travel Guidance memo and notification letter signed.**



# Transportation

- **Authorized military vehicles for use in accomplishing casualty notification:**
  - **Air Force Sedan**
  - **Air Force Station Wagon**
  - **Privately Owned Vehicle use only when military vehicles are not available**
    - **Submit Standard Form 1164 for reimbursement for expenditures on official business to the local FSO**
    - **Reimbursement is chargeable to unit O&M funds**



# Location of the NOK

- **The Casualty Assistance Representative (CAR) or HQ AFPC/DPFCS will provide the notification officer the NOK's last known address**
  - **The notification officer should contact local law enforcement officials if assistance is necessary to protect the notification team in a dangerous area, or if they might help the officer locate the NOK with rural route or post office box addresses**





# Inability to Locate NOK

- If it appears the NOK is not at home, the notification officer should contact neighbors, police department, or local postmaster for information regarding NOK's whereabouts without the divulging too much information regarding the visit. "We have an important message to deliver on behalf of the Air Force Chief of Staff" is sufficient
- If the notification team cannot locate the NOK, or the NOK has moved from the area, immediately contact HQ AFPC/DPFCS at their toll free number for further guidance



# Notification Letter

---

- **A notification letter is not required when the member's commander or designated representative personally notifies the NOK**
- **The notification letter is completed by HQ AFPC/DPFCS and e-mailed to the installation CAR or officer at the GSU**
  - **The CAR or officer must print the letter verbatim and ensure it is error-free and add the notification officer's signature block**



# Preparing for the Notification

---

- The CAR or HQ AFPC/DPFCS provides the notification officer with:
  - Notification procedures briefing
  - Notification letter
  - **AF/A1 Casualty and Mortuary Affairs Program Travel Guidance Memo**
  - **COVID19 Health Questionnaire**
  - NOK's name and address
  - Advice/instructions if problems occur
  - Map of the area, if available (CAR only)
  - Transportation (CAR only)
  - HQ AFPC/DPFCS toll free number



# Making the Notification during COVID-19

- As a minimum, the notification officer should:
  - **If available utilize gloves and knock at the door. Immediately back up at a distance per current CDC's guidance and wait for a response.**
  - **Once greeted, the Notification Officer will confirm the identify of the Next of Kin to be notified. Identify him/herself as a representative of the Air Force Chief of Staff**
  - **He/she will advise that the Notification Team Members have each completed a COVID-19 Medical Questionnaire and are asymptomatic.**
  - **Request to speak with the family inside and inform the residents that you will practice "social distancing" per CDC guidance during the notification and any subsequent conversations.**



# Making the Notification (cont)

---

- **Paraphrase the circumstances as described in the notification letter**
- **Don't hurry your words; speak as naturally as possible**
- **Don't extend overly sympathetic gestures that may be taken the wrong way**
- **Don't physically touch the NOK in any manner**
- **Avoid making detailed statements about the incident**
- **Give the notification letter to the NOK, if applicable**



# Making the Notification (cont)

---

- **State that the member's commander will send a letter explaining the circumstances of the incident**
- **Refer the NOK to:**
  - **The home installation commander for information on CONUS casualties**
  - **HQ AFPC/DPFCS for information on overseas casualties**



# Informing the NOK

---

- Inform NOK eligible for casualty assistance that a CAR will contact them within 24-hours to arrange for **virtual** personal casualty assistance at their convenience
- Verify NOK's:
  - Name
  - Home address
  - Telephone number
- If there is another notification team en-route to a different NOK, we will let you know to inform the NOK



## Informing the NOK (con't)

---

- **Inform the NOK, as indicated in the notification letter that:**
  - **For CONUS casualties, a mortuary affairs representative will contact them regarding mortuary affairs**
  - **Headquarters, Air Force Mortuary Services, will contact them regarding mortuary affairs for all overseas/AOR casualties, aircraft accidents and accidents involving multiple casualties**





# Informing the NOK (con't)

- As soon as possible, provide to HQ AFPC/DPFCS all information obtained from the NOK
- **At a safe distance**, stay with the NOK as long as needed, but depart the residence in a professional manner and within a reasonable period of time
- Ask if the NOK has someone that will stay with them or wishes to call someone to stay with them (**DO NOT leave the member's NOK alone and do not depart the premises until positively seeing the NOK will have someone with them when ready to depart**)



# Not Discussed With NOK

---

- Questions about survivor benefits, burial or similar matters
- Compensation-related questions dealing with insurance, gratuities, arrears of pay and so forth
- Questions relating to line of duty, negligence, errors in judgment or the responsibility of other personnel concerned with the incident
- Questions relating to mortuary affairs



# Verification of Notification

---

- **After the notification is complete and immediately after leaving NOK's residence telephone HQ AFPC/DPFCS at their toll free number:**
  - **Time notification completed**
  - **NOK's name, address and telephone number**
  - **Unusual events or comments made by the NOK**
  - **Information on other family members to be notified by the NOK or the Air Force**



# Air Force Casualty Services

---

- Technician available 24/7, 365-days a year
- 1-800-525-0102, Option 1, Option 1
- **Casualty Standby Phone:**
  - **0700-1500: 210-319-0830, 210-954-0464**
  - **1500-2300: 210-376-7910**
  - **2300-0700: 210-376-0168**
- [afpc.casualty@us.af.mil](mailto:afpc.casualty@us.af.mil)

# *The Air Force's Personnel Center*

---

