



Releasing names of casualties to the public

Procedure is used to identify the earliest point where names of personnel casualties may be publicly released or confirmed. Prior to that point, names shall not be released.

Use this Procedure for search and rescue (SAR) operations when casualties are due to operations.

Do not use this Procedure during SAR operations when prompt release of names is a normal part of a diligent search for members of the general public or for military personnel in non-operational situations.

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Releasing names of casualties to the Public

Overview

In common practice with the Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force, the names of Coast Guard casualties will not be publicly released or confirmed until 24 hours after the last required notification to next-of-kin (NOK) is completed.

PROCEDURE

Who must be notified

Notify the first person on this list. For military members, also notify parents.

- Spouse. (Even if estranged, a spouse is a spouse. An ex-spouse is NOT a spouse.)
- Children not with the spouse. For minor children notify the child's guardian.
- **Parents. For military members, parents must always be notified.**
- If none of the above, then siblings. Notification of one sibling, commonly the eldest, is enough.
- Person Authorized to Direct Disposition of remains (PADD), if PADD is not listed above.

A common scenario is that of a married member with one or two living parents. In this case, notification is required for the spouse and both parents.

Name released for a single casualty

1. Confirm situation qualifies as a casualty. See ["Who is a casualty"](#) on page 3.
2. Confirm when the last required NOK notification was completed, with careful attention to time zones.
3. Add 24 hours.
4. The name may be released to the public, or confirmed to media who already have a name, after the 24-hour point.

Names released for multiple casualties in a single incident

Confirm situations qualify as personnel casualties. See ["Who is a casualty"](#) on page 3.

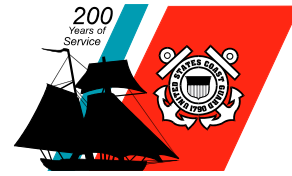
The 24-hour period begins when required notifications for ALL casualties are complete. Treat all names equally. Never release names of some casualties while notification to other families is still in progress.

In rare cases this may cause considerable delay when one person cannot be located. Do not waiver.

Names released for multiple casualties in multiple services in a single incident

Same rule as for a multiple casualty.

Coordinate between Services to ensure accurate accounting for notifications prior to releasing any names. The Casualty Matters office at CG PSC is the point of contact for interservice coordination of information.



Releasing names of casualties to the Public

Supporting details

The fact an incident occurred or that a CG member was killed or injured is releasable as soon as it is confirmed and prior to NOK notification. Names are not yet releasable.

Imminent or actual media publication of the names of Coast Guard casualties does not justify release or confirmation by the Coast Guard until the 24-hour period has passed.

Personnel casualty report messages must be clear about the date, time, and time zone when notification occurred, who was notified, and by what means. The CASREP is often the best info source.

Other agencies sometimes assume responsibility for notifying NOK (for example, local sheriff, state marine patrol, or local fire department might notify NOK of a death such as a motor vehicle accident or homicide). This policy does not constrain the normal procedures of those agencies.

This policy applies to retirees such as retired flag officers unless NOK waive the waiting period.

Who is a “casualty”

“Casualty status exists when a person is lost to the Coast Guard or other military service because the person is ill, injured, wounded, captured, missing, dead, excused absence but whereabouts are unknown (EAWUN – only for civilian employees), or in a duty status but whereabouts are unknown (DUSTWUN – military only). Note: DUSTWUN does not include willful unauthorized absence.”

“Policy applies at all times and for any casualty status to any person who is a regular member on active duty, reserve member on or off duty, cadet, CG Academy prep student, Public Health Service officer detailed to the Coast Guard, Auxiliarist when assigned to duty, and civilian employee while on the job.”

“Policy applies to the following persons only when deceased: dependents, civilian employees while not on the job, retirees, persons joining the Coast Guard, or former members who die within 120 days after separating from the Coast Guard.”

ALCOAST 254/11

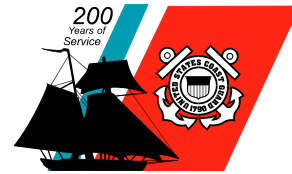
Special note: ALCOAST 254/11 vs. COMDTINST M1770.9 – 24 hrs vs. 10 hrs

ALCOAST 254/11 specifies a 24-hour delay.

Section 1.J of COMDTINST M1770.9 specifies a 10-hour delay.

The ALCOAST is correct. Section 1.J is out of date.

The next update to COMDTINST M1770.9 (series) will be corrected to 24 hours.



