

Category: Governance

Expression of Sympathy

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Administered by: Events & Protocol, Strategic Communication, Tourism, & Events
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1. Background

Having served the City of Brampton as an elected Member of Council, upon their death, former and current Members are acknowledged by the City in a manner that is consistent and honours their contributions.

In the event that a current full-time or part-time staff member has passed away, the City offers condolences.

The City also recognizes former elected officials and significant members of the community and holds community gatherings of remembrance, which are important ways residents can express collective mourning.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to define appropriate and consistent methods for expressing the City's sympathy over a death of significance to the City and its residents.

3. Application and Scope

This Policy applies:

3.1 Upon the death of:

- 3.1.1 A current Member of Council.
- 3.1.2 A former Member of Council.
- 3.1.3 A significant community member.
- 3.1.4 A current City of Brampton staff member.

3.2 Upon a significant event where the community would like to express collective mourning.

3.3 Exceptions

- 3.3.1 This Policy does not apply to former City of Brampton staff.
- 3.3.2 This Policy is not to replace or impede the standards of practice of the Brampton Fire and Emergency Services Department with regard to honouring their members of other fire and emergency personnel who have died in the line of duty.
- 3.3.3 Should there be a desire to name a City asset on behalf of the deceased, the appropriate procedure and process for acknowledgment will be followed in accordance with the Asset Naming Policy PND-110 and accompanying SOPs.

4. Outcomes

- 4.1 Provide standardized and consistent methods of expressing sympathy.
- 4.2 Ensure the reputation of the City is maintained.
- 4.3 Ensure the City's readiness to respond in an appropriate way to collective acts of mourning and sympathy in a prompt manner.

5. Policy Statements

- 5.1 Upon receipt of notification of death, Events & Protocol will disseminate this information to appropriate groups including:
 - 5.1.1 Mayor's Office, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)'s Office
 - 5.1.2 Corporate Leadership Team (CLT)
 - 5.1.3 Strategic Communications
- 5.2 The City will liaise with the family to determine their wishes in accordance with this Policy.
- 5.3 The family may wish to receive some, all, or none of the services offered.
- 5.4 Events & Protocol will liaise with the Mayor's Office, CAO's office, CLT and other departments as required to implement the agreed upon expressions of sympathy.
- 5.5 Events & Protocol will maintain the record of the City's acknowledgements provided to the family in compliance with the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and the Records Retention Bylaw.

6. Commemorative Activities Upon the Passing of a Current Member of Council

The City of Brampton, in discussion with the family where possible, may offer the following commemorative activities upon the death of a current Member of Council:

- 6.1 Lower all City flags in accordance with the Flag Policy GOV-150.
- 6.2 Coordinate public statements and internal and external messaging, including news release informing the media of any commemorative service and expressions of sympathy.
- 6.3 Coordinate recognition at the first Council or Committee of Council meeting following the Member's death.
- 6.4 Establish a book of condolences.

- 6.5 A token expressing sympathy from the City.
- 6.6 A letter or card from the Mayor sent to the family on behalf of the City.
- 6.7 Provide a floral arrangement and a small candle arrangement at the Member's seat for the next committee or Council meetings.
- 6.8 Loan City of Brampton flags to the family.
- 6.9 Coordinate Honour Guard services.
- 6.10 Arrange for a corporate representative from Corporate Leadership Team, Council, or both to attend a public funeral or memorial service.

Please refer to Expression of Sympathy Standard Operating Procedures for further details.

7. Additional Activities Upon the passing of the Current Mayor

In addition to section 6, the City, in discussion with the family, will offer the following commemorative activities upon the death of the current Mayor:

- 7.1 Arrange for an Honour Guard.
- 7.2 Lying in state services at City Hall, with public visitation hours, as determined appropriate by the CAO and Events & Protocol.
- 7.3 Provide protocol support to the family for any commemorative services.

8. Commemorative Activities Upon the Passing of a Former Member of Council

The City of Brampton, in discussion with the family where possible, may offer the following commemorative activities upon the death of a former Member of Council:

- 8.1 Lower all City flags in accordance with the Flag Policy GOV-150.
- 8.2 Coordinate public statements and internal and external messaging, including news release informing the media of any commemorative service and expressions of sympathy.
- 8.3 Coordinate recognition at the first Council or Committee of Council meeting following the Member's death.
- 8.4 Establish a book of condolences.
- 8.5 A token expressing sympathy from the City.
- 8.6 A letter or card from the Mayor sent to the family on behalf of the City.

- 8.7 Loan City of Brampton flags to the family.
- 8.8 Arrange for a corporate representative from Corporate Leadership Team, Council, or both to attend a public funeral or memorial service.
- 8.9 Provide protocol support to the family.

9. Condolence Upon the Death of an Elected Official or Dignitary

- 9.1 At the discretion of the Mayor, in consultation with the CAO and Events & Protocol, the City may express sympathy upon the passing of an elected official or dignitary who has represented the City of Brampton in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario or Parliament of Canada or has made significant contributions to public life.
- 9.2 The City, in discussion with the family where possible, may offer the following commemorative activities upon the death of an elected official or dignitary:
 - 9.2.1 Lower flags in accordance with the Flag Policy GOV-150.
 - 9.2.2 Coordinate public statements and internal and external messaging, including recognition during committee or Council meetings.
 - 9.2.3 Establish a book of condolences.
 - 9.2.4 A token expressing sympathy from the City.
 - 9.2.5 A letter or card from the Mayor sent to the family on behalf of the City.
 - 9.2.6 Arrangements for a corporate representative to attend a public funeral or memorial service where possible.

