

Administrative Protocol Related to the Death of CMU Faculty or Staff

Learning of a death of a member of our CMU family is difficult. Information about the death of a university employee may be received from a variety of sources. When the death of an employee occurs, often a co-worker or supervisor may be among the first to become aware. This protocol is developed to help guide communication processes.

Reporting an employee death in the workplace

When an employee death occurs in the workplace, the supervisor or co-worker immediately contacts:

- **CMU Police (call 911)**
 - CMU Police may contact Human Resources (HR) or Faculty Personnel Services (FPS) for the deceased employee's emergency contact information
 - Human Resources (staff, temporaries) – (989) 774-3661
 - Faculty Personnel Services (faculty, post-doctoral research fellows)- (989) 774-3368
 - CMU Police will notify the deceased employee's family
- If the death is possibly work-related:
 - Worker's Compensation – work-related death must be reported to MIOSHA within 8 hours (call 989-774-7177 to report) **AND**
 - Risk Management, Environmental Health & Safety (989)774-7398

Communication protocols for all employee death notices

The **immediate supervisor** of the deceased employee is responsible to:

- Notify Human Resources - Benefits & Wellness, (989) 774-3661 (for staff employees) or Faculty Personnel Services, (989) 774-3668 (for faculty or post-doctoral research fellows)
- Notify their next level supervisor (who will in turn notify their supervisor, etc.)
- Notify department colleagues (if applicable, AFTER the family has been notified)
- With sensitivity to the family, obtain funeral details when known
- Confirm with the family that an announcement regarding the employee's death may be shared with the university community, verify what information may be shared, and work with University Communications to announce through Our CMU. A university-wide announcement allows the university to respectfully recognize the loss to the entire CMU community, and enables others to therefore approach colleagues with sensitivity and support in the continuity of operations. A communication within the department or college may also be appropriate.
- Follow the protocols for employee separation outlined in this document

Helping Employees Handle the Loss of a Co-Worker

- EAP services: The department may wish to share EAP contact information with employees so they may reach out individually as needed, or the department may wish to have someone from EAP come to the office to be available for employees. If the department wishes to bring EAP into the workplace, this can be coordinated with the assistance of Human Resources.
- Please see Human Resources/Employee Assistance Program webpage for additional resources:

<https://www.cmich.edu/about/human-resources/benefits-wellness/wellness-benefits/health-advocate>

AVP/Human Resources or Executive Director/Faculty Personnel

- AVP/HR or Executive Director/Faculty Personnel will notify the Vice President/Finance and Administrative Services (staff death) or Provost/Executive Vice President (faculty death), who will in turn notify the President

Human Resources and Faculty Personnel Services

Upon confirming the death of a staff or faculty member, HR (for staff) or FPS (for faculty) will also notify payroll (for handling final paycheck) and the other departments listed where an employee might have an outstanding account:

- Payroll: payroll@cmich.edu
- Student Account Services & University Billing: billing@cmich.edu
- CMU Connect: connect@cmich.edu
- Advancement: advancement@cmich.edu
- CMU Health: healthservices@cmich.edu

For benefits eligible Staff and Faculty, HR/Benefits & Wellness will:

- Prepare a condolence letter to be mailed to the employee's beneficiary. Letters vary by employee group, benefit enrollment and wellness program participation
- Communicate information about [Survivor Benefits](#) to the employee's family and assist with life insurance, retirement, and other benefit programs

Separation protocols – Department

The deceased employee's department is responsible for separation actions, with sensitivity to the grieving family and colleagues. The Staff Separation Checklist is a useful guide and is available here:

<https://www.cmich.edu/docs/default-source/finance-and-administrative-services-division/human-resources/employment-services/employment-policies--procedures-and-resources/termination-checklist.pdf>

- Initiate separation via the Personnel Transactions System (<https://apps.cmich.edu/personneltransactions/>)
 - HR/FPS will process separation as Termination - Deceased
- Request the family return all institutional property, keys and employee identification card
- Coordinate with the family the retrieval of employee's personal effects from the workplace
- Notify Payroll/Travel to cancel the employee purchasing card (if applicable)
- The supervisor should provide HR: employee.relations@cmich.edu or FPS: FPS@cmich.edu with the following information so they may seek appropriate approvals for access to the employee's data:
 - To whom access to the employee's email account should be designated
 - To whom the employee's voicemail should be forwarded
 - Other data locations of the employee to which the department may need access (OneDrive, U:Drive, etc.)
- Upon approvals from HR/FPS, work with Office of Information Technology to set up an out of office reply for email, access to the employee's email and voicemail accounts, and access to any other locations for which departmental data may need to be retrieved.
- Replace the employee's voice mail message. For example: "You have reached Pat Smith's office. Dr. Smith will not be able to take your call; please call XXX for assistance."
- Cancel access to another CMU business information systems

Faculty Research, if applicable

- An appropriate person should be designated by the Dean to check the employee's research space for anything that should be secured or removed (chemicals, valuables, etc.). This designated person should perform a preliminary check of the employee's research space for personal property that may need to be returned to the employee's family.

Additional Information

Payroll - final paycheck

In the likely event wages are still owed to the employee at the time of death, CMU will issue a check made payable to the beneficiary or to the estate of the employee. Final wages paid within the same calendar year in which the employee died are not subject to Federal or State Income Tax Withholdings, but they are subject to Social Security and Medicare taxes. The deceased employee's final pay will include payoff of accrued but unused vacation paid up to the 300-hour maximum, compensatory and personal time, if applicable. The beneficiary or estate will need to be issued a Form 1099-MISC with "other income" listed in Box 3 for the gross amount paid at the end of the calendar year.

CMU Connect

If the deceased employee had cell phone service through CMU Connect, service and billing to the employee's account is stopped immediately. The family will have 30 days to decide if they would like to deactivate the service and number, transfer the number to an off-campus wireless account or to transfer the number to another campus account.

Student Account Services and University Billing (SASUB)

If the deceased employee is also a student, all late fees or billing to their student account is stopped immediately. Any existing balances are written off to the originating cost center. If there is a credit on the account, the family can choose to receive a check or receive the refund via direct deposit. If the employee was receiving financial aid, disbursements of any aid will be canceled which could cause a bill back. A financial analyst from SASUB will work with the family to provide situation specific guidance regarding financial aid.