

**BY ORDER OF THE
SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE**

AIR FORCE INSTRUCTION 36-809

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Personnel

CIVILIAN SURVIVOR ASSISTANCE



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This Instruction implements Air Force Policy Directive (AFPD) 36-8, *Employee Benefits and Entitlements and Work/Life Programs* and prescribes procedures to follow when a civilian employee dies. This instruction explains the responsibilities of commanders; supervisors; employees; Civilian Personnel Sections (CPS); Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC), AFPC/DPIEB Benefits and Entitlements Service Team (BEST) (AFPC/DPIEB); casualty assistance officials; installation mortuary officers; and other staff officials responsible for notifying and assisting an employee's next of kin (NOK). This instruction applies to appropriated fund civilian employees, Title 5 and Title 10 civilian employees of the Air Force, United States Air Force Reserve, Air National Guard, and civilian employees assigned to foreign overseas areas; civilian employees with transportation agreements assigned to non-foreign overseas areas; civilian employees who die while on duty; and local national employees on temporary duty. It does not apply to Title 32 Air National -Guard Technicians.

This Air Force Instruction (AFI) may be supplemented at any level; all supplements need to be approved by the Human Resource Management Strategic Board (HSB) prior to certification and approval. Refer recommended changes and questions about this publication to the OPR listed above using the AF Form 847, Recommendation for Change of Publication; route AF Forms 847 from the field through the appropriate chain of command. Requests for waivers are submitted to the OPR listed above for consideration and approval. Ensure that all records created as a result of processes prescribed in this publication are maintained in accordance with Air Force Manual (AFMAN) 33-363, *Management of Records*, and disposed of in accordance with the Air Force Records Disposition Schedule (RDS) located in the Air Force Records Information Management System (AFRIMS).

This Instruction requires collecting and maintaining information protected by the Privacy Act of

1974, System of Records Notices (SORN) F033 AF B, Privacy Act Request File, and F036 AF

PC Q, Personnel Data Systems (PDS), apply. Vigilance should be taken to protect Privacy Act (PA) and Personally Identifiable Information (PII) when submitting or sending nominations, applications or other documents to DoD agencies whether by postal methods, faxing or through government internet systems. As a minimum, review the following references that contain sensitive or For Official Use Only (FOUO) information: Air Force Policy Directive (AFPD) 33-3, *Information Management* and AFI 33-332, *The Air Force Privacy And Civil Liberties Program*.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

This revision of the Instruction updates and clarifies responsibilities for notifying the next of kin (NOK) when an appropriated fund civilian employee becomes deceased (casualty). The notification process is vested with commanders, supervisors, the Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC), the Civilian Personnel Section (CPS), installation mortuary officers, and other staff officials and requires coordination with the AFPC Casualty Services Branch (AFPC/DPFCS). This revision includes procedures for employees to identify and update their emergency contact information using Defense Civilian Personnel Data System (DCPDS) MyBiz and a description of procedures for reporting a civilian death to the AFPC/DPFCS by the servicing CPS.

Chapter 1

OVERVIEW

1.1. When a civilian death (casualty) occurs during official duty, the Air Force handles next of kin (NOK) notification with compassion and professionalism. This instruction explains the responsibilities of commanders; supervisors; employees; Civilian Personnel Sections (CPS); Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC), Benefits and Entitlements Service Team (BEST) (AFPC/DPIEB); casualty assistance officials; installation mortuary officers; and other staff officials responsible for notifying and assisting an employee's next of kin (NOK).

1.2. The survivor assistance program aims to reduce the trauma of the next of kin (NOK) by taking care of the personal affairs of the deceased employee. The Air Force handles the deceased employee's personal affairs with thoughtfulness, professionalism and confidentiality.

1.3. The Air Force will administer the civilian survivor assistance program without unlawful discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, national origin, age (40 or older), disability, genetic information, or prior EEO activity. (T-0)

Chapter 2

RESPONSIBILITIES.

