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John C. Stennis Space Center

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COMPLIANCE IS MANDATORY

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

Stennis Procedural Requirements	SPR 3790.1	Basic-2
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Rev.</i>
	Effective Date: June 14, 2022	
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	Page 1 of 10	
Responsible Office: Office of Human Resources Stennis Space Center		
SUBJECT: Notification and Assistance to Next of Kin		

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Stennis Procedural Requirements	SPR 3790.1	Basic-2
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Rev.</i>
	Effective Date: June 14, 2022	
	Expiration Date: June 14, 2027	
Page 2 of 10		
Responsible Office: Office of Human Resources Stennis Space Center		
SUBJECT: Notification and Assistance to Next of Kin		

Table of Contents

PREFACE.....	3
P.1 PURPOSE.....	3
P.2 APPLICABILITY.....	3
P.3 AUTHORITY.....	3
P.4 APPLICABLE DOCUMENTS.....	3
P.5 MEASUREMENT/VERIFICATION	3
P.6 CANCELLATION.....	3
CHAPTER 1. RESPONSIBILITIES	4
1.1 Organizational Heads.....	4
1.2 Procurement Officer.....	4
1.3 EAP Coordinator.....	4
1.4 Office of Human Resources Stennis Space Center.....	5
1.5 Supervisors.....	5
CHAPTER 2. PROCEDURES	6
2.1 Office of Communications.....	6
2.2 Identification of Next of Kin.....	6
2.3 Requirements for Notification of Next of Kin in the Event of the Death of an Employee	6
2.4 Cases Involving Serious Illness or Injury	8
2.5 Assistance to Co-workers and Next of Kin.....	8
CHAPTER 3. RECORDS	9
3.1 Copy of Inventory of Personal Effects.....	9
Appendix A – DEFINITIONS/ACRONYMS.....	10
A.1 Definitions.....	10
A.2 Acronyms.....	10

Stennis Procedural Requirements	SPR 3790.1	Basic-2
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Rev.</i>
	Effective Date: June 14, 2022	
	Expiration Date: June 14, 2027	
Page 3 of 10		
Responsible Office: Office of Human Resources Stennis Space Center		
SUBJECT: Notification and Assistance to Next of Kin		

PREFACE

P.1 PURPOSE

This Stennis Procedural Requirements (SPR) document specifies Stennis Space Center (SSC) notification and assistance policy and procedures pertaining to on-the-job serious illness, injury, or death of SSC civil service employees and on-site contractor employees.

P.2 APPLICABILITY

- a. This SPR is applicable to Stennis Space Center and all 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 System 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. SPLN-3792-0001, *Critical Incident Stress Management Plan*

P.5 MEASUREMENT/VERIFICATION

P.6 CANCELLATION

Basic

Signature on File

Richard J. Gilbrech, Ph.D.
Director

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Stennis Procedural Requirements	SPR 3790.1	Basic-2
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Rev.</i>
	Effective Date: June 14, 2022	
	Expiration Date: June 14, 2027	
Page 4 of 10		
Responsible Office: Office of Human Resources Stennis Space Center		
SUBJECT: Notification and Assistance to Next of Kin		

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 Resources (OHR) Stennis Space Center (SSC) (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 organizational head 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 OHR SSC (or designee) and EAP Coordinator.

1.2 Procurement Officer

1.2.1 In the event that an on-site 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 OHR SSC 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 organizational head (or designee) and OHR SSC manager (or designee) when notifying the next of kin *in person*.

1.3.1.2 The EAP Coordinator shall provide training on next of kin notification processes and

Stennis Procedural Requirements	SPR 3790.1	Basic-2
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Rev.</i>
	Effective Date: June 14, 2022	
	Expiration Date: June 14, 2027	
Page 5 of 10		
Responsible Office: Office of Human Resources Stennis Space Center		
SUBJECT: Notification and Assistance to Next of Kin		

techniques to employees who may be involved in the next of kin notification process, (e.g., managers, supervisors, employees within the OHR SSC .

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 Resources Stennis Space Center

1.4.1 In the event that a civil service employee becomes seriously ill, injured, or dies while on duty, the OHRSSC 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 OHR SSC manager (or designee) shall accompany the organizational 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 OHR SSC manager 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.

Stennis Procedural Requirements	SPR 3790.1	Basic-2
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Rev.</i>
	Effective Date: June 14, 2022	
	Expiration Date: June 14, 2027	
Page 6 of 10		
Responsible Office: Office of Human Resources Stennis Space Center		
SUBJECT: Notification and Assistance to Next of Kin		

CHAPTER 2. PROCEDURES

2.1 Office of Communications

2.1.1 In the event that a civil service employee becomes seriously ill, injured, or dies while on duty, the Office of Communications will coordinate with the Office of the Center Director, the Office of the General Counsel and the OHR SSC 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 the 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

As listed in Employee Express, the family member designated by the employee 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 the 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 OHRSSC manager (or designee) or EAP Coordinator will remain with the next of kin as long as necessary/needed.

Stennis Procedural Requirements	SPR 3790.1	Basic-2
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Rev.</i>
	Effective Date: June 14, 2022	
	Expiration Date: June 14, 2027	
Page 7 of 10		
Responsible Office: Office of Human Resources Stennis Space Center		
SUBJECT: Notification and Assistance to Next of Kin		

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 Chapter 1, 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 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 OHR SSC manager shall be advised by the attending OHR SSC 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 workforce residency surrounding SSC, in person notification should be completed within 4 hours of the incident.

2.3.11.1 Any difficulty that would preclude accomplishing notification of next of kin within the recommended 4-hour time frame shall be reported to the OHR SSC manager as soon as it becomes known.

Stennis Procedural Requirements	SPR 3790.1	Basic-2
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Rev.</i>
	Effective Date: June 14, 2022	
	Expiration Date: June 14, 2027	
Page 8 of 10		
Responsible Office: Office of Human Resources Stennis Space Center		
SUBJECT: Notification and Assistance to Next of Kin		

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 Chapter 1, 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 next of kin in the event of 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 on-site. The OHR SSC 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.

Stennis Procedural Requirements	SPR 3790.1	Basic-2
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Rev.</i>
	Effective Date: June 14, 2022	
	Expiration Date: June 14, 2027	
Page 9 of 10		
Responsible Office: Office of Human Resources Stennis Space Center		
SUBJECT: Notification and Assistance to Next of Kin		

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.

Stennis Procedural Requirements	SPR 3790.1	Basic-2
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Rev.</i>
	Effective Date: June 14, 2022	
	Expiration Date: June 14, 2027	
Responsible Office: Office of Human Resources Stennis Space Center		
SUBJECT: Notification and Assistance to Next of Kin		
Page 10 of 10		

Appendix A – DEFINITIONS/ACRONYMS

A.1 Definitions

A.1.1 Organizational head – For purpose 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 purpose 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

A.2.1 EAP – Employee Assistance Program

A.2.2 OHR SSC – Office of Human Resources Stennis Space Center

A.2.3 NSSC – NASA Shared Services Center