



General Order 55.2 - SPECIALIZED ASSISTANCE

PURPOSE: Describe specific victim/witness assistance to both the public and departmental personnel (and their families) who become victims and/or witnesses, and provide information to assist deputies in calming young victims of crime and tragedy.

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ISSUED BY : Sheriff Jeffrey T. Easter

REVIEWED BY: Standard Review Committee

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55.2.1 COMMUNICATION -- DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

A. It is the policy of the Sheriff's Office to ensure that a consistently high level of service is provided to all members of the community, including those that may be deaf or hard of hearing. Effective communication is critical regardless of whether the individual is a victim, witness, suspect, arrestee or someone simply asking for directions. As there are specific legal obligations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the following procedures will be followed:

1. Personnel will make every effort to communicate effectively with people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

2. Appropriate communication aids will be utilized as needed. These may include, but not be limited to: gestures or visual aids to supplement oral communication; use of a notepad and pen/pencil to exchange notes; a device to amplify sound; or use of a qualified oral or sign language interpreter.
 - a. Interpretation services consistent with the requirements of the ADA have been contracted by Sedgwick County to be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This service may be contacted when authorized by a watch commander or higher authority as outlined in [Appendix A to this General Order](#).
 - b. Teletypewriters (TTY) are available in the detention facility. Personnel may contact the detention watch commander to arrange access. Note access may require the deputy and the citizen to enter the secure portion of the facility.
3. The type of aid that will be required for effective communication will depend on the individuals usual method of communication, and the nature, importance, and duration of the communication at issue.
4. Primary consideration and deference should be given to the type of communication aid or service requested by the individual, unless:
 - a. There is another equally effective way of communicating based upon the circumstances, length, complexity and importance of the communication as well as the communication skills of the person who is deaf or hard of hearing; or
 - b. Doing so would fundamentally alter the nature of the law enforcement activity in question or would cause an undue administrative or financial burden. This decision may be made by the watch commander on duty, or higher authority.
5. All personnel will receive training to assist in implementing this policy. The training will include review of the publication: Communicating with People Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing: ADA Guide for Law Enforcement Officers. This publication may be found as [Appendix B to this General Order](#).

55.2.2 OPEN

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55.2.6 VICTIM/WITNESS ASSISTANCE TO DEPARTMENTAL PERSONNEL

- A. When an employee is seriously injured or dies in the line of duty, it will be the responsibility of a deputy of the rank of captain or greater to notify the employee's immediate family personally.
 - 1. Notification will take place in a timely manner.
- B. Immediate support that can be offered to the employee's family includes, but is not limited to:
 - 1. Transportation to the hospital;
 - 2. Further notifications of kin at the family's request;
 - 3. Contacting the departmental chaplain or family clergy; and
 - 4. Arranging for babysitting, home security, etc.
- C. Extended support for the employee's immediate family can include:
 - 1. Assisting with, or arrangements for, funeral and burial;
 - 2. Assisting with legal matters and arranging for benefits;
 - 3. Setting up personal counseling for emotional stress; and
 - 4. Arranging for financial counseling.
- D. The sheriff may, depending on circumstances, appoint a designee to act as advocate for the employee's immediate family.
 - 1. Refer to part C above.

55.2.7 STUFFED ANIMAL PROGRAM

- A. Stuffed animals will become standard-issue equipment in every marked patrol unit and are to be treated by sheriff personnel no differently than any other Sheriff's Office issued apparatus.
- B. Two (2) stuffed animals, encased in plastic, shall at all times be kept in the trunk of each marked patrol unit.
- C. Six (6) of the stuffed animals will be assigned to the Investigations Division.
- D. At the deputies' discretion, the stuffed animals are given to any child who is upset by crime, accidents, or other traumatic events. The stuffed animal then becomes the property of the child and is not to be returned.
- E. After a deputy dispenses a stuffed animal, it is the responsibility of that deputy to draw another stuffed animal from the Community Liaison Unit for replacement.
- F. Community Liaison Unit shall be the repository for the stuffed animals and shall maintain accountability.

