

## NCA FIRST NOTICE OF EVENT

**1. REASON FOR ISSUE:** To update the National Cemetery Administration (NCA) First Notice of Event (FNOE) policy and associated responsibilities and reporting procedures and requirements.

**2. SUMMARY OF MAJOR CHANGES:** This directive:

a. Updates existing and incorporates new FNOE reporting procedures and requirements, including for FNOEs that constitute Serious Incident Reports; and

b. Clarifies the officials whose visit to a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) national cemetery, to include their attendance or participation in a ceremony or special event in their official capacity, require the cemetery to submit a very important person (“VIP”) FNOE.

**3. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** NCA Cemetery Operations (41A), 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420, is responsible for the material contained in this Directive. Questions may be referred to the Deputy Director, Cemetery Operations.

**4. REFERENCES AND RELATED PUBLICATIONS:**

a. VA Directive 0321, Serious Incident Reports (June 6, 2012).

b. VA Directive 0322, VA Integrated Operations Center (VA IOC) (April 29, 2010).

c. VA Handbook 0322.1, VA Integrated Operations Center (VA IOC) (November 10, 2011).

d. NCA Directive 0320, NCA Emergency Preparedness Program (February 15, 2022).

**5. SUPERSESSION:** NCA Directive 0322, NCA First Notice of Event (FNOE) (October 29, 2019).

**6. RECERTIFICATION:** This publication is scheduled for recertification on the last day of October in 2029.

/s/

Ronald E. Walters

Acting Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs

Distribution: Electronic

## NCA FIRST NOTICE OF EVENT

### 1. PURPOSE AND AUTHORITY:

a. This directive establishes policy and associated responsibilities and procedures for Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) National Cemetery Administration (NCA) personnel related to the reporting of events, conditions, and incidents as identified in this document and in accordance with VA Integrated Operations Center (VA IOC) requirements.

b. The statutory authority for this directive is codified in Sections 307, 2400(a), 2404(a), and 8117 of Title 38, United States Code (U.S.C.).

**2. BACKGROUND:** The VA IOC is the Department's primary office for data integration and analysis of events and incidents that have the potential to impact VA. NCA supports the VA IOC with dedicated personnel (referred to as the "NCA Watch Desk"). The NCA Watch Desk serves as NCA's primary point of contact for reporting and analysis related to events or incidents that have the potential to impact NCA. These impacts may include but are not limited to disruptions to interment operations or the provision of other memorial benefits, safety and security concerns, media engagements, and site visits by elected officials or VA senior leaders.

**3. POLICY:** It is NCA policy that:

a. Supervisory employees (or their designees) at every level of the organization will report events, conditions, and/or incidents identified in this directive at Appendix A to NCA Central Office's senior leadership group and applicable officials, and staff members for their situational awareness and so they can take any requisite actions, where applicable, to address the circumstance; and

b. Supervisory employees (or their designees) will report these events, conditions, and/or incidents within a specific amount of time and using a standardized mechanism and format referred to as a First Notice of Event (FNOE).

### 4. RESPONSIBILITIES:

a. **Executive Director, Cemetery Operations**, is responsible for establishing an FNOE process, pursuant to their responsibility to provide NCA's personnel support to the VA IOC in NCA Directive 0320, NCA Emergency Preparedness Program.

b. **Deputy Director, Cemetery Operations**, is responsible for facilitating engagement between NCA Central Office senior leadership and the Supervisor, Current and Integrated Operations, for the purpose of making updates or changes to the FNOE process or its administration/management.

c. **Supervisor, Current and Integrated Operations**, is responsible for:

(1) Managing execution of the FNOE process provided in Appendix C;

(2) Developing, implementing, and maintaining the following electronic resources:

(a) An FNOE template for standard incident reporting and templates for any specialized FNOEs that require additional or specific information (e.g., Active Duty, KIA);

(b) A central site/online location for all NCA Supervisory Employees (or their designees) to access these FNOE templates; and

(c) An organizational system using a searchable tracker/record and file structure to assess, log, monitor, and recall all FNOEs received.

(3) Managing the FNOE email distribution list to maintain it for currency;

(4) Developing and providing:

(a) Training for NCA Supervisory Employees on the FNOE process and how to submit a timely, accurate, and quality-compliant FNOE;

(b) A recurring status briefing on FNOE data and analysis to the Deputy Director and the Executive Director, Cemetery Operations, and to the District Executive Directors;

(5) Giving guidance and instruction to NCA Watch Officers to evaluate FNOEs for timeliness, accuracy, and/or quality;

(6) Directing NCA Watch Officers to reply to FNOEs for additional information or clarification about the reported incident in compliance with reporting requirements established in this directive, or as otherwise instructed by Cemetery Operations, NCA Central Office, or VA IOC management officials.

