

NR 492 GR 600-2A

No. C4-156202/2017/PHQPolice Headquarters, Kerala
Thiruvananthapuram-695010.

Dated: 28/09/2017.

Circular No. 23/2017Sub: **Communication with families of victims—Instructions—Issued—Reg.**

Read: (1) PHQ Circular No. 15/2010 dtd 14/03/2010.

(2) PHQ Circular No. 35/2011 dtd 12/12/2011.

On many occasions Police officers have to attend to situations where death of persons occur due to various causes such as accidents, natural calamities, law & order situations and crimes. In the case of crimes and accidental deaths, especially road traffic accidents, Police would normally be the first responder at the spot and would be involved in further pursuit of the incident also through the investigation procedures. In such situations, the legal and moral responsibility of disseminating information about the death of individuals to the near relatives becomes incumbent upon the Police officials concerned.


02. Recently, in an incident in which one of our colleagues lost his life in an accident during the course of duty, care was not taken to convey the information to the family of the victim promptly. The next of kin came to know about the matter through Social Media and other indirect channels and the emotional impact could not be borne by the family and this led to some other serious developments. Likewise, in some previous cases of road accidents, insensitive handling of such information by our officers while communicating with parents and near relatives of the victims have led to emotional trauma and have generated avoidable allegations and complaints against the Police.

03. Therefore, there is an urgent need to ensure that this unavoidable though distressing duty is performed with utmost sensitivity. In order to ensure that such information is handled with care and compassion, it is instructed that the Unit head or the senior most Officer on the spot makes arrangements for properly conveying such information.

04. In cases of death or serious injuries to **members of our own force**, it will be the personal responsibility and duty of the DPC/Unit Head or the Sub-Divisional Police Officer of the jurisdiction in which the incident has occurred, or CI in his absence, to convey accurate information to the family concerned, in the most befitting matter.

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- 05.** If the family members are at a distant location, the DySP/CI should pass on the clear and correct details to the DPC/DySP/CI in whose jurisdiction the family members are available. One of these officers should personally proceed to the residence concerned along with a woman officer, if necessary, and break the news with utmost concern and spend a little time with them and assuage their emotions as far as possible.
- 06.** Where it is not possible to convey the information in person without delay, the nearest Police station should be alerted to send two of their staff members to convey the information in person. If there is no option other than to convey the information through phone, the same should be done by the CI/DySP concerned and care should be taken to see that the news is conveyed to some senior member of the family (other than spouse or parents to the maximum possible extent) and if no such person is available, to another relative/friend who can break the news in the most sensitive manner possible to the parents/spouse/children. Physical presence of Police personnel should be provided at the residence of such families to ensure continued moral support to them to overcome the trauma.
- 07.** In case of accidents involving other people, the SHO of the concerned Police Station attending to the accident or another officer nominated by him or senior to him should perform this task. Here in most cases the information will have to be conveyed on phone and care should be taken to do it sensibly and empathetically according to the principles mentioned above.
- 08.** The norms of the civil society demands utmost empathy and compassion in such situations and all Officers should be careful to ensure this. It should be remembered that it is the duty of each member of the force to be of support to the citizens whether they be our colleagues or otherwise in times of tragedy.


Loknath Behera IPS 28/9/2017
Director General of Police &
State Police Chief, Kerala

To
All Officers in List 'B'

Copy to:
All Officers in PHQ
Circular Register / PIC, PHQ / Police Website / DDPR.

NB: Malayalam Version follows.

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