

We Regret to Inform You... Providing Sensitive Death Notifications with Professionalism, Dignity and Compassion

Content developed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Penn State University. Participate in the full-length training here: <http://www.deathnotification.psu.edu/we-regret-to-inform-you>



This online training course is designed to help law enforcement officers, medical examiners, victim assistance professionals and other professionals make sensitive death notifications.

Make sensitive death notifications using a four-step process:

1. Plan
2. Prepare
3. Deliver
4. Follow-up

Special Circumstances and Key Considerations

Mass Casualty Incidents: Providing Multiple Death Notifications

- Each family should have its own death notification team
- Provide notifications in private
- Create realistic expectations for the next-of-kin
- Effective communication among jurisdictions

Social Media

- Social media can challenge the death notification process
- The next-of-kin may already be aware of the death and need confirmation
- The next-of-kin may be angry at the death notification team due to lapse of time for formal notification

Children

- Make sure children are not present for the initial notification
- Never use children to translate
- Death notification should be delivered by a person who the child trusts

Deceased Subject (Criminal Suspect)

- It is best practice not to utilize the same death notification team for the victim's family and the deceased subject's family
- Subject's next-of-kin notification
- Impact on victim's family

Cultural and Religious traditions should be taken into consideration when making a death notification

- Religious groups may have specific customs surrounding death and burial
- Some cultural groups may have additional practice of which you need to be aware

Demonstrate death notifications by utilizing best practices

- Recap of death notification by team delivering the notification
- Victim/survivor assistance