

[insert organisation name/logo]

---

## Notification of Death Policy

---

**Document Status:** Draft or Final

**Date Issued:** [date]

**Lead Author:** [name and position]

**Approved by:** [insert organisation name] Board of Directors on [date]

**Scheduled Review Date:** [date]

---

### Record of Policy Review

Review Date	Person Initiating/Leading Review	Other People Consulted

### Triggers for Policy Review (tick all that apply)

- Standard review is timetabled.
- A gap has been identified
- Additional knowledge or information has become available to supplement the policy.
- External factors
  - Policy is no longer relevant/current due to changes in external operating environment.
  - There are changes to laws, regulations, terminology and/or government policy.
  - Changes to funding environment, including requirements of funding bod(y)ies
- Other (please specify).
- Internal / organisational factors
  - A stakeholder has identified a need, eg by email, telephone etc
  - A serious or critical incident has occurred, requiring an urgent review.
  - Need for consistency in service delivery across programs and organisations.
  - Separate, stand-alone policy is now warranted
  - A near miss has occurred, requiring a review to prevent a serious/critical incident in the future

**Additional Comments**

[for example, policy now covers details related to new legislation].

# Notification of Death Policy

## 1. Purpose and Scope

This policy guides **[insert organisation name]** in responding with promptness and sensitivity to the death of a person supported by, or employed by, or **[insert organisation name]**.

This policy applies to all staff employed by **[insert organisation name]** and should be read with the Emergency and Critical Incident Policy and Procedures.

## 2. Definitions

## 3. Principles

In the unfortunate event of a death of a person supported by, employed by, or volunteering for **[insert organisation name]**, **[insert organisation name]** recognises the need to balance sensitivity with practical needs. In addition, it is accepted that the death of a person has a major impact on those with whom the person had a service relationship.

Response to the death of any person is sensitive and appropriate. This includes ensuring that:

- The cultural and religious beliefs and practices of the person and their family are respected;
- The response is sensitive and prompt to minimise the distress arising from the event.

**[insert organisation name]** and its staff offer appropriate support. This includes:

- Providing practical and organisational assistance within normal expected arrangements where required;
- Where possible, having the same staff member deliver information about the person's death and burial arrangements to the family, guardian or advocate.

**[insert organisation name]** and its staff offer appropriate support to any individuals supported by **[insert organisation name]** who are affected by the death.

## 4. Outcomes

**[insert organisation name]** responds promptly, appropriately and sensitively to the death of a person supported by, employed by, or volunteering for **[insert organisation name]**.

This policy may also be used as a basis for dealing sensitively people who themselves have suffered a bereavement of an immediate member of their family (eg spouse, civil partner, or child).

**5. Functions and Delegations**

Position	Delegation/Task
Board of Directors	<p>Endorse Notification of Death Policy.</p> <p>Comply with Notification of Death Policy and associated procedures.</p>
Management	<p><u>CEO:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensures appropriate condolences are expressed at a senior level from [insert organisation name] to the next of kin and deceased person’s workplace team.</li> <li>• Overall responsibility for ensuring the appropriate critical incident procedures are implemented. (if appropriate)</li> <li>• Where appropriate, makes arrangements for obituary, media management, ensures liaison with outside agencies etc.</li> </ul> <p><u>Service Manager [or insert position]</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible for notifying key personnel that a death has occurred.</li> <li>• Completes forms in a timely manner.</li> <li>• Ensures appropriate support is in place for affected individuals and colleagues.</li> <li>• Ensures all calls and correspondence relating to the death are dealt with in a confidential and sensitive manner.</li> <li>• Liaises with family/next of kin regarding whether flowers from [insert organisation name] and attendance at the funeral of managers, friends, employees and supported individuals is acceptable.</li> <li>• Decides how individuals who had a workplace relationship with the deceased will be informed.</li> <li>• Arranges for removal of the deceased person’s details from all mail / email distribution lists.</li> <li>• Where appropriate and in conjunction with the payroll department, keeps the next of kin/estate informed of payment of salary arrangements.</li> <li>• Oversees the return of personal property, and the collection of organisational property, from the deceased person’s next of kin/estate</li> </ul> <p>Comply with Notification of Death Policy and associated procedures.</p>
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correctly and immediately respond in the event of a death at the organisation.</li> </ul> <p>Comply with Notification of Death Policy and associated procedures.</p>

## 6. Risk Management

**[insert organisation name]** ensures mechanisms are in place to demonstrate that decisions and actions relating to notification of death comply with federal and state laws.

All **[insert organisation name]** staff, Board members, students and volunteers are given information about the process as part of their induction.

## 7. Policy Implementation

This policy is developed in consultation with all staff and approved by the Board of Directors. This policy is to be part of all staff orientation processes and all employees are responsible for understanding and adhering to this policy.

Staff, volunteers, families, guardians and advocates are informed of **[insert organisation name]**'s responsibility and procedures in the event of a death.

