
Major Incident Notification

316.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to members of the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office in determining when, how and to whom notification of major incidents should be made.

316.2 POLICY

The Montgomery County Sheriff's Office recognizes that certain incidents should be brought to the attention of supervisors or other specified personnel of this office to facilitate the coordination of activities and ensure that inquiries from the media and the public may be properly addressed.

316.3 CRITERIA FOR NOTIFICATION

Most situations where the media and public show a strong interest are also of interest to the Sheriff, or the affected Division Director. The following list of incident types is provided as a guide for notification and is not intended to be all inclusive:

- Officer-involved shooting, whether on- or off-duty (see the Officer-Involved Shootings and Deaths Policy for special notification)
- Homicides, suspicious deaths or deaths related to law enforcement activity
- Crimes of unusual violence or circumstances that may include hostages, barricaded persons, home invasions, armed robbery or sexual assaults
- At-risk missing children or adults
- In-custody deaths
- Aircraft, train, boat or other transportation accidents with major damage and/or injury or death
- Traffic crashes with fatalities or severe injuries involving personnel
- Significant injury or death to a member of the Office, whether on- or off-duty
- Arrest of a member of the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office
- Equipment failures, utility failures, natural disasters and incidents that may affect staffing or pose a threat to basic sheriff's services
- Any other incident, which has or is likely to attract significant media attention

316.4 SHIFT SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

The Sergeant or Shift Supervisor is responsible for making the appropriate notifications. One of these people shall make reasonable attempts to obtain as much information on the incident as possible before notification, and shall attempt to make the notifications as soon as practicable.

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316.4.1 COMMAND STAFF NOTIFICATION

In the event an incident occurs as identified in the Criteria for Notification section above, the Sheriff shall be notified along with the Director of that affected Division via the chain of command.

316.4.2 INVESTIGATOR NOTIFICATION

If the incident requires that an investigator respond from home, Shift Supervisor will then contact the appropriate investigator to advise him of the incident.

316.4.3 DIVISION NOTIFICATION

In the event of a major injury or fatality involving Sheriff's Office personnel or their family, the shift supervisor shall contact the Division Director. The information shall be validated and the Sheriff will be notified.

316.4.4 MEDIA NOTIFICATION

After the command staff have been notified, the Sheriff or his designee shall determine if it appears the media may have a significant interest in the incident. The Sheriff's Office may make the appropriate news release.