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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*. It prescribes the procedures to follow when a civilian employee dies. It explains the responsibilities of commanders; supervisors; employees; civilian personnel flights (CPF); Air Force Personnel Center, Benefits and Entitlements Service Team (BEST) (HQ AFPC/DPCMB); installation mortuary officers; and other staff officials for notifying and assisting the next of kin (NOK). This instruction applies to appropriated fund civilian employees, including United States Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard Title 5 employees, civilian employees assigned to foreign overseas areas; civilian employees with transportation agreements assigned to non-foreign overseas areas; employees who become seriously injured or die while on duty; and local national employees on temporary duty. Records Disposition. Ensure that all records created by this Air Force Instruction (AFI) are maintained and disposed of IAW AFMAN 37-139, "Records Disposition Schedule."

**SUMMARY OF REVISIONS**

This is the first revision of Air Force Instruction (AFI) 36-809, 22 April 1994. A **bar ( | )** indicates revisions from previous edition. For installation commanders, supervisors, HQ AFPC, CPFs, installation mortuary officers, and other staff officials, it updates and clarifies responsibilities for notification of NOK in the event an appropriated fund civilian employee becomes a casualty. It includes the coordination of the CPF and the Casualty Services Branch (HQ AFPC/DPWCS) in the NOK notification process. This instruction does not change survivor/designated beneficiary benefit procedures in accordance with (IAW) the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) instructions. For the purpose of survivor/designated beneficiary benefits, the term casualty is specifically identified as a civilian death. For the purpose of NOK notification, casualty is defined in AFI 36-3002, *Casualty Services*. Notification and reporting of all Air Force civilian casualties will occur in IAW this AFI and AFI 36-3002, as appropriate. Also included is a new component in the process, the Air Force Civilian Emergency Data System (EMDS) and the related input document, the Air Force Civilian Record of Emergency Data.

**1. Philosophy.** The survivor assistance program aims to reduce the trauma on the deceased's survivors. Each person handling the personal affairs of the deceased employee must act with thoughtfulness and on a confidential basis. As civilian employees are called on, in greater numbers, to help continue to meet our mission needs, and total force accountability becomes a necessity; we must also plan to provide NOK notification for AF civilian deaths/casualties with compassion and professionalism.

## **2. Responsibilities:**

### 2.1. Employee's Commander/Organization Director:

2.1.1. When an employee dies, the employee's commander/organization director notifies the installation commander and provides status on NOK notification. The supervisor will immediately contact the CPF.

2.1.1.1. Further assistance to notify other family members, will be provided by the base Military Personnel Flight (MPF) casualty assistance representative (CAR) or the Casualty Services Branch (HQ AFPC/DPWCS), if requested by the CPF, employee's commander/organization director or NOK.

2.1.1.2. Casualty notifications will be made in person by an Air Force representative whenever feasible. This person will be referred to as the casualty assistance representative.

2.1.1.3. A field grade officer, or civilian equivalent carries out notification, with the assistance of the CPF or the employee's supervisor, and others, as directed by the employee's commander/organization director.

2.1.1.4. Once notification is completed, the commander may convey condolences in person or by sending an official letter of condolence to the NOK within a reasonable period of time, but not to exceed thirty days. This letter should be personal, sympathetic in tone, and offer full assistance to the employee's survivors.

### 2.2. Supervisor. When an employee dies, the supervisor (or next immediately available supervisor):

2.2.1. Promptly notifies the servicing CPF, the organizational commander, and, in the overseas areas, the installation mortuary officer, when applicable. Assists in NOK notification, if requested.

2.2.2. Prepares the Request for Personnel Action (RPA) in the Defense Civilian Personnel Data System (DCPDS) to document the death and forwards action to the CPF for immediate action.

2.2.3. Certifies and sends (hand-carry, if possible) the Time and Attendance sheet to the Customer Service Representative in the Comptroller Squadron as soon as possible on the first workday after the employee's death.

2.2.4. Secures the employee's personal property for prompt inventory and shipment to the authorized recipient as directed in AFI 34-244, *Disposition of Personal Property and Effects*.

2.2.5. Arranges for turn in government property assigned to the employee and out-processing of individual through normal installation procedures.

2.2.6. Prepares compensation forms as directed in DoD 1400.25-M, *Civilian Personnel Manual*, Subchapter 810, *Injury Compensation*, if a work-related injury or illness caused the employee's death with the assistance from CPF, Injury Compensation Program Administrator.

