



ALBUQUERQUE POLICE DEPARTMENT
PROCEDURAL ORDERS

SOP 2-21 (Formerly 3-22)

Effective: 03/06/2023 Review: 03/06/2024 Replaces: 11/18/2020

2-21 APPARENT NATURAL DEATH/SUICIDE OF AN ADULT

Related SOP(s), Form(s), Other Resource(s), and Rescinded Special Order(s):

A. Related SOP(s)

[2-73 Collection, Submission, and Disposition of Evidence and Property \(Formerly 2-08\)](#)

[2-92 Crimes Against Children Investigations \(Formerly 2-33\)](#)

B. Form(s)

PD 3066 Apparent Natural Death Worksheet (In TraCS)

C. Other Resource(s)

None

D. Rescinded Special Order(s)

None

2-21-1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the procedures for Albuquerque Police Department (Department) personnel when responding to and investigating adult apparent natural deaths and suicides.

2-21-2 Policy

It is the policy of the Department to investigate any adult apparent natural death or suicide to document the cause(s) of such deaths and to ensure that no evidence is lost or concealed.

N/A 2-21-3 Definitions

A. Natural Death

Death caused by advanced age or disease as opposed to an accident or violence.

B. Next of Kin

The nearest adult relative, spouse, child, parent, or sibling of person who has died.

7 2-21-4 Procedures

A. Apparent Natural Death



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1. For all adult apparent natural death calls, except calls for service where a death occurs in a hospital, hospice care facility, or nursing home, sworn personnel shall:
 - a. Secure the scene;
 - b. Check for signs of life;
 - c. Investigate the incident;
 - d. Complete a Uniform Incident Report;
 - e. Complete the Apparent Natural Death Worksheet;
 - f. Call the Office of the Medical Investigator (OMI) for all unattended deaths, including apparent overdoses; and
 - i. Sworn personnel shall call a Crime Scene Specialist (CSS) to the scene if the OMI verifies the death to be suspicious.
 - ii. When questions arise about whether a death is suspicious or not, the reporting officer is encouraged to contact an on-duty or on-call SED/CSS supervisor for guidance.
 - g. Coordinate with the OMI to make a death notification to the next of kin and document that they coordinated with the OMI in their Uniform Incident Report.
 - i. An officer shall only make a death notification to the next of kin when accompanied by another officer.
 - ii. Sworn personnel may request Emergency Communications Center (ECC) personnel to dispatch a Chaplain to assist in a death notification to the next of kin.
 1. Telephonic death notifications to the next of kin do not require a second officer.

N/A

N/A

B. Apparent Suicide or Accidental Death

1. For apparent suicides or accidental deaths, sworn personnel shall:
 - a. Secure the scene;
 - b. Check for signs of life;
 - c. Conduct a preliminary investigation;
 - i. Sworn personnel shall take statements from witnesses if witnesses are present.
 - d. Complete a Uniform Incident Report;
 - e. Request that a CSS respond to the scene;
 - i. After confirming through the OMI that the death is by suicide, only the investigating CSS shall make arrangements with the Evidence Unit for the release of evidence to the next of kin, consistent with SOP Collection, Submission, and Disposition of Evidence and Property (refer to SOP Collection, Submission, and Disposition of Evidence and Property for sanction classifications and additional duties).
 - f. Request that the OMI respond to the scene; and
 - i. Sworn personnel shall coordinate with the OMI to make a death notification to the next of kin and document the information in their Uniform Incident Report.

N/A



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g. Make the death notification to the next of kin when accompanied by another officer.

N/A

i. Sworn personnel may call a Chaplain to assist in a notification of death to the next of kin.

N/A

1. Telephonic death notifications to the next of kin do not require a second officer.

2. The dispatched supervisor shall ensure that the investigation is comprehensive and complete.

N/A

C. Crimes Against Children Unit (CACU) Detectives investigate child deaths when the child is seventeen (17) years old or younger, consistent with SOP Crimes Against Children Investigations (refer to SOP Crimes Against Children Investigations for sanction classifications and additional duties).