

Tips for Leaders:

Response to an Employee Death



COLORADO

**State Employee Assistance
Program**

CSEAP

Important Points of Contact

Contact your Appointing Authority (AA), HR Director and next level leaders (if you are the AA) to -

- Inform them of the death and identify agency-approved next steps in notifying colleagues, coworkers, and other business contacts of the deceased, as well as the press (if applicable and per communications protocols).
- Designate an internal contact person for employees who have any questions or concerns in order to prevent employees from trying to contact the family directly.

Contact your Human Resources department for the following -

- Contact information for the emergency contact of the deceased employee; report the death to the emergency contact per your HR policies and protocols.
- Information about the necessity of reporting work-related death to any external agencies and who is authorized to make such report(s).
- Protocol for notifying:
 - third-party benefit administrators so that they may notify beneficiaries (HR **does not** notify beneficiaries);
 - insurance carriers regarding COBRA for survivors.

Applying Caution, Compassion and Sensitivity

Communication

- Determine who (HR, Appointing Authority, other leader, etc.) will be in contact with the surviving family; Request funeral and/or memorial information and inquire about the family's wishes regarding employee attendance at services.
- Always be respectful of the family's wishes regarding details of the death (especially when death occurred outside of work); the family may not want coworkers or others to know the cause of death, details of events or circumstances leading to death.
- Understand the benefits available to the deceased employee's family and work with the benefit administrator in your agency to identify beneficiaries, continued access to benefits, etc. Do not assume that next-of-kin, spouses, or other dependents are named as beneficiaries. Please note that **third-party benefit administrators will notify beneficiaries.**

Funeral and Memorial Services

- Respect family's wishes regarding workplace attendance at services; if the family wishes that no coworkers attend, do not post the information in the workplace.
- As appropriate, identify a leader representative of the agency to attend services.
- Make time available for coworkers to attend services as deemed appropriate by surviving family.

Equipment and Workload

- Begin termination process following normal procedures.
- Work with close colleagues of the deceased and family members to collect office keys, laptops, thumbdrives, and other work property.
- Meet with the most closely impacted team members or team(s) to express condolences, offer support, and sensitively determine how the workload of the deceased employee will be managed in the coming weeks.

Encourage Team Support & Reach Out for Individual Support

- Allow team members to support each other and gather for an informal memorial or talks as desired.
- Remind employees that EAP services are available, on-site or via video, if they are experiencing difficult emotions or reactions - 303-866-4314
- Find workplace trauma and grief materials at the [CSEAP website](#) and make available to your employees.
- Surviving family or household members may be eligible for [counseling](#) and/or [Financial Assistance](#) through CSEAP.