

Taking Care of Our Own



Line-of-Duty Death Guidelines

The line-of-duty death of one of our members will be one of the most traumatic experiences we will ever experience. Fortunately for most of us, it is something that we may never have to directly deal with during our careers. But the reality is that at anytime and in any place we may have to deal with that unthinkable situation.

The key to managing a line-of-duty death is similar to handling a fire ground incident – control the situation; communicate effectively; and ensure the cooperation of all involved parties. Pre-planning is the foundation. It allows us to establish a system or procedures to follow that will ensure that the proper steps are taken to handle the incident, media, investigation, funeral services, and the family’s desires and support it needs.

This Guidebook is intended to assist us in preparing for and handling a line-of-duty death of a member of our department. I would like to start developing or Pre-plan now – so that we can honor our fallen and help our extended families during the time of their greatest need.

Acknowledgments

This Guideline was prepared with information collected from the following resources and organizations:

National Fallen Firefighters Foundation

International Association of Fire Chiefs

International Association of Fire Fighters

Ohio State Fire Marshal's Office

United States Fire Administration

National Fallen Firefighters Line of Duty Death Guidelines

Utah State Fire Chiefs Association

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Pre-incident Planning	2
Initial Actions	3
Investigative Issues	4
Post-incident Issues	4
Family Issues	5
Notifications	8
Staff Assignments	11
Funeral Considerations	15
Survivors Benefits	26
Resources	30
Appendix A – LODD Checklists	34
Appendix B – Personal Information Packet Sample	38
Appendix C – GO 100.5 Up date	41
Appendix D – LODD Memo to Staff	42
Appendix E – Funeral Staff Assignments	44
Appendix F – Funeral Service Diagrams	46
Appendix G – Funeral Procession Diagrams	50
Appendix H – Cemetery Service Diagrams	53
Appendix I – Firefighter Poems / 23 rd Psalm	55
Appendix J – Bell Service Readings Options	58
Appendix K - PSOB Fact Sheet	61

Introduction

Approximately 100 firefighters give their lives in the line of duty each year in the United States. There is no other single event that is as powerful and significant to a department. The death of a fellow firefighter presents a difficult time for the entire department as well as the deceased member's family. Many details and arrangements need to be addressed in a short period of time. It is vital that the our department be prepared to take the responsibility for seeing that the deceased members family receives the assistance needed and the various benefits afforded to them. Plans, policies, and resources should all be in place prior to an incident.

The purpose of the Guidebook is to assist us with a line of duty death of a member of our department. Additional resources will be identified and samples of forms and checklists are provided. The time to start our planning and preparation is *now* – not after an incident.

This Guidebook is divided into the following sections:

- Pre-incident Planning
- Initial Actions
- Investigative Issues
- Post Incident Issues
- Family Issues
- Notifications
- Staff Assignments
- Funeral Considerations
- Survivors Benefits
- Resources

Pre-incident Planning

Pre-incident planning for a line of duty death is similar in many respects to the preparations that a fire department takes in the pre-fire planning that it does for a structure. When we pre-plan a building, we take into consideration the availability of personnel, apparatus, and equipment, information about the building, and other factors that influence how we will handle a fire incident. Policies are developed; people are assigned tasks; and, equipment and materials are obtained and allocated.

The pre-incident planning for line of duty death includes gathering information about our personnel, updating department General/Special Orders and identifying additional resources.

Personal Information Packets

Personal Information Packets for all members of the department should be prepared *now*. They should include such items as emergency contacts, photos, wishes/desires of the member, and career historical information. Packets should be completed by members in consultation with their families, updated on a regular basis and kept sealed in their personnel file. (Refer to Appendix B – Personal Information Packet Sample)

General/Special Orders

Orders should be updated to address such tasks as: notification practices; prepared media announcements; department wake and funeral procedures; personnel assignments; and, human resource needs. (Refer to Appendix C)

Resources

Resources need to be identified, including personnel for Color or Honor Guards, uniforms, and supplies and equipment (e.g., mourning bands, gloves, bunting for the station and apparatus, flags, etc.).

A list of outside resources, including local, state, national and related fire support organizations should be prepared.

Initial Actions

An emotional and tense situation occurs at an incident with the death, probable death, or injuries severe enough that they will likely lead to the death of a department member. Actions; however, need to be taken to control the situation and to prepare for the events which will take place. (Refer to Appendix A – LODD Checklist)

- ***Don't forget the rest of the incident.***
- Institute a radio discipline policy.
- Assign a PIO:
 - Expect a major media event.
 - Use prepared scripts so that the release of information is concise and accurate.
 - Schedule press conferences.
- Begin notifications:
 - Firefighter's family;
 - The Fire Chief and an additional representative from the department should notify (in person) the family of death and facts related to the incident. Have a medic unit nearby, but out of sight.
 - A family Liaison should remain with and/or be available to the family (24hrs) and should be the conduit for all information to/from the family.
 - All department personnel
 - Professional Firefighters – Local President
 - Volunteer Members- Volunteer Association President
 - County Executive and County Council members, other department heads
 - Coroner for an autopsy (refer to Resources Section)
- Initiate a thorough investigation into the incident:
 - Assign a member of the Fire Marshalls Office to recover & secure all personal protective equipment, with the assistance of the Safety Office.
 - Secure the scene – consider it a possible crime scene
 - Establish an investigation team – should be separate and distinct from the fire cause investigation team; but, both should work well together.
- Contact support agencies:
 - Provide for critical incident stress debriefing and grief counseling for the department.
 - State Fire Marshal's Office
 - Public Safety Officers' Benefit Program (PSOB)
 - National Fallen Firefighters Foundation
 - Professional Fire Fighters Association of Maryland and/or the Maryland State Firemen's Association
 - Neighboring departments

Investigative Issues

A thorough investigation into the cause of the fatality should be conducted, including the possibility of criminal activities. Legal representation may be required. A full autopsy should be conducted (refer to Resources Section).

- Secure the scene.
- Conduct thorough investigation, possibly with the aid of a local law enforcement unit – possible criminal activity may be involved. Due to local or state protocols, the local law enforcement agency may conduct an investigation.
- Collect appropriate statements from individuals. Use restraint to collect information. This is not intended to suppress the facts, but rather to suppress incorrect and unnecessary opinions. Stick only to the facts. If facts are not known, this should be clearly stated.
- Recover and secure all protective clothing and equipment.
- Maintain records – interviews, radio tapes, incident report, photographs and drawings.
- The autopsy shall be performed in accordance with United States Fire Administration, Firefighter Autopsy Protocol (refer to Resources Section), using the post mortem protocol for fire victims. It is essential that steps be taken to ensure that the cause and death is accurately reported.
- Obtain at least six (12) certified copies of the autopsy report and death certificate. These copies may have to be requested by the family.
- ***Document, Document, Document!***

Post-incident Issues

Assist the family in planning the funeral/memorial as they choose. This may include department involvement, transportation, home maintenance, meals, childcare, etc. The department assigned Family Liaison Officer should be the interface between the family, the department and others.

Continue to inform department members and officials of arrangements.

Solicit law enforcement officials and others for support. This may include assistance with the investigation, traffic control during the funeral and routine checks of the family's residence.

Monitor department members closest to the incident to see how they are dealing with the loss. Provide for critical incident stress debriefing and grief counseling for the department as needed. Consideration may also have to be given to allow members time off to cope with the tragedy.

Family Issues How to Help the Family....

At the Hospital or the Morgue

- Offer to have a member of the department drive the family to the hospital and stay for as long as necessary.
- Work with the hospital staff to secure a private room where the family can gather. This should be separate from the general waiting area, if possible.
- Assist the family in dealing with hospital staff. Assign EMS Staff to help with hospital contacts.
- Provide assistance to the family in making calls to relatives and close friends. Answer incoming calls for the family or get messages to them at the hospital.
- Work with the family to arrange a plan for dealing with the media. The family may wish to have a member of the department speak for them.
- Offer to assist with day-to-day tasks such as home maintenance, arranging for childcare, or bringing meals and other necessities to the family.
- If the firefighter is badly burned or disfigured, help prepare the family for what they will see. Always allow family members to make the decision.
- Have someone available to drive the family home from the hospital. Offer to help with continuing visits as much as resources allow. Offer to stay with the family at the house.

Family Issues

How to Help the Family...

From Time of Death Through the Funeral

- Notify the Department of Justice of the Death. This will begin the process of reviewing eligibility for the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program.
- Contact the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation about the death. This will assure the beginning of emotional support for both the family and the department.
- Work with the family in planning the funeral. ***Remember that the family's wishes should always come first.*** If they want a private funeral, the department may consider holding a memorial service; however, the family should still be consulted.
- If there are children in the family, consider creating a special role for them, such as riding on the fire truck in the funeral procession. (Be sure to ask a parent before mentioning this to the children!)
- Offer to assist with lodging or transportation for out of town relatives and friends.
- Offer to have a member of the department stay with the family prior to the funeral. Consider rotating people as needed in order to maintain a department presence with the family.
- Have someone available for tasks such as answering the phone, driving the family to the funeral home to make arrangements, or running errands.
- Help coordinate household duties such as food preparation, cleaning, and childcare. Do necessary maintenance such as mowing the grass or clearing the snow.
- If donations are collected for the family, set up a bank account to deposit these funds.
- Coordinate with local law enforcement officials to make routine checks of residence and neighborhood.
- Assign a department member to help the family set guidelines for dealing with the media.

When assisting the family with funeral arrangements, remember that the family's wishes, Past Military Service and their religious preferences may take precedence over fire department traditions.

Family Issues How to Help the Family...

Ongoing Support

- Only promise what you actually can do. Keep all your promises.
- Instead of saying "Call if you need anything" offer to help with specific tasks and then follow through.
- Continue to talk with the family about your memories of the member. Most families want to hear about their loved one, even if it is emotionally difficult.
- Remember that parents of a fallen member need support and contact just like spouses and children do.
- Help with what the member used to do – yard work, fixing things around the house, attending children's sports and school events, etc.
- Take all steps necessary to secure benefits for the family. The process is often lengthy, so keep the family involved.
- Continue to invite the family to department events, but don't be disappointed if they don't always attend.
- Remember that some events, such as holidays and the anniversary of the date of death, may be especially difficult for the family. Even families who seem to be doing well may need extra support and contact during these times.
- Contact the family before releasing any information on investigations, incident reports, etc.
- Consider creating some kind of tribute to the fallen firefighter. This could be a local memorial, a video tribute, a scrapbook, or a scholarship in the firefighter's name. Prepare a tribute that is fitting for our member and special to the family.
- Provide survivors with information on the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation's programs for survivors. Contact the Foundation to get support for the family.

- Encourage the family to attend the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Weekend and other local, state, and national tributes. Offer to help make travel arrangements and attend with them whenever possible.

Notifications

Next of Kin

The importance of the next of kin notification cannot be over-emphasized. This process sets the tone for the difficult times the surviving family will face. Sensitivity and compassion are important.

The name of the deceased firefighter must never be released by the Department before the immediate family is notified. Do not inform neighbors of the death before telling the family. If asked, inform them you need to find the family regarding a medical emergency and ask if they know where the family can be found.

Family notification should be made as quickly as possible to avoid the family receiving a notification from another outside party. The media may employ many efforts to seek out the name of the fallen member. Use all necessary measures to protect the next of kin from unwanted media exposure.

For this reason, a Notification Team needs to assemble rapidly. The team should consist, if possible, of the Chief (or the highest ranking available Officer), Chaplain, Clergy (Family bishop, Pastor, Minister, etc.), Family Liaison Officer, and a firefighter friend or the family or close civilian family friend. Check the Members Personal Information Packet for their wishes and or recommendations.