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TABLE 1: Who is a casualty, and when

Dependent <i>(including stillborns)</i>	Dead
Person joining CG	
Retiree	
Separated (120 days)	
Civilian employee <u>not</u> on job	
Civilian employee on the job	SI, VSI
Auxiliarist when on duty	Missing, Captured, etc.
USPHS detailed to USCG	EAWUN <i>(civilian employees only)</i>
Cadet & CGA Prep Student	DUSTWUN <i>(regular, reserve, cadet)</i>
Reservist —24/365, on or off duty <i>(AD, SELRES, IRR, etc.)</i>	Dead
Regular	



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Examples

CG member dies suddenly of apparent heart attack aboard ship at sea.

Based on the specific family circumstances, the Coast Guard might be responsible to notify the spouse, mother, and father of the deceased member.

Personnel casualty report messages clearly report notification. Incident occurred on the 11th day of the month, in time zone ROMEO (Eastern time zone, or Central if daylight savings). For example:

110730R SPOUSE NOTIFIED AT HOME IN PERSON BY CACO AND CHAPLAIN.

110800R MOTHER NOTIFIED AT HOME IN PERSON BY CACO AND CHAPLAIN.

110815R MOTHER NOTIFIED FATHER BY PHONE.

Release of the name of the deceased Coast Guardsman may be made any time after 120815R, 24 hours after the last required notification was completed.

CG member with terminal illness dies in hospice, with family present.

Personnel casualty report messages clearly report notification. Death occurred on the 25th of the month, at 0330 (3:30 AM), in time zone ROMEO (Eastern time zone, or Central if daylight savings).

Spouse called the pre-assigned CACO at 0910 (9:10 AM):

250910R SPOUSE NOTIFIED COAST GUARD BY PHONE THAT PETTY OFFICER SMOOTMAN DIED AT 250330R, WITH NOK PRESENT.

Release of the name of the deceased Coast Guardsman may be made any time after 260330R, 24 hours after NOK were present at death.

CG member commuting to work and two others die in traffic accident.

Incident occurred at 280630T (28th day of the month, 6:30 AM, Mountain time or, if DST, Pacific). State police release names of all three fatalities at 281300T.

Personnel casualty report messages clearly report notification:

280930T MOTHER NOTIFIED IN PERSON AT WORK BY STATE POLICE.

281000T STATE POLICE NOTIFIED COAST GUARD.

281430T FATHER NOTIFIED IN PERSON AT HOME BY CG CACO AND CHAPLAIN.

State police already released the name. The Coast Guard may confirm the name any time after 291430T, 24 hours after both parents were officially notified.

CG employee dies in work-related accident.

Accident occurred at 051330U (5th day of the month, 1:30 PM, Pacific time, or, if DST, Alaska time).

Personnel casualty report message clearly reports notification:

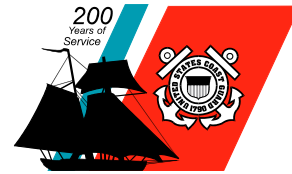
051545U SPOUSE NOTIFIED IN PERSON AT HOSPITAL BY DOCTOR.

The name of the deceased employee may be released any time after 061545U, 24 hours after spouse was told of the death, in person, at the hospital.

CG members went fishing on liberty and are overdue for return

This is an active search and rescue situation, no different from the general public. The 24-hour delay does not apply. Prompt public release of names may be required as part of a diligent search effort.

USCG Casualty Matters Personnel Casualty Procedure



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However, ensure NOK know of the overdue situation before releasing names. (Often it is the NOK who report an overdue like this.)

CG boat on patrol is overdue for return

This is an active search and rescue situation due to military operations. It differs from the general public situation because it is due to a military operation. DO NOT release names until 24 hours after all required NOK notifications are made.

Navy aircraft lost from radar and believed crashed at sea

This is an active search and rescue situation due to military operations. DO NOT release names until 24 hours after all required NOK notifications are made. In addition, release of names must be coordinated with the parent service.

Release of names will normally be made by the parent agency or service.

In a multi-agency or multi-service situation, release of names must be coordinated between all agencies and services involved.

ICE and CBP agents on duty are overdue for return

This is an active search and rescue situation due to law enforcement operations. DO NOT release names until 24 hours after all required NOK notifications are made. In addition, release of names must be coordinated with the parent service.

Release of names will normally be made by the parent agency or service.

In a multi-agency or multi-service situation, release of names must be coordinated between all agencies and services involved.