2.1. Employee's Commander/Organization Director.

2.1.1. When an employee dies, the unit commander/organization director will ensure the supervisor immediately notifies the CPS and provides the installation commander status on NOK notification. (T-1)

2.1.2. The commander/organization director will ensure casualty notification to other family members is made in person by an Air Force representative when requested by a family member (T-1). The Commander/organization director will work with the casualty assistance representative (CAR) located in the Airmen and Family Readiness Center (A&FRC), or in some cases the Military Personnel Section (MPS), Force Support Squadron (FSS), for assistance in assembling a Casualty Notification Team. (T-1)

2.1.3. The commander/organization director will ensure a field grade officer or civilian equivalent (GS-12 and above) provides notification with the assistance of the CPS, the employee's supervisor and others. (T-3)

2.1.4. Once notification is completed, the unit commander/organization director will convey condolences in person or by sending an official letter of condolence to the NOK within 5 days of the date of death notification. The letter should be personal and sympathetic in tone and offer full assistance to the employee's survivors. (T-3)

2.1.5. The commander/organization director will request assistance from the base CAR or AFPC/DPWCS to notify other family members if deemed appropriate or requested by the CPS or NOK. (T-3)

2.2. Supervisor. When an employee dies, the supervisor or next supervisory level immediately available will:

2.2.1. Promptly notify servicing CPS, installation and organizational commander, and, in the overseas areas, installation mortuary officer, when applicable. Supervisor will assist in NOK notification, if requested. (T-1)

2.2.2. Certify and send employee's final Time and Attendance Sheet as soon as possible on first workday after employee's death. (T-1)

2.2.3. Secure employee's personal property from work area for prompt inventory and/or shipment to authorized recipient according to AFI34-511, *Disposition of Personal Property and Effects*. (T-1)

2.2.4. Arrange for return of government property assigned to employee and for out-processing of individual through normal CPS and installation procedures. (T-1)

2.2.5. Prepare appropriate worker compensation forms according to DoD 1400.25-M, *Civilian Personnel Manual*, Volume 810, Injury Compensation, with assistance from the CPS and ensure forms are filed with AFPC/DPIEPC Injury Compensation Unit when an employee dies as the result of an injury or occupational illness in the performance of duty. (T-0)

2.2.6. Notify in writing an official of the local union when employee is covered by a recognized bargaining unit, so that union official may express condolences and provide any insurance or other union benefit that may be due to survivors. (T-1)

2.3. Civilian Personnel Section (CPS).

2.3.1. Immediately upon notification of a civilian death, the CPS will notify Benefits and Entitlements Service Team (BEST) via Total Force Service Center to report the death (T-1). The CPS provides BEST the deceased employees' name, social security, date and cause of death and NOK information (name, phone number and address).

2.3.2. When a civilian casualty occurs, home installation CPS will coordinate NOK information with employee's supervisor before providing the CAR the Emergency Contact Information from MyBiz. (T-1)

2.3.3. If NOK are aware of casualty and desire family members to be notified who are not in the immediate area, AFPC/DPFCS will assist in notification, if requested. (T-2)

2.3.4. If the immediate family has not already been contacted, employee's supervisor will coordinate with CAR, and AFPC/DPFCS, to notify NOK as quickly and compassionately as possible. (T-1)

2.3.5. If it appears employee's death could be the result of a work-related injury or illness, the CPS will promptly notify AFPC/DPIEPC Injury Compensation Unit by telephone or e-mail and describes details of death. (T-1)

2.3.6. If requested, the CPS with assistance from AFPC/DPIECC, will make biographical information from employee's personnel record available for use in a public announcement. (T-3) The CPS will not allow any public announcement of the identify of a death to made before NOK have been provided initial casualty notification. (T-1)

2.3.7. If the death occurs outside Continental United States (OCONUS), CPS will notify American Embassy in host nation (T-1). The Benefits and Entitlements Service Team (BEST) will notify Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service (DCPAS) Injury Compensation/ Unemployment Compensation Division (ICUC). E-mail address: ICUCcontact@cpms.osd.mil. (T-1)

2.3.8. The CPS shall annually remind employees to update their emergency contact information via MyBiz, to include designation of beneficiary forms. (T-3)

2.4. AFPC BEST.

2.4.1. Once notified of an employee death, AFPC BEST will ensure a SF 50, *Notification of Personnel Action*, from the Defense Civilian Personnel Data System (DCPDS) is created and processed. (T-1)

2.4.2. BEST will provide counseling to survivors and/or designated beneficiaries on potential benefits as soon as possible after death notification has been completed, which may include: (T-1)

2.4.2.1. Any unpaid pay and allowances.

2.4.2.2. Death benefits under the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS), the Federal Employees' Retirement System (FERS), the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP), and the Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance Program (FEGLI).

