

Active Shooter Events: What to Expect for Victim Assistance Personnel

Please note: This is only a sample, not all inclusive and will be incident dependant on requests.

Law Enforcement may request that you:

- Accompany LEO on Death Notifications;
- Assist with interviewing victims/witnesses;
- Provide status updates on victims;
 - Especially critically injured in hospitals
- Help define victim vs witness per incident;
- Establish and/or update victim contact information for victim list;
- Gather/coordinate family photos/statements for PIO/Media Rep;
- Identify a Team Lead (Director of VAP or appointee) to have a presence in the command post
 - This person's role will be to receive the need/request from LEO and assign duties. Be prepared not to leave the CP.
- Assist with return of property or personal effects;
- Help staff/organize a family briefing;
- Provide case/investigative updates to victims/NOK;
- Collaborate with the ME on death notifications/funeral home arrangements;
- Respond to requests from the FBI/White House for contact information of victims/NOK;
- Request to release victim contact information to elected officials (i.e. Governor, White House, legislators, etc....). Victim assistance may be asked to obtain permission from families to release this information since we are having more regular contact. Have a generic release for available for victim signature.

DA/Sheriff/Chief (i.e. your boss) may request:

- Status update on victim assistance response, sometimes called a SITREP or situation report;
 - Be able to identify the needs of the response team & realistic expectations of advocates
- Status update on victims and current capacities.
 - Who is where (hospital, discharged, at home, etc.), what are their needs, how have those needs been met / how are those needs going to be met. For deceased victims – who is the NOK and NOK status.

Victims or NOK may need:

- Death notification
- Crime Victims' Compensation information
- Media support
- Contact with public official support
- Crisis intervention
- Assessment of needs and linkage/referrals

- Family briefing support
- Funeral support
- Criminal justice support
- Updates on case/investigation
- Assistance with return of personal effects
- Help manage expectations of investigation
- Assistance with transportation, lodging, meals, medicine, notifying other family members, pets, replacing essential property (medicines, phones, bank cards, etc).

Others:

- **Hospitals** – Coordinate w/hospital staff to help fill gaps for victims/families.
- **Victim List** – Initially, you will need access to victim information to provide services and linkage to community organizations
- **Resources and Coordination** - EVERY community organization reaching out should contact you directly or the LEO CP which should route it to you. They will want to provide a summary of what they can offer and want to know how they can become involved. Expect to organize this information and disseminate to your teams.
- **Long Term** –Plan to participate in mental health planning and long term needs of victims/community.
- **Presentations** - Prepare to give brief presentations at planning meetings to explain victim assistance role, capabilities and current response plan.
- **Briefings** – Be prepared to organize larger briefings for victims/victim families.
- **Volunteer Management** – Be prepared to have a point person manage all responders. This person is in charge of briefing teams, debriefing teams, tracking work, allocating resources, and coordination in the field (not in the CP).
- **Tracking Services** – Track your work! Each victim assistance responder should track VOCA services, time spent with victims, time on the job, activities performed, positive experiences and lessons learned from the response.
- **Documentation** – Remember that all written communication in a criminal case could be subject to discovery. Remind victim assistance responders to keep communications professional. Copy email communications to a central inbox for upload/discovery later.

Suggested you consider NOW:

- What can you provide to a response?
 - In your county?
 - In a neighboring county?
 - A county across the state?

*All categories are subject to organized chaos. Be ready to think on your feet.