

Information Sharing and Privacy After a Service Member's Death

When a service member dies, some information about the death might be shared publicly. Learn what information the military may release automatically and what's released only with your consent. Knowing the difference can help you better understand what you might see in the media and what protections you have regarding your personal information.

After a service member's death, the release of information generally falls into two categories:

- **Standard information:** details the War Department is permitted to release automatically
- **Consent-based information:** details released only with a survivor's written permission

Standard information

The military can release limited information about a deceased service member, such as confirmation of death, the date and location of death and the cause and manner of death. Casualty information isn't released publicly until 24 hours after the last next of kin has been notified.

Some information may be requested under federal transparency laws, including the Freedom of Information Act, or FOIA. The military reviews all requests and withholds information that would clearly invade personal privacy, such as personally identifiable information for living individuals.

Consent-based information

The military can't release certain details about surviving family members without written consent. This includes information such as contact details, relationships to the service member and other PII. These details are protected by federal privacy laws.

Choosing not to provide consent won't affect your benefits or the support you receive from the military. You may revoke your consent at any time by submitting a formal written request to your service branch's Casualty Office. Any information released before your request is processed cannot be withdrawn.

Need help?

Your CAO is there to answer questions, explain information-sharing options and support you at your own pace. You don't have to manage everything at once – or alone.

For more information, refer to:

<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/casualty-mortuary-affairs/survivor-assistance/survivor-information>.

