



# **An Garda Síochána**

## **Policy Document**

### **Investigation of Sudden, Unexplained or Suspicious Deaths**

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## Purpose

Deaths of a sudden, unexplained or suspicious nature can have a profound impact on the immediate family of the deceased and the wider community. This Policy and accompanying Procedure document provides members of An Garda Síochána, responding to such incidents, with a structured approach to meet both statutory and ethical obligations placed upon them. In adhering to its statutory function, as set out in section 7, Garda Síochána Act, 2005, as amended, it is imperative that An Garda Síochána carries out a thorough and professional investigation. Each investigation shall be in accordance with the positive obligations of An Garda Síochána under Article 2 of the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR).

This Policy must be read in conjunction with the accompanying Procedures document. The Procedures document sets the standards for members of An Garda Síochána during the initial response and investigation of sudden, unexplained or suspicious deaths.

This Policy and associated Procedure document aim to:

- ensure that a thorough and professional investigation is conducted by An Garda Síochána.
- outlines the roles and responsibilities of all members of An Garda Síochána in the investigation of sudden, unexplained or suspicious deaths.
- support and guide members of An Garda Síochána when responding to and investigating such deaths while fulfilling their statutory and investigative obligations.
- emphasise the need for empathy and diplomacy in these investigations.

## Scope

This Policy and associated documents will apply to all Garda and Civilian staff with particular relevance to First Responders, Supervisors, Senior Investigating Officers, District Officers, Incident Room Co-ordinators, Crime Scene Examiners, Crime Scene Managers and those members of An Garda Síochána detailed with the duty to preserve the scenes of such deaths.

This Policy will also apply to any police officer seconded to An Garda Síochána from the Police Service of Northern Ireland in accordance with section 53, Garda Síochána Act, 2005.

## Policy Statement

An Garda Síochána provides a consistent and appropriate level of investigation to all reported deaths in order to ensure that those deaths not arising from natural causes are identified and investigated in accordance with the positive obligations of An Garda Síochána under Article 2 of the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR).

Members of An Garda Síochána shall act in accordance with the Code of Ethics with due respect for the rights of persons and their dignity as human beings. When investigating any death, members of An Garda Síochána will consider the individual needs of any person with whom they are dealing.

**Compliance with this Policy and accompanying Procedure is mandatory for all Garda and Civilian Staff.**



## Related Documents

- 1) the Garda Síochána Investigation of Sudden, Unexplained or Suspicious Deaths Procedures Document

## Legal & Human Rights Screening

This Policy has been Legal and Human Rights screened in terms of the respective obligations placed on An Garda Síochána for the subject area concerned.

## Ethical Standards & Commitments

Every person working in An Garda Síochána must observe and adhere to the standards and commitments set out in the [Code of Ethics](#) for An Garda Síochána and uphold and promote this Code throughout the organisation.

## Policy Review

This Policy will be reviewed 12 months from its date of effect, and every 3 years thereafter.

