



NEWS RELEASE
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COOPERATIVE EFFORT CALLS FOR FAMILY NOTIFICATION PLAN

- **MVA UNVEILS EMERGENCY CONTACT CARD CAMPAIGN**
- **MD HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION INITIATES STATEWIDE EFFORT**
- **STATE POLICE WILL ASSIST HOSPITALS IN FAMILY NOTIFICATION**

(Baltimore, MD) – The Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA), Maryland Hospital Association, the Maryland State Police and others are joining forces to better notify the next of kin and to urge Marylanders to carry information with them about whom to notify in the event of an emergency.

The Motor Vehicle Administration is unveiling a new family notification card. The card is carried with information about whom to call in the event of an emergency. The Maryland Hospital Association is encouraging the use of the notification cards and strengthening family notification procedures at hospitals. The Maryland State Police is revising its policy concerning family notifications and encourages other police departments to do the same.

The MVA has launched the Emergency Information Contact Card Program. A simple ID card has been developed that lists the individual's name, address and phone number. The card also includes three persons, and their phone numbers, to contact in case of an emergency. The form can be downloaded free-of-charge by visiting www.marylandmva.com.

“We share the concern of our sister agencies and are glad to be able to provide one simple solution to the problem of notifying family members when a loved one is injured in an accident,” stated Maryland MVA Administrator John Kuo. “Clear, readily accessible information will significantly speed the notification process, especially if the injured person is unconscious, or unable to provide contact information.”

This summer, Maryland State Police reviewed the department policy concerning the next of kin notification in the event of injury or death. While State Police who investigate a fatal crash are responsible for family notification, nothing addressed the notification of family for injured individuals transported to hospitals. Now, the initial responsibility for family notification will remain that of the medical facility providing treatment, however State Police will provide notification assistance if requested by the hospital. This had been an unwritten policy of the State Police, but is now in formal policy.

“While performing the multitude of duties involved with the investigation of a traffic crash or other serious incident, we will not forget the families or friends of the injured person or persons,” Maryland State Police Superintendent Colonel Terrence Sheridan said. “If a hospital is unable to make the notification and requests our assistance, we will do all we can to help in locating and notifying the closest relative or other person so designated by the injured individual.”

The Maryland Hospital Association, which represents 68 hospitals and health care systems, coordinated meetings to address this issue among the medical community. Included in the meetings were representatives from area hospitals, the Maryland Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians, the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems, State Police, and the Motor Vehicle Administration.

“Notifying the next of kin has always been a priority for Maryland’s hospitals,” MHA President Cal Pierson said. “Full cooperation among the appropriate police agencies in doing so and the MVA card should help us improve the process.”

“We try to notify family members from the emergency department as soon as possible, but we don’t always have accurate identification or up to date phone numbers. Contact cards will certainly help. We applaud the Maryland State Police and the Motor Vehicle Administration for working together with Maryland hospitals to develop a better approach,” said Dr. Stephen Schenkel on behalf of the Maryland Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians.

The Maryland Hospital Association will be working with its members to develop written notification policies. The State Police will coordinate similar efforts through the Maryland Chiefs of Police Association and the Maryland Sheriffs Association. The Motor Vehicle Administration will promote the use of the card internally to all state employees, as well as externally to all licensed drivers.

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