



# **Manager guidance on the loss of an employee or an employee's loved one**

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# Manager guidance on the loss of an employee or an employee's loved one

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## In all cases of loss

Managers play a key role in helping employees deal with a loss, be it of a colleague or a loved one. In addressing all such situations, managers should:

- contact the human resources group for information on the organization's protocols and supports, including about leave provisions and procedures for security, IT and the return of government property <sup>1</sup> as applicable
- contact the [Pay Centre](#) to initiate procedures with pensions and benefits
- determine if there is a [mental health first aid](#) responder available and willing to provide support

- expect a wide range of emotional and behavioural reactions from those involved and be aware that those reactions may change over time
- be [empathetic](#) in communicating with those involved and be flexible, where possible, when it comes to supporting the employee, such as granting leave or adjusting workloads
- be aware of your own reactions and [needs](#), and seek support from your supervisor and the [Employee Assistance Program](#) as needed

## Loss of an employee

When an employee passes away, managers can help by respecting the wishes of those who represent the deceased, most often the family [2](#), and by supporting the employee's team.

### Respect the wishes of the family

Communicate with the human resources group to determine who should be your organization's key point of contact with the family.

If you are identified as the key point of contact, offer your condolences to the family and:

- ask them what information about the loss, such as funeral arrangements, should or should not be communicated to the deceased employee's team and organization
- direct them, as appropriate, to this [list](#) of steps to take when someone dies and let them know about resources available to them, including the [Employee Assistance Program](#)
- arrange with the family for return of any personal effects from the workplace and the return of government property

### Support the team

Contact the human resources group and the [Employee Assistance Program](#), if needed, for help in developing a plan to support staff.

Inform the deceased's colleagues through thoughtful messaging that:

- reminds them of resources they can access, including the:
  - [Employee Assistance Program](#)
  - benefits provided under the [Public Service Health Care Plan](#)
  - if available, the [mental health first aid](#) responder
- encourages them to prioritize their own well-being, recognizing that some employees may feel overwhelmed and may not be able to carry out their regular work duties

After the initial announcement:

- review the need to redistribute work duties within the team and to support employees that may need to take some time to address the loss
- if the team wishes it, consider having a group discussion with affected team members

Check in regularly with your employees to gauge their need for support and acknowledge those who may be taking on extra workloads.

## Employee loss of a loved one

### Support your employee

- Ask your employee about how you can best support them
  - this may include approving bereavement leave, adjusting workloads, periodic check-ins or other measures
- Ask your employee if and how they plan to communicate about their loss, including what messages, if any, they would like you to provide to their colleagues
- Offer the employee the assistance of a [mental health first aid responder](#), if available
- Encourage the employee to prioritize their well-being and remind them of the resources they can access, including:
  - the [Employee Assistance Program](#)

- the benefits provided under the [Public Service Health Care Plan](#)
- relevant leave provisions available to them under their collective agreement
- Direct the employee to information on the pensions and benefits process: [When death occurs](#)

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## Footnotes

1

Protocol may vary for certain occupational groups, such as Border or Correctional Services, regarding loss in the conduct of duty.

2

This guide uses the term ‘family’ to refer to all authorized representatives of the deceased person.

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