



Royal Canadian Mounted Police
Gendarmerie royale du Canada



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OM - ch. 41.3. Human Deaths

Directive Amended: 2018-06-14

For information regarding this policy, contact National Criminal Operations, Contract and Aboriginal Policing at GroupWise address [OPS POLICY HQ](#).

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1. General

1. 1. All reportable deaths occurring within RCMP jurisdiction will be treated as suspicious and will be investigated thoroughly.
1. 2. For a list of reportable deaths and required documentation, refer to the provincial or territorial *Fatality/Coroners Act*. Also consult [divisional supplements](#).
1. 3. The principles of major case management must be used to investigate suspicious deaths and homicides. Refer to [ch. 25.3](#).
1. 4. Notify the provincial/territorial coroner/medical examiner of all reportable deaths occurring within RCMP jurisdiction in accordance with provincial/territorial requirements.
1. 5. The RCMP has primary control of the scene within its jurisdiction, until released to another agency.
1. 6. Investigations are a cooperative effort between the RCMP, medical examiner, coroner, pathologist, other law-enforcement services and other municipal/provincial/territorial/federal agencies e.g. Workers Compensation Board, Occupational Health and Safety.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

2. 1. First Member at Scene

2. 1. 1. Follow first response investigative standards and scene security as outlined in [OM ch. 1.2., sec. 2.](#)
2. 1. 2. Immediately notify your supervisor if a death occurred as a result of police action, or while the person was held in RCMP custody, under arrest or control of police whether in hospital, ambulance, other transport, or police facility. Refer to [ch. 19.5.](#), [ch. 4.8.](#), and [ch. 54.1.](#)
2. 1. 3. Consider CBRN contamination. If there is no indication of CBRN contamination, secure the scene for investigation. Refer to [ch. 14.1.](#)
2. 1. 4. Take control of preserving the scene and evidence, and when necessary, direct-assisting agencies, e.g. ambulance and fire personnel.
2. 1. 5. Restrict access and document the names and actions of all persons entering and exiting the scene.
2. 1. 6. Obtain the names of persons who entered the scene before your arrival.
2. 1. 7. Consider the possibility that these agency personnel may have overheard comments, and may be witnesses.
2. 1. 8. Do not draw conclusions or conclude your investigation until sufficient evidence is gathered to assist in determining the cause of death.
2. 1. 9. If the death appears to be the result of natural causes, notify your supervisor, request the assistance and approval of the coroner/medical examiner for body removal, autopsies, and all other legislative processes. Refer to your provincial/territorial *Coroners Act and Regulations*.
2. 1. 10. If the death appears suspicious:
 2. 1. 10. 1. Notify your supervisor and request the attendance of support services, e.g. General Investigation Section (GIS), Major Crimes Unit, Forensic Identification Section (FIS); and
 2. 1. 10. 1. Where possible do not remove human remains from the scene until the scene examination has been completed and until directed to do so by the coroner/medical examiner.

2. 2. Primary Investigator

2. 2. 1. Make an initial assessment of the scene for indications of suspected criminal involvement, e.g. witness information, if the deceased was moved post-mortem, conflicting mechanism of injury, evidence of intrusion, signs of violence, inconsistent body temperature, insect or vermin presence, evidence of medication or controlled substances.
2. 2. 2. Update your supervisor/team commander of the status of the investigation.
2. 2. 3. Take note of crime scene evidence involving human material, e.g. DNA, hair and fibre, blood spatters, as it may reveal the identification of the victim/offender, cause of death and/or type of weapon.
2. 2. 4. The preservation and collection of the physical evidence should be under the direction of the exhibit manager and FIS.

2. 2. 5. Evidence that is subject to contamination by weather or other exigent circumstances should be preserved and protected immediately, with the actions documented accordingly.