References

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| (a) ALCOAST 254/11 | Public release of names of personnel casualties |
| (b) COMDTINST M1770.9 | Military Casualties & Decedent Affairs, section 1.J (<i>See special note, page 3</i>) |
| (c) COMDTINST M5728.2D | Public Affairs Manual, sections 2.F, 2.G.5, and 2.G.6 |
| (d) DODI 1300.18 | DOD Personnel Casualty Matters, Policies & Procedures: paragraph 4.6 |
| (e) NDAA FY04 | National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2004 (Public Law 108-136), section 546) |
| (f) USD (P&R) memo | Under-Secretary of Defense (Personnel & Readiness) memo of 1 April 2004 |



Releasing names of casualties to the Public

Background details

Forms and documents available

None.

Funding.

None needed.

Timing of procedure

Use this Procedure as soon as someone becomes a casualty (dead, missing, SI, VSI, etc.).

Procedure Users

PAOs	Public Affairs Officers
COs & XOs	Commanding Officers and Executive Officers
DAOs	Decedent Affairs Officer at BASEs, TRACENs, etc.
CACOs	Casualty Assistance Calls Officers

Procedure Owner

Chief, Casualty Matters	CG PSC (PSD FS—Casualty Matters), Arlington VA 202-493-1931 Terrence.w.walsh@uscg.mil
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Procedural support

Support for DAOs is available from the Casualty Matters program, Field Support branch, Personnel Support Division, at PSC, Arlington, VA. CACOs and Survivors are supported by DAOs. If DAO is not known, contact the Casualty Matters office.

Chief, Casualty Matters	703-872-6647
LT Sean Arumae	sean.r.arumae@uscg.mil
Office of Public Affairs, Media Relations Branch	202-372-4634
LT Paul Rhynard	paul.d.rhynard@uscg.mil

History of Procedure

5 Nov 2010	First draft
24 May 2011	First post online
1 Aug 2012	Updated
8 Aug 2013	Latest revision

Internet availability of procedure

- Procedures for Casualty Matters are posted at <http://www.uscg.mil/psc/psd/fs/Casualty.asp> .
- Procedure owner determined that this procedure is authorized for internet release.



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Glossary and acronyms

- ALCOAST: A general message addressed to ALL COAST GUARD. Has force of regulation.
- BASE: Located at Boston MA, Portsmouth VA, Miami FL, New Orleans LA, St. Louis MO, Cleveland OH, Los Angeles/Long Beach CA, Alameda CA, Seattle WA, Honolulu HI, Ketchikan AK, Kodiak AK, and Washington DC. Personnel Service and Support Units (PSSU) at these locations became the Personnel Service Divisions at the new Bases in 2011-2012.
- CACO: Casualty Assistance Calls Officer. Works face-to-face with NOK. Works for DAO.
- CBP: Customs and Border Patrol, an agency of DHS
- CG: U.S. Coast Guard
- CO: Commanding Officer, or Commander for a group of units.
- COMDTINST: Commandant Instruction. A document to publish policy and sometimes procedure.
- DAO: Decedent Affairs Officer, located at BASEs, TRACENs, and other major HQ units.
- DHS: Department of Homeland Security
- DOD: Department of Defense
- DODI: Department of Defense Instruction.
- DST: Daylight Savings Time.
- DUSTWUN: For military member, DUty Status but Whereabouts are Unknown. Not used for willful unauthorized absence.
- EAWUN: For civilian employee, Excused Absence, but Whereabouts are UNknown.
- ICE Immigrations and Customs Enforcement, an agency of DHS.
- NOK: next-of-kin.
- PADD: Person Authorized to Direct Disposition of remains, per form CG-2020D.
- PSC: Personnel Service Center, Arlington VA. Includes Casualty Matters office.
- SI: Seriously ill, injured or wounded. Defined in Joint Pubs as “Illness, injury or wound requires medical attention, and medical authority declares that death is possible, but not likely within 72 hours; *or* the severity of the injury is such that it is permanent and life-altering.”
- TRACEN: Training Centers, at New London CT (Academy), Cape May NJ (recruit), Yorktown VA, Elizabeth City NC (aviation technical), Mobile AL (aviation), and Petaluma CA.
- VSI: Very Seriously Ill, injured or wounded. Defined in Joint Pubs as “Illness, injury or wound is such that medical authority declares it more likely than not that death will occur within 72 hours.”
- XO Executive Officer, or Deputy Commander for a group of units.