2.2.7. Notifies, in writing, an official of the union representing the deceased's organization so that it may provide any insurance or other union benefits due survivors.

### 2.3. Civilian Personnel Flight (CPF):

2.3.1. The CPF provides all civilian employees with information and instructions for completion of the Air Force Civilian Employee Record of Emergency Data in the Air Force Civilian Emergency Data System (EMDS). This includes new employees during in-processing. See EMDS guidance at paragraph [2.6.1.](#)

2.3.1.1. Annually reminds employees to update AF Form 971, **Supervisor's Employee Brief** or the EMDS when their emergency contact information changes. Employees should provide a copy to their supervisor.

2.3.2. When a civilian casualty occurs, the home installation CPF will coordinate NOK information with employee's supervisor before providing the MPF Casualty Assistance Representative a copy of the employee's completed Employee Record of Emergency Data containing current NOK information, if available. If no EMDS data is available, provides emergency information obtained from supervisor on employee's AF Form 971.

2.3.2.1. If the NOK are aware of the casualty and desire family members not in the immediate area to be notified, HQ AFPC/DPWCS will assist in the notification.

2.3.2.2. If the immediate family has not already been contacted, the employee's supervisor in coordination with the CPF and Casualty Services Branch, will notify NOK as quickly and compassionately as possible.

2.3.3. If it appears the employee's death could be as a result of a work-related injury or illness, the CPF promptly notifies HQ USAF/DPPC, Washington DC, and the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs, either by telephone or by e-mail and describes the details of the death.

2.3.4. If requested, the CPF (with assistance from AFPC) makes biographical information from the personnel folder available for use in a public announcement. No public announcement is made before the NOK have been told of the death.

2.3.5. If the death occurs in a foreign area, the CPF notifies the American Embassy in the host nation.

2.3.6. If the Air Force Personnel Center, Benefits and Entitlements Service Team (BEST or HQ AFPC/DPCMB) is the servicing office for survivor benefits, the CPF is to notify that office and provide the following information: deceased employee's name and SSAN, date and cause of death, name, phone number, and address of next of kin, any worker compensation claim numbers and date of receipt of compensation benefits, and the name and telephone number of the employee's supervisor. See guidance in paragraph [2.4.1.](#) If the CPF is the servicing office for survivor benefits (i.e., limited-serviced bases), the CPF assists the NOK as soon as possible after notification has been completed by:

2.3.6.1. Contacting the NOK, and offering assistance.

2.3.6.2. Mailing copies of letters and supporting information to other CPFs mentioned in letters of assistance to hasten any help they are expected to provide.

2.3.6.3. Notifying the Air Force Senior Leader Management Office, Sustainment

Division (AFSLMO/SU) upon the death of all active Senior Executive Service, Senior Level, Scientific and Professional, Defense Intelligence Senior Executive Service and Defense Intelligence Senior Level members with the following information: deceased employee's name and organization; date, place, and cause of death; name, relationship, phone number, and address of next of kin, and funeral information, if available. AFSLMO will prepare the condolence letter for the AF/CC and notify appropriate senior leadership.

2.3.7. The CPF counsels the survivors/designated beneficiaries on their entitlements which may include:

2.3.7.1. Any unpaid compensation.

2.3.7.2. Death benefits under the Civil Service Retirement System, the Federal Employees' Retirement System, the Thrift Savings Plan, and Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance Program.

2.3.7.3. Health benefits coverage.

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

2.3.7.5. Availability of special tax benefits if the death occurred because of terrorist or military action. Advises NOK to contact the nearest office of the Internal Revenue Service for more information.

2.3.8. The CPF provides claim forms to survivors and assists them with completing and processing their claims. Specifically, the CPF:

2.3.8.1. Promptly notifies survivors that they may need up to six certified copies of the death certificate which reflect the manner/cause of death (continental United States [CONUS] death) or DD Form 1300, **Report of Casualty** (See AFI 36-3002,) if the employee died while in a temporary duty status or in a location outside the CONUS.

2.3.8.2. Advises survivors to find out whether any benefits are due them under the Social Security Program, the Veterans Administration, a credit union, or the decedent's membership in an employee union, social or religious organization.

2.3.9. The CPF should annually remind employees:

2.3.9.1. That if the order of precedence by law does not meet with the employee's wishes, it is important to make beneficiary designations in writing and to keep the designations current.

