

WATERTOWN POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER



JOANNA W. VITEK
CHIEF OF POLICE

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| Effective Date: October 1999 | Rescinds: B-180 (May 1998) Amends: | Number: B-180 |
| Subject: Unattended Death | | Re-evaluation Date: June 2011 |
| Distribution: ALL PERSONNEL | Related CALEA Standards: | |

POLICY

It is the policy of the Watertown Police Department to have all unattended deaths within city limits investigated by law enforcement officers to determine beyond any reasonable doubt the cause of the death to be either natural causes or suicide (accidental or criminal in nature).

Definitions:

Unattended death: Any death other than in a nursing home, medical care facility, or where a physician is not present.

Procedure a. Death by Natural Causes

1. Upon arrival at scene determine if death has occurred.
 - A. Paramedics will be at the scene if there is any doubt that the person has expired.
2. Check the area in vicinity of body for anything suspicious.
 - A. Observe body for unusual or unnatural marks or bruises.
 - B. If anything suspicious, contact supervisor.
3. Gather following information on natural cause deaths.
 - A. Name of victim.
 - B. Age ó DOB.
 - C. Known medical problem ó medical history.
 - D. When victim last seen or talked to and by whom.
 - E. Prescription medications.
 - F. Personal physician.
4. Contacting Coroner.
 - A. He is to notified of all unattended deaths.
 - B. If not available, make contact with those in following order until notification has been made.
 - a. Deputy Coroner.
 - b. States Attorney.
 - c. Deputy States Attorney.
5. All prescription medication of victim will be confiscated.
 - A. Medication will be placed into evidence lockers.
 - B. Medication can be destroyed after 60 days unless Coroner requests it held longer in evidence.

6. Contact of family members.
 - A. Information reference to victim can be gathered from family.
 - B. Contact funeral home if family requests it.
 - a. If no preference or contact with family, dispatch will contact funeral homes on a rotation basis.
 - C. If family present, get names of those in charge of residence of victim.
 - a. If no family present, secure lockup of residence before leaving, preferably in presence of someone else, i.e. police officer or funeral chapel employee.
 - D. All officers will complete the Death Report Form.

Procedure b. Violent Unattended or Suspicious Deaths

1. Secure the scene of occurrence as in any crime scene.
2. Notify Supervisor.
 - A. Supervisor can determine if additional assistance is needed.
 - a. Detectives.
 - b. Sheriff's Office.
 - c. DCI Office.

Procedure c. Media Press Releases

1. No information will be released regarding any death by anyone other than:
 - A. Chief
 - B. Chief's designee.
 - C. States Attorney's Office.
 - D. Sheriff.
 - E. Sheriff's designee

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Watertown Police Department
Watertown, South Dakota