If the fallen members family lives far enough out of the area as to make the department's notification impractical, the local Fire Agency (or law enforcement agency) in the area should be notified to make a timely notification.

In the event that the department experiences the loss of more than one member, then multiple notification teams will need to be assembled and deployed.

Before arriving at the residence, verify the latest information, decide who will speak and what they will say. Because of the emotional circumstances involved, be prepared for the family to strike out and blame the department for their loss.

Steps to be taken at the residence:

1. It is recommended to have a medic unit standby near the residence, but not in view, especially if there is a known medical problem with an immediate survivor.
2. At the door identify yourself and ask to come in. (Notification should take place in a private setting.)
3. When inside, ensure you are notifying the right person.
4. It is important to put all of the known basic facts into one sentence. Make sure the message is absolutely clear and direct.

5. Begin with, "I have very bad news" or "I am very sorry to tell you."
6. Let them know what happened, "Your husband/wife died responding to a fire," or "John was killed in a building collapse." (Use the victim's first name when appropriate.)
7. Allow the family to express their emotions. Do not try to talk them out of their grief. Also, since this is a very sad time, do not mask your own grief.
8. Provide only the facts you know, never speculate. Answer all questions honestly. If you cannot answer a question, find the correct answer.
9. Avoid the following phrases: a) "*I know how you feel*" b) "*It was God's will*" c) "*Life will go on*" d) "*He would have wanted to go this way*" e) "*Be brave*" f) "*Passed away.*"
10. Ask if the Department can assist by notifying immediate family members (parents, brothers and sisters).
11. Never leave immediately after making the notification. Have at least one member of the Department stay with the family – preferably the Family Liaison Officer.
12. Do not take the victim's personal items with you.
13. Ask the survivor(s) if they wish to see the deceased member, even if the body is badly disfigured. People often have a need to see, touch and hold the deceased; otherwise they may be in denial. This is often very helpful in the family grief process. It gives a sense of finality.
14. If family members wish to see the member, arrangements need to be made rapidly for viewing. Sensitivity to the family is very important. Provide the best possible environment and avoid delays that heighten the family's anxiety.
15. Offer to transport the family to the location of the member, and help prepare them for what they will see. It is highly recommended that the family not drive themselves. If the family insists on driving, a uniformed firefighter should accompany them in the family vehicle. (NOTE: If family members arrive on the scene during on-going operations it is important to identify them and keep them out of the direct flow of operations, particularly if the body is still trapped or on the scene.)
16. If you transport the family, advise dispatch that you are transporting the relatives and if possible, turn off your radio or switch to an alternate channel. Communicate by phone.
17. If the Department's Family Liaison Officer is not present at the notification, the family should be given the name prior to the team deployment. Write down their telephone and other contact numbers. If possible, this person should already be known by the family.
18. Advise the family that the Family Liaison Officer will contact them to assist with the necessary arrangements.
19. Advise the family of possible media calls. Unwanted media exposure will only add to the difficulty of the tragedy. Suggest that a friend of the family screen incoming calls. Offer to be the media spokes person for the family.
20. Assure the family that their wishes are important to the Department.
21. Advise the family that an autopsy (refer to Resources Section) may be required and why it is necessary.

22. Ensure that the family understands that they do not have to make any immediate decisions regarding services, mortuary, wills, etc. The Department's Family Liaison Officer may be able to provide assistance.

Fire Department Members

It is very important that all members of the Department be notified of the death(s) as soon as possible, including those off-duty and vacationing personnel. (Refer to Appendix D – LODD Memo to Staff)

In the event of an on-duty death, the external monitoring of fire frequencies may be extensive. Communications regarding notifications should be restricted to the telephone whenever possible. Department personnel should not give out any information about the incident unless it is approved by the Chief or his designee.

For a line-of-duty death, a message, prepared and/or approved by the Chief, should be transmitted to personnel. Record it in the Department logbook.

LODD Sample Announcement

It is with deep regret that announcement is made of the death of (Rank, Name, Company) who lost his life in the line of duty while participating in operations on Incident (Number, Location, Date and Time).

For a death other than a line-of-duty, an announcement should be transmitted to personnel.

Sample Death Announcement for Non-LODD

It is with deep regret that announcement is made of the death of (Rank or Retiree Name) on/at (Date/Time).

Media

The line-of-duty death of a firefighter is fortunately a rare occurrence for most departments. When it does occur, the media, as well as many others are interested in obtaining as much detailed information as possible. Every effort should be made to provide *essential* facts, but the information provided should be done only after the next of kin has been notified. Care should be given so that information critical to an investigation of the incident is not compromised.

The Public Information Officer (PIO), with the approval of the Fire Chief, can arrange for news conferences, written news releases and interviews. Information provided during a news conference should be prepared in advance. A press kit can be prepared that may include Bio(s), pictures, and service information.

Others

Depending on the circumstances surrounding the incident, and the family and community situation, notification of the death of a member may also be given to:

- Local elected and governing officials from the jurisdiction the member resides.
- Maryland State Fire Chiefs Association, Professional Fire Fighters of Maryland, and the Maryland State Firemen's Association
- Neighboring fire departments
- Public Safety Officers Benefit Program (1-888-744-6513)
- National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (301-447-1365)
- Elected State and Federal Senators and Representatives
- The Baltimore Regional Incident Management Team.

Staff Assignments

In order to provide the best possible tribute to the fallen member(s), it is extremely important for the department to organize an effective team(s) to manage all of the related activities. The organizational structure that will become necessary to control and coordinate this effort should be patterned after the ICS structure that is utilized to manage major emergency incidents. (Refer to Appendix E – Funeral Staff Assignments)

The Fire Chief has overall responsibility for directing the activities. It is recommended that the Chief assign, as a minimum, individuals to function as: Funeral Coordinator, Family Liaison Officer, Public Information Officer, Church Coordinator, Procession Coordinator, and Cemetery Coordinator. Other assignments or personnel may be established depending on the Department's make-up and desires (e.g., Hospital Liaison, Reception Coordinator, and Benefits Coordinator). It is also recommended that these duties be assigned to individuals before an incident occurs. After the "Taking Care of Our Own" training scheduled in the fall, senior staff and identified department members will have a better idea of what is required of each position and this will allow those individuals an opportunity to research and recommend a course of action for the Department to follow prior to an incident. Backup personnel should also be assigned to positions.

Funeral Coordinator – The Funeral Coordinator is the overall coordinator (IC) for the Department's involvement in the planning and participation in the funeral, and the after care for the family. This person needs to be able to effectively communicate with the Fire Chief, funeral team members, Department members, and the public. The Funeral Coordinator, or designee, may have these additional duties:

1. Conduct coordination meetings with key personnel as needed.

2. Assure notification of all off-duty and vacationing personnel.
3. Arrange to have flags lowered to half mast.
4. Notify all other County Departments.
5. Notify neighboring Fire Departments.
6. Make appropriate follow-up contacts when the funeral arrangements have been made.
7. Personally collect all of the deceased personal items from the station and forward them to the Family Liaison Officer.
8. Remain a contact person for outside agencies.
9. Make appropriate arrangements for a post funeral meal/reception.
10. Contact support agencies, as appropriate, to arrange for their assistance.
11. Contact appropriate Department personnel to arrange for finalization of paperwork, forms, etc.
12. Contact neighboring departments for purpose of station coverage during the funeral.
13. Contact law enforcement and other agencies for assistance during the funeral.

Family Liaison Officer (FLO) – The FLO is the primary department connection with the family – the conduit for all information flow to/from the family. The FLO should be assigned a department vehicle for the entire funeral process and should be available to the family 24-hours a day.

The FLO should be prepared to discuss all parameters of the funeral process and ceremonies, and to counsel the family in its decisions. These may include, but are not limited to: the of internment; wake; funeral home; religious service; cemetery; burial garment (uniform or other); music; eulogy; procession; reception; child/family care. The FLO needs to know what services the Department can and cannot provide.

The Family Liaison Officer also needs to work with the family to obtain necessary documentation – autopsy reports (refer to Resources Section), birth and death certificates, marriage certificates, military records, and insurance documents. The FLO can assist in obtaining the benefits due the family such as:

1. Public Safety Officers Benefits
2. Pension/retirement systems
3. Volunteer Fire Fighters Dependents Benefits
4. Local insurance benefits
5. Workers' Compensation
6. Social Security
7. Veterans benefits
8. Union or State firefighter organizations
9. State/Federal education benefits
10. Other local, state or regional organizations
11. Setting up a Family Fund through a local bank.

Public Information Officer (PIO) – The Public Information Officer should coordinate and disseminate, with the approval of the Chief, all information regarding the Line-of-duty Death. The release of names of injured or deceased firefighters should *never* be done prior to the notification of the next of kin. The PIO's responsibilities may include:

1. Coordination and/or presentation of all media contacts including interviews, news conferences and written news releases.
2. Coordinate the notification of:
 - a. Local public officials
 - b. Maryland State Fire Chiefs Association
 - c. Local 2000 union
 - d. Neighboring fire departments
 - e. Public Safety Officers Benefit Program (1-888-744-6513)
 - f. National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (301-447-1365)
 - g. State Fire Marshal
 - h. State and federal elected officials
 - i. Other related State and local organizations
3. Establish information telephone numbers – recorded or live.
4. Prepare press kits – bio(s), pictures, service info, maps, etc.
5. Organize media coverage. Use media pool coverage to limit and manage media areas at the service and burial.
6. Prepare printed service programs for viewing and burial.
7. Manage VIP arrangements.

Church Coordinator – The Church Coordinator assists with all phases of the funeral and/or memorial services. He/she works closely with the Family Liaison Officer to ensure that the needs and desires of the family are being met. Duties may include:

1. Working with the Funeral Home Director to ensure that the family is taken care of appropriately in the planning of the funeral.
2. Determine whether department vehicles will be used as a funeral coach, family transportation, and for the processional.
3. Coordinate with the Honor Guard.
4. Obtaining and delivering to the Funeral Home Director burial clothing from the family or from the Department.

5. Coordinates any formal walk-through of uniformed personnel during the period of viewing.
6. Assists in coordinating the funeral service such as prayers, readings, music, and eulogies.
7. Assists with arrival and seating of fire department members, visiting departments, dignitaries, friends, and family.

Procession Coordinator – It is the responsibility of the Procession Coordinator to coordinate the procession from the funeral service to the cemetery. Duties may include:

1. Coordinating with other departments that will be involved with the procession.
2. The cleaning and preparing Department vehicles.
3. Establishing staging areas for vehicles and apparatus at both the funeral service and at the cemetery.
4. Determining if crossed ladders will be used and obtaining the apparatus.
5. Contacting and working with the Police Liaison Officer in setting up traffic control, directing traffic, and assisting in the staging areas.
6. Determining and placing the procession vehicles in order.
7. Determining the route of the procession, how long the procession will be and if the procession will pass in front of the fire station or other special location.
8. Providing maps and directions to the service.
9. Assigning personnel to assist in parking cars as well as setting up personal vehicles for the processional.
10. During a walking procession, directing individuals into proper placement.

Cemetery Coordinator – The Cemetery Coordinator is responsible for the events at the cemetery from the time the processional arrives until the end of the service and everyone has left the cemetery. He/she works with the Family Liaison Officer and the Funeral Home Director in determining how the grave side service is put together. Duties may include:

1. Ensuring the proper placement and formation of Department members, honor and color guards, bugler, pipers, drummers, firing squads, visiting departments, friends and others.
2. Coordinating with the cemetery the overhead protection for the immediate family, public address system, parking, staging and security.
3. Coordinating medical personnel at the cemetery.
4. If a flag is going to be presented to the family, coordinating the presentation with the Department or other personnel involved.
5. Providing any details or instructions regarding post-funeral gatherings.

