POLICY TITLE: Last Wishes Program

STANDARD/REF #: 22.2.3; 22.2.4

APPROVED BY: Wayne Jerman, Chief

REVIEWED DATE: 7/31/2014

REVI SED DATE: 7/31/2014

POLICY:
The Cedar Rapids Police Department’s (CRPD) Last Wishes Program allows employees of CRPD to document, in advance, what their wishes are in case of a serious injury or death while in the line of duty. The CRPD Last Wishes Program is voluntary and open to all employees of the CRPD (sworn full-time officers, reserve officers, and department civilians). The lead commander in charge of the Honor Guard and/or their designee will be responsible for maintaining the Last Wishes Program.

In the course of their duty, police officers routinely deal with serious injury and death. Officers often witness the anguish of family members when they inform family of a loved one’s death. Employees often never discuss what their own last wishes may be with their immediate family members. Family members have no idea of what a deceased person’s final wishes may include. Families are commonly unprepared emotionally and financially for the loss of a loved one.

Police officers often do not acknowledge or believe they may be killed unexpectedly and tragically in the line of duty. Certain items such as financial assurances and personal requests can be preplanned. The Last Wishes Program, just as life insurance, is designed to help alleviate unnecessary burden on family members.

- Should an officer be killed or seriously injured in the line of duty, the Last Wishes Program packet allows employees to document in advance who they want contacted, and by whom. It also allows officers to document other pertinent information which will assist both their family and the police department with decisions immediately upon their death.
- Two different types of packets are available:
  - Sworn personnel
  - Civilian personnel
- All CRPD Academy recruits will receive instruction with the Last Wishes Program and receive a Last Wishes packet before graduating.
- Completed Last Wishes packets are maintained in a locked Last Wishes file drawer and kept in the Equipment Checkout Vault (Command Vault). The key, labeled “Last Wishes Key”, for the Last Wishes file drawer is maintained in the Command Office’s locked key cabinet.
  - The confidential packets are sealed up by the employee at the time of completion and turned over to any commander or the Honor Guard lead to be placed into the locked file drawer in the command vault.
  - Each officer’s completed packet contains very personal information. All information provided is considered confidential.
  - Packets will only be opened by the department upon either the death or serious injury of an officer.
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REQUIRED REVIEWERS: Honor Guard Lead

REVISED DATE: 7/31/2014

- Unopened packets will be returned to the participant:
  - At the retirement or termination of employment of the participant.
  - At the request of the participant (i.e. to update a packet; terminate from the program, etc.).

- January of each year, an email reminder will be sent to all CRPD employees reminding/encouraging departmental members who have previously completed a Last Wishes Program packet to make any updates to their packet as needed (recent marriage, divorce, change in contact info, etc.).
- Changes to existing packets can be made at any time throughout the year.
- Changes can be made on an existing form, or a new form may be filled out. When the form has been removed from the original sealed envelope for updating by the employee, it should be sealed into a new envelope, which can be provided by contacting the current CRPD Honor Guard commander in charge of the Last Wishes Program.
- Officers are requested to keep in mind that completing this packet as thoroughly as possible can only benefit and assist their loved ones during a traumatic time in their life, plus help assure their final wishes are met. There is no minimum or maximum amount of information that needs to be disclosed and all information is at the discretion of the officer.

The lead Honor Guard commander will act as liaison in the unfortunate event of a line-of-duty death or serious injury. (Refer to Notification Procedures directive) The lead Honor Guard commander will create a Last Wishes checklist to ensure all issues with family, hospitals, insurance/retirement system notifications, benefits, and any additional obligations are addressed.