2. 2. 6. When preserving and seizing exhibits, follow precautions as outlined in [ch. 22.1.](#) and [LSM ch. 1.](#)

2. 2. 7. If required:

2. 2. 7. 1. complete a ViCLAS booklet 3364, and

2. 2. 7. 2. request assistance from the divisional ViCLAS coordinator. Refer to [ch. 36.1.](#)

2. 2. 8. Complete and submit the mandatory Homicide Survey, [Form 138-1](#) (established homicides or not), for the Uniform Crime Reporting Statistically.

2. 3. Supervisor

2. 3. 1. Attend the scene of all human deaths where practicable.

2. 3. 2. Immediately attend the scene and report to the detachment commander if a death has occurred as a result of police action. Refer to [ch. 19.5.](#), [ch. 4.8.](#), and [ch. 54.1.](#)

2. 3. 3. Confirm that all investigative actions have been documented on the file and recorded in the Records Management System (RMS).

2. 4. Unit Commander/Detachment Commander or Delegate

2. 4. 1. Advise the Divisional Cr. Ops. Officer/delegate as soon as practicable if the death occurred as outlined in [sec. 2.1.2.](#) and follow up with a briefing note. Refer to [ch. 25.3.](#), [sec. 9.3.](#)

2. 5. Division Criminal Operations Branch

2. 5. 1. If the death occurred as outlined in [sec. 2.1.2.](#), immediately send a briefing note to National Headquarters, ATTN: National Operations Centre. Refer to [ch. 46.1.](#) Refer to [ch. 54.1.](#) for consideration.

2. 5. 2. For all deaths occurring in police custody or resulting from police action, forward a copy of all recommendations resulting from an inquiry or inquest, and the divisional response to each recommendation to National Headquarters, ATTN: DG. NCROPS. Refer to [ch. 46.1.](#)

3. Notification of Death

3. 1. Member

3. 1. 1. Before meeting with the family of the deceased, review [OM App. 41-3-1, Next of Kin Death Notification Checklist.](#)

3. 1. 2. Arrange for notification of next of kin (NOK) as soon as possible.

3. 1. 3. Make certain the member performing the NOK provides information on the resources and services available to assist the next of kin, e.g. Victim Services, or a chaplain. Refer to [ch. 37.6.](#)

NOTE: If the deceased is Metis, Inuit or First Nations, consider seeking guidance from the elders for cultural protocol.

3. 1. 4. To assist the families with coming to terms with the death, consider requests to view the body or to attend the scene. Members should:

3. 1. 4. 1. Consider the status of the investigation (e.g. criminal investigation).

3. 1. 4. 2. Comply with provincial legislation when gaining access to the scene.

3. 1. 4. 3. Where access to the scene is possible, ensure that the scene has been released by the coroner/medical examiner and the lead investigator before granting/facilitating the family access to the scene.

3. 1. 4. 4. Where the family later requests to view the scene, facilitate and assist their attendance to the location.

NOTE: Depending on the beliefs of the family, they may wish to perform a ceremony at the scene, (e.g. tobacco ceremony).

3. 1. 5. According to the [Privacy Act](#), deceased persons retain the right to privacy.

3. 1. 6. Confirm with the coroner/medical examiner that the identity of the deceased has been verified, and that their name may be released.

3. 1. 6. 1. The name of the deceased may be released (e.g. to the news media), after the NOK, in the following circumstances:

3. 1. 6. 1. 1. It will further the investigation, or,

3. 1. 6. 1. 2. If there is a police or public safety concern, or,

3. 1. 6. 1. 3. the identity of the deceased has been made publicly available through other means, such as, but not exclusive to, social media sites.

NOTE: An exception under the [Privacy Act](#) includes the release of the person's identity when, in the opinion of the investigator, public interest in disclosure clearly outweighs any invasion of privacy that could result from the disclosure.

3. 1. 7. Do not release the cause of death to the news media (refer to [ch. 27.2.](#)):

3. 1. 7. 1. until it has been determined by an autopsy; and

3. 1. 7. 2. if the death was a result of a criminal action, and/or if the information could compromise the investigation/court proceedings.

