



NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU
111 SOUTH GEORGE MASON DRIVE
ARLINGTON VA 22204-1382

ARNG-HRF

01 OCT 2010

MEMORANDUM FOR The Adjutants General of all States, Puerto Rico, the US Virgin Islands, Guam, and the Commanding General of the District of Columbia

SUBJECT: Suicide Investigation Policy Amendment

1. References.

a. Army Regulation (AR) 15-6, Procedures for Investigating Officers and Boards of Officers, 10 February 2006.

b. AR 600-8-4, Line of Duty Policy Procedures and Investigations, para 2-3 c (3), 4 September 2008.

c. AR 600-63, Army Health Promotion, 7 September 2010.

d. Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-24, Health Promotion, Risk Reduction, and Suicide Prevention, 7 September 2010.

e. Memorandum, NGB-SFSS, 5 May 2009, subject: Suicide Investigation Policy (enclosure).

2. The investigation of ARNG suicides continues to remain a priority as we seek to better understand why Soldiers are dying by suicide. The information gleaned from the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army (VCSA) report and from AR 15-6 investigations allows the ARNG and Army Suicide Prevention Task Force to craft better policies and programs in the hope of stemming future suicides.

3. The VCSA's 37-Line Report is the initial report submitted to the Soldier Family Support and Services Division (ARNG-HRF). This report should be submitted no later than 5 days following the submission of the Serious Incident Report. In cases where a lack of information exists, units should send the case information they have within the 5-day time frame and amend the original VCSA report at a later date.

4. The time frame for AR 15-6 investigations remains the same IAW the DARNG Suicide Investigation Policy memorandum dated 5 May 2009. In order to better standardize the AR 15-6 investigation process as it relates to suicide, the following procedural changes and documents will comprise a completed AR 15-6 investigation sent to ARNG-HRF.

a. The appointing authority for all AR 15-6 investigations for suspected and confirmed suicides is the Adjutant General. This authority will not be delegated. The letter of appointment should be included in the final packet.

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b. All statements taken from military personnel will be captured on Department of the Army (DA) Form 2823 (Sworn Statement). If a witness is suspected of criminal offense under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, other federal law, or state law, the investigating officer (IO) will advise that witness of his or her rights against self-incrimination. In such cases, a DA Form 3881 (Rights Warning Procedure/Waiver Certificate) will be completed.

c. A completed DA Form 1574 (Report of Proceedings by Investigating Officer/Board of Officers) will serve as the base product of the investigation. The Adjutant General will concur/non-concur with the findings and recommendations of the IO in Section VIII.

5. All suicides are listed as "pending" until a civilian or military coroner issues a death certificate. It is imperative that ARNG-HRF receives the final adjudicated death certificate as soon as it is issued. State Suicide Prevention Program Managers are responsible for forwarding this information to ARNG-HRF. Final determination on whether a case is considered a suicide is based on the coroner's ruling.

6. Concurrent with the VCSA report and AR 15-6 investigation processes, units will conduct formal line of duty (LOD) investigations when a Soldier is suspected or is confirmed to have died by suicide. These LOD investigations are mandatory for any Soldier who is in a Title-10 or Title-32 status.

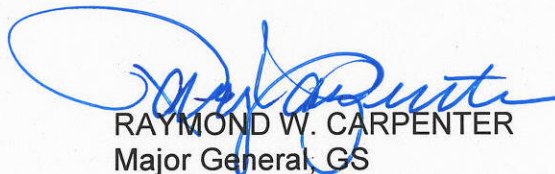
7. In cases where a suicide occurs when a Soldier is in a non-duty status and there are contributing factors caused by deployment (e.g., post-traumatic stress disorder, total brain injury, or depression), an LOD investigation should also be initiated. The LOD investigation does not replace the existing requirement to conduct the AR 15-6 investigation.

8. The point of contact is LTC Reginald Barnes, Branch Chief, Soldier and Family Support Division, at DSN 329-7573, 703-601-7573 or reggie.barnes@us.army.mil.