(7) Communicating issues or concerns to NCA Supervisory Employees (or their designees) for resolution about the timeliness, accuracy, and/or quality of FNOEs their office or facility is submitting.

d. **NCA Watch Officers** are responsible for:

(1) Executing the FNOE process provided in Appendix C; and

(2) Performing tasks delegated to them by the Supervisor, Current Integrated Operations, in support of executing the responsibilities assigned in paragraph 4.c. of this directive.

e. **All NCA Supervisory Employees**, to include members of the Senior Executive Service, are responsible for:

(1) Reporting incidents identified in Appendix A of this directive via FNOE in accordance with the timelines and procedures assigned in Appendix C;

(2) Designating personnel within their span of control to submit an FNOE on their behalf;

(3) Upon request, providing additional information or clarification about the incident they reported to an NCA Watch Officer or VA Central Office management official; and

(4) Coordinating with the Supervisor, Current and Integrated Operations, to address any issues or concerns with the timeliness, accuracy, and/or quality of FNOEs their office or facility is submitting.

f. **District Executive Directors**, in addition to the responsibilities assigned at paragraph 4.e., are responsible for communicating NCA's policy and procedures for submitting FNOEs to:

(1) Their district office staff; and

(2) The leadership teams at all VA national cemeteries within their district.

g. **All Non-Supervisory NCA Employees**, to include members of the Senior Executive Service, are responsible for informing their supervisor (or their supervisor's designee) about any incident they witness personally or that is brought to their attention that may be reportable via FNOE (reference Appendix A).

## 5. DEFINITIONS:

a. **Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)**. A document used by a federal agency under presidential directive to continue performing essential functions and mission execution under a broad range of adverse circumstances.

b. **Emergency Action Plan (EAP)**. A written document required by particular Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards. The purpose of an EAP is to facilitate and organize employer and employee actions during workplace emergencies. See, NCA Directive 0320.

c. **Facility Disaster Plan**. A document generally used by emergency management officials for government facilities that house multiple federal agencies to direct the actions of its residents or occupants during and after a disaster.

d. **First Notice of Event (FNOE)**. A standardized mechanism and format for supervisory employees (or their designees) to report reportable events to the appropriate organizational leaders and authorities for their immediate awareness.

e. **Reportable Event.** Any event, condition, or incident that impacts, or has the potential to impact, the organization, to include (but not limited to) activities that disrupt the administration of memorial benefits to eligible Veterans and their families, caregivers, or survivors. (See Appendix A for a list of events that are reportable via FNOE.)

f. **Serious Incident Report (SIR).** Informs the Secretary of any reported adverse events or incidents likely to result in National media or Congressional attention. See, VA Directive 0321. (See Appendix B for a list of events, conditions or incidents that should be considered SIRs based on information provided in VA Directive 0321.)

g. **Very Important Person (VIP).** For the purposes of this directive, any individual in one of the following positions:

(1) A federal, state, or local elected official;

(2) A state or local government official;

(3) A U.S. territory elected official;

(4) A U.S. territory or tribal government official;

(5) Any governmental official or representative of a foreign government (including its military) or a member of their staff;

(6) From VA, which includes any of the Department's Senior Leaders (Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Chief of Staff, Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries and Key Officials). Names and biographies of VA's incumbent Senior Leaders are available on the VA Staff Biographies webpage; and

(7) Equivalent senior leaders from other federal agencies.

## 6. APPENDICES:

a. **Appendix A** – List of Reportable Events and Requirements for Additional Information;

b. **Appendix B** – Serious Incidents; and

c. **Appendix C** – First Notice of Event (FNOE) Process and Procedures.

