



Casualty Assistance

Military Community and Family Policy

Background

Department of Defense policy states that “casualty procedures shall be uniform across the military departments except to the extent necessary to reflect the traditional practices or customs of a particular military department.”

Program highlights

- **Casualty reporting** uses the Defense Casualty Information Processing System, a single standard system that supports uniform procedures, accounting and accurate reporting of casualties, assistance to family members, benefits tracking, coordination of mortuary affairs services and return of personal effects and human remains.
- **Personal casualty notification** involves assignment of a two-person uniformed notification team, at a minimum, to surviving family members as identified on the service member’s Record of Emergency Data.
- **Assignment of a casualty assistance officer or representative** provides families with direct assistance as long as they need or request it.
- **Casualty assistance** includes transportation assistance, applying for and receiving benefits and entitlements, obtaining copies of records, reports and investigations, legal assistance (including tax issues), ensuring receipt of personal effects, mortuary services and funeral honors, relocation (including shipment of household goods), liaising with other federal agencies and providing information and referral including bereavement counseling, spiritual support and other assistance as the surviving family requests.
- **Transportation assistance** provides eligible family members travel to the bedsides of wounded, ill and injured service members, to burials, unit or installation memorial services and to Dover Air Force Base, Delaware, to observe the dignified transfer of the remains of loved ones who die overseas and whose remains are directed to go to Dover Air Force Base for a forensic pathology investigation.
- **Comprehensive guides** for primary next of kin of service members who die on active duty:
 - “A Survivor's Guide to Benefits: Taking Care of Our Families” (<https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/ResourceGuides/A-Survivors-Guide-To-Benefits.pdf>) details federal benefits available to families whose loved one died on active duty, including coordinated benefit information from the Department of Defense, Department of Veterans Affairs and Social Security Administration.



- “The Days Ahead: Essential Papers for Families of Fallen Service Members” (<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/ResourceGuides/The-Days-Ahead.pdf>) is a comprehensive binder organizing tool designed to assist surviving families in the days following the death of their loved one.
- **The Interactive Online Survivor Benefits Report** (<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/leaders-service-providers/casualty-assistance/interactive-online-survivor-benefit-reports>) is available to all eligible family members whose loved ones have died on active duty, with invaluable information on all current and estimated future benefits for a family’s financial planning.
- **The Gold Star and Surviving Family Member Representative program** (<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/family-relationships/survivor-casualty-assistance/support-after-loss/gold-star-and-surviving-family-member-representatives>) provides support and addresses complaints by spouses and other dependents of deceased service members regarding casualty assistance or receipt of benefits authorized by law.

Eligibility

All active-duty members, Department of Defense civilians (based on duty status) and activated National Guard and reserve members are eligible.

Additional information

Military OneSource at <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/family-and-relationships/casualty-assistance-and-surviving-loss>