**Responding to the Death of an Employee UPPS 04.04.58
Issue No. 1
Effective Date: 07/27/2021
Next Review Date: 06/01/2025 (E4Y)
Sr. Reviewer: Assistant Vice President for Human Resources**

**POLICY STATEMENT**

*Texas State University is committed to providing proper information and resources to the university community when responding to the death of an employee.*

**01. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

01.01 The death of an employee can have a significant impact on the Texas State University community. This impact calls for a sensitive and well-planned response. It is critical that all members of the university community conduct themselves with the highest degree of compassion and professionalism while maintaining clear communication among the various staff that will be performing specific tasks related to the death of an employee.

01.02 The Office of Human Resources is the primary administrative office responsible for coordinating the internal university response to the death of an employee. The creation and implementation of this policy will ensure a caring, professional, coordinated, and consistent response to the death of an employee.

01.03 Each employee death may have unique circumstances that should be taken on a case-by-case basis; however, this policy will ensure proper notification to appropriate university administrative offices, identify support resources for university community members impacted by the death of an employee, and indicate procedures to work with affected family members.

**02. DEFINITIONS**

02.01 Appropriate Law Enforcement (LE) Agency – the local law enforcement agency with police jurisdiction. In an emergency, calling 9.1.1 is most appropriate. In general, the University Police Department (UPD) will have jurisdiction over university property; however, UPD has agreements and may collaborate with other LE agencies (e.g., San Marcos Police Department, Hays County Sherriff’s Office, Round Rock Police Department, Williamson County Sherriff’s Office, and state LE). For jurisdictions outside of the United States (e.g., during Education Abroad programs), contact local emergency agencies.

02.02 Death of a Confirmed Active Employee – a death that has been declared by the appropriate law enforcement agency authority and the next-of-kin has been notified.

02.03 Death of an Employee on University Property – The death of an employee shall be regarded as having occurred on university property if the death takes place on property owned, leased, or maintained by the university. The death of an employee may be treated as having occurred on university property if it occurs while the employee is participating in a program or function hosted or supported by the university (e.g., employees traveling for approved university business or faculty teaching abroad).

02.04 Employee – an individual who is actively employed by Texas State in a faculty or staff position. This policy does not apply to student employees, as they are included in [UPPS No. 07.11.06](https://policies.txstate.edu/university-policies/07-11-06.html), Responding to Student Deaths.

02.05 Support for Employees Impacted by the Death of an Employee

Employees impacted by the death of another employee can contact staff in the following departments for support and assistance:

* + 1. Human Resources – Bobcat Balance (employee assistance program); and
		2. their supervisor or department head.

02.06 Suspected Death of an Employee – a person who appears deceased but has not been evaluated by emergency personnel or declared deceased by the appropriate authority (i.e., justice of the peace or medical examiner).

**03. PROCEDURES FOR RESPONDING TO THE DEATH OF AN EMPLOYEE**

03.01 Death of an Employee on University Property

a. All employee deaths on university property shall be reported to UPD.

b. UPD will determine the need to conduct a death investigation in accordance with the [Texas Code of Criminal Procedure](https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/CR/htm/CR.49.htm).

* + 1. UPD will notify or coordinate notification of next-of-kin, as necessary.
		2. UPD will notify Human Resources when there is confirmation of an employee’s death.
		3. If the employee is an international employee, UPD will notify the International Affairs Office or the assistant vice president for International Affairs as soon as possible to coordinate notification of next-of-kin and any other necessary processes.
		4. Under no circumstances should there be any discussion about the cause of death.

03.02 Death of an Employee Off University Property – Response to any death occurring off university property will be handled initially by the appropriate LE agency, medical examiner, or hospital involved. It is the responsibility of these agencies to notify the next-of-kin. UPD may be notified to assist in this process. When the information is communicated to Human Resources, the same process of internal communication within the university will be followed.