2.3.9.2. To consider taking part in government insurance programs.

2.3.9.3. To make a will.

2.3.9.4. To take similar protective measures.

2.4. Air Force Personnel Center, Benefits and Entitlements Service Team (BEST or HQ AFPC/DPCMB):

2.4.1. For full-serviced bases, the BEST assists the survivors/designated beneficiaries as soon as possible after notification has been completed, by providing benefits related counseling on their entitlements which may include:

2.4.1.1. Any unpaid compensation.

2.4.1.2. Death benefits under the Civil Service Retirement System, the Federal Employees' Retirement System, the Thrift Savings Plan, and Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance Program.

2.4.1.3. Health benefits coverage.

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

2.4.1.5. Availability of special tax benefits if the death occurred because of terrorist or military action. Advises NOK to contact the nearest office of the Internal Revenue Service for more information.

2.4.1.6. Annually, reminds all employees to ensure beneficiary information on file such as life insurance, Thrift Savings Plan (TSP), unpaid compensation, and/or retirement is current.

2.4.2. For full-serviced bases, the BEST will provide claim forms to survivors/designated beneficiaries and assist with completing the death claim forms. Specifically, the BEST:

2.4.2.1. Promptly notifies survivors that they may need up to six certified copies of the death certificate which reflect the manner/cause of death (continental United States [CONUS] death) or DD Form 1300, **Report of Casualty** (See AFI 36-3002) if the employee died while in a temporary duty status or in a location outside the CONUS.

2.4.2.2. Advises survivors to find out whether any benefits are due them under the Social Security Program, the Veterans Administration, a credit union, or the decedent's membership in an employee union, social or religious organization.

2.5. HQ AFPC Casualty Services Branch (HQ AFPC/DPWCS):

2.5.1. If the NOK has no knowledge of the death and the CPF requests assistance, then the base MPF CAR and/or HQ AFPC/DPWCS will assist with the civilian casualty notification process.

2.5.1.1. Ensures family members are notified, in writing, when a member dies or death is imminent.

2.5.1.2. Reports the casualty IAW guidance provided in AFI 36-3002 and this AFI.

2.6. Employee's Responsibility:

2.6.1. After new employee in-processing, employees should complete their Civilian Employee Record of Emergency Data in the EMDS at the earliest opportunity and need to periodically check the system to ensure it is current at all times. The Air Force Civilian Employee Record of Emergency Data provides a dependable system for immediate access to emergency information. The purpose of the Air Force Civilian Emergency Data System (EMDS) web application is to provide casualty notification personnel immediate NOK contact information in the event of a casualty or to provide the supervisor contact information in the event of an emergency. Instructions about the web application can be found at <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/emds/default.htm>.

2.6.2. Civilian employees should complete the emergency data information to show the names and addresses of the person(s) they would like notified if the employee becomes a casualty or for any other emergency. The employee is the only person who may update their emergency data in the EMDS. All civilian employees will be provided access to government computers and any

assistance needed for the purpose of completing the Civilian Employee Record of Emergency Data in the Air Force Civilian Emergency Data System (EMDS).

2.6.2.1. Current employees are encouraged to complete the Civilian Employee Record of Emergency Data in the EMDS and provide their supervisor a printed copy to place in the AF Form 971, **Supervisor's Employee Brief**. Without this information in EMDS, the ability to make timely notification to NOK could be adversely affected. This is especially critical for employees in Emergency-Essential, Mission-Essential, and Key positions as well as employees overseas and deployed civilians to maintain this information on a regular basis. It impacts all employees in the event of a terrorist act, natural disaster, or other catastrophe.

2.6.3. The servicing CPF and the Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC), Casualty Services Branch (HQ AFPC/DPWCS) have EMDS view-only capability. After the employee updates his/her data, a printed copy should be provided to the supervisor for placement in the AF Form 971, **Supervisor's Employee Brief**. Establishment of EMDS does not relieve employees of the responsibility to provide their supervisors with the name, address, and phone number for their emergency contact.

2.7. **The Installation Mortuary Office.** Helps the NOK on mortuary affairs benefits (overseas only).

### 3. Preparation and Transportation of Remains:

3.1. When an employee dies while traveling on official government business, while permanently serving outside the 50 states and District of Columbia, or on transportation agreements to OCONUS (outside CONUS) to include Hawaii and Alaska, the remains are prepared and transported as provided for in AFI 34-242, *Mortuary Affairs Program* and the Joint Travel Regulation (JTR), Volume 2, Chapter 6, Part B.