**LIST OF REPORTABLE EVENTS AND REQUIREMENTS FOR  
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Reportable Event	Description	Follow-Up Required YES/NO?	Follow-Up Information
Active Duty Death – Non-Combat	Interment or memorial scheduled for a U.S. Service member that died while on active duty but was not killed in combat.	YES	Send a Follow-Up to initial FNOE once service and interment (or memorial) are completed to confirm this and report any issues.
Active Duty Death – Killed in Action (KIA)	Interment or memorial scheduled for a U.S. Service member that died while on active duty and was killed in action, including remains recovered and identified by the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency.	YES	Send a Follow-Up to initial FNOE once service and interment (or memorial) are completed to confirm this and report any issues.
Communications	Service disruption or outage for communication systems and/or devices including internet, phone, gravesite locator kiosk, GIS/GPS equipment, or damage/loss of Government-furnished IT equipment.	NO	N/A
Complaint	Any significant concern raised by a customer, partner (e.g., funeral services provider), or visitor that has potential to escalate and involve negative media coverage and/or congressional scrutiny.	NO	N/A
Eligibility Issue	Identification of the possible or confirmed interment or memorial of an ineligible individual, or of an individual who is eligible but barred from interment.	NO	N/A
Emergency Action Plan (EAP) Activation	Any incident that results in a facility activating one or more portions of its EAP.	YES	In coordination with NCA Watch Desk, send a Follow-Up to initial FNOE with accountability status of all NCA cemetery designated personnel, volunteers, and customers/visitors, and a facility condition assessment.
Facility Status	Any incident that requires (1) the closure of a facility or stoppage of daily operations for the remainder of the duty day (“Closure”); or (2) the late opening of a facility or the late start of normal daily operations (“Delayed Opening”).	YES	In coordination with NCA Watch Desk, send a Follow-Up to initial FNOE with a status update on the resolution of the incident which caused the Facility Closure or Delayed Opening.
Interment Issue	Any incident that adversely impacts an interment or memorial for an eligible decedent, including staffing shortages and burial errors, regardless of when an error is identified (e.g., sometime later during the Routine Gravesite Review).	NO	N/A
Marker Issue	Any incident that adversely impacts a gravesite or memorial marker or niche cover, or the marking of a gravesite, regardless of when it is identified (e.g., during the Routine Gravesite Review or in the course of daily/routine operations), to	NO	N/A

Reportable Event	Description	Follow-Up Required YES/NO?	Follow-Up Information
Marker Issue (continued)	include mismarked or unmarked gravesites, damaged or broken markers, or the identification of intact government-furnished markers off federal property (e.g., for sale at a flea market). <b>NOTES:</b> <i>(1) An FNOE is <u>not</u> required for marker errors identified on a cemetery's GIS/GPS Discrepancy Resolution Report.</i> <i>(2) If the error involves, or appears to involve, both a marker and an interment issue, prepare and submit the FNOE as an Interment Issue reportable event.</i>		
Media	Any engagement by a media or film industry representative or outlet (print or digital/online) that is: (1) requesting an interview with employees, volunteers or contractors; or (2) that is requesting access to federal property/facilities; or (3) that comes onto federal property/facilities without prior notification or request to facility leadership.	YES	Send a Follow-Up to initial FNOE once approved media engagement is completed to confirm this and report any issues.
Medical – Death (Other than Suicide)	Death of an employee, volunteer, contractor, or any other individual on federal property by any means other than suicide.	NO	N/A
Medical – Illness or Injury	Any instance of accidental injury or experience of acute illness, including loss of consciousness, by employees, volunteers, contractors or customers/visitors.	NO	N/A
Medical – Suicide	Death of an employee by suicide whether on or off federal property; death of any other individual by suicide on federal property.	NO	N/A
Medical – Suicidal Ideation	Observed employee speech or behavior expressing self-harm, whether on or off federal property; observed speech or behavior expressing self-harm by any other individual on federal property.	NO	N/A
Notable Burial	Interment or memorial scheduled that is: (1) for unclaimed remains; or (2) otherwise expected to draw several attendees due to the decedent's status, such as a prominent community member, politician, celebrity, or due to increased public awareness/interest in the event, such as for repatriated remains of a POW/MIA.	YES	Send a Follow-Up to initial FNOE once service and interment (or memorial) are completed to confirm this and report any issues.
Remains	Discovery of unscheduled or unidentified cremated remains left at or scattered on federal property; damage to a gravesite liner, casket, urn, or columbarium niche; exposure of remains due to outer burial container damage or deterioration.	NO	N/A