3. 1. 8. If the deceased was a member of National Defence, notify the CO of the nearest Canadian Forces Base. If possible, do a joint DND/RCMP NOK.

NOTE: When there is a death of a Canadian citizen overseas, the Consular Services and Emergency Management Branch, Global Affairs Canada (GAC) is responsible for contacting police agencies across Canada directly to request a next of kin notification be completed on their consular cases.

3. 1. 9. Provide the NOK with the file number and the GAC contact information 24/7 Operations Centre at 1-800-387-3124 or 613-996-8885.

3. 1. 10. Once the next of kin has been notified, ensure that you notify GAC immediately at 1-613-944-1294 or email sos@international.gc.ca so that they can contact the next of kin, and provide consular assistance, such as, advice and assistance regarding issues such as the repatriation of remains.

3. 1. 11. For any questions, you may contact GAC's 24/7 Operations Centre at 1-800-387-3124 or 613-996-8885.

NOTE: In exceptional circumstances, prior to notification to the RCMP by GAC or before the member is able to locate the NOK, GAC may deliver the notification to the NOK. e.g. when the NOK contacts GAC, to confirm that their immediate family member has died while overseas. In such situations, attendance is still required by the member to determine the wellbeing of the NOK.

4. Death of a Foreign National

4. 1. Member

4. 1. 1. If the deceased is a foreign national, notify the appropriate consulate/embassy whose country of origin is known. Refer to the following website for an up to date list of [Consular Posts](#).

4. 1. 2. If you are unable to reach someone at the foreign mission, the member may contact the Diplomatic Corps Service at (343) 203-3114 or email at security-liaison-securite.xdc@international.gc.ca. They are available during normal business hours, Monday to Friday.

NOTE: Contact Global Affairs Canada (GAC) 24/7 Operations Centre at 1-800-387-3124 or (613) 996-8885, if you are unable to contact anyone at the mission, and you require urgent assistance.

5. Deceased Possessing Criminal Record

5. 1. Member

5. 1. 1. If the deceased has a criminal record, report on a Notification of Death of Person Known to Have a Criminal Record, [Form C-163](#), the date, place of death and FPS number to National Headquarters, ATTN: Information and Identification Services Dir.

5. 1. 1. 1. Take the fingerprints if possible. Use discretion when obtaining the fingerprints.

5. 1. 2. Complete [Form C-163](#), if the FPS number is available, and forward to the Canadian Criminal Real Time Identification Services (CCRTIS).

5. 1. 2. 1. The deceased individual's fingerprints will remain searchable in the National Repository of Criminal Records until its purge date.

5. 1. 2. 2. The FPS file will be purged when the deceased person would have reached the age of 80.

5. 1. 3. Take a complete set of fingerprints on [Form C-216T](#), if the FPS number is not established.

5. 1. 4. State the reason on [Form C-163](#), if fingerprints cannot be obtained.

5. 1. 5. If there is a risk of contamination by either blood or toxic substances, such as Fentanyl, and there are no concerns of the identity of the deceased, do not obtain fingerprints. Death notifications are to be submitted to CCRTIS without fingerprints, either via [Form C-163](#) without the fingerprints or by email to CriminalRecordsIMS@rcmp-grc.gc.ca with the name, date of birth, FPS number and date of death of the deceased. The death notification will appear on the National Repository of Criminal Records, but it will specify that it is not supported by fingerprints.

5. 1. 5. 1. If a positive identification is required, obtain and submit the fingerprints using the Central Latent Client. If there is a match to a FPS the death notification on the Central Repository will say supported by fingerprints.

6. Organ Transplant Donations

6. 1. Member

6. 1. 1. Do not allow the removal of organs or tissues until it can be established that they will not be required for analysis, if death was caused by a criminal act or suspicious circumstances. Refer to your [divisional supplements](#).