Honor Guard – A detail of Department members in dress uniform with white gloves that are normally positioned at the head and foot of the casket. They may escort the casket to the funeral and cemetery. They can also act as pallbearers.

Pallbearers – Pallbearers are chosen by the family (usually 6-8 individuals) to “bear the body of the deceased.” Their duties may include passing the casket from the Chapel to the funeral coach or apparatus and then from the vehicle to the grave side. If the Department apparatus is used as a caisson to carry the casket, the Pallbearers from the Department may be assigned to drive and/or ride on the apparatus from the beginning to the end of the funeral procession.

Funeral Considerations

Decisions regarding the funeral are the responsibility of the family. However, consideration should be given to the individual’s wishes, if he/she communicated those wishes before his/her death (Personal Information Packet); the family’s religious traditions; and, fire service traditions, the members past military service.

The honors and support provided by the fire department may be affected by circumstances surrounding the death, established departmental protocol and the classification (type) of death.

Classifications

Type I - Death occurs as a result of an on-duty incident or job related.

Type II - Death occurs when an active member is off-duty and not relating to any emergency activities.

Type III - Death pertains to a retiree of the department.

Suggested Services for Funeral Types

Listed below are the different types of situations and suggested services which may be offered to the family. The Family Liaison Officer should coordinate the arrangements with the family. The most important item in any situation is that prior approval of any and all funeral services must be given by the family of the deceased. Under no circumstances should assumptions be made.

Suggested Options

OPTION	TYPE I	TYPE II	TYPE III
American Flag Presentation	X	X	X
Badge Shrouds	X	X	X
Bagpipers/Drum Corps	X	Opt	Opt
Bell Service	X	X	X
Bugler	X		
Color Guard	X		
Crossed Ladders	X		
Eulogies	X	X	X
Fire Engine Caisson	X		
Fire Service Flags	X	X	X
Flower Unit	X	X	

Honor Guards	X	X	X
Honor Detail	X	X	
Active Member Pallbearers	X	X	X
Station Bunting	X		
Vehicle Bunting	X		
Walk Through	X	X	X

*****Respect the desires of the family*****

Guidelines for the Funeral/Memorial Service

Type I Service – On Duty

(Refer to Appendix F – Funeral Service Diagrams)

All available department personnel to attend in full class ‘A’ dress uniform, including off duty members.

All members will wear a black band over their badges from the time the death is announced until 24 hours after the finish of service. The department may choose to have the shroud remain on the badge for thirty day mourning period.

All department flags will fly at half-staff from the time of the death is announced until at least 24 hours after finish of service, and up to one week after death.

All regular uniformed personnel will remain covered while outdoors, except during prayers, and uncovered indoors.

All Honor Guard members will be covered at all times during the performance of their duties.

Seating will be reserved as such that the family is nearest the casket followed by the Pallbearers, the department officers, descending in rank, followed by all other members of the department. Following that will be all visiting uniformed firefighters, from the longest distance traveled to the least traveled. The County Executive, Council persons, and other dignitaries (from local to most broad (i.e. Federal), will be seated either to the side of all firefighters, or directly behind the department members.

Upon conclusion of the service, all personnel starting with the Pallbearers, and going further from the casket, will file out, being the first to leave, to assemble outside in preparation of the passing of the casket.

Line-Of-Duty Death Guidelines

The casket will precede the family filing through the assembled firefighters to the Fire Apparatus or Funeral Coach of choice.

Directly behind the casket as it exits the chapel/church will be the immediate family, followed by extended family and all other attendees.

The Pallbearers will then place the casket on the appropriate apparatus, or in the funeral coach, if chosen.

Type II Service – Off Duty

All available department personnel asked to attend in uniform, including off duty members.

All members will wear a black band over their badges from the time the death is announced until 24 hours after finish of service, and up to one week after death.

All department flags will fly at half-staff from the time of the death is announced until at least 24 hours after finish of service, and up to one week after death.

All regular uniformed personnel will remain covered while outdoors, except during prayers, and uncovered indoors.

Seating will be reserved as such that the family is nearest the casket followed by the Pallbearers, any department officers who wish to attend, followed by all other members of the department. Following that will be any visiting uniformed firefighters. Any dignitaries will be seated either to the side of all firefighters, or directly behind them.

Upon conclusion of the service, all personnel starting with the Pallbearers, and going further from the casket, will file out, being the first to leave, to assemble outside in preparation of the passing of the casket.

The casket will precede the family filing through the assembled firefighters to the Funeral Coach.

Directly behind the casket as it exits the chapel/church will be the immediate family, followed by extended family and all other attendees.

The Pallbearers will then place the casket in the funeral coach.

Type III Service – Retiree Death

All available department personnel to attend in full class ‘A’ uniform, including off duty members.

All members may wear a black band over their badges from the time the death is announced until 24 hours after finish of service.

All uniformed personnel at the service will remain covered while outdoors, except during prayers, and uncovered indoors.

All Honor Guard members will be covered at all times during the performance of their duties.

Seating will be reserved as such that the family is nearest the casket followed by the Pallbearers, department officers, all attending members of the department, all visiting uniformed firefighters, and any applicable dignitaries.

Upon conclusion of the service, all personnel, starting with the Pallbearers, and going further from the casket, will file out, being the first to leave, assembling outside in preparation of the passing of the casket.

The casket will precede the family filing through the assembled firefighters to the Funeral Coach.

Directly behind the casket as it exits the chapel/church will be the immediate family, followed by extended family and all other attendees.

The Pallbearers will then place the casket in the funeral coach.

Guidelines for Processional to, and Assembly at Graveside

Type I – On Duty

(Refer to Appendix G – Funeral Procession Diagrams and Appendix H – Cemetery Service Diagrams)

NOTE: There are two options for proceeding to the graveside – marching and vehicular procession.

Marching Processional – It is the responsibility of the Procession Coordinator to ensure that the order for the marching processional is as follows, and that the Bugler is standing by at the cemetery.

- Piper(s) and Drummer(s)
- Color Guard
- Clergy/Department Chaplain
- Apparatus/Funeral Coach will Pallbearers and Honor Guard Escort
- Immediate Family
- Fire Chief, Department Officers in descending order of rank, and Dignitaries from most local to most broad.
- Department uniformed personnel.
- Visiting Department uniformed personnel from the longest distance traveled to the least traveled.
- Department Additional Apparatus
- Visiting Department Apparatus from the longest distance traveled to the least traveled
- All other miscellaneous vehicles

Vehicular Procession Only – It is again the responsibility of the Procession Coordinator to ensure that the order for the vehicular processional is appropriate, as follows, and that Piper(s), Drummer(s), Bugler and Color Guard are standing by at the cemetery.

- Lead Car provided by funeral home, containing appropriate Clergy/Department Chaplain
- Apparatus/Funeral Coach, with Pallbearers, riding inside if apparatus, or immediately following family in one vehicle if funeral coach
- Car or Limousine with Immediate Family
- Fire Chief Car followed by officer cars and dignitary cars
- Additional Department Apparatus
- Visiting Department Apparatus from the longest distance traveled
- All other Department Personnel, if in personal vehicles
- All other Visiting Department Personnel, if in personal vehicles
- All other Miscellaneous Vehicles

Assembly at Graveside

- Two crossed Aerial Ladders with a draped flag shall be at the entrance to the cemetery, so that the entire processional goes underneath them in entering.
- The Piper(s), Drummer(s) will be assembled approximately 100 yards from the gravesite, and the Bugler will assemble approximately 20 feet past the gravesite.
- Fire Walk of Honor – the members of the department shall line up on both sides of the path, in an organized fashion from the Coach/Apparatus to the graveside, approximately 10 feet apart with all additional department firefighters, and visiting department firefighters lining up behind the front row of firefighters.
- Once the firefighters are appropriately assembled, the Color Guard will line up at the beginning of the Walk of Honor followed by the Clergy/Chaplain.
- At this point the Pallbearers will remove the casket from the Coach/Apparatus and the Honor Guard will command “Detail, Attention”. All firefighters will then come to attention, awaiting the command “Detail, Present Arms” which will signal the Pallbearers to begin carrying the casket down the Walk of Honor, and all Detail Members will render a hand salute just as the casket nears them.
- The casket will be followed in order by the Immediate Family, the Fire Chief and Officers, in descending rank, command staff, and other dignitaries.
- Once the casket reaches the gravesite, the piper(s) and drummer(s) may begin playing ‘Amazing Grace’ as they approach from the distance, marching to approximately 20 feet from the foot end of the graveside.
- After the piper(s) and drummer(s) reach their appropriate places, the command “Detail, Order Arms, Fall In” will be given, instructing the detail to move from their places in the Walk of Honor, to orderly lined, directly behind (or across from) the family, who are to be seated directly in front of the casket.

- The appropriate Clergy/Chaplain then should step forward with the graveside message, which may include the Firefighter's Prayer and 23rd Psalm (refer to Appendix I – Firefighter's Poems / 23rd Psalm), depending upon the wishes of the family.
- At the close of the graveside message, the Clergy/Chaplain may then commence with "Let us now pray." At this time, all are expected to remove and order their covers to their sides, and bow their heads in respect.
- Once the Clergy/Chaplain has finished his prayer, all personnel will recover, and the Honor Guard will remove the flag from the casket (if used), and fold it for presentation to the family.
- The flag will be passed from one member of the honor guard to the honor guard commander, with both members of the honor guard saluting as it passes.
- The presentation to the next of kin will be made by the Chief or Public Official, who will present it as he explains,
"This flag is presented on behalf of the grateful citizens of Howard County, as a small token of our appreciation for the honorable and faithful service, and great sacrifice of your loved one."
- It is then appropriate for the dispatcher to announce this farewell message.
"The members of the Howard County Department of Fire & Rescue wish to thank _____ (rank and name) for his/her ____# years of services to the citizens of Howard County of. Although you are gone, you will never be forgotten."
- At the conclusion, the Honor Guard Commander will command "Detail, Attention, Present Arms" and the bugler will begin to play 'Taps'.
- At the conclusion of 'Taps' the command "Detail, Order Arms" will be rendered, and the firefighters will stand at attention until the family has begun to depart.
- Information about the reception or other family desires may be announced.
- At this point the Honor Guard Command will command, "Detail, Dismissed" concluding the services.

Type II – Off Duty Death

Procession – It is again the responsibility of the Procession Coordinator to ensure that the order for the vehicular processional is appropriate, as follows, and that Piper(s) and Drummer(s) are standing by at the cemetery.