Reportable Event	Description	Follow-Up Required YES/NO?	Follow-Up Information
Safety, Security and Vulnerability (SSV) – Active Shooter	Active shooter scenario in progress on, adjacent to, or nearby federal property; includes scenarios where office or facility employees, volunteers, contractors, and customers/visitors are instructed to shelter in place.	YES	In coordination with NCA Watch Desk, send a Follow-Up to initial FNOE with accountability status of all NCA cemetery designated personnel, volunteers, and customers/visitors, and a facility condition assessment.
Safety, Security and Vulnerability (SSV) – Criminal Activity	Actual or possible criminal/illegal activity on federal property, including actions perpetrated by employees, volunteers, contractors, or customers/visitors, or actions impacting any of these parties (e.g., theft of government-owned or contractor equipment).	NO	N/A
Safety, Security and Vulnerability (SSV) – Inclement Weather or Environmental Hazard	Disruption to standard operations at an office or facility and/or physical damage caused by inclement weather conditions (e.g., tornado, wildfire, flood, hurricane, or blizzard); includes any change to an office or facility’s regular schedule, such as cemetery closure or delayed opening.	YES	In coordination with NCA Watch Desk, send a Follow-Up to initial FNOE with accountability status of all NCA cemetery designated personnel, volunteers, and customers/visitors, and an operations and facility condition assessment.
Safety, Security and Vulnerability (SSV) – Motor Vehicle Accident (MVA)	Any vehicular incident on or adjacent to federal property involving employees, volunteers, contractors, or customers/visitors, whether in a government vehicle (GOV) or personal vehicle (POV); includes accidents that may cause disruption to operations by blocking a cemetery road or entrance.	NO	N/A
Safety, Security and Vulnerability (SSV) – Other	An incident not otherwise described in the SSV subcategories above that presents a safety hazard or poses a threat to the security or vulnerability of a federal office or facility or to the employees, volunteers, contractors or customers/visitors there (e.g., a fallen tree or collapsed historic wall not caused by inclement weather).	NO	N/A
Utilities	Service disruption or outage for electricity, gas, potable water, sewer or irrigation system, or for disruption or outage of a heating or cooling unit/element (e.g., air conditioning in a cemetery administration building).	NO	N/A

Reportable Event	Description	Follow-Up Required YES/NO?	Follow-Up Information
Very Important Person (VIP) Visit	<p>Request for/scheduling of an official visit to a federal office or facility by one or more individuals defined as a VIP in paragraph 5.g. of this Directive; or an unscheduled visit to a federal office or facility by one or more VIPs.</p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> Any ceremony, special event, tour, oversight engagement, or other site visit where one or more VIPs is participating in their official capacity is considered a VIP Visit reportable event.</p>	YES	Send a Follow-Up to initial FNOE once visit is completed to confirm this and report any issues.

## SERIOUS INCIDENTS

1. When submitting a First Notice of Event (FNOE) for any of the following types of events, conditions, or incidents, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) National Cemetery Administration (NCA) Supervisory Employee (or their designee) will consider their FNOE to constitute a Serious Incident Report (SIR), pursuant to VA Directive 0321, Serious Incident Reports.

2. When a NCA Supervisory Employee (or their designee) is submitting an FNOE that constitutes an SIR, they must follow the procedures at paragraph 1.a.(1) of Appendix C of this Directive.

3. The following list of serious incidents is not exhaustive. VA's Integrated Operations Center may determine that another tracked or reported issue or activity constitutes an SIR. Under those circumstances, the NCA Watch Desk will coordinate with the appropriate personnel to achieve reporting compliance:

- Public information regarding the arrest of a VA employee (police report, public release of information, etc.).
- Major disruption to the normal operations or closure of a VA facility.
- Loss or compromise of VA sensitive data, including classified information.
- Theft or loss of material over \$1,000 in value, to include VA-controlled firearms or hazardous materials.
- Activation of Emergency Action Plan (EAP), Facility Disaster Plan, and/or Continuity of Operations Plan.
- Incidents on VA property that result in serious illness or bodily injury, to include attempted suicide, sexual assault, aggravated assault, and child abuse.
- Death on VA property, to include suspected homicide, suicide, accidents, and/or suspicious deaths.
- Shootings on or near VA property or facilities.
- Terrorist event or credible threat that impacts VA facilities or operations.

## FIRST NOTICE OF EVENT (FNOE) PROCESS AND PROCEDURES

### 1. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) National Cemetery Administration (NCA) employees submitting an FNOE will:

a. Adhere to the following timelines:

(1) For reportable events that constitute a Serious Incident Report (SIR), submit your FNOE within 2 hours of observing or learning about the incident.

(2) For all other reportable events, submit the FNOE as soon as possible but not more than within 24 hours after observing or learning about the incident.

