

**Effective Trainings on New Policies Regarding First Responder Photographs**

On August 30, 2022, in response to a jury verdict ordering Los Angeles County (County) to pay \$30 million to Vanessa Bryant and Chris Chester for the failure of the County Fire Department and Sheriff’s Department to prevent the taking and sharing of photos, the County Board of Supervisors passed a motion directing County Counsel, the Fire Department, and the Sheriff’s Department to report back with an analysis of policies and training procedures that address the proper conduct of first responders regarding photographs of human remains in the course of their duties.

In the October 26, 2022, confidential report back, both the Fire Department and Sheriff’s Department presented new policies that explicitly address prohibited behavior regarding photographs and recordings at scenes where human remains are present. The Sheriff’s Department adopted a new policy in July 2020 regarding the photographing of human remains that has been consolidated into their Manual of Policy and Procedures (MPP). The new policy, MPP section 5-00/475.00, requires personnel to preserve the dignity and privacy of the deceased and their family and prohibits photographs of human

MOTION

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remains unless by certain authorized personnel. The Fire Department has not yet implemented their new policy, but it has been finalized and has gone through the review process with labor. They plan to implement the new policy in January 2023. The new policy will address all types of employee photography, the use of recording devices, and posting on social media. It also strictly prohibits photographs of deceased persons or human remains.

These new policies are in line with best practices and in compliance with new state law. While this is important and noteworthy, departmental policies are only effective if the personnel are all well informed of the policy and its requirements. Therefore, robust training on these new policies is crucial to their success. The Sheriff's Department and Fire Department must ensure that all personnel, including new hires and current employees, are educated on the new policies and trained explicitly in their expectations.

**I, THEREFORE MOVE** that the Board of Supervisors direct the Fire Department and request the Sheriff's Department to report back in writing in 45 days with their plans to develop and implement training of the new policies pertaining to on-scene and incident photography. The report should detail how each department plans to train both new hires and current employees on the new policies in a way that will provide all department members with clear guidance on the application of the new policies.

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JH:kc