10. Condolence Upon the Death of a Current City Staff

- 10.1 The City, in discussion with the family where possible, may offer the following commemorative activities upon the death of a current City staff:
 - 10.1.1 Internal communication to all staff including details of a commemorative service.
 - 10.1.2 Internal communication to staff of affected areas by Director or Commissioner of respective area.
 - 10.1.3 A token expressing sympathy from the City.
 - 10.1.4 A letter or card from the Mayor sent to the family on behalf of the City.

- 10.1.5 Half-masting of flags at City Hall and the facility where individual was employed, if applicable, and in accordance with the Flag Policy GOV-150.
 - 10.1.6 Arrange for a corporate representative from Corporate Leadership Team, Council, or both to attend a public funeral or memorial service.
- 10.2 If a current City of Brampton employee dies in the line of duty or by reason of the position occupied, then, in discussion with the family, the City will offer the additional commemorative activities:
- 10.2.1 Half-masting of flags, consistent with the Flag Policy GOV-150.
 - 10.2.2 Communications and media relations support to the family.

11. Commemorative Activities for Community Gatherings of Remembrance

At the discretion of the Mayor, and in consultation with the CAO and Events & Protocol, the City may express sympathy during periods of mourning for significant international, national, or local tragic events, including the death of a significant community member. The City may offer the following:

- 11.1 Lower flags in accordance with the Flag Policy GOV-150.
- 11.2 Establish a book of condolences.
- 11.3 Coordinate public statements, and internal and external messaging.
- 11.4 Make arrangements for a corporate representative to attend a commemorative service where possible.

Corporate support may be provided for a program for community vigils with the approval from the CAO. This could include space and event support with no fee at City Hall for a community gathering to express sympathy.

Refer to the Civic Event Protocol GOV-160 for information on Member of Council hosted events. Event support will be provided as outlined in the Vigil and Expression of Sympathy SOP.

12. Roles and Responsibilities

- 12.1 Mayor
 - 12.1.1 Consult with the CAO and Events & Protocol for advice on expressing sympathy during periods of mourning for significant international, national, or local tragic events, including the death of a significant community member.

- 12.1.2 Seek approval of the CAO for corporate support for community gatherings for collective mourning which are “Mayor and Council hosted”.

12.2 Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) or designate

- 12.2.1 Comply with this Policy.
- 12.2.2 Determine whether lying in state and the public hours for visitation are appropriate and grant approval where appropriate.
- 12.2.3 Consult with Events & Protocol for advice on expressing sympathy during periods of mourning for significant international, national, or local tragic events, including the death of a significant community member.
- 12.2.4 Approve exceptions to this Policy.
- 12.2.5 Review and approve requests for corporate support for a community gathering program hosted by “Mayor and Council”.

12.3 Events & Protocol

- 12.3.1 Provide advice and support to ensure appropriateness of expressions of sympathy under this Policy.
- 12.3.2 Receive and disseminate notification of death.
- 12.3.3 Offer services consistent with this policy.
- 12.3.4 Gather information that may be of interest to the City with respect to the commemorative service.
- 12.3.5 Liaise with Members of Council offices, CAO’s office, CLT, Strategic Communication, and other business units as required to implement services.
- 12.3.6 Maintain records of the City’s acknowledgements provided to the family consistent with the Records Retention Bylaw and the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

13. Monitoring and Compliance

- 13.1 Events & Protocol will administer this Policy and coordinate the payment of all expenses incurred through implementation. Events & Protocol will maintain detailed procedures and guidelines to accompany this Policy.

13.2 Consequences of non-compliance:

13.2.1 Failure to follow this Policy may result in reputation harm to the City.

14. Definitions

14.1 **Family** – The surviving immediate relatives of the deceased or a representative. This could include a spouse, common-law partner, parents, parents-in-law, children, or siblings.

14.2 **Lying in state** – The coffin of a deceased official which rests in City Hall allowing members of the public to view and pay their respect.

14.3 **Member of Council** – Any member of the legislative body of the City, including Mayors and Councillors past and present.

14.4 **Protocol** – In general, the official procedure or rules of governing City-wide events and other official functions and the official liaising with and between dignitaries.

14.5 **Token of sympathy** – Anything that may include a floral arrangement or donation of equivalent value to a registered charity, if requested by the family.

15. References and Resources

This Policy should be read and applied in conjunction with the following references and resources as updated from time to time. Please note that some of the following documents may not be publicly available.

15.1 External references

- [Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.56](#)

15.2 References to related bylaws, Council policies, and administrative directives

- [Asset Naming Policy PND-110](#)
- [Civic Event Protocol GOV-160](#)
- [Flag Policy GOV-150](#)
- [Records Retention By-law 272-2014](#)

15.3 References to related corporate-wide procedures, forms, and resources

- Expression of Sympathy SOP
- Vigil and Expression of Sympathy SOP

16. Revision History

Date	Description
2019/09/25	New. Approved by Council Resolution C354-2019, which adopted recommendation GC034-2019.
2022/09/25	Next Scheduled Review.
2025/02/28	Minor administrative edits to correct grammar, formatting, and to update policy as per program administration.
2025/03/26	Approved by Council Resolution C065-2025.
2028/03/26	Next Scheduled Review.