### 4. Travel and Transportation of Family Members and Personal Property:

4.1. When an employee stationed outside the CONUS dies, travel and transportation of family members, household goods, and personal effects are provided as specified in AFI 34-244, *Disposition of Personal Property and Effects* and in the JTR, Volume 2, Chapter 6, Part B. Family members need approved travel orders before they undertake such travel and transportation. The CPF and AFPC will work together to ensure timely completion of these orders.

RICHARD E. BROWN III, Lt General, USAF  
DCS/Personnel

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

DoD 1400.25-M, *Civilian Personnel Manual*, current edition  
Joint Travel Regulation (JTR), Volume 2, *DoD Civilian Personnel*, current edition  
Joint Publication 1-02, *DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, current edition  
AFPD 36-8, *Employee Benefits and Entitlements*  
AFI 34-242, *Mortuary Affairs Program*  
AFI 34-244, *Disposition of Personal Property and Effects*  
AFI 36-3002, *Casualty Services*  
AFMAN 37-139, *Records Disposition Schedule*

***Abbreviations and Acronyms***

**AF**—Air Force  
**AFI**—Air Force Instruction  
**AFPC**—Air Force Personnel Center  
**AFPD**—Air Force Policy Directive  
**AFSLMO**—Air Force Senior Leadership Management Office  
**BEST**—Benefits and Entitlements Service Team  
**CAR**—Casualty Assistance Representative  
**CONUS**—Continental United States  
**CPF**—Civilian Personnel Flight  
**DD**—Department of Defense  
**DCPDS**—Defense Civilian Personnel Data System  
**DoD**—Department of Defense  
**DUSTWUN**—Duty status—whereabouts unknown  
**EMDS**—Emergency Data System  
**HQ AFPC/DPCMB**—Headquarters, Air Force Personnel Center, Benefits and Entitlements Service Team  
**HQ AFPC/DPWCS**—Headquarters, Air Force Personnel Center, Casualty Services Branch  
**HQ USAF/DPPC**—Headquarters United States Air Force, Compensation and Legislation Division  
**IAW**—In accordance with

**JTR**—Joint Travel Regulation

**MPF**—Military Personnel Flight

**NOK**—Next of kin

**OCONUS**—Outside the Continental United States

**OPM**—Office of Personnel Management

**RPA**—Request for Personnel Action

**SF**—Standard Form

**TSP**—Thrift Savings Plan

### *Terms*

**NOTE:** These definitions are for the purpose of this AFI only. See Joint Publication 1-02, DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, for the official DoD definition of many of these terms.

**Beneficiary**—The individual who is entitled to receive certain benefits either by law or written designation of the employee.

**Casualty**—Any person who is lost to the organization by having been declared dead, duty status—whereabouts unknown (DUSTWUN), missing, ill, or injured (AFI 36-3002, *Casualty Services*).

**Casualty Assistance Representative (CAR)**—Any person at the nearest Air Force installation responsible for reporting deaths and assisting survivors.

**Civilian Employee**—The Air Force pays civilian employees from Department of the Air Force or DoD appropriated funds. A civilian employee must be either a US citizen or an alien admitted for permanent residence.

**Continental United States (CONUS)**—United States territory, including the adjacent territorial waters, located within North America between Canada and Mexico. When used for Air National Guard casualties the term applies to the geographical limits of the 50 states and the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands.

**Deceased**—A casualty status applicable to a person 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.

**Duty status - whereabouts unknown**—An employee whose duty status and whereabouts is unknown.

**Immediate Family**—The employee's spouse, children, parents, and siblings.

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

**Next of Kin**—An employee's relatives. The person most closely related to the person. The order in which the family relationship is recognized by law is spouse, son or daughter, father or mother, brother or sister, and grandfather or grandmother. Parents or legal guardians exercise the rights of minor children. The Air Force identifies the next of kin in this order:

*Spouse.*

*Natural, adopted, and stepchildren.* All children, if acknowledged by the employee or so determined by a court.

*Parents,* unless a court or a statute has granted sole legal custody of the employee to someone else.

*Persons standing in loco parentis.*

*Persons granted legal custody* of the employee by court or statute.

*Siblings,* including those gained through adoption.

*Grandparents.*

*Other relatives in order of relationship* to the employee according to civil laws.

If no other persons are available, the Secretary of the Military Department may act on behalf of the employee.

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