03.03 Reporting Confirmed Employee Deaths

a. Anyone who learns of a confirmed employee death not attended by UPD should report the death to Human Resources.

b. Human Resources is responsible for assisting with notification to appropriate parties regarding the death of the employee including:

 1) the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

(VPAA) concerning death of faculty and the Office of the Vice President for Finance and Support Services (VPFSS) concerning the death of a staff member;

2) department contacts – deceased employee’s supervisor and

administrative support are responsible for completing necessary

paperwork including submitting Personnel Change Requests (PCRs) and request for payment of leave, if applicable;

3) the Employees Retirement System (ERS) regarding insurance benefits, if applicable;

4) the Teachers Retirement System (TRS) or Optional Retirement Program (ORP) provider regarding retirement benefits, if applicable; and

 5) the Office of Payroll and Tax Compliance regarding final payment details.

**04. CAMPUS COMMUNITY NOTIFICATION**

04.01 Upon confirmation of the death of an active employee, Human Resources will notify the Office of the Provost and VPAA for a faculty member or the VPFSS Office for a staff member. Human Resources will coordinate institutional follow-up actions as needed and maintain internal procedures and notification lists for this purpose. These actions may include, but are not limited to:

a. coordinating expressions of condolence on behalf of Texas State to the next of kin or other appropriate person;

b. interfacing with the family of the deceased to coordinate details relating to employee benefits of the deceased employee; and

c. providing information to the Dean of Students Office for inclusion in the Bobcat Pause ceremony.

04.02 Office of the Provost and VPAA or VPFSS Notifications

The Office of the Provost and VPAA or the Office of the VPFSS will send a notification to the campus community regarding the death of an active employee and will include the following:

a. the employee name, title, and department;

b. the date of death; and

c. a statement of support resources available, if needed.

04.03 University President Notifications

a. If the death of the employee occurred on university property, the university president, or designee, will notify faculty, staff, and students through official communication channels and will include:
1) the employee name, title, and department;

2) the date of death;

3) the location of death;

4) a statement regarding whether there is a security risk to others, if

needed; and

5) a statement of support resources available, if needed.

b. The university president has the discretion of notifying the campus community about the death of the employee off university property, as deemed appropriate.

04.04 The Office of the Provost and VPAA, the VPFSS Office, Human Resources, and UPD will work with the Office of Media Relations to respond to media inquiries, if necessary. Responses to the media will be in accordance with [UPPS No. 06.05.02](https://policies.txstate.edu/university-policies/06-05-02.html), Responding to Media Inquiries and will focus on sharing, as deemed appropriate:

a. the employee name, title, and department;

b. the date of death;

c. the location of death;

d. a statement that there is or is not a security risk to others and if there is an ongoing investigation;

e. Counseling Center services and other appropriate offices to assist those in the university community impacted by the death of the employee; and

f. appropriate university contact information

**05. ON-CAMPUS REMEMBRANCE**

05.01 Each year, the Texas State Student Foundation and the Dean of Students Office sponsor [Bobcat Pause](https://sfoundation.studentinvolvement.txst.edu/sf-events/bobcat-pause.html), a memorial service to remember and honor members of the university community who passed away during the preceding year. The event is held every spring (for more information, visit [Bobcat Pause](https://sfoundation.studentinvolvement.txst.edu/sf-events/bobcat-pause.html)).

**06. REVIEWERS OF THIS UPPS**

06.01 Reviewers of this UPPS include the following:

Position Date

Assistant Vice President for Human July 1 E4Y
Resources

Director, University Police Department July 1 E4Y

 Associate Provost July 1 E4Y

Vice President for University Advancement July 1 E4Y

**07. CERTIFICATION STATEMENT**This UPPS has been approved by the following individuals in their official capacities and represents Texas State policy and procedures from the date of this document until superseded.
Assistant Vice President for Human Resources; senior reviewer of this UPPS

Vice President for Finance and Support Services

President