

# Hamden Police Department General Orders

---

**Policy Number:** 024-021

**Effective Date:** August 01, 2005

**Section:** Patrol

**Rescinds:**

**Title:** Deceased Body Protocol.

**Approved By:**

**Approval Date:**

## PURPOSE

To establish protocol for notification of the Medical Examiner's Office in cases involving untimely or suspicious deaths.

## POLICY

The Hamden Police Department will notify the Medical Examiner or the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner in all cases involving suicides or suspicious, untimely deaths. Deaths resulting from apparent natural causes will be handled according to procedures outlined below.

### General

In cases of obvious death where a decision is made not to attempt resuscitation, that decision is an act which says the person is presumed to be dead. The Chief Medical Examiner and the Commissioner of the Department of Health Services have agreed that such a determination can be made by the EMT responsible for medical care at the scene.

Officers should keep in mind that regardless of protocol, empathy and sensitivity are very important when responding to a deceased person call. Although successful completion of a law enforcement career often necessitates staying objective and relying on facts only, the emotional upheaval experienced by the family and friends of a deceased person require officers to be emotionally supportive, understanding, and helpful in any way possible. These relatives often consider themselves to be victims and deserve special consideration and attention.

### Procedures

#### A. Untimely Deaths - Due to Apparent Natural Causes.

1. In the event a presumption of death has been made and the death appears to be due to natural causes, the assigned officer will affect the following procedures:

## **Hamden Police Department General Orders**

---

- a. Notify the attending physician.
- b. If the attending physician will not respond to the scene because of problems of distance, (i.e., another town) or unavailability, (i.e. out-of-town emergency call), the assigned officer will.
  - i. Advise the attending physician that there is a presumption of death.
  - ii. Ask the attending physician when the patient was last seen and note in writing.
  - iii. Ask the attending physician to authorize a non-emergency transport by a funeral home of the family's choosing.
- c. If the attending physician refuses to cooperate under procedures 2a, b, and c, the officer will advise HQ to contact the Medical Examiner.
- d. If there is no attending physician, the Medical Examiner will be notified by HQ.
- e. If the Medical Examiner cannot be available at the scene within a reasonable period of time, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner will be contacted by the Shift Supervisor, advised of the circumstances and asked for authorization to obtain non-emergency transport. For timely disposition, every effort will be made to obtain the following information prior to making the initial call to the Medical Examiner's Officer:
  - i. Name of deceased.
  - ii. Location of remains and information concerning assess to the scene.
  - iii. Estimated height and weight of deceased.
  - iv. Name and telephone number of contact at scene.
  - v. Estimated time when body will be released for transport.
- f. When requesting authorization for non-emergency transport, the supervisor shall obtain specific direction as to:
  - i. Destination (hospital or funeral home)
- g. If authorization for a non-emergency transport is received, the assigned officer will contact the funeral home of the family's choosing and arrange for the proper transportation. If Officers

## **Hamden Police Department General Orders**

---

initiate a call for body transport by a local funeral home/service, the cost of the transport will be burden of caller.

### **B. Suicides and Suspicious Untimely Deaths.**

1. The Detective Division will be notified in the event of all suicides and suspicious untimely deaths and will be responsible for investigating those cases with the assistance of the patrol officer assigned, who will be responsible for the initial case report.
2. The patrol officer assigned will be responsible for protecting the scene and preserving any evidence until the arrival of the Detective Division.
3. Notification of the Medical Examiner, Chief's State's Attorney's Office and/or the Connecticut State Police Major Crime Squad, if necessary, will be the responsibility of the Detective Division.
4. The Medical Examiner will decide the appropriate means of transport and will relay where and when transport should be made.
5. The original of the suicide note should be sent to the Office of Chief Medical Examiner per their request. It is released to the family after six months.

### **C. Notification of Clergy.**

1. In many circumstances, the presence of clergy at the scene of a deceased body is appropriate. The investigating officer should contact a family member and discreetly inquire as to their wishes concerning this matter.

### **D. Securing Premises and Property.**

1. When the body has been removed, the premises will be secured by either:
  - a. A relative.
  - b. The investigating officer/supervisor.