- Lead Car provided by funeral home, containing appropriate Clergy/Chaplain.
- Funeral Coach, with Pallbearers immediately following family in one vehicle
- Car or Limousine with Immediate Family
- Fire Chief Car
- Additional Department Vehicles
- All other Department Personnel
- All other Vehicles

Assembly at Graveside

- The Piper(s) and Drummer(s) will be assembled approximately 100 yards from graveside.
- At this point the Pallbearers will remove the casket from the Coach and begin carrying the casket to the graveside.
- The casket will be followed in order by the immediate family and present firefighters.
- Once the casket reaches the gravesite, the Piper(s) and Drummer(s) may begin playing 'Amazing grace' as they approach from the distance, marching to approximately 20 feet from the foot end of the graveside.
- The appropriate Clergy/Chaplain then should step forward with the graveside message, which may include the Firefighter's Prayer and 23rd Psalm (refer to Appendix I – Firefighter's Poems / 23rd Psalm), depending upon the wishes of the family.
- At close of the graveside message, the Clergy/Chaplain may then commence with "Let us now pray." At this time, all are expected to remove and order their covers to their sides, and bow their heads in respect.
- Once the Clergy/Chaplain has finished his prayer, all personnel will recover
- It is then appropriate for the dispatchers to announce this farewell message. *"The members of the Howard County Department of Fire & Rescue wish to thank _____ (rank and name) for his service to the citizens of Howard County Maryland. Although you are gone, you will never be forgotten."*
- At this point the services are concluded.
- Information about the reception or other family desires may be announced.

Type III – Retiree Death

Procession – It is the responsibility of the Procession Coordinator to ensure that the order for the vehicular processional is appropriate, as follows, and that Piper(s), Drummer(s), are standing by at the cemetery, according to the family's wishes.

- Lead Car provided by funeral home, containing appropriate Clergy.
- Funeral Coach, with Pallbearers immediately following family.
- Car or Limousine with immediate family.
- Fire Chief Car
- Additional Department vehicles
- All other Department Personnel
- All other vehicles

Assembly at Graveside

- The Piper(s) and Drummer(s) will be assembled approximately 100 yards from the graveside, according to the wishes of the family.
- At this point the Pallbearers will remove the casket from the Coach and begin carrying the casket to the graveside.

- The casket will be following in order by the immediate family and present firefighters.
- Once the casket reaches the graveside, the piper(s) and Drummer(s) may begin playing 'Amazing Grace' as they approach from the distance, marching to approximately 20 feet from the foot end of the graveside.
- The Clergy should then step forward with the graveside message, which may include the Firefighter's Prayer and 23rd Psalm (refer to Appendix I – Firefighter's Poems and 23rd Psalm), depending upon the wishes of the family.
- At the close of the graveside message, the Clergy may then commence with "Let us now pray." At this time, all are expected to remove and order their covers to their sides, and bow their heads in respect.
- Once the Clergy has finished his prayer, all personnel will recover.
- If it is then appropriate, according to local customs, for the dispatch to read this farewell message over the radio. *"The members of the Howard County Department of Fire & Rescue wish to thank _____ (rank and name) for his service to the citizens of Howard County Maryland. Although you are gone, you will never be forgotten."*
- At this point the services are concluded.
- Information about the reception or other family desires may be announced.

Viewing/Vigil Considerations

The family may desire to have a time for a viewing or vigil. The Department should coordinate its participation with the Family Liaison Officer. Often the family will request Honor Guards be posted at each end of the casket. It is generally proper protocol for the Honor Guards to wear their uniform hat inside the church or mortuary, including the time spent posted alongside the casket. Gloves should also be worn. It would be acceptable for immediate family members to be escorted by Department personnel to and from the viewing. It may be helpful to have members of the Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Team available for counseling.

Memorial Service Logistics

There are a number of issues regarding the memorial service that should be taken into consideration:

1. Ensure the facility is large enough to handle the anticipated numbers. We may have to plan for an overflow.
2. The Department may need to coordinate traffic control and parking with other agencies.
3. Work with the family in establishing the program and obtaining speakers for the service.
4. Assist with the printing and distribution of a written program.

5. Coordinate seating arrangements for the family, VIP's, Department personnel, visiting departments, officials, and civilian friends.
6. Arrange for an adequate PA system.
7. Coordinate music requests from the family with musicians, etc.
8. If services are held outside, arrangements may be required to a tent, chairs, restrooms, water, stage, power, etc.
9. Rehearsals may be needed for key personnel.
10. Coordinate Last Alarm ceremony.

Recommended Presentation Order for Memorial Service

1. Invocation
2. Prayer
3. Opening remarks/greetings
4. Special music
5. Scripture reading/clergy remarks
6. Speakers
 - a. County Executive
 - b. Local elected officials
 - c. State or Federal officials
 - d. Family representative(s)
 - e. Union representative
 - f. Department representative's friends
7. Eulogy – Chief
8. Special music
9. Presentations
10. Closing remarks/prayer
11. Last Alarm Ceremony
12. Bagpipes
13. Dismissal instructions

Suggested Presentation of the Emblem

- The Fire Chief may present the deceased members badge to the family.

(Name of nearest of kin) it is an honor that I have the privilege presenting to you an emblem of the Department of which our late brother/sister was a member; his/her emblem symbolizes the esteem we held for him/her. May the memory therefore always bring happiness?

Suggested Last Alarm Ceremony

- Chaplain or Department member can read or recite:

Throughout most of history, a firefighter's life has been closely associated with the ringing of a bell. As they began their hours of duty, it was the bell that started it off. Through the day and night, each alarm was sounded by a bell, which called them to fight fire and to place their lives in jeopardy for the good of their fellow citizens. And when the fire was out, and the alarm had come to an end, the bell rang three times to signal the end.

An now our Brother/Sister _____ has completed his/her task, his/her duties well done, and the bell rings three times in memory of, and in tribute to him/her life and service. (see Appendix J for Bell Readings Options)

- Officer in charge call the detail to Attention.
- Color Guard called to "Present Arms."
- Bell is struck three times, pause. Repeat two additional times (total of nine rings).
- Color Guard called to "Order Arms."
- Detail call to "Rest."

Recommended Program for Internment

1. Assembly
2. "Officers attention, salute" (command given, ready two, when casket is placed over the grave).
3. Opening prayer
4. Scripture reading
5. Bagpiper
6. Committal reading, closing prayer
7. Taps
8. Flag folding (NOTE: **Flag option for veterans.**)
9. Flag presentation by Chief
10. Gun Salute and/or Last Alarm Ceremony
11. Reception/family announcements
12. Attention, dismissed.

Suggested Graveside Services

Chaplain or Department member can read or recite:

Reverently we commit the body of our brother/sister to the grave (flames, if cremation) "Earth to Earth" – "Ashes to Ashes" and "Dust to Dust." Though our brother/sister has passed beyond our mortal view, through our faith in the Almighty we know that we can leave him/her in the hands of the Supreme Chief of the Universe who doeth all things well; who is glorious in His holiness: wondrous in His power; and, boundless in His goodness and love to His children.

Now, my brother/sister, with a firm faith in the almighty, we know we shall meet you again in His house and until then – my brother/sister – farewell.

May the Almighty bless thee and keep thee; let His face shine upon thee and be gracious to thee; may the Almighty lift up the light of countenance upon thee and give thee peace. AMEN.

Reception Logistics

It is often the Department's responsibility to organize and provide food and refreshments at a reception at the conclusion of the burial service. This will probably take place at a location away from the cemetery. The Funeral Coordinator should assign an individual to coordinate the activity. The following should be taken into consideration:

1. Location site – to ensure site in suitable in size, with adequate parking.
2. Maps to be passed out at the cemetery
3. Number of anticipated attendees
4. Anticipated starting/closing times
5. Menu and refreshments (provided by Department or catered).
6. Tableware and seating
7. If outside, tents, restrooms, seating
8. If speakers/program, PA and stage
9. Relocation of flowers
10. Department provided transportation for individuals.

Setting Up Memorials

Paying tribute to the fallen is honorable and should be done. Setting up a memorial can also help with the healing process of the family and the Department. Permission should be obtained from family member before setting up the memorial.

There are several ways a memorial can be made – erecting a permanent memorial marker; establishing a trust or scholarship fund (check with the bank for the proper type of account); annual Department memorial service; and, national memorial service.

Survivors Benefits

The death of a member is often a difficult time for the entire department. Many details and arrangements need to be addressed in a short period of time. One major item which is often overlooked is the identification and completion of the various claim forms that are required to assure the deceased member's family receives the benefits available to them. The department should take the responsibility for seeing that this is cared for. The benefits available can vary as a result of the circumstances surrounding the cause of death, whether the member was a volunteer or paid, prior affiliations and places of employment and locally established benefit options. The Department should research and prepare a listing of the potential benefits available to its members.

Federal Benefits

Public Safety Officers' Benefit (PSOB) Program

(Refer to Appendix J – PSOB Fact Sheet)

The PSOB Program provides a one-time financial benefit to the eligible survivors of public safety officers whose deaths, or permanent and total disability, are the direct and proximate result of a traumatic injury sustained in the line of duty. The total benefit amount is adjusted annually, as of October 1, 2005, the benefit was set at \$283,385.

Following the death of a firefighter, the Department needs to identify a departmental liaison with the PSOB Program. This can also be handled by the NFF LAST Team. The identified person making contact needs to:

1. Call the PSOB at 1-888-744-6513 (If you need to notify PSOB on an evening or a weekend, leave a message. Be sure to include all of the required information.)
2. Provide accurate, up to date information including,
 - Department name and address
 - Liaison's name
 - Phone number for the department and liaison
 - A fax number or mailing address so the PSOB can send the Death Benefits Questionnaire
 - Deceased firefighter's name
 - Date of the incident and death
 - A brief description of the incident

The department liaison must complete and return the Questionnaire to PSOB immediately. This information is vital. In describing the incident, as much detail as possible should be given; however, do not speculate if the cause of death is not known.

The PSOB will send an information package with a form (Report of Public Safety Officer's Death) that the department must complete and a form (Claim for Death Benefit) that the survivors must complete and sign. With the form the family submits, several original documents will need to be attached (e.g., birth certificate, marriage license, divorce decree, etc.). PSOB will not return items unless specifically requested to (Refer to Appendix J – PSOB Fact Sheet).

Upon verification of the claim, the PSOB will notify the next-of-kin of the status of the claim. The Department liaison should be available to provide assistance to the family.

Department of Veterans Affairs

The Department of Veterans Affairs may be able to provide family assistance for veterans in obtaining a burial site, marker and flag. Contact the VA at 1-800-827-1000.

Social Security Administration

Depending on the work history of the deceased firefighter, and their participation in the Social Security program, his/her family may be eligible for benefits provided by the Social Security Administration (SSA). Assistance can be obtained from regional SSA offices or at www.ssa.gov.

If eligible, survivor benefits may include:

- A one-time lump-sum payment of \$255.00 is payable to the surviving spouse provided the deceased employee and the spouse were living together at the time of death, or the surviving spouse is entitled to survivor benefits. If there is no surviving spouse, the lump sum is paid to children who are eligible for benefits. Otherwise, the lump sum is not payable.
- Social Security will pay survivor benefits to a surviving spouse and dependent children. For the spouse to qualify, he/she must be at least age 60, or between the ages of 50 and 59 and disabled, or any age and caring for a child under the age of 16 or a disabled child. Children may qualify for benefits if they are under age 18 (or under age 19, if in high school) or disabled. Dependent parents and former spouses may also qualify for survivor benefits. The amount of the benefit depends on the deceased employee's Social Security earnings and the number of survivors eligible for benefits.

Workers' Compensation

Spousal benefit is 66 2/3% of employee's average weekly wages for 312 weeks. After 312 weeks, benefit to spouse becomes subject to Social Security benefit offset. Minimum and maximum amounts apply and are adjusted annually. Upon remarriage, spouse receives 52-week lump sum distribution or remainder of award, whichever is less, and benefits terminate. If there are other dependents remaining at the time of

remarriage, benefits shall be paid to such person as an administrative law judge may determine, for the use and benefit of the other dependents. Children are considered dependent until age 18 or longer if disabled. No continuation for full-time student status. All medical expenses associated with death are paid.

