



SUBJECT: Death Investigations	POLICY NO: 618.1-618.4
DISTRIBUTION: Patrol	NO. PAGES: 3
EFFECTIVE DATE: February 26, 2018 REVISION DATE: October 17, 2019	
SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:	

618.1 Purpose

To provide general guidelines for death investigations and next of kin notification.

618.2 Policy:

It is the policy of the Yuma County Sheriff's Office that all deaths occurring in the County will be investigated thoroughly and completely.

618.3 Primary Procedure

I. Primary Actions

- A. A deputy and an on-duty supervisor will be notified of the incident and will respond to conduct and coordinate initial investigative efforts.
- B. The scene will be secured as soon as possible.
- C. The Criminal Investigations Bureau supervisor will be notified and he/she will assign detectives as needed if the death involves:
 - 1. Suspicious or unexplained circumstances.
 - 2. A child or infant.
 - a. This includes children and infants that are transported to the Yuma Regional Medical Center.
 - b. This policy will not apply to children and infants **admitted** to the Yuma Regional Medical Center.
 - c. An infant death requires the completion and submission of an infant death checklist to the Department of Health Services. (Attached)
- D. The Yuma County Medical Examiner's Office will be notified of the death.
- E. Attended deaths (HOSPICE) which are later determined by the Medical Examiner to have been the result of accidental circumstances will require an independent investigation and case report to be completed by patrol. These investigations shall cover the nature of the accident and circumstances of any injury which later contributed to death. Any suspicious circumstances or evidence of possible foul play shall be relayed to the Criminal Investigations Bureau Immediately.

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II. On-Scene Investigation

- A. Maintain scene security and do not disturb or allow the body to be disturbed.
- B. Follow Crime Scene Procedures.
- C. Establish and maintain crime scene log.
- D. Maintain control over potential witnesses keeping them separated.
- E. Interview witnesses and obtain statements where warranted.
- F. Assist the Medical Examiner and Detectives as needed.

III. Next of Kin Notifications

- A. Family Notification Order: Only one notification is required, and the below list is preferred order of notification.
 - 1. Spouse/Significant Other
 - 2. Adult Children
 - 3. Parents
 - 4. Grandparents
 - 5. Siblings
 - 6. Any other established relative, i.e. aunt, uncle, cousin

IV. Notification Guidelines

- A. Make notification in person
- B. Minimum of two (2) deputies/investigators; one (1) uniformed deputy preferred.
- C. Clergy
- D. Location Recommendations
 - 1. Secure and private location, if possible.
 - 2. Officer Safety
- E. Timely Manner
 - 1. Upon positive identification of victim.
 - 2. As deemed appropriate by scene supervisor/case officer as to not compromise investigation.
- F. Additional Next of Kin Notification Assistance
 - 1. Locating additional family members via teletype to local Law Enforcement.
 - 2. Next of Kin medical conditions/concerns.
 - 3. Deployed military personnel.
 - 4. Employment/School

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V. Death as a Result of Potential Criminal Act

A. The following are considerations for deaths as a result of a potential criminal act.

1. Victim's right (if applicable)
2. Victim's advocate
3. On-Call County Attorney
4. Command Staff

618.4 Amendment

This policy is subject to amendment, revision and/or recession as required.

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