2.4.2.3. Health benefits coverage under the Federal Employee Health Benefits Program (FEHBP).

2.4.2.4. Possible eligibility under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA) if a work-related injury or illness caused the death.

2.4.2.5. Availability of special benefits if the death occurred because of terrorist or military action.

2.4.2.6. Provides claim forms to survivors/designated beneficiaries and assists with their completion.

2.4.2.7. Notifies survivors they may need a minimum of six certified copies of the death certificate which reflects the manner/cause of death within the continental United States (CONUS) or DD Form 1300, Report of Casualty, if the employee died while in a temporary duty status or OCONUS.

2.4.2.8. Advises survivors as to whether they may be entitled to any benefits, to include Social Security Administration, Veterans Administration or military benefits.

2.4.2.9. Advises survivors of the flag recognition benefit for fallen federal civilian employees.

2.5. AFPC Casualty Services Branch (DPFCS).

2.5.1. When the NOK has no knowledge of the death of the civilian employee and the CPS requests assistance, the base CAR and/or AFPC/DPFCS will assist with the civilian casualty notification process. (T-1)

2.5.2. AFPC/DPFCS will report the casualty in accordance with guidance provided in AFI 36-3002, *Casualty Services* and this Instruction. (T-2)

2.6. Casualty Assistance Representative (CAR)

2.6.1. The CAR will ensure the CPS is aware of the civilian casualty reporting process on their installation.(T-1)

2.6.2. The CAR will receive civilian death worksheet from CPS and submit via DCIPS. Forwards to AFPC/DPFCS for inclusion in AF Casualty Morning Reports. (T-1)

2.6.3. Provide Casualty Assistance if the civilian employee was is also a retired Air Force member. (T-1)

2.7. Employees.

2.7.1. Employees will complete their Emergency Contact Information in MyBiz at the earliest opportunity and verify it periodically to ensure currency (T-3). The Emergency Contact Information in MyBiz provides the mechanism for immediate access to employee emergency information. MyBiz may be accessed via MyPers website or the Defense Civilian Personnel Data System (DCPDS) Secure Portal.

2.7.2. Employees are encouraged to provide their supervisor a printed copy of the emergency information to place in the Supervisor's Employee Work Folder. (The servicing CPS and the employee's supervisor have view-only capability of the employee's emergency information.)

2.8. Installation Mortuary Officer.

2.8.1. The installation mortuary officer will assist the NOK with mortuary affairs benefits when a civilian employee dies OCONUS or while in a TDY or PCS status. (T-1)

Chapter 3

NEXT OF KIN (NOK)

3.1. The Air Force identifies the NOK in the following order:

- 3.1.1. Spouse or domestic partner.
- 3.1.2. Children acknowledged by the employee or so determined by a court, including natural, adopted, and stepchildren.
- 3.1.3. Parents (unless a court or a statute has granted sole legal custody of the employee to someone else.).
- 3.1.4. Persons granted legal custody of the employee by court or statute.
- 3.1.5. Siblings, including those gained through adoption.
- 3.1.6. Grandparents.
- 3.1.7. Other relatives in order of relationship to the employee according to civil laws.

3.2. If no NOK are available, the Secretary of Air Force may act on behalf of the employee.

Chapter 4

WHEN DEATH OCCURS OCONUS OR WHILE TRAVELING ON OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

4.1. When an employee dies on official travel or on official government business or on transportation agreements to OCONUS, including Hawaii and Alaska, the remains are prepared and transported as provided for in AFI 34-242, *Mortuary Affairs Program* and JTR Volume 2, Chapter 7, Part W, paragraph C7065.

4.2. When an employee stationed in OCONUS dies, the travel and transportation of family members, household goods, and personal effects are provided as specified in AFI 34-511, *Disposition of Personal Property and Effects* and JTR Volume 2, Chapter 5, Part W, paragraph C7085. The CPSs and AFPC/DPIFSB will work together to ensure timely completion of required orders. (T-3)

DANIEL R. SITTERLY, SES,
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary
(Manpower and Reserve Affairs)

Attachment 1**GLOSSARY OF REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION*****References***

DoD 1400.25-V810, DoD Civilian Personnel Management System, *Injury Compensation*, April 16, 2009

The Joint Travel Regulations, *Uniformed Service Members and DOD Civilian Employees*, October 1, 2014

AFPD 33-3, *Information Management*, September 8, 2011

AFPD 36-8, *Employee Benefits and Entitlements and Work/Life Programs*, December 24, 2014

AFI 33-332, *The Air Force Privacy And Civil Liberties Program*, June 5, 2013

AFI 33-360, *Publications and Forms Management*, September 25, 2013

AFI 34-242, *Mortuary Affairs Program*, April 2, 2008

AFI 34-511, *Disposition of Personal Property and Effects*, June 7, 2011

AFI 36-3002, *Casualty Services*, February 22, 2010

AFMAN 33-363, *Management of Records*, March 1, 2008

Prescribed Forms

There are no forms prescribed by the Instruction.

Adopted Forms

AF Form 847, *Recommendation for Change of Publication*

DD Form 1300, *Report of Casualty*

Standard Form 50, *Notice of Personnel Action*

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AF—Air Force

AFI—Air Force Instruction

AFPC—Air Force Personnel Center

AFPD—Air Force Policy Directive

A&FRC—Airmen and Family Readiness Center

BEST—Benefits and Entitlements Service Team

CAR—Casualty Assistance Representative

CONUS—Continental United States

CPS—Civilian Personnel Flight/Civilian Personnel Section

CSRS—Civil Service Retirement System

DoD—Department of Defense

DCPAS—Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service

DCPDS—Defense Civilian Personnel Data System

FECA—Federal Employees' Compensation Act

FEGLI—Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance Program

FEHB—Federal Employee Health Benefits Program

FERS—Federal Employees' Retirement System

ICUC—Injury Compensation/Unemployment Compensation Division

NOK—Next of Kin

OCONUS—Outside of the Continental United States

SF—Standard Form

TSP—Thrift Savings Plan

Terms

Beneficiary— A person who is entitled to receive certain benefits either by law or by written designation of the employee.

Casualty— An employee who is lost to the organization by virtue of having been declared dead, missing, ill, or injured (per AFI 36-3002, *Casualty Services*).

Casualty Assistance Representative (CAR)— A designated person at an Air Force installation responsible for reporting deaths and assisting NOK survivors.

Civilian Employee— A person employed by the Air Force and paid from appropriated funds who are a US citizen or an alien admitted for permanent residence.

Deceased— A casualty status applicable to an employee who is either known to have died, determined to have died based on conclusive evidence, or declared dead based on a presumptive finding of death. The recovery of remains is not a prerequisite to declaring a person deceased.

Domestic Partner— 5 C.F.R. § 875.213 defines as a committed relationship between two adults, of the same sex, in which the partners:—

(1) are each other's sole domestic partner and intend to remain so indefinitely;

(2) **maintain a common residence, and intend to continue to do so (or would maintain a common residence but for an assignment abroad or other employment**—related, financial, or similar obstacle);

(3) are at least 18 years of age and mentally competent to consent to contract;

(4) share responsibility for a significant measure of each other's financial obligations;

(5) are not married or joined in a civil union to anyone else;

(6) are not the domestic partner of anyone else;

(7) are not related in a way that, if they were of opposite sex, would prohibit legal marriage in the U.S. jurisdiction in which the partnership was formed;

(8) are willing to certify, if required, that they understand that willful falsification of any documentation required to establish that an individual is in a domestic partnership may lead to disciplinary action and the recovery of the cost of benefits received related to such falsification, as well as constitute a criminal violation, and that the method for securing such certification, if required, shall be determined by the AF; and

(9) are willing promptly to disclose, if required, any dissolution or material change in the status of the domestic partnership

Immediate Family— An employee's spouse or domestic partner, children, parents, and siblings.

Installation Commander— The individual responsible for all operations performed by an installation.

MyBiz— A sub-program of DCPDS which contains employee maintained Emergency Contact Information.

Order of Precedence— Benefits that are due and payable are paid in the order prescribed by OPM unless there is a qualifying court order or an assignment of benefits on file.

Overseas— All locations, including Alaska and Hawaii, outside the continental United States (CONUS).