- Volunteer Firefighters – Considered employees for the purpose of Workers Compensation. Compensation is based on the lowest monthly salary of firefighters in a first-class city at the time of death.
- Funeral Benefits – Maximum of \$8,000 for burial expenses in ordinary cases. Unusual cases may result in additional payments either voluntary or by Commission order.

State Of Maryland One-time Death Benefit - Death benefit is \$133,383 to spouse or spouse and dependent children. The benefit is adjusted annually on July 1 based on the Consumer Price Index. Benefit provided when firefighter dies in performance of duties.

Performance of duties is defined as: actively participating in fighting a fire or while going to or from a fire; performing other duties necessary to the operation or maintenance of a fire company; actively participating in ambulance, advanced life support, or rescue work as part of a fire, ambulance, rescue, or advanced life support unit while going to or from the scene; or providing emergency or rescue assistance, whether acting alone or at the direction of or with a company or advanced life support unit.

Benefit paid is in addition to any benefits from workers' compensation and life insurance.

Contact:

Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services
Death Benefit Program
6776 Reisterstown Road
Baltimore, MD 21215
Phone: (410) 585-3408 or (877) 379-8636
Website: www.dpscs.state.md.us

Education

Police Officer's and Firefighter's Survivor Tuition Act, also referred to as the "Golden Shield" policy. Tuition waivers can be used for undergraduate education for not more than nine semesters. Must be in a program of study leading to a degree or certificate. Must attend a state institution of higher education and be under age 25. Some private institutions also provide this benefit but are not required to do so. Financial need is a consideration for the waiver.

Local Benefits

Survivor benefits vary greatly by locality. The deceased firefighter's own Volunteer Department may have available benefits and/or scholarships. The Department should prepare a potential source list now. Items that could be included are: life insurance policy; accidental death policy; deferred compensation program; and, civic and fire related organizations. A special fund or trust may also be set up for the family.

Scholarship and Educational Programs

- **National Fallen Firefighter Foundation** – Offers annual financial assistance for post-secondary education and training to spouses, children, and stepchildren of firefighters honored at the National Memorial in Emmitsburg, Maryland. Children and stepchildren must be under age 30 and have been under age 22 at the time of the firefighter's death. Survivors who apply for the Foundation's Sarbanes Scholarship Program will also be considered for several partner programs. You only need to submit the Foundation scholarship application and materials to be considered for the partner programs.
- **International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF)** – The IAFF, through the W.H. "Howie" McClennan Scholarship, makes annual scholarship awards available to children of firefighters who died in the line of duty. The applicant's parent must have been a member in good standing of the IAFF at the time of death (202-737-8484).
- **Public Safety Officers' Educational Assistance Program, Department of Justice** – Provides support for higher education expenses through an established monthly allowance for eligible survivors. It may be used to defray expenses such as tuition and fees, room and board, books, supplies, and other education-related costs. For classes taken after October 1, 2005, the program offers up to \$827 per month for full-time students and lesser amounts for part-time students. This educational assistance program is limited to survivors who qualified for Public Safety Officers' Benefits. Spouses are eligible for benefits at any time. Children are only eligible for expenses that occur prior to their 27th birthday. All awards are reduced by the amount of other governmental assistance that a student is eligible to receive.

Resources

Autopsy

Firefighter Autopsy Protocol, United States Fire Administration, 1991

(Available online at <http://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/FA-156.pdf>)

Contact: United States Fire Administration
USFA Publications Center

16825 S. Seton Avenue
Emmitsburg, MD 217727
1-800-561-3356
www.usfa.fema.gov

Benefits

Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program Fact Sheet

(Available online at: www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/bja/fs000271.pdf)

Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program, Checklist for Public Safety Agencies Filing a PSOB Death Claim

(Available at: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/psob/PSOBChecklist.pdf>)

Public Safety Officers' Educational Assistance Program

(Available online at: www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/bja/fs000270.pdf)

Contact: Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program
Bureau of Justice Assistance
810 Seventh Street NW
Washington, DC 20531
1-888-744-6513 / Fax: 202-616-0314 www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA

National Fallen Firefighters Foundation, State Benefits and "Taking Care of Our Own" Training Programs and Materials

Contact: National Fallen Firefighters Foundation
P.O. Drawer 498
Emmitsburg, MD 21727
301-447-1365 / Fax: 301-447-1645
www.firehero.org

Funeral Guides

Chaplain's Manual: Fire Department Funerals. Federation of Fire Chaplains, 1994

(Available at: <http://www.firehero.org/s567/images/ChaplainsManual--final.pdf>)

Contact: Federation of Fire Chaplains
185 County Road 1602
Clifton, TX 76634-4508
(254) 622-8514
www.firechaplains.org

For Those Who Gave So Much: Planning, Preparation, and Officiation of Funerals and Memorial Services for Public Safety Officers. Dwaine Booth, 1993

Contact: Booth/Taylor Publishing
2579 Surrey Drive
Clearwater, FL 34615
(727) 789-3816

Funeral Procedures for Firefighters, A Resource Manual. National Volunteer Fire Council, 1992. (Available at: http://www.nvfc.org/pdf/funeral_procedures.pdf)

Contact: National Volunteer Fire Council
1050 17th Street, NW, Suite 490
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 887-5700 / 1-888-ASK-NVFC / Fax: (202) 887-5291
www.nvfc.org

IAFC Line of Duty Deaths; Notification, Family Support, Department Support, Benefits, Protocols, Investigation, Appendix

Available at: (<http://www.iafc.org/associations/4685/files/01Notification.PDF>),
(<http://www.iafc.org/associations/4685/files/02famSupport.PDF>),
(<http://www.iafc.org/associations/4685/files/03deptSupport.PDF>),
(<http://www.iafc.org/associations/4685/files/04Benefits.PDF>),
(<http://www.iafc.org/associations/4685/files/05Protocols.PDF>),
(<http://www.iafc.org/associations/4685/files/06Investigations.PDF>),
(<http://www.iafc.org/associations/4685/files/07Appendix.PDF>),

Contact: International Association of Fire Chiefs
4025 Fair Ridge Drive, Suite 300
Fairfax, VA 22033-2868
(703) 273-0911 / Fax: (703) 273-9363
www.iafc.org

IAFF Recommended Protocol for Line-of-Duty Deaths.

(NOTE: The IAFF will provide this protocol at the request of the IAFF District Vice President or local IAFF affiliates.)

Contact: International Association of Fire Fighters
1750 New York Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20006-5395
(202) 737-8484 / Fax: (202) 737-8418
www.iaff.org

Illinois Fire Chiefs Association, Funeral Service Guidelines, Funeral Committee

(http://www.illinoisfirechiefs.org/data/service/FuneralServiceGuidelines_59.doc)

Sample SOG for Funeral Guidelines

([http://www.illinoisfirechiefs.org/data/service/SOG103.09\(LineofDutyDeath\)_60.doc](http://www.illinoisfirechiefs.org/data/service/SOG103.09(LineofDutyDeath)_60.doc))

Contact: Illinois Fire Chiefs Association
P.O. Box 7
Skokie, IL 60076-0007
1-800-662-0732
www.illinoisfirechiefs.org

Investigations

Guide for Investigation of a Line of Duty Death. International Association of Fire Chiefs

(Available at: <http://www.iafc.org/associations/4685/files/06Investigations.PDF>)

Contact: International Association of Fire Chiefs
4025 Fair Ridge Drive, Suite 300
Fairfax, VA 22033-2868
(703) 273-0911 / Fax: (703) 273-9363
www.iafc.org

NIOSH Fire Fighter Fatality Programs and Reports

A list of and links to all the periodic NIOSH reports on firefighter fatalities are available.

Contact: National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health
1-800-35-NIOSH or 1-800-356-4674
www.cdc.gov/niosh/firehome.html

The Aftermath of Firefighter Fatality Incidents: Preparing for the Worst. United States Fire Administration, Technical Report Series, Report 089.

Contact: United States Fire Administration
USFA Publications Center
16825 S. Seton Avenue
Emmitsburg, MD 21727
1-800-561-3356
www.usfa.fema.gov

Specialized Websites

National Fallen Firefighters Foundation

www.firehero.org

Provides immediate information on how to report a Line of Duty Death, support for survivors, and criteria for inclusion on National Memorial. Gives information on the national tribute held each October. Provides pre-incident planning resources available for download and adapt to local needs. Lists survivor benefits for each state. Operates a Lending Library for resource materials.

Appendix A

LODD Checklists

NOTE: The checklist included in Appendix A should be used as a guide and can be amended to meet our needs.

LODD Checklist

- _____ Notification of Department Chief Officers
- _____ Radio Discipline Policy
- _____ Scene Security
- _____ Notification of local law enforcement agency
- _____ Firefighters Personal Information Packet Referenced
- _____ Notification Team Established
- _____ Notification Team - Verification of Information and deceased (Facts Only)
- _____ Notifications:
 - _____ Family
 - _____ Fire Department Members
 - _____ Local Officials
 - _____ Neighboring Departments
 - _____ Maryland State Firemans Association
 - _____ Professional Firefighters – Local President
- _____ Order Flags Half-Mast
- _____ LODD Investigation Team
 - _____ Safety Officer / Fire Investigation - Secure firefighters PPE (turnouts, helmet, boots, gloves, SCBA, PASS Devices, clothing, etc.)
 - _____ Contact Medical Examiner (Autopsy Protocols)
 - _____ Autopsy Arranged
 - _____ Copies of Death Certificate (Minimum of 12)
- _____ Contact Support Agencies:
 - _____ CISD Team
 - _____ State Fire Marshal
 - _____ Baltimore Regional Incident Management Team
 - _____ USFA / National Fallen Firefighter Foundation LAST team.
- _____ LODD Staff Assignments
 - _____ Funeral Coordinator
 - _____ Family Liaison Officer
 - _____ Church Coordinator
 - _____ Procession Coordinator
 - _____ Cemetery Coordinator
 - _____ Public Information Officer
- _____ Prepared Media Release (Only the Facts)
- _____ LODD Supply Kit (mourning bands, gloves, bunting, bell, flag, etc.)

Funeral Coordinator

- _____ Notify off-duty personnel
- _____ Lower department flags to half mast
- _____ Notify neighboring fire departments
- _____ Notify other County departments.
- _____ Collect and secure deceased members personal items for Family Liaison Officer
- _____ Contact support agencies for assistance benefits.
- _____ Arrange for station coverage during funeral
- _____ Arrange for law enforcement and other departmental assistance during funeral
- _____ Arrange post-funeral meal/reception
- _____ Coordinate all funeral arrangements with staff coordinators and department

Family Liaison Officer

- _____ Notify deceased members family in conjunction with the Chief
- _____ Contact hospital for family visit, if needed
- _____ Coordinate family's funeral desires with department
- _____ Coordinate benefit applications with family
- _____ Arrange for Family's child care as needed
- _____ Make post-funeral follow-ups with family

Church Coordinator

- _____ Coordinate Viewing/Vigil with Funeral Home Director, Family Liaison Officer and department
- _____ Coordinate church services with church/Funeral Home Director, Family Liaison Officer, and department
- _____ Coordinate Department staff roles
- _____ Coordinate Honor Guard
- _____ Coordinate Pallbearers
- _____ Coordinate/assist with services
- _____ Assist participants with arrival/parking/seating

Procession Coordinator

- _____ Coordinate staging areas
- _____ Establish procession route
- _____ Prepare maps/directions, as needed
- _____ Establish/coordinate processional order
- _____ Prepare Department vehicles
- _____ Prepare stations, as needed
- _____ Prepare engine for use as caisson
- _____ Arrange for aerial apparatus
- _____ Coordinate staging, traffic control, etc. with law enforcement agencies

Cemetery Coordinator

- _____ Establish placement of personnel and guests
- _____ Coordinate staging, parking and security
- _____ Coordinate standby medical personnel
- _____ Coordinate flag presentation
- _____ Coordinate drummer(s) and piper(s)
- _____ Coordinate bugler
- _____ Coordinate Last Alarm Ceremony
- _____ Coordinate Dispatch Farewell Message
- _____ Notify participants of post-funeral arrangements

Public Information Officer

- _____ Coordinate all media contacts
- _____ Coordinate notifications
 - _____ Surrounding Departments
 - _____ Local Public Officials
 - _____ Local Professional Firefighters Union
 - _____ Utah State Fire Marshal
 - _____ Utah State Fire Chiefs Association
 - _____ National Fallen Firefighters Foundation
 - _____ Other related State and local organizations

Appendix B

Personal Information Packet Sample

**HOWARD COUNTY FIRE & RESCUE
PERSONAL INFORMATION PACKET**

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Last:		First:		Middle:	
Address:			City:		State: Zip:
Home Phone:			Cellular Phone:		

EMERGENCY CONTACT 1

Please identify family members you would like the department to contact. Please list them in order for contact. NOTE: If the contact is a minor child, please indicate the name of the adult contact.

