

I. PURPOSE

To establish procedures in the event an inmate dies while in the custody of the Fairfax County Sheriff's Office.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Fairfax County Sheriff's Office (FCSO) that all possible measures shall be taken to prevent the death of an inmate. Should the death of an inmate occur, the Sheriff's Office shall be attentive to the needs of the inmates' family members and foster cooperation with agencies involved. The FCSO shall take steps to ensure that an internal review occurs to determine staffs' compliance with all applicable standard operating procedures (SOPs), and to ascertain whether changes to operational policies and procedures are warranted.

III. PROCEDURE

A. The following actions will be taken by the indicated personnel

1. First deputy on the scene
 - a. Summon back up and medical assistance.
 - b. Take immediate life-saving steps (e.g., remove any ligature which may be around the inmate's neck, open the inmate's airway, stop bleeding, begin resuscitation, etc.).
 - c. Once relieved by medical personnel, notify the shift supervisor.
 - d. Ensure only essential personnel are allowed in the vicinity of the victim.
 - e. Write a detailed Sheriff's Incident Report before tour of duty has ended.
2. Medical Staff
 - a. Comply with the provisions of [SOP 410 - Procedure In The Event of an Inmate Death](#) and [SOP 410a - Notification of Inmate Medical Emergency/Inmate Death](#).
 - b. When necessary, request for rescue to be summoned.
 - c. Immediately notify the Adult Detention Center (ADC) physician and the Health Services Administrator.
 - d. Complete a Sheriff's Incident Report before the end of the shift.
3. On Duty Shift Commander or Shift Supervisor
 - a. If not already performed, direct that Rescue be summoned.
 - b. Notify the Chief of the Confinement Branch, Division Commander, and the Internal Affairs Section. After normal business hours, holidays and weekends, notify the Staff Duty Officer.
 - c. Ensure the victim is accompanied to the hospital. When possible, a

- deputy in the rank of Sergeant or above should be dispatched with the victim.
- d. Ensure the scene is preserved to the maximum extent possible.
 - e. When the inmate is pronounced dead by a physician;
 - 1) Arrange for the continued operation of the ADC, Alternative Incarceration Branch (AIB), or Fairfax County Courthouse while relieving involved personnel, to the maximum extent possible, to prepare reports regarding their role in the incident and to participate in the investigation.
 - 2) Ensure that all available records (e.g., court, medical, classification, etc.) are compiled for Internal Affairs inspection. The medical section shall provide records directly to Internal Affairs.
4. On-Duty Chief, Confinement Branch (or Staff Duty Officer after normal business hours, holidays, and weekends)
- a. Respond to the scene, assume command, and notify the Division Commander.
 - b. Gather the inmate's Booking Card, ADC Booking and Receiving Information Form, The Brief Jail Mental Health Screening Form and, if applicable, the Classification Report. Prepare a brief summary of events, and as soon as practical send this information to Command Staff, Internal Affairs, and the PIO.
 - c. Upon notification of the apparent death of an inmate, notify the Sheriff, both Chief Deputy Sheriffs, and Internal Affairs.
 - d. When the inmate is pronounced dead:
 - 1) Notify the Public Information Officer and direct him/her to respond.
 - 2) Notify the Deputy County Executive of Public Safety and request that notification be made to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.
5. Internal Affairs
- a. Notify Fairfax County Police Homicide Investigations and respond to the scene to render assistance to the investigators and technicians, as necessary.
 - b. Gather incident reports from all personnel directly involved in the incident.
 - c. Maintain custody of the body until it is released to the Medical Examiner.

- d. Be present at the autopsy when necessary and appropriate.
- e. Collect and review all existing agency records pertaining to the inmate.
- f. Upon completion of the notification requirements specified in section 4 above, coordinate with the Police Department when contacting the inmate's next of kin and:
 - 1) Advise them that the matter is under investigation.
 - 2) Request information regarding the disposition of the inmate's belongings.
 - 3) Advise them of the location of the body and steps to take to arrange for its disposition.
- g. As soon as practical, notify the inmate's attorney.
- h. Ensure notification of the court.
- i. Secure copies of the death certificate and all medical, police, laboratory reports, and photographs as part of the case record.
- j. Coordinate with the participation of Sheriff's Office personnel in the investigation of the incident by the Police Department or other agencies.
- k. Prepare a final report concerning circumstances of the death and follow-up action. Include interviews with all persons involved and identify measures which could be taken to preclude similar occurrences in the future, if any.
- l. Bring forward relevant information for the Mortality Review.
- m. Be prepared to be the agency's point of contact for the family regarding additional requests for information, return of prisoner's property, copies of reports, etc.
- n. Notify the Virginia Department of Corrections regarding "Local Jail Suicide or Death."
- o. Notify the Office of Risk Management.
- p. Coordinate with the State Board of Corrections and facilitate any requests for information per Virginia Code [§ 53.1-5. - Powers and Duties of Board.](#)
- q. To develop and implement policies and procedures for the review of the death of any inmate that the Board determines warrants review that occurs in any local, regional, or community correctional facility. Such policies and procedures shall incorporate the Board's authority under Virginia Code [§ 53.1-6. - Board May Administer Oaths, Conduct Hearings, and Issue Subpoenas](#) to ensure the production of evidence necessary to conduct a thorough review of any such death.

**FAIRFAX COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES**

**SOP NUMBER: 039
SUBJECT: INMATE DEATH**

6. Public Information Officer
 - a. Prepare a press release on the inmate's death for the Sheriff's approval and release.
- B. [SOP 039 Attachment 1 – Checklist for Inmate Death Incident](#), shall be completed under the direction of the Division Commander. The Division Commander shall then forward the checklist to a Chief Deputy, and after review, the completed checklist shall be maintained by Internal Affairs.

01/01/00
DATE APPROVED

04/29/19
EFFECTIVE DATE

Revised: March 1992, May 2018, April 2019



**STACEY A. KINCAID
SHERIFF**