

Bereavement of a Staff Policy

POL 29/2019 Version 1/2019

Commencement Date	24 January 2019
Relevant Legislation/ Reference Document	ERP General Orders
Review Date	The review date is 12 months after the commencement date and every three years after that.

POLICY STATEMENT

1 Intent

The Office of the Auditor General recognizes that the fact of death is unavoidable and values all staff it has at a particular point in time. As a caring employer, the office seeks to create a supportive environment for its staff & their families during times of bereavement. The death of a staff not only causes grief to the staff's immediate family, but also to other employees at OAG.

2 Scope

OAG is committed to providing a supportive work environment and contributing to the health and wellbeing of all staff.

The office shall do whatever is within its means to reasonably contribute to reducing the grief of the family over the loss of a family member.

This policy applies to all staff that are working within the OAG under their contract of service.

3 Objective(s)

- To ensure a uniform, fair & consistent approach in dealing with death of a staff
- To ensure following principles are adhered to: Equality, Fairness, Respect and Compliance.

4 Definitions and Acronyms

Policy Maker Auditor-General

Management Approval of Executive Management Committee

5 Supporting Procedures and Guidelines

The guidelines to this policy are attached as Annexure I to this policy. This information will provide the background to the development of the policy should officers need clarification.

RESPONSIBILITIES	
Implementation	The Corporate Services are responsible for implementing the policy.
Compliance	All Staff are responsible for complying with the policy.
Monitoring and Evaluation	The Corporate Services are responsible for monitoring and evaluating the policy.
Development and/or Review	The Corporate Service will be responsible for developing and/or reviewing the policy.
Interpretation and Advice	The Deputy Auditor-General is responsible for interpreting and advice on the policy.



ANNEXURE 1

I. Execution Process

The following procedure will provide guidance and support when office has been advised of the death of a staff and may vary depending on the circumstances surrounding.

- 1) Having regard to the sensitivity of the situation, each member of the Management team will take appropriate action as the death of the staff member relates to their area of responsibility.
- 2) The office will seek to ensure that contact with the staff's family is timely and sensitive
- 3) Coordinating the overall response of OAG with the rest of the staff through the relevant Directors/Heads of Department.
- 4) The Death of a staff shall be dealt with sensitively and tactfully including:
 - Liaising with next of Kin. Contact details of the family members will be maintained in Personal Files at registry and database shall be kept with Senior Admin Officer Human Resource for easier reference. The same shall be made available to Directors/Heads of Department.
 - In the event of death abroad of OAG staff, arranging flights and accommodation for the period required, if necessary, normally 3-4 days, meeting the family at the airport, if required, assisting with the arrangements should this be required as well.
 - Acting as a contact point for the family for the duration required
 - Informing staff and external contacts /stakeholders about the death of the staff.
 - Liaising with medical insurance service provider if appropriate,
 - Liaising for a Memorial Service at a suitable time. This may vary between different religion & customs.
- 5) The office is committed to wellbeing and will seek to provide appropriate assistance to the staff's team members and work area as soon as possible after notification. This may include counselling or other interventions as required.
- 6) The office will ensure all appropriate primary consideration of family wishes are considered and as such office shall contribute towards, (if the following is required by family):
 - Liaising with family member to offer condolences and to seek their wishes regarding further process and support from OAG.
 - Publishing an obituary in newspapers and advising of the funeral services & memorial service containing photographs and detailed biographies.
 - Office providing sympathy contribution for the support of Family for a sum of \$750 (for hearse and coffin) while paying final respect for the late staff in addition to the voluntary contribution by staff.
- 7) Once the funeral details become known and subject to the agreement of the family, a communication will also be issued via email that staff will be attending the funeral of their late colleague. At the discretion of the Auditor General, staff shall attend the memorial service and/or funeral and will be allowed paid hours away from work for this, subject to operational needs. Staff who were on leave, shall attend the funeral for the duration and return on leave thereafter.
- 8) The office shall process all leave benefits to the designated beneficiaries.

II. Death of a Staff

Where a staff dies during the contract of service, the office must, as soon as practicable, and in any event not more than 14 days after the notification of death of the staff by medical certificate or statutory declaration, pay or deliver to the spouse; or if there is no spouse, to any of the dependents 18 years or over or to their legal guardians if the dependents are under the age of 18 years, all wages, other remuneration due to the deceased staff and any personal belongings of the deceased staff

If a staff who has been stationed away from his/her place of initial appointment dies, his/her family will be entitled to receive an allowance at the same level as the transfer allowance. Transfer Allowance will be paid at the following rates:

- (a) Single Officer \$190.00
- (b) Married Officer \$395.00

In the event of the death of an Insured overseas under the provisions of this benefit, Fiji Care will provide reimbursement for costs of embalming, coffin, transportation, or a contribution towards overseas funeral costs to a maximum of FJ\$6,000.

If a death occurs on working premises or premises of the client, the available staff shall inform the Supervisor/Director first, who shall inform the Police Department together with medical service and they become in charge of the investigation and scene through the conclusion of the investigation.

The Police investigates the cause of death and confirms the identity of the individual through those available nearby.

While in terms of emergency situations and for medical (local & overseas) evacuation, available staff shall do immediate referral for evacuation and inform the Insurance provider accordingly due to urgency of the matter. (Refer to the communications Policy – Chain of Communication during emergency)

III. Administration Process

Under the ERP, *Termination of contract is by expiry of the term of service or by death*

Subject to above, a written contract is terminated:

- a) by the expiry of the term for which the contract was made; or
- b) by the death of the staff before the expiry of the term for which the contract was made.
- c) The termination of a contract by the death of the staff does not limit any legal claims of the staff's heirs or personal representatives.
- d) Bringing back home the deceased staff shall be the responsibility of the office

IV. Role of Senior Admin Officer -Human Resource

- a) Initiate & Complete the End of Service processes and documentation.

- b) Process any outstanding documentation (leave forms, employment changes).
- c) Notify relevant officers that any outstanding bond shall be waived and that the deceased shall be removed from the payroll & other deductions.
- d) If deceased had other scheduled payments, the next of kin shall be made aware of.
- e) List, pack and safely store personal possessions until the next of kin is ready to retrieve them. Discuss arrangements for collection of personal possessions with a family representative at an appropriate time.

V. Acknowledgements and Expressions of Sympathy

Family members generally find comfort in condolences from friends and colleagues of the deceased, and it is recommended that the family's preferences are followed in relation to this. It is also important to keep in mind that reactions and response to death vary among cultures.

VI. Letter of Acknowledgement

Where appropriate, the office may prepare a Letter of Acknowledgment from the Auditor General to the deceased's family, for the term of service and being part of OAG family.

VII. Office Procedures

The office will not be liable for any injury and the consequential medical and other costs incurred if the injury is attributable to the gross misconduct of staff nor the insurance provider will not reimburse medical and other costs in respect of incapacity or death resulting from deliberate self-injury.

6 Review

This policy will be reviewed 12 months after implementation and every 3 years after that.

7 Who to Contact About this Policy

Any queries is directed to Deputy Auditor-General.

10 Approval

The Bereavement of a Staff Policy becomes effective on the date approved by the Executive Management Committee.

11 Revision/Change Log

Version 1.0	
Policy endorsed by:	Executive Management Committee
Policy approved by:	Auditor-General
Policy effective from:	24 January 2019
Policy to be reviewed by:	24 January 2020
Policy prepared by:	Senior Admin Officer (Training & Policy)
Manager responsible for policy:	Manager Corporate Services