7. Autopsy

7. 1. Member

7. 1. 1. In order to obtain and secure evidence, provide assistance to the pathologist, and obtain information which may assist in the investigation.

7. 1. 2. Attend all autopsies when there is evidence or suspicion of foul play or homicide.

7. 1. 3. Consider attending autopsies when the death is believed to be self-inflicted, the result of an accident, or of unknown cause.

7. 2. Have Forensic Identification Section (FIS) send the fingerprints through the Regional Automated Fingerprint Identification Access System (RAFIAS) as a latent image if the deceased has not been positively identified.

7. 2. 1. If there is no local FIS, contact the Canadian Police Services Information Center (CPSIC) at: cpsic.iis@rcmp-grc.gc.ca for direction.

7. 2. 2. If the deceased has not been positively identified, submit fingerprints to National Headquarters, ATTN: Information and Identification Services Directorate.

7. 2. 3. Have photographs, odontograms (dental records) and X-rays taken, if necessary.

7. 2. 4. Enter the identifiers on CPIC and check for hits on CPIC.

8. Decomposed Bodies and Skeleton

8. 1. General

8. 1. 1. All reports of Unidentified Remains (UR) must be handled as human remains.

8. 1. 1. 1. In cases where only partial remains or bones are found, only a coroner/medical examiner should make the determination of human versus animal.

8. 1. 2. In most provinces, the coroner/medical examiner is legislated to assume the responsibility of investigating unidentified remains cases. The provincial/territorial *Coroners Act and Regulations* must be consulted.

8. 2. Member

8. 2. 1. Cooperate with authorized anthropologists, local aboriginal leaders, or archaeologists in protecting and respecting the site if a skeleton is believed to be of ancient origin. Refer to your [divisional supplements](#) and provincial/territorial legislation.

8. 2. 2. The National Center for Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains (NCMPUR) can provide specialized analytical services or assist with requests to publish UR information to their website. Contact NCMPUR through email: NCMPUR@rcmp-grc.gc.ca.

8. 2. 3. Investigate all UR as being the result of foul play until determined otherwise. Refer to [sec. 1.2.](#)

8. 2. 4. Notify the provincial/territorial coroner/medical examiner of all UR reported within RCMP jurisdiction in accordance with provincial/territorial requirements.

8. 2. 5. Conduct RMS and CPIC checks, including a CPIC Off-line search for applicable missing person or related UR cases. Refer to Part A.II.3., [CPIC User Manual](#).

8. 2. 6. Make certain that any data on the UR provided by the coroner/medical examiner, is entered into CPIC (BODY) as soon as practicable, and updated as new information becomes available, including the removal from CPIC once the identity of the deceased is confirmed by the coroner/medical examiner. Refer to Part B, Appendix III.4.G., [CPIC User Manual](#).

NOTE: The BODYUR information entered into CPIC is sent automatically to the Missing Children/Missing Persons and UR database (MC/PUR) which is managed by the NCMPUR, and is also sent to NCIC (USA system).

8. 2. 7. Consider requesting a CPIC zone alert to notify local area police agencies of the found remains.

8. 2. 8. If the identity of the UR is confirmed, refer to [sec. 3.](#)

8. 2. 9. Complete the ViCLAS booklet and consider requesting the assistance of the divisional ViCLAS coordinator. Refer to [ch. 36.1.](#)

9. Death Aboard Aircraft or Vessel

9. 1. General

9. 1. 1. It is possible that a death occurring on an international flight or vessel may be the result of a contagious or infectious disease; specific precautions must be taken.

9. 1. 2. The [Quarantine Regulations, sec. 19\(1\)](#) and [19\(2\)](#) require the person in charge of an aircraft arriving in Canada from a destination outside Canada to immediately notify the quarantine officer at the airport of the death of any person on board.

9. 2. Member

9. 2. 1. Investigate as a sudden death if the death occurred on a domestic flight or vessel.

9. 2. 2. Determine if the victim connected from an international flight, and notify the quarantine officer accordingly and, if so, follow the [Quarantine Regulations](#).