For employees, volunteers, and people supported by the organisation, details of who to contact in the event of death or injury are kept current.

This policy will be reviewed in line with **[insert organisation name]**'s quality improvement program and/or relevant legislative changes.

## 8. Policy Detail

### 8.1 Immediate response when someone dies

When person dies at **[insert organisation name]**, the following must occur:

- 1) the staff member on duty **[or insert position]** is to:
  - a) Immediately, in the first instance, call an ambulance ph: 000
  - b) Immediately, in the second instance, notify the nearest police station of the death ph: **[insert phone number]**
  - c) Immediately, in the third instance, inform the staff member's direct supervisor of the person's death.
- 2) The staff member's direct supervisor **[or, insert position]** ensures that:
  - a) Immediately, in the next instance, next of kin (including family and/or carers and/or guardian and/or advocate) of the deceased are notified (in person where possible) as soon as possible, by the most appropriate staff member, who explains the circumstances of the death, expresses sympathy, and (where appropriate) offers support for funeral arrangements.
  - b) The supervisor informs the CEO

- c) Immediately, in the next instance, the board Chairperson is informed of the person's death; the Chairperson will ensure all board members are then notified.

## 8.2 Family and funeral arrangements

**[insert organisation name]** may offer the family support and assistance with funeral arrangements (when appropriate). **[insert position]** will decide on appropriate support assistance.

If the deceased is from a non-Christian background, **[insert position]** seeks advice concerning appropriate funeral arrangements. Advice may be sought in the first instance from the Community Relations Commission (CRC).

**[insert organisation name]** ensures that:

- a) A funeral is arranged where the deceased was a person using the service who had no family, guardian or friends.
- b) Individuals using the service are supported to attend the funeral.

The CEO will send a letter of condolence to the next of kin within 24 hours of being informed of the death.

## 8.3 Critical Incident Support

**[insert organisation name]** ensures that:

- People being interviewed by police are supported during the interview.
- Employees, volunteers, and people supported by the organisation are informed of the death of an individual they know, and given appropriate support and/or counselling to deal with their grief.

Individuals supported by the organisation will be offered the opportunity to be linked to additional supports.

Managers will ensure appropriate support is put in place/offered to employees through this **[insert organisation name]**'s Employee Assistance Program provided by **[insert details and contact number]**

## 8.4 Notifying authorities

**[insert organisation name]** ensures it fulfills its obligations to notify the relevant authorities of the death of an individual.

Relevant authorities include:

- **[insert details and contact number]**
- **[insert details and contact number]**

*ADHC funded services have specific obligations (eg fill out and submit to ADHC the Client Death Notification (CDN) form no later than two days (48 hours) after the person's death)*

## **8.5 Media Interest**

Where there is likely to be media interest in a death, the **[insert position, eg CEO]** and **[insert position]** will liaise to agree on a strategy for dealing with media interest.

No information will be given to any external enquirer; instead, they should be referred to **[insert position]**.

## **8.6 Returning personal and organisational items**

A second letter will be sent within one week of the first letter to the next of kin. The letter will focus on the practical arrangements (eg, if the person was an employee, regarding payment of salary) with a request, if needed, for details of the executors of the estate. The intent is to deal sensitively with the return of the deceased's personal belongings to the next of kin.

The **[insert position]** is responsible for ensuring the return of **[insert organisation name]** items e.g. keys. Relatives/next of kin will not be pressured immediately after the death to return such items.

## **8.7 Completion of Forms.**

The **[insert position]** ensures that relevant forms are completed for the person.

## **9. References**

### **9.1 Internal**

Personal Records Policy  
Emergency and Critical Incident Policy  
Information Management Policy  
Human Resources Policy  
Feedback and Complaints Policy  
Rights and Responsibilities

### **9.2 External**

## **Legislation**

Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1995  
Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998  
Community Services (Complaints, Reviews and Monitoring) Act 1993  
Coroners Act 2009  
Coroners Regulation 2005  
Mental Health Act 2007  
Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Commonwealth)  
Model Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011 (Cth)

## **Resources**

### **9.3 Quality and Accreditation Standards**

#### **EQuIP4**

Provided by the Quality Improvement Council (QIC)

Standard 1.1. Consumers / patients are provided with high quality care throughout the care delivery process.

Criterion 1.1.7 Systems exist to ensure that the care of dying and deceased consumers / patients is managed with dignity and comfort.

#### **EQuIP5**

Provided by the Quality Improvement Council (QIC)

Standard 1.1. Consumers / patients are provided with high quality care throughout the care delivery process.

Criterion 1.1.7 Systems exist to ensure that the care of dying and deceased consumers / patients is managed with dignity and comfort and family and carers are supported.

#### **Health and Community Service Standards (6<sup>th</sup> edition)**

N/A

### **9.4 National Mental Health Standards**

N/A

### **9.5 Recovery Oriented Service Self-Assessment Tool (ROSSAT)**

N/A

**9.6 DSS**

N/A