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2. Suicide Reporting Process Map



RAYMOND W. CARPENTER

Major General, GS

Acting Director, Army National Guard



NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU
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NGB-SFSS

5 May 2009

MEMORANDUM FOR The Adjutants General of all States, Puerto Rico, the US Virgin Islands, Guam, and the Commanding General of the District of Columbia

SUBJECT: Suicide Investigation Policy

1. References:

a. Army Regulation (AR) 15-6, Procedures for Investigating Officers and Boards of Officers, 2 Oct 06.

b. AR 600-8-4, Line of Duty Policy, Procedures, and Investigations, 4 Sep 08.

2. Purpose. To announce policy change associated with suicide reporting and tracking.

3. Background. The entire Army is experiencing an increase in the number of reported suicides. Because of this increase, the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army (VCSA) now conducts monthly briefings using the VCSA briefing format (enclosed) to discuss, in detail, all suicides. Given the difficulties associated with collecting information about these deaths, it is prudent to initiate policy that produces timely information that leads to practical lessons learned for reducing the number of suicides.

4. Policy. Commanders will conduct AR 15-6 investigations into all suspected or confirmed suicides of Soldiers assigned to their respective commands. An investigation will take no more than 10 consecutive days and the results will be e-mailed to NGB-SFSS at sssb@ngb.army.mil no later than 5 working days after the investigation has been completed. The appointing authority for these investigations is the State Adjutant General.

a. Commanders are encouraged to utilize the same investigating officer to conduct both the informal AR 15-6 investigation and the formal line of duty investigation required by AR 600-8-4 whenever possible. The AR 15-6 investigation is not punitive in nature and must answer, at a minimum, all of the questions identified in the VCSA briefing format. The investigating officer will use all of the gathered information to complete the VCSA briefing format. The investigating officer will send the completed briefing to the ARNG operations center and NGB-SFSS at sssb@ngb.army.mil.

b. The investigating officer shall be appointed as soon as the appointing authority has reason to suspect a suicide has occurred. The investigating officer should coordinate with the casualty assistance officer to collect information from the family and coordinate with the

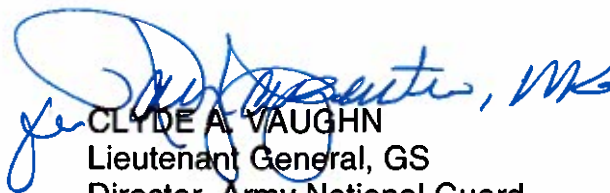
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jurisdictional investigative agency to get incident reports and details. All personnel should give extreme attention to the sensitive nature of these investigations when gathering data.

c. The investigation is not in lieu of a serious incident report (SIR). The SIR must be submitted to the ARNG operations center within 24 to 48 hours of any reported death of an ARNG Soldier. The commander will ensure that the SIR and the VCSA briefing format are provided to the Director, Army National Guard. A thorough commander's assessment is critical for gaining insight to the Soldier's mindset prior to the suicide.

5. The point of contact is Ms. Erin Thede, Chief, Soldier/Family Support Services Division, at DSN 327-7597, 703-607-7597, or erin.thede@us.army.mil.

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CLYDE A. VAUGHN
Lieutenant General, GS
Director, Army National Guard

Suicide Reporting Process Map

Step 1: A death by suicide occurs.

Step 2: The State JOC submits an SIR to the ARNG Watch Center within 24 hours.

Step 3: The VCSA 37-Line Report is submitted to ARNG-HRF NLT 5 calendar days after initial SIR is submitted.

Step 4: An Article 15-6 investigation, lasting no more than 10 days, is completed, and a copy of the investigation is sent to ARNG-HRF NLT 5 days following the conclusion of the investigation.

Step 5: An LOD is initiated as a concurrent investigative process for all suspected/confirmed suicides of Title 10/32 AGR and Soldiers who have previously deployed.

Step 6: A copy of the death certificate is submitted to ARNG-HRF immediately upon receipt from the coroner's office.