9. 2. 3. Contact Public Health through the following website: www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/contact-eng.php.

10. Assist Foreign Countries

10. 1. Detachment/Unit Commander

10. 1. 1. Give priority to a request from National Headquarters to notify the next of kin of a person who died in a foreign country.

10. 1. 2. When you have notified the next of kin, immediately notify National Headquarters, ATTN: OIC International Liaison Br., National Central Bureau, Interpol.

10. 1. 3. According to [sec. 4.](#), notify the appropriate consulate/embassy, if the country of origin of the deceased foreign national is known.

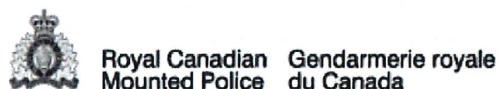
10. 1. 4. If the identity of the deceased is unknown, and you believe that they may be from outside Canada, notify National Headquarters, ATTN: OIC International Liaison Br., National Central Bureau, Interpol.

10. 1. 4. 1. Supply a complete description of the remaining clothing, fingerprints, odontogram, and head-and-shoulders photographs. Refer to [ch. II.6., sec. F.](#)

References

- [Administration Manual, ch. II.19.](#)
- *Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, Code of Police Practice: A Guide for First Line Officers*
- Forensic Support Services, CPIC, NCMPUR, INTERPOL Ottawa

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New Appendix: 2018-06-14

Every death notification has a long-lasting impact on family members. How the notification of the death is provided can positively or negatively affect family members.

Receiving a death notification can be an extremely stressful experience. Adhering to the core values of the RCMP, by delivering the death notification respectfully with professionalism, clarity, and compassion, may mitigate some of the stress.

It is critical to be well informed and prepared as family members need accurate and complete information about the death of their loved one.

Investigators will follow the provincial and divisional procedures pertaining to human deaths.

Planning

- Members should, depending on the circumstances of the death, collaborate with the coroner before any notification of next of kin (NOK), to ensure that positive identification has been made and that the notification will not interfere with any ongoing coroner's investigation.
- Notification of NOK should be done as soon as possible.
- Identify and verify the legal NOK to be notified, (e.g. spouse, parent, or legal guardian).
- Verify the victim's full name, age (if known), and relationship with the family members being notified.
- Know the location of the victim and the process for family members to see the victim and/or make arrangements to recover their loved one.
- Know the contact information of the victim services in your area.

Notification

- Introduce yourself.
- Confirm the identity of the person with whom you are speaking and their relationship to the victim.
- Ask to come inside and ask or encourage family members to sit down. Provide a one-sentence statement to prepare the family for the news (e.g. "I'm sorry to have to share this news"). Provide notification immediately following your prepared statement, using

the victim's name and clearly understood words such as died, death, or dead (e.g. "I'm sorry to inform you that your son Davis died this evening as a result of a traffic accident").

- Provide family members with the details of when, where, and how the death occurred.
- Provide family members with the current location of the victim, and the process to make arrangements to see and/or recover the victim.
- Advise family members of the medical examiner's or coroner's contact information.
- Answer all questions honestly. Provide only information that you know to be true and that you can release.

After the Notification

- Be prepared to repeat information to both the NOK and family members.
- Be prepared for any type of emotional or physical reaction, e.g. denial, anger, screaming, fainting, and vomiting.
- Do not leave family members alone. Ask if you can call anyone for them, and wait until that person arrives.
- If there is victim assistance available in your area, offer to have them attend the residence. If it is not required, provide the family with the contact information of the victim services unit.

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Exhibit: National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls		
Location/Phase: <u>Part 2 Regina</u>		
Witness: <u>Brenda Butterworth-Carr</u>		
Submitted by: <u>Anne McConville</u>		
Add'l info: <u>P02 P02 P04 01</u>		
Date: <u>JUN 28 2018</u>		
Initials	I/D	Entered
<u>63</u>		<u>109</u>