



Bereavement Policy

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Responsible Manager: Senior Manager for Corporate Services

Recommended :


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1. Policy Aim

1.1. This policy aims to regulate the support to the bereaved family of a deceased employee, or in the case of death of an employee's immediate family¹ member, and to determine the extent of support provided to the family of the employee, in the event an employee's death.

2. Policy Scope

2.1. This policy applies to all employees² of the Northern Cape Department of Transport, Safety and Liaison.

3. Policy Statement

3.1. It is the policy of the Northern Cape Department of Transport, Safety and Liaison:

3.1.1. To provide emotional support, practical and uniform measures to interact with families of employees who have passed on as well as employees who have lost their loved ones.

3.1.2. All costs pertaining to the memorial services and funerals of an employee or immediate family member will be borne by the respective Programme.

3.2. Death of an Employee

3.2.1. In the event where the death of an employee occurs in the workplace, no person, without the consent of the South African Police Services, must disturb the site at which the incident occurred or remove any article or substance involved in the incident unless such action is necessary to prevent a further incident, death or to rescue persons from danger.

3.2.2. The Employee, Health and Wellness Unit must make every attempt to notify the next-of-kin once the employee is declared dead by an authorised person.

3.2.3. Where possible and with written approval from the responsibility/programme manager (or designee) of the deceased, conveyance of immediate family members

¹ Immediate family refers to a spouse or co-habiting partner, including same sex relationships, biological children/step children/legal adopted/a child through foster care, mother/step mother/legal guardian, father/step father/legal guardian, siblings (sister and brother)

² Employee refers to both permanent and contract employees, interns and learnerships

through official transport could be arranged to transport them to and from the scene of the accident or incident.

3.2.4. In the event that the death of employee occurs outside the workplace the relevant responsibility/programme manager (or designee) shall:

3.2.4.1. Inform the Accounting Officer about the death of the employee immediately after obtaining confirmation from the deceased individual's next of kin or immediate family member.

3.2.4.2. Visit the family of the deceased and shall thus serve as a link between the Department and the bereaved family.

3.2.5. In consultation with the deceased's next of kin, the relevant responsibility/programme manager (or designee) together with the Employee Health and Wellness Officer must:

3.2.5.1. Arrange a memorial service, which must be held either at the workplace premises or at an alternate suitable venue. Employees of the Department who wish to attend a memorial service held during ordinary office hours, may be authorized to attend, subject to proper arrangements with due regard to the operational requirements³ of the Department. As far as practically possible, all memorial services should be held at 2pm.

3.2.5.2. Organise the transportation of the immediate family member(s) to attend the memorial service. Authorisation must be obtained from the Accounting Officer. To this end the family member must sign an indemnity form.

3.2.5.3. Ensure that a person of appropriate seniority represents the department at the memorial service.

3.2.6. Gestures of condolence must take into consideration religious and cultural observances and these may include:

3.2.6.1. A letter of condolence signed by the Accounting Officer.

3.2.6.2. Floral wreath and condolence card.

3.2.7. The Department shall authorize reasonable⁴ transportation for employees attending the memorial service. This gesture shall be viewed as a courteous act on the part of the

³ Operational requirements refers to economic, technological, structural or similar needs of the employer

⁴ Reasonable refers to as much as is appropriate, fair or moderate

Department and shall by no means be viewed as an authorisation of a trip for personal reasons.

3.2.8. The Department shall consequently be vicariously liable for any act or omission (unless wilful or negligent) on the part of the driver of any vehicle, or any other person, which may cause any employee or such other person to suffer loss, damage or harm as a result of such act or omission referred to paragraph 3.2.7.

3.3. **Death of a Traffic Inspector**

3.3.1. If the deceased employee is a **Provincial Traffic Inspector** the following applies:

3.3.1.1. The Traffic Inspectors of the local traffic station as well as those Traffic Inspectors from nearby traffic stations may attend the memorial service and funeral.

3.3.1.2. Any Traffic Inspector attending the memorial service and/or funeral shall be dressed in the official dress code for Provincial Traffic Inspectors.

3.3.1.3. In addition to the above, all traffic inspectors attending the funeral shall form part of and/or partake in a parade in salutation of the deceased employee.