**Note:** While assessing the reportable event and gathering information to identify any next steps, **Cemetery Directors** are encouraged to report whatever initial details they have to their **District Executive Director** to discuss of whether information should be relayed to NCA Central Office leadership more quickly (e.g., cases of imminent threats to NCA personnel or property or anticipated media or congressional interest.)

b. Select the appropriate template for their FNOE from the online location identified by Current and Integrated Operations.

**Note:** NCA employees should prepare their FNOE within the body of the email template. FNOEs should not be submitted as attachments (e.g., do not type your FNOE into a Word document and attach it to an email).

c. Refrain from using the names, nicknames, initials, or any other personal identification information for NCA employees, volunteers, or contractors when submitting FNOEs.

d. Include certain additional information in the "Summary" paragraph of the FNOE based on the type of event being reported, as specified in Appendix A of this Directive:

(1) For FNOEs reporting eligibility, interment, or marker issues, include the Decedent ID number for all impacted decedents.

(2) For FNOEs reporting unclaimed remains ceremonies, include the conflict/war period(s) associated with the decedents (e.g., Vietnam War, Persian Gulf War, etc.).

(3) For FNOEs reporting impacts to contractors and/or their equipment, include the impacted contract and/or project numbers.

(4) For FNOEs reporting communication system disruptions, outages, or other information technology (IT) issues, include all applicable VA IT incident (INC) ticket numbers (also referred to as Helpdesk ticket numbers).

e. Submit the FNOE via email to:

(1) VANCAFirstNoticeofEvent@va.gov; and

(2) If the reportable event constitutes an SIR, copy (cc) the VA Integrated Operations Center (VA IOC) at VAIOC@va.gov.

(3) If the reportable event involves actual or possible violations of criminal law related to VA programs, operations, facilities, contracts, or information technology systems, send a courtesy copy (cc) to the Office of Inspector General, Office of Investigations at WatchOfficer-OIG@va.gov.

f. Send a Follow-Up to the initial FNOE as required based on the type of event reported. (See Appendix A of this Directive for reportable events that require a Follow-Up).

g. Upon request and in coordination with the NCA Watch Officer on duty, provide any additional information or clarification requested by NCA Central Office leadership concerning the FNOE submitted.

2. **NCA Watch Officers** will:

a. Review each FNOE as it is received to:

(1) Verify that the sender used the correct email address (VANCAFirstNoticeofEvent@va.gov);

(2) Review content to confirm the FNOE was submitted timely, and that all information provided is complete and accurate, including confirmation of contact with law enforcement in the FNOE when reporting observed or suspected criminal activity.

(3) Verify that the sender cc'd VAIOC@va.gov if their reportable event constitutes an SIR. If the sender did not copy the VA IOC, immediately forward the FNOE to the VA IOC for their awareness and monitoring; and

(4) Coordinate and execute any additional forwarding actions required to provide the FNOE to appropriate VA law enforcement, legal, and/or administrative offices.

b. Log each FNOE received into the Watch Desk's electronic tracker/record; and

c. Reply to an FNOE's submitting office or facility to:

(1) Collect required information that was not included, or to collect additional information or clarification about the incident as directed by the Supervisor, Current and Integrated Operations; the Deputy Director, Cemetery Operations; or any NCA Central

Office senior leader; or

(2) Address any issues with reporting compliance.

(3) FNOE requirements in relationship to continuous reporting requirements:

a. Under certain circumstances, such as severe weather events impacting a specific region, the VA IOC or NCA Central Office may establish a continuous reporting requirement to gather critical information throughout the day about the safety, security, and status of NCA employees, facilities, and operations.

b. Whenever the VA IOC or NCA Central Office establishes a continuous reporting requirement, the **NCA Watch Officer(s)** on duty will coordinate with NCA's Emergency Preparedness Coordinator to communicate this requirement to the applicable district or program office for relay to their impacted facility or facilities.

c. **NCA employees** responsible for submitting an FNOE must do so, even when VA or NCA has introduced a continuous reporting requirement for incident reporting that may include the same or similar event information.

**Note:** *An example of this is a cemetery's closure due to severe weather. The fact that VA and NCA emergency management personnel are coordinating with cemeteries and district offices on continuous reporting requirements (e.g., daily status "roll-ups") at the district and/or national level to provide comprehensive situational awareness to senior leadership does not supersede or substitute for the required FNOE. NCA emergency management personnel and management officials use FNOEs submitted by impacted facilities in these situations to identify emergent issues and validate information to be provided at the next continuous reporting interval.*