



Support Services

Roles of DOS Offices in Response to Deaths of Foreign Service Employees or Family Members

Introduction Several offices in the Department of State have roles in response to deaths of Foreign Service employees or family members. The responsibilities of these offices are summarized below.

The Operations Center (Ops Center)
(202) 647-1512

During non-office hours, the Operations Center at the Department of State performs the following duties in regard to the deaths of overseas Department of State employees and their family members:

- Notify the Office of Casualty Assistance
- If no family at Post, convenes a conference call with the COM, DG and AS from the regional and (if appropriate) functional bureau to determine how NOK notification will be made.

The Family Liaison Office (FLO)
(202) 647-1076

The Family Liaison Office (FLO) offers client services to all of the Foreign Affairs agencies. FLO does not have a mandate for particular duties in regard to deaths of Foreign Service officers or family members. However, FLO does have a concern for the welfare of the family of the deceased, and the welfare and morale of the community at post.

- To this end, FLO provides guidance to Community Liaison Office coordinators as to how to respond to the family of the deceased, and how to support the affected community.
- FLO offers the above resources on grief and loss, suggestions on organizing a memorial service, and a Survivor Checklist for the family.
- FLO is available as needed to support and assist the family returning to the United States, as well as the family of an employee or EFM who dies in the United States.

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**The Office of
Casualty
Assistance
(OCA)
(202)
736-4302**

The Office of Casualty Assistance (OCA) provides administrative assistance and ongoing support following the death of a direct hire U.S. citizen Department of State employee serving abroad or their family member, or of a Department of State employee in the United States.

OCA also offers support to all USG employees serving under Chief of Mission authority and their family members, including FSNs, and Department of State employees in the United States who are victims of terrorism, a mass casualty, or certain other critical incidents, whether the victims are killed, injured or impaired. This support includes but is not limited to the following:

- Staff remains on 24-hour call, and is contacted by the Operations Center when there is a death.
- Sends initial telegram authorizing post to begin preparation for shipment of remains and requesting post to send specific information. OCA will prepare a brief Condolence cable to the family, if present at post.
- Makes all the notifications within the Department and other organizations (Credit Union, etc) and provides liaison between the Post, the Bureau, the Office of Retirement, the Office of Transportation and the families regarding shipment, travel, and the benefits which might be due.
- Drafts an official Condolence Letter for the signature of the Secretary of State.
- Maintains contact with the Post and the family for as long as needed and will provide continued contact for administrative matters and for the completion of necessary forms for benefits.
- Is an advocate within the Department of State, with other agencies and in the private sector.
- Provides information about resources and grief counseling.

Note: if the family is abroad, it is necessary to determine ASAP if the spouse wishes to return to post to pack out. If so, Post has authority to issue EVT orders in accordance with regulations in 3FAM (3FAH-1H-3742.1). If EVT orders are issued by Post, "death" orders prepared by HR/CDA should **not** be issued until spouse has returned to post for pack out. (Each order cancels the previous order.) Spouse's final departure from post is then covered by HR/CDA/ASD's orders.