3.4. **Attendance at Funerals**

3.4.1. If the funeral is open to colleagues and is taking place **during** working hours, employees may be given time off to attend such funeral. However prior approval must be obtained from the Accounting Officer taking into account the operational requirements of the Department.

3.4.2. If the funeral is open to colleagues, and takes place **after** working hours, the Accounting Officer shall nominate⁵ an official to represent the department. The Department to provide reasonable assistance to employees to attend a funeral in support of a colleague outside the usual place of employment with the proviso that it is approved by the Accounting Officer. This will only apply in the case of the death of an immediate family member.

3.4.3. The Department will arrange transport for the official nominated to represent the Department at the funeral. A state vehicle may be utilised for this purpose. However, persons not authorised to use state vehicles must make alternative means of

⁵ Nominated official is the official as selected and approved by the Accounting officer to represent the department

travelling approved by the Accounting Officer. The Programme Manager (or designee) may motivate for hiring or use of two (2) X 14-Seater Minibuses to the Accounting Officer.

- 3.4.4. Nominated officials who are in possession of subsidized vehicles may use their vehicle, with the approval of the Accounting Officer, to attend the funeral and all trips will be regarded as official trips.
- 3.4.5. No state vehicle may be used for **funeral arrangements** for the bereaved family. Any employee who is found to have permitted such use of government vehicles will be charged for misconduct.
- 3.4.6. In the event that the nominated official requires accommodation, a formal submission must be approved by the Accounting Officer for this purpose. Such costs must be borne with due regard to efficiency and cost effectiveness.
- 3.4.7. No subsistence and travel allowance may be claimed for the attendance of a funeral.

3.5. Death of Immediate Family of an Employee

- 3.5.1. In case of the death of an immediate family member of an employee, the Responsible Programme Manager (or designee) and/or EHW Officer shall:
 - 3.5.1.1. Ensure that a message of condolence is sent to the employee and his/her family within a day after receiving the news.
 - 3.5.1.2. Send out a notification to inform staff members about the bereavement of their colleague, including the residential address and also the arrangements regarding paying of respects.
- 3.5.2. Reasonable accommodation and transport arrangements will be made for employees attending a memorial service or funeral of a family of an employee with the authorisation of the Accounting Officer.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1. The Head of Department:

- 4.1.1. Shall nominate an official to represent the Department during the funeral of the deceased employee.

4.1.2. Exercise discretion over the planning, budgeting and any other arrangements or eventualities related to the funeral and or memorial service of a deceased employee.

4.2. The Responsible/Programme Manager:

4.2.1. Inform the Head of the Department of the passing of the employee.

4.2.2. Arrange for the transportation of immediate family members to the scene of the accident or incident considering cultural practices/norms in the case of an employee's death on duty.

4.2.3. Formally notify other employees of the death immediately after obtaining confirmation from the deceased employee's next of kin.

4.2.4. In consultation with the next of kin ensure that a memorial service is arranged for the deceased employee.

4.2.5. Prepare the letter of condolence to be signed by the Head of Department.

4.3. The Employee Health and Wellness Unit:

4.3.1. Notify the next of kin in the case where an employee dies in the workplace and must arrange for the conveyance of the remains of the employee to the mortuary.

4.3.2. Make every effort to make contact with an employee who has lost an immediate family member upon his or her return to work so as to initiate a platform for counselling where necessary.

4.3.3. In the case where an employee dies, the Unit will also make an effort to contact other employees who worked closely with the deceased so as to offer counselling sessions where necessary.

4.3.4. Assist Programme Managers or delegated officials with the necessary arrangements during the bereavement of employees or next of kin.

5. Review and Distribution

5.1. The Director for Corporate Services is the responsible manager for this Policy and for ensuring it is reviewed and updated.

5.2. This policy will be reviewed no sooner than 18 months but not later than 3 years after the last publication date. If necessary, an updated version will be issued, if not a

formal cover letter will be issued to supplement the cover of this Policy (identifying a revised publication date).

5.3. The Director for Policy and Planning will distribute updated versions to:

- Member of the Executive Council for Transport, Safety and Liaison
- Head of Department of Transport, Safety and Liaison
- All senior managers who will in turn distribute to their staff as appropriate.