



**PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS' BENEFITS PROGRAM
CORONAVIRUS / COVID-19 UPDATE
APRIL 2020**

Administered by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program provides death benefits to the eligible survivors of public safety officers who are fatally injured in the line of duty, disability benefits to public safety officers catastrophically injured in the line of duty, and education benefits to the eligible spouses and children of fallen and catastrophically injured officers. BJA's PSOB Office is honored to review the more than 1,000 claims submitted each year on behalf of America's fallen and injured public safety heroes and their loved ones.

With the recent outbreak of the novel coronavirus disease, or COVID-19, America's law enforcement officers, firefighters, and other first responders face a new health risk as they continue to selflessly serve their communities.

Under the current Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Act and its implementing regulations, conditions caused by infectious diseases, viruses, and bacteria may be found to be an injury sustained in the line of duty.

To establish eligibility for benefits under the PSOB Act in connection with a public safety officer's death or disability due to COVID-19, the PSOB Act and regulations require that the evidence show that it is *more likely than not* that the disease resulted from the public safety officer's exposure to the disease or the virus that causes the disease, SARS-CoV-2, while performing a line of duty activity or action. In general, BJA will find that the evidence shows a public safety officer with COVID-19 contracted it in the line of duty, when (1) the officer had engaged in line of duty action or activity under circumstances that indicate that it was medically possible that the officer was exposed to the virus, SARS-CoV-2, while so engaged; and (2) the officer did contract the disease, COVID-19, within a time-frame where it was medically possible to contract the disease from that exposure. In addition, in the absence of evidence showing a different cause of death, BJA generally will find that the evidence shows a public safety officer who died while suffering from COVID-19 died as the direct and proximate result of COVID-19.

As the PSOB Office receives claims based on COVID-19 exposure, it will work closely with survivors, officers, and agencies to obtain whatever evidence may be needed to support each claim, through all available information, including incident reports and related documents.

For questions regarding the PSOB Program or filing a claim, please do not hesitate to visit PSOB's online portal at www.psob.gov or email the PSOB Director at AskPSOB@usdoj.gov.

Guidance documents, like this document, are not binding and lack the force and effect of law, unless expressly authorized by statute or expressly incorporated into a contract, grant, or cooperative agreement. Consistent with Executive Order 13891 and the Office of Management and Budget implementing memoranda, the Department will not cite, use, or rely on any guidance document that is not accessible through the Department's guidance portal, or similar guidance portals for other Executive Branch departments and agencies, except to establish historical facts. To the extent any guidance document sets out voluntary standards (e.g., recommended practices), compliance with those standards is voluntary, and noncompliance will not result in enforcement action. Guidance documents may be rescinded or modified in the Department's complete discretion, consistent with applicable laws. Pursuant to section 3(b)(1)(I) of Executive Order 12988, nothing in this document is intended to create any legal or procedural rights enforceable against the United States, except as the same may be contained within 28 C.F.R. part 32.