Last:		First:		Relationship:	
Address:		City:		State:	Zip:
Home Phone:		Cellular Phone:		Pager:	
Employer:		Address:		City:	State:
Work Phone:		Is this person your primary beneficiary?			

Special Circumstances (age, health, etc.) or instructions:

EMERGENCY CONTACT 2

Please identify family members you would like the department to contact. Please list them in order for contact. NOTE: If the contact is a minor child, please indicate the name of the adult contact.

Last:		First:		Relationship:	
Address:		City:		State:	Zip:
Home Phone:		Cellular Phone:		Pager:	
Employer:		Address:		City:	State:
Work Phone:		Is this person a beneficiary?		Explain:	

Special Circumstances (age, health, etc.) or instructions:

CHILDREN - NAMES AND D.O.B.

Please provide the names and date of births of your children:

	/ /		/ /
	/ /		/ /
	/ /		/ /
	/ /		/ /

DEPARTMENT MEMBERS

Department member(s) if any, that you would like to accompany the Notification Team to make notifications.

--	--

Line-Of-Duty Death Guidelines

OTHER ASSISTANCE TO NOTIFICATION			
Identify anyone else that you would like to help make the notification (example: bishop, minister, friends, etc.)			
Last:	First:	Relationship:	
Address:		Home Phone:	Cellular Phone:
Employer:		City:	
Work Phone:		Other Information:	
FUNERAL/MEMORIAL SERVICES			
Do you wish to have a fire service funeral, as established by Department Procedures? _____.			
If no, may the District hold a public fire memorial service, if cause of death is L.O.D.D. related? _____.			
Disposition: Burial _____ Cremation _____ Other Instructions:			
Funeral Home Choice:		Cemetery Choice:	
Has cemetery plot been purchased?		Are flowers to be omitted in lieu of a charity or organization?	
If, Yes: Please identify charity or organization:			
Preference as to who will deliver the eulogy? Please Identify:			
Favorite Songs:			
Favorite Poems:			
Favorite Readings:			
Favorite Scriptures/verses:			
List preferences for Pallbearers:			

ARMED FORCES			
Are you a veteran of U.S. Armed Services?		Please identify which branch?	
If entitled to a military funeral, do you wish to have one?			
OTHER CRITICAL INFORMATION			
Are you a member of Local Union?		Would you like a union representative at notification?	
Do you have a Will?		Do you have a Living Will?	
Life Insurance Policy:		Agent & Policy #:	
Death & Disability Insurance:		Agent & Policy #:	
Are you an organ donor?		Drivers license indicates that you are an organ donor?	

SPECIAL REQUESTS

List any special requests, wishes or directions that you would like to be cared for in the event of your death or serious injury:

Employee Signature

____/____/____
Date

Next of Kin Signature

____/____/____
Date

Sworn to and subscribed before me this _____ day of _____, 200____.

Notary Public

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION:

The information provided will be utilized by the department in the event of your death to assist your family in preparing for your funeral and obtaining the benefits available to them. Please make sure that someone close to you knows this information.

UPDATE INFORMATION:

The information provided is accurate and requires no revisions/changes:

Employee Signature

____/____/____
Date

Witnessed by

Employee Signature

____/____/____
Date

Witnessed by

Appendix C

Up - Dated GO-100.15

Appendix D

LODD Memo to Staff

Sample Memo to Staff for LODD

TO: Fire Department Staff
FROM: Fire Chief
RE: Line of Duty Death Announcement
DATE:

It is my sad duty to inform you that at ____ (time) today Firefighter(s) (rank and names) were killed in the line of duty. Details for the incident are not fully known. I have ordered an immediate and thorough investigation of the events surrounding this tragedy.

I will provide you with more information as soon as it is available, including details of services.

This is a difficult time for the entire Department, and we will need to come together to get through it. All of us know when we choose firefighting as a vocation that this type of occurrence is possible. But that does not make it any less tragic or any less difficult to bear once it actually happens.

At this time our thoughts and prayers are with the _____ family. I urge you to support the Department in any way you can to see to the family's needs during this difficult and trying time.

_____ has accepted the assignment as the Family Liaison Officer and will be coordinating the Departments support to the family and assuring to their needs.

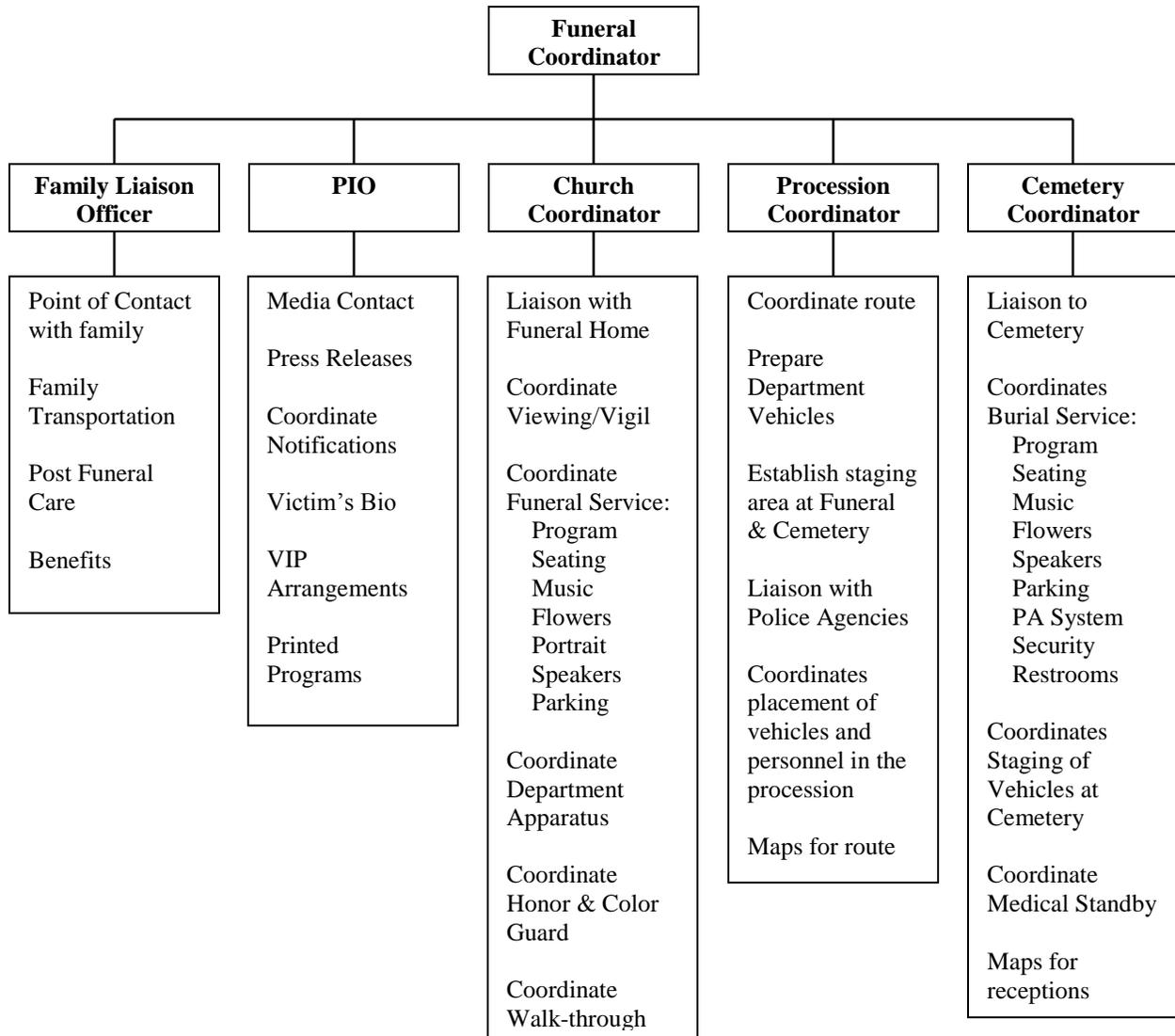
I wish I had the words to ease the pain all of us are feeling, but I don't. I would only remind us all that this/these was/were (a) firefighter(s) doing the job he/she/they loved on behalf of the people he/she/they cared about.

Appendix E

Funeral Staff Assignments

NOTE: Staff assignments may vary based on available staff, type of funeral and or services chosen based on family wishes. Some assignments may also be combined as necessary.

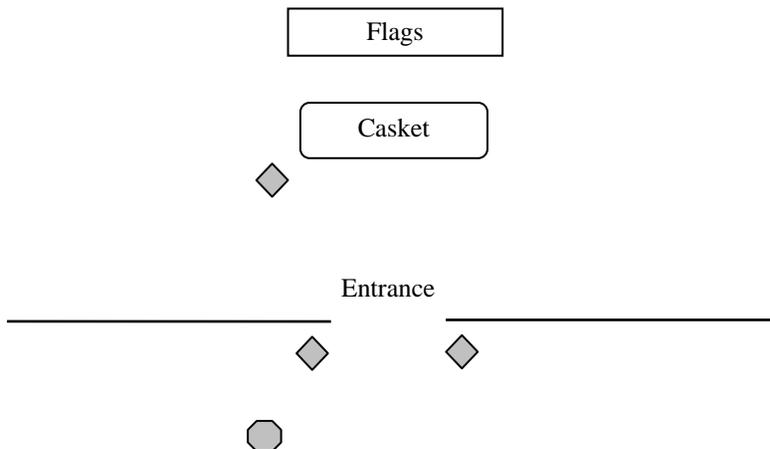
Line-Of-Duty Death Guidelines



Appendix F

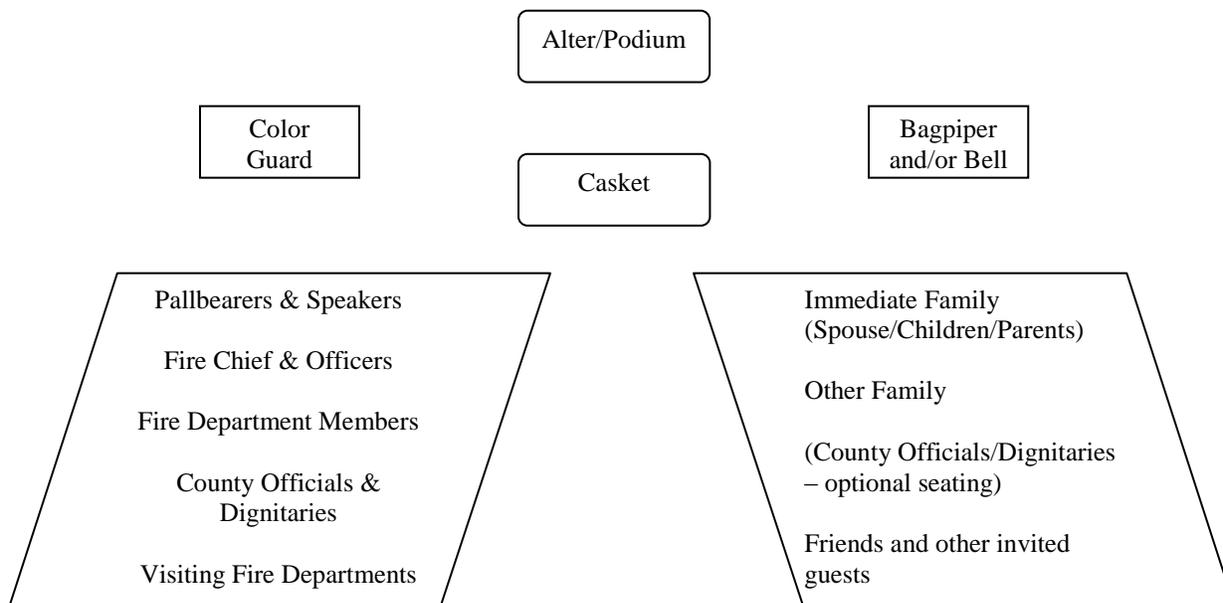
Funeral Service Diagrams

Visitation



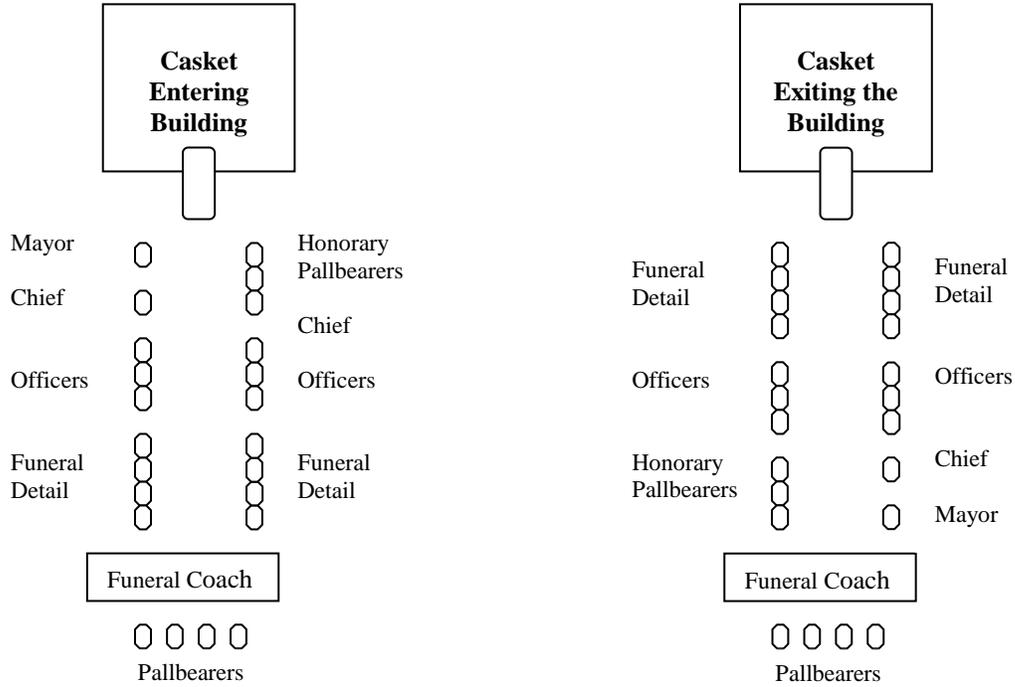
- ◆ Honor Guard Member – One member to stand at attention by the foot of the casket during the entire time of visitation and one on each side of the entrance. Rotate Individuals every 30-60 minutes.
- ⬡ Chief or other Fire Department Officer

Inside The Church

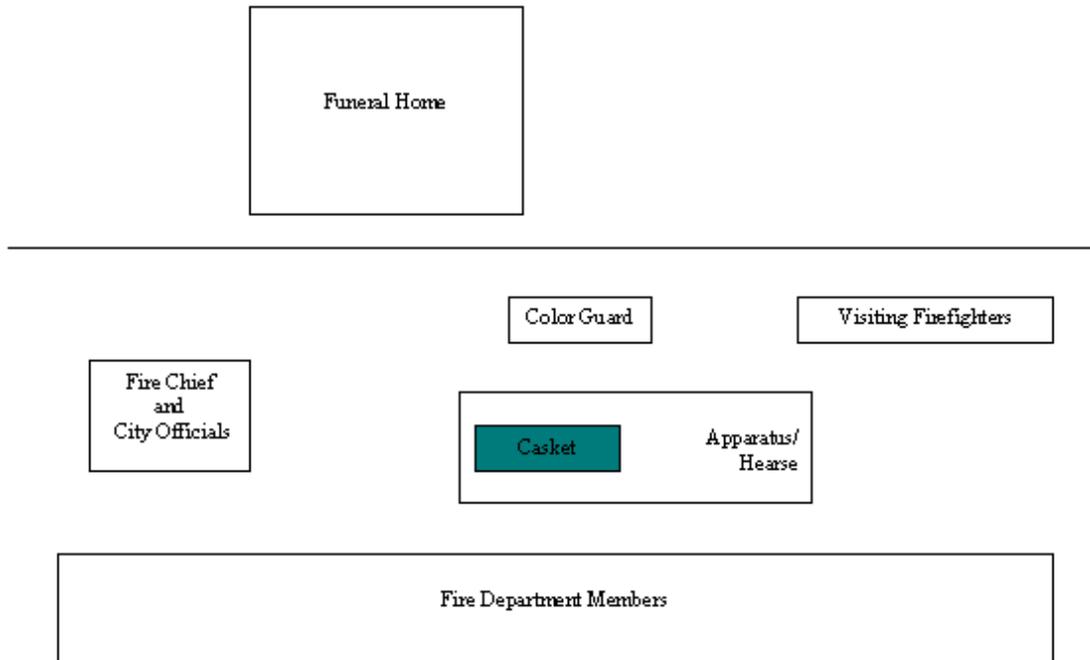


Outside the Church

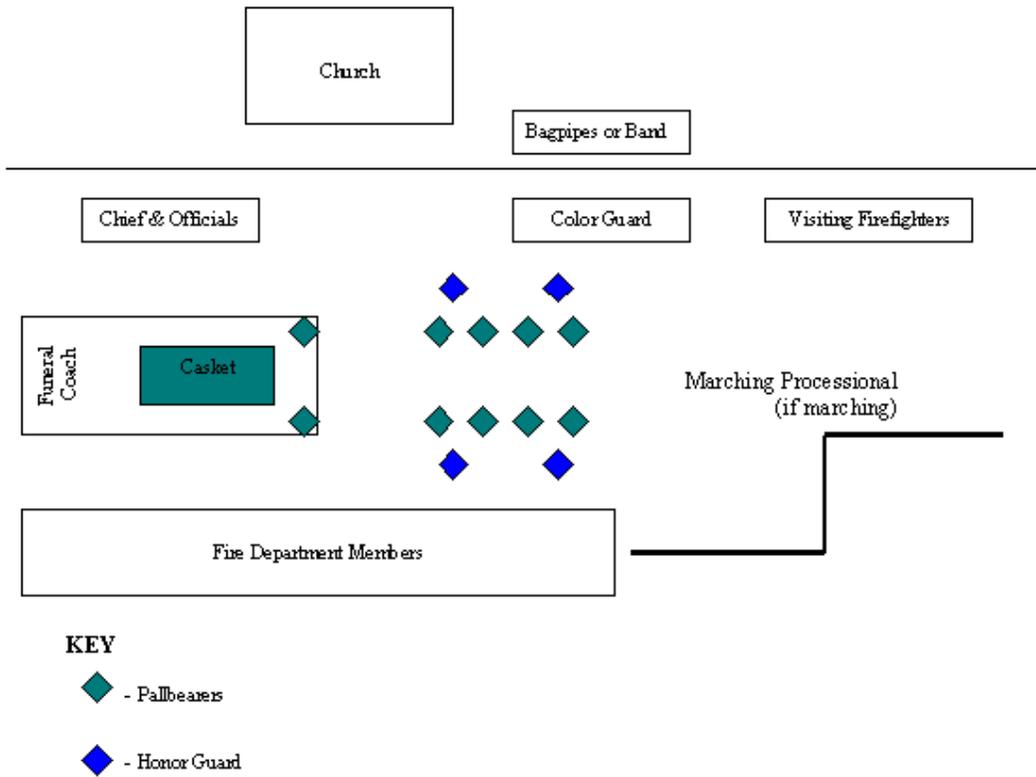
(The funeral formation is formed before the casket is moved and the casket is then carried through the formation followed by the family and friends)



Outside Funeral Home



Outside of Church - Marching

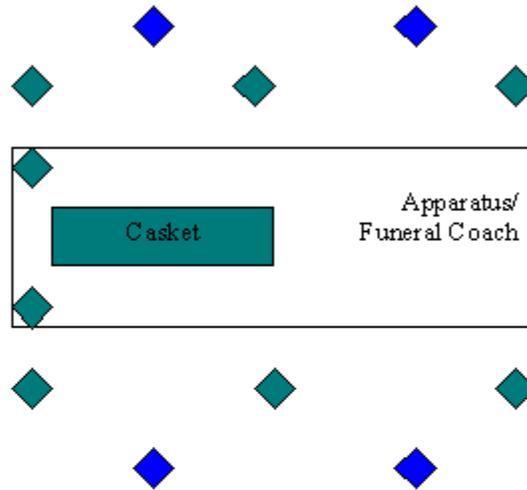


Appendix G

Funeral Procession Diagrams

Marching Arrangement

Location of Pallbearers around the Funeral Coach when marching



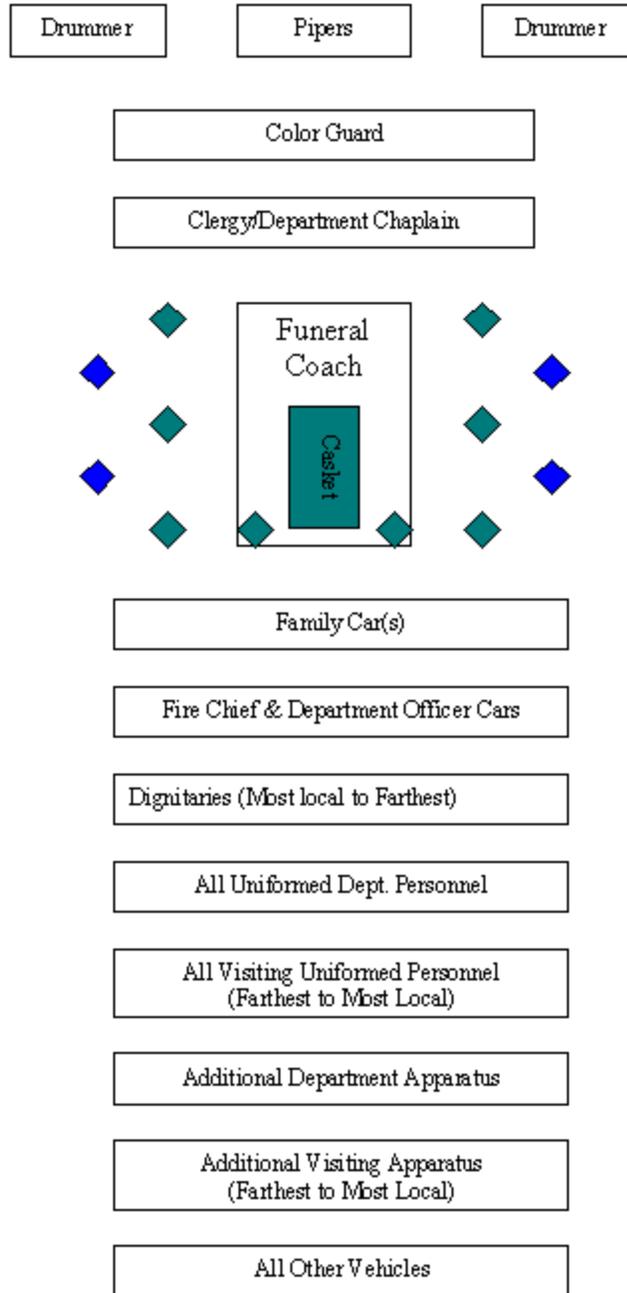
KEY

-  - Pallbearers
-  - Honor Guard

Two Pallbearers should ride on the tailboard, one on each side of the casket. Pallbearers riding on the tailboard should never obstruct the view of the casket.

Vehicle Processional - Marching

(Conducive to short distance)



Appendix H

Cemetery Service Diagrams

Cemetery Service

◆ Bugler/ Bagpiper

Friends of the
Family

◆ Funeral Director

Family Seating

◆ Fire Chaplain

Casket

◆ Fire Chief

◆ Officiating Clergy

Color Guard

Pallbearers

County Officials & Dignitaries

Fire Department Members

Friends of Family & Visitors

Visiting Fire Departments

Appendix I

Firefighter Poems / 23rd Psalm

“Fireman’s Prayer”

*When I am called to duty, God wherever flames may rage,
Give me strength to save some life, whatever be its age.*

*Help me embrace a little child, before it is too late,
Or save an older person, from the horror of that fate.*

*Enable me to be alert to the weakest shout,
And quickly and efficiently to put the fire out.*

*I want to fill my calling and to give the best in me,
To guard my every neighbor and protect his property.*

*And if according to my fate, I am to lose my life
Please bless with your protecting hand
my family and my wife.*

“Only a Fireman”

*He is only a fireman the people say
As they pass him or give him the way
The alarm with a clatter, a clatter and bang
Strikes many an ear with an unpleasant clang
His dress is not tidy and his face does tan
But note he walks like a man
Not ashamed of friends nor afraid of foes
When to work each time he goes
Not dreading danger not death each hour
For his trust and hope is in an unseen power
Who gives strength to his arm and light to his eye
He dreads not to live, or fears not to die*

“The Firefighter’s Memorial Hymn”

(Tune – Abide With Me)

*In fond remembrance gathered here today,
Tribute to pay to firefighters passed away;
Garlands of flowers placed upon the dead
Brightest blossoms deck their quiet bed.*

*When duty called, our firefighters would go,
Ever undaunted, met the fiery foe.
May guardian angels o’er them vigil keep,*

While they lie resting in eternal sleep.

*Father in heaven, guide us on our way,
Through storm and sunshine to eternal day;
And when our duty on earth is o'er
Vouch safe our journey to the gladden shore.*

“A Firefighter’s Prayer”

*Give Me Concern
A willingness to seek out those in need
Give Me Courage
The boldness of spirit to face and conquer fear,
share and endure the ordeal of another in need.
Give Me Strength
Strength of heart, to bear whatever burden
might be placed on me and strength of body to
deliver safely all those placed in my care.
Give Me Wisdom to Lead
The compassion to comfort,
and the love to serve unselfishly wherever you take me.
And please Lord, through it all, be at my side.*

23rd Psalm

*The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
He leadeth me beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul:
He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name' sake.*

*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil: For thou art with me;
Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies;
Thou annointest my head with oil; My cup runneth over.*

*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*

__KJV

Appendix J

Bell Service Readings Options

Bell Service Readings Option #1

The life of a firefighter is closely associated with the ringing of a bell. As he begins his hours of duty it is the bell that starts it off and so through the day and night, each alarm is sound by a bell, which calls him to fight fires and to place his life in jeopardy. For the good of his fellowman. And when the fire is out and the alarm has come to an end, the bell rings three times to signal the end. And now _____ has completed his task, his duties were well done, and the bell rings three times.

Bell Service Readings Option #2

During times like these we seek strong symbols to give us a better understanding of our feelings during this time of sadness and as a reflection of the devotion our comrade had for his duty. The sounding of “taps” is a strong symbol which gives honor and respect to those who have served so well. So also is the sounding of a bell. A special signal of three rings, three times each represents the end of his duties and that he will be returning to quarters. For our comrade, his last alarm, he is coming home.

Bell Service Readings Option #3

*****Ring bell one time*****

The men and Women of today’s fire service are confronted with more dangerous work environment than ever before. We are forced to continually change our strategies and tactics to accomplish our tasks. Our methods may change, but our goals remain the same as they were in the past.

TO SAVE LIVES AND TO PROTECT PROPERTY

*Sometimes at a terrible cost.
This is what we do.
This is our chosen profession.
This is the tradition of the firefighter.*

The fires service of today is ever changing, but is steeped traditions 200 years old. One such tradition is the sounding of the bell.

*****Ring bell one time*****

In the past, as firefighters began their tour of duty, it was the bell that signaled the beginning of that days shift. Through the day and night, each alarm was sounded by a bell, which summoned these brave souls to fight fires and to place their lives in jeopardy for the good of their fellow man. And when the fire was out and the alarm had come to an end, it was the bell that signaled to all, the completion of that call.

When a firefighter had died, it was the mournful toll of the bell that solemnly announced...a comrades passing.

We utilize these traditions as symbols which reflect honor and respect on those who have given so much and who have served so well. To symbolize the devotion that these brave souls had for their duty – a special signal of three rings, three times each (pause in between in set of three), represents the end of our comrades duties, and that they will be returning to quarters.

And so to he who has selflessly devoted his life for the good of his fellow man.

His task completed, his duties well done. To our comrade, his last alarm, he's going home.

*** (Ring bell 3 times, repeat 3 times with a slight pause in between each set, for a total of 9 rings) ***

Appendix K

PSOB Fact Sheet

On September 29, 1976, the President signed Public Law 94-430 establishing a death benefit to eligible survivors of firefighters and police officers from local, state and federal organizations. The legislation became known as the Public Safety Officers Benefit Act (PSOB). The Act has been amended several times since 1976. The most profound amendments came in November 1988, November 1990, October 2001, and December 2003.

The PSOB Act, amended in 1988, increased the death benefit to \$100,000. It had an escalator clause tied to the Consumer Price Index, which increases every October 1. Death benefits to public safety officers on and after January 1, 2001, became \$250,000. Based on the Consumer Price Index as of December 2003, the benefit has increased to \$267,494.

Among the 1988 amended changes made were beneficiary requirements. The Act added benefits for the survivors of single firefighters or police officers, including parents, without regard to dependency. Spouses became eligible automatically, as did stepchildren, adopted children and children born to unmarried parents. Parents also were included if they were the only survivors - whether or not they were dependent on the child - as long as a parent/child relationship existed.

Children over 18 are eligible when they are less than 23 and a full-time student. When there is a surviving child or children, and a surviving spouse, one-half of the benefit will be provided to the child or children of the officer in equal shares. One-half goes to the surviving spouse.

Because the PSOB benefit is not paid into the deceased officer's estate, benefits are not paid when an officer dies without an eligible survivor.

To be covered, a firefighter or rescue squad person must be an officially designated member of a fire or rescue squad (department). Under the law, an "officially designated" person is one who is carried on the department's membership roll as an active member. If not on the listed roll, beneficiaries must prove that the individual was conscripted legally at the scene of an emergency to engage in emergency operations.

To be covered, a firefighter's death must be the result of a traumatic injury suffered in the line of duty. A traumatic injury is a blow to the body by an outside force. An accident in which the victim suffers crushing injuries in a building collapse is eligible, as well as accidents involving apparatus or falls. Burns, smoke inhalation and such climactic injuries as heatstroke or frostbite are considered traumatic injuries.

Death from stress, heart attacks, strokes and diseases, including occupational diseases, are not covered by the law unless a traumatic injury was a substantial factor in the death. To be a substantial factor, a traumatic injury must have been capable in itself of having caused the death. Smoke inhalation is considered a substantial factor in a heart or stroke related death when the firefighter's blood/carbon monoxide level is 10% or greater for nonsmokers, 15% or greater for smokers.

Excluded from the coverage are deaths from suicide, intentional misconduct, gross negligence and voluntary intoxication. Intoxication is described as evidence by a postmortem blood alcohol level of .20 percentum or greater. A postmortem blood alcohol level of a least .10 percentum, but less than .20, will exclude coverage unless the Bureau receives convincing evidence that the public safety officer was not acting in an intoxicated manner immediately prior to his/her death. Exclusion will also be made if the blood tests show evidence of the introduction of drugs or other substances into the blood.

President Bush, on December 1, 1990, signed into law the "Crime Control Act of 1990." This legislation includes a major revision to the PSOB. The revision at that time made available \$100,000 to any public safety officer who becomes permanently and totally disabled as the direct result of a catastrophic personal injury sustained in the line of duty. An amendment to the Crime Control Act of 1992 changed the funding so the death and disability benefits are the same. Thus the disability benefit is \$250,000 until October, 2002. The catastrophic injury is defined as "consequences of an injury that permanently prevents an individual from performing any gainful work." As with the death benefit, the amount of the award will be adjusted annually.

Limitations to the new PSOB are that beneficiaries are not eligible to collect both the disability and death benefits. An example of this limitation would be if a firefighter became permanently injured, collected the disability award and later died from the injuries, his beneficiaries would not be eligible for the death benefit.

Congress and the President amended the Act in 1998, which the Bureau of Justice Assistance implemented September 14, 1999, to include a revision to provide educational assistance to spouses and children of all Public Safety Officers killed in the line of duty or permanently and totally disabled by catastrophic injuries sustained in the line of duty. The dependents will be eligible on a retroactive basis if the Safety Officers death or disability occurred on or after October 1, 1997.

On October 25, 2001, the United States Congress voted to significantly increase the benefit to \$250,000. The provision, included as part of the anti-terrorism bill (H.R. - 3162), is retroactive to January 2001.

On December 15th, 2003, President Bush signed into law the Hometown Heroes Survivor Benefits Act (S. 459 /

Line-Of-Duty Death Guidelines

H.R. 919), which will expand the PSOB program to cover public safety officers who die of heart attacks or strokes in the line of duty. The death benefit is payable to the survivors of a public safety officer who "has died as the direct and proximate result of a personal injury sustained in the line of duty." Unfortunately, in almost every incidence of death by heart attack or stroke, it had been ruled that the heart attack or stroke was not a direct result of an injury sustained in the line of duty and the family receives no benefits even though the deaths were clearly triggered by the rigors of the job.

The Hometown Heroes Survivor Benefit Act will correct that deficiency in the law, by ensuring that a public safety officer who suffers a fