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Space Administration

John C. Stennis Space Center
Stennis Space Center, MS 39529-6000

SPR 3790.1 Basic
April 2012

COMPLIANCE IS MANDATORY

John C. Stennis Space Center (SSC) Notification and Assistance to Next of Kin

Stennis Procedural Requirements	SPR 3790.1	Basic
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Rev.</i>
	Effective Date: April 18, 2012	
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Responsible Office: Office of Human Capital		
SUBJECT: Notification and Assistance to Next of Kin		

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PREFACE

P.1 PURPOSE

This Stennis Procedural Requirement (SPR) establishes Center procedural requirements regarding notification and assistance in matters related to on-the-job serious illness, injury or death of Stennis Space Center (SSC) civil service employees and onsite contractor employees.

P.2 APPLICABILITY

- a. This SPR is applicable to SSC and all National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) SSC personnel.
- b. This SPR is applicable to SSC contractors as specified in section 1.2 Procurement Officer.

P.3 AUTHORITY

NPR 1400.1, NASA Directives and Charters Procedural Requirements

P.4 APPLICABLE DOCUMENTS

- a. NPR 1441.1, "NASA Records Retention Schedules"
- b. NPR 8621.1, "NASA Procedural Requirements for Mishap and Close Call Reporting, Investigating, and Recordkeeping"
- c. SCWI-3792-0002, "SSC Critical Incident Stress Management Program"
- d. SPLN-3792-0001, "SSC Critical Incident Stress Management Plan"

P.5 MEASUREMENT/VERIFICATION

Compliance will be measured through periodic audits such as International Standards Organization (ISO) compliance, document management, and management reviews.

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P.6 CANCELLATION

None.

Signature on file

Patrick E. Scheuermann
Director

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CHAPTER 1. RESPONSIBILITIES

1.1 Organizational Heads

1.1.1 In the event that a civil service employee becomes seriously ill, injured or dies while on duty, the head of the organization to which the employee is assigned and the Manager of the Office of Human Capital (OHC) (or designee) shall, with the assistance and support of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Coordinator, notify the next of kin.

1.1.1.1 Fatalities - In the event that a civil service employee dies while on duty, notification shall be made *in person*.

1.1.1.2 Serious Injury or Illness - In the event that a civil service employee becomes seriously ill or injured while on duty, notification of the next of kin shall be made in the fastest manner possible (usually by telephone) unless, in the opinion of the head of the organization, the severity of circumstances warrant notification in person.

1.1.2 If the head of the organization is unavailable, his/her deputy or a senior level supervisor shall notify the next of kin with the assistance and support of the Manager of the OHC (or designee) and EAP Coordinator.

1.2 Procurement Officer

1.2.1 In the event that an onsite contractor employee dies or becomes seriously ill or injured while on duty, the Procurement Officer shall notify the employing contractor company so the company can follow their notification procedures.

1.2.1.1 If the Procurement Officer is unavailable, his/her deputy or an Office of Procurement supervisor shall notify the employing contractor company.

1.3 EAP Coordinator

1.3.1 In the event that a civil service employee becomes seriously ill, injured or dies while on duty, the EAP Coordinator (or designee) shall be present with and assist the head of the employee's organization (or designee) and OHC Manager (or designee) when notifying next of kin.

1.3.1.1 Fatalities - In the event that a civil service employee dies while on duty, the EAP Coordinator (or designee) shall accompany the organization head (or designee) and OHC Manager (or designee) when notifying the next of kin *in person*.

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1.3.1.2 The EAP Coordinator shall provide training on next of kin notification processes and techniques to employees who may be involved in the next of kin notification process, (e.g., managers, supervisors, employees within the Office of Human Capital).

1.3.1.3 The EAP Coordinator shall be prepared to provide grief counseling and/or critical incident stress management intervention following the death of an employee.

1.4 Office of Human Capital

1.4.1 In the event that a civil service employee becomes seriously ill, injured or dies while on duty, the OHC Manager (or designee) shall accompany and assist the designated manager and EAP Coordinator in notifying the next of kin.

1.4.1.1 Fatalities - In the event that a civil service employee dies while on duty, the OHC Manager (or designee) shall accompany the organization head (or designee) and EAP Coordinator when notifying the next of kin *in person*.

1.4.2 In the event that a civil service employee dies while on duty, the OHC shall report the death to the NASA Shared Services Center (NSSC) and be prepared to support NSSC personnel with respect to assisting employees and their families with benefits-related questions after initial notification of next of kin.

1.5 Supervisors

1.5.1 In the event that a civil service employee dies while on duty, the employee's supervisor and another employee shall be responsible for inventorying and packaging the employee's personal effects, including determining which items are personal and which are Government property.

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CHAPTER 2. PROCEDURES

2.1 Office of Public Affairs

2.1.1 In the event that a civil service employee becomes seriously ill, injured or dies while on duty, the Office of Public Affairs will coordinate with the Office of the Center Director, the Office of Chief Counsel and the Office of Human Capital to prepare a statement for official release. When warranted, an internal statement for employees will also be prepared.

2.1.2 Release of information to the media or internally to employees - Names and addresses of deceased, injured, or missing employees shall be withheld until such time as next-of-kin have been officially notified.

Note: NASA procedural requirements for the release of information to the press and public concerning casualties are contained in NPR 8621.1, NASA Procedural Requirements for Mishap and Close Call Reporting, Investigating, and Recordkeeping.

2.1.2.1 Information on employee addresses shall be limited to city and state.

2.2 Identification of Next of Kin

The family member designated by the employee in the Emergency Contact System to be notified in the event of an emergency shall be treated as the employee's next of kin for notification purposes.

2.2.1 In the absence of such designation, the following order of precedence shall be used to identify next of kin:

2.2.1.1 Spouse.

2.2.1.2 Child 21 years of age or older.

2.2.1.3 Parents.

2.2.1.4 Siblings.

2.2.1.5 Grandparents.

2.2.1.6 Other relatives.

2.3 Requirements for Notification of Next of Kin in the Event of the Death of an Employee

2.3.1 Next of Kin notification shall be conducted with tact and consideration.

2.3.2 Notification shall be made in person. After notification in person, the OHC Manager (or designee) or EAP Coordinator will remain with the next of kin as long as necessary/needed.

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2.3.3 Care shall be taken not to upset the next of kin any more than is unavoidably necessary.

2.3.4 Graphic, gory, or embarrassing details shall not be relayed.

2.3.5 Information provided to next of kin shall be limited to facts which have been confirmed. Accuracy of information provided is of paramount importance.

2.3.6 Every effort shall be made to avoid "informal" notification of next of kin before the official notification can be accomplished.

2.3.7 Employees shall be advised to delay contact with next of kin until the official notification is complete.

2.3.8 Three persons shall be present for the notification in accordance with section 1.0 Responsibilities.

2.3.9 It is recommended that information on benefits and entitlements not be provided during the initial death notification. Rather, the next of kin should be advised that a representative from the NASA Shared Services Center (NSSC) will contact them at their convenience to provide benefits information, answer questions, and otherwise be of assistance. If not personally present during the notification of the next of kin, the OHC Manager shall be advised by the attending OHC designee of any questions or concerns raised by the next of kin immediately after the notification is complete.

2.3.10 When notifying next of kin, do not discuss:

2.3.10.1 Specific questions regarding subjects such as insurance, final pay, etc. If asked, advise that an NSSC representative will discuss those issues with them.

2.3.10.2 The employee's personal effects, unless asked by the next of kin.

2.3.10.3 Questions relating to responsibility for the death.

2.3.11 It is recommended that notification of next of kin be accomplished in a timely manner. Given the range of residency surrounding SSC, in person notification should be completed within four hours of the incident.

2.3.11.1 Any difficulty that would preclude accomplishing notification of next of kin within the recommended four hour time frame shall be reported to the OHC Manager as soon as it becomes known.

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2.4 Cases Involving Serious Illness or Injury

2.4.1 In the event that a civil service or contractor employee becomes seriously ill or injured while on duty, the first priority shall be to ensure that appropriate medical care is provided.

2.4.2 The second priority shall be the notification of the next of kin in accordance with the specifications of section 1.0 Responsibilities.

2.5 Assistance to Co-workers and Next of Kin

2.5.1 Benefits - NSSC provides assistance and counseling regarding benefits for seriously ill or injured employees and for their survivors in the case of their death.

2.5.2 Funeral and Memorial Observances - The death of a co-worker is a serious event affecting the workforce and the Agency. To the greatest extent possible, employees shall be permitted to attend funeral and memorial services for their co-workers. Memorial observances may be conducted at the worksite following the death of an employee.

2.5.3 Property - In the event of a fatality, the personal effects of a deceased employee which are in the workplace shall be collected by the employee's supervisor and another employee as specified in section 1.5.1 and safeguarded until they can be given to the next of kin.

2.5.3.1 The employee's personal effects shall normally be given personally to the next of kin, either during a condolence visit paid to the family by the supervisor or by transfer to family members who elect to come onsite. The OHC will assist the supervisor with the transfer.

2.5.3.2 Personal effects shall be mailed to the next of kin only when the methods described above are deemed impractical.

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CHAPTER 3. RECORDS

3.1 Copy of Inventory of Personal Effects

3.1.1 Notated with the date and signature of the person transferring the property, a copy of the inventory of personal effects transferred to the next of kin (Reference 2.5.3.1) shall be maintained by the employee's basic organization in accordance with NPR 1441. 1, NASA Records Retention Schedules.

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Appendix A – DEFINITIONS/ACRONYMS

A.1 Definitions

A.1.1 Organizational Heads – For purposes of this SPR, the term “organizational head” refers to those who report directly to the Center Director.

A.1.2 Serious Illness or Injury – For purposes of this SPR, a “serious illness or injury” is one which is either life-threatening or one which will require hospitalization and continuing medical treatment. A heart attack is an example of a serious illness. An amputation is an example of a serious injury.

A.2 Acronyms

EAP	Employee Assistance Program
ISO	International Standards Organization
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NODIS	NASA Online Directives Information System
NPR	NASA Procedural Requirement
NSSC	NASA Shared Service Center
OHC	Office of Human Capital
SPR	Stennis Procedural Requirement
SSC	Stennis Space Center