

Notification Guideline: Death of a Minor

In the event there is a loss of life of a minor who is in the care and custody of a university program, event or engagement. It is important to be aware of and implement the guidelines below:

On-site-University premises

- Immediately notify the University of Michigan Police Department (UMPD) by calling 911.
- Secure the area and location - remove minors and non-essential personnel from the area and ensure the immediate safety and well-being of all other minors and staff in the vicinity.
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- Death should be reported to the Insurance and Claims Administration (formerly known as **Risk Management**) at (734) 764-2200. If after business hours, please contact Heather Banules at (734) 780-4303 or Denne Lawton at (734) 763-8380.
- Secure the scene to prevent any further harm or contamination of evidence.
- Remain with the deceased until University of Michigan Police arrive.

Offsite-Non-University Facility (E.g., field trip, park, bus, school site)

- Call 911 - Immediately to report the incident.
- Secure the area and location - remove minors and non-essential personnel from the area and ensure the immediate safety and well-being of all other minors and staff in the vicinity.
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- Follow-Crisis Management procedures of the facility where you are located
- Death should be reported to Risk Management at (734) 764-2200. If after hours, please contact Heather Banules at (734) 780-4303 or Denne Lawton at (734) 763-8380.
- Secure the scene to prevent any further harm or contamination of evidence.
- Remain with the deceased until University of Michigan Police or local police arrive.

Mass Casualties

During a mass casualty, you will be given specific instruction by the University of Michigan Police Department or the law enforcement agency in the jurisdiction in which your event or program occurs. Please adhere to the instructions of law enforcement or emergency personnel on site. You can assist law enforcement by being prepared with the following information:

- Call 911- Immediately to report incident
- Know the number of minors in your care. Maintain an accurate and up-to-date count of all minors in your program.



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- Have readily accessible records of the names and parental/emergency contact information for each minor in your care to provide to law enforcement and/or medical personnel.
- Medical Information: Inform law enforcement or medical personnel of any illnesses, medical conditions, or physical disabilities that may impact a minor during a lockdown or evacuation.
- Designate a primary and a secondary contact person responsible for representing your group and providing necessary information during the incident. Ensure these contacts are familiar with the crisis protocols and have access to all relevant information.
 - The secondary contact person should be a person who is not travelling with, or near the group but is readily available to be contacted and provide information should the need arise.

Additional Suggestions:

- Emergency Kit:
 - Prepare an emergency kit that includes necessary documents, contact lists, medical information, and basic supplies such as first aid materials and water.
- Training and Drills:
 - Conduct annual training sessions and drills for staff and minors to ensure everyone knows their roles and the actions to take during a mass casualty incident.
- Communication Tools:
 - Adherent to directives given regarding communication. The event may require communication to be delivered in a specific manner or by a designated university appointee.
 - Utilize communication tools and apps that can help you quickly share information with law enforcement, parents, and the university.

In the case of mass casualties, the U-M Office of Public Affairs will coordinate with UMPD and other law enforcement agencies, campus units such as Student Life, and health-care providers to develop communications and cascade communications to the appropriate people and teams and the public. University personnel should refer all inquiries to the Office of Public Affairs and should not provide any information outside of that process.

By being well-prepared and informed, you can significantly support law enforcement and emergency personnel in effectively managing a mass casualty incident, ensuring the safety and well-being of all minors in your care.

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Next of Kin Notification

The responsibility for death notifications lies with the health care agency (e.g., coroner, etc.) that determined the death or the appropriate law enforcement agency. **Program administrators or program personnel should not notify relatives of a minor in the event of their death.**

- Death notification should be made only by personnel trained to communicate such news in an appropriate manner and who are able to provide medical or other necessary assistance to the recipient of the death notification.
- Death notification should always be in person by a health care provider or law enforcement officer trained to convey the news with empathy and support.

After Death Communication

The death of a minor is a tragedy for the University and the parent/guardian of the deceased minor. As a result, your unit/department may be contacted after the incident for more information or insight as to what occurred. It is important that you remain sympathetic, but adhere to the appropriate guidelines for communication listed below:

- Given that most deaths will result in a police investigation, all inquiries should be directed to the UMPD Public Information Officer.
- Unit/department leadership should direct all calls to Insurance and Claims
- In case of a mass casualty- the University Office of Public Affairs will work closely with UMPD and law enforcement agencies to manage media inquiries.
- Personal belongings
 - The university representative, Insurance and Claims Administration and the program administrator will collaborate to gather up and box all of the decedent's belongings and deliver them to the university representative (ICA) for distribution to the appropriate next of kin. This step will ensure that the correct next of kin receives the belongings. Do not allow the decedent's family members or friends direct access to the decedent's room, locker or other storage areas.
- Support for Affected Individuals:
 - Contact the Insurance and Claims Administration to coordinate counseling and support services for all minors and staff involved.
- Coordination with External Entities:
- Note: **All Coordination with external entities should be done in a manner preserving confidentiality. All external university statements/messaging will be from the Public Affairs Office unless directed otherwise by an official agency.**



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- Cooperate fully with law enforcement, medical examiners, and any other relevant external entities.
- Ensure clear communication channels are established for ongoing coordination.
- Facilitate debriefing sessions and follow-up support as needed.
- Documentation and Record Keeping:
 - Document all actions taken from the moment the incident is discovered.
 - Incidents can be reported on the [Insurance and Claims Administration website](#)
 - Maintain detailed records of notifications, communications, and support provided.
- Review and Investigation:
 - The Insurance and Claims Administration will assist the program with conducting an internal review to understand the circumstances leading to the incident.
 - Cooperate with any external investigations.
 - Identify any preventive measures or policy changes needed to avoid future occurrences.
- Policy Review and Improvement:
 - Regularly update the guidelines based on the findings of internal and external reviews.
 - Incorporate lessons learned into training programs for staff.
- Legal and Compliance Considerations:
 - Ensure compliance with all legal obligations, including mandating reporting to appropriate child welfare agencies if applicable.
 - Liaise with the university's legal counsel to navigate any legal complexities.

Program Continuation and Cancellation

There are several factors that will impact whether a program is canceled or allowed to continue if a death of a minor occurs. Law enforcement, Insurance and Claims Administration, and other University personnel will take into consideration the following factors:

- The safety and security of the minors: Is the environment safe for the minors to continue
- Law enforcement investigation: It may be necessary for investigative purposes for minors to remain at the program for a duration of time
- The severity of the incident and impact of trauma.
- The length and remainder of the program (i.e., How many weeks, days left in the program).
- The number of minor participants
- Travel Arrangements (i.e., can flights be rescheduled for out-of-state/International minor participants).



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Note: A minor may be removed from a program or event at any time at the discretion of the parent or guardian.