

Delivering a Death Message

Be prepared when delivering a death message or notification of death to the family and/or NoK. If you need advice, speak to a supervisor first or contact the Death Notification Advice line on 0800 032 9990. Your actions may have a lasting effect on the bereaved so choose your words carefully and considerately.

Are you satisfied that the deceased has been correctly identified and that you are informing the correct family member and/or NoK? How are they known or related to the deceased? Are you informing the right person? If so, you will need

- Sensitivity and compassion
- Honesty and openness
- Awareness of the needs of the NoK/family
- Explanation of what has happened. Use appropriate language.
- Record the date, time and location for notification of death, who has been informed and their relationship to the deceased.

Please remember:

- You should not deliver a death message over the phone or put a note through the door. It will be delivered in person and face to face.
- If you are requesting another Force to deliver the death message, ensure you are giving as much accurate information as possible and provide a contact point.
- Gather all possible facts and information before you speak to the family/ NoK
- Find out if there are language barriers, or cultural aspects that you need to be familiar with.
- When you arrive, turn your radio down and your mobile off.
- Make sure you are speaking to the correct person.
- Ask them to sit down.
- Deliver the message.
- Offer to call someone for them, a friend, family or neighbour.
- Write relevant details down for them, as they may not remember what you are telling them due to shock.
- Always refer to the deceased by their name. Never refer to them as “the deceased” or “the body”.
- Provide the family and/or NoK (or other person representing the family) the MPS Bereavement Information Leaflet (see [Useful Resources](#)). This is to be used in non-suspicious cases only.
- Provide the family and/or NoK with your contact details and email address and explain to them what will happen next (if you are not going to be on duty for a period of time also provide details of a nominated point of contact i.e. supervisor)

For support and advice on cultural information you can speak to local community leaders, Borough Liaison Officers or the Coroners Officer. It is very important that we show sensitivity and understanding when dealing with people from all backgrounds, particularly at times of stress. You also need to be aware that the needs and wishes of the family and/or NoK and those closely associated with the deceased, for example their partner or their close friends may all be different. There is information

available to assist you on the MPS staff association sites as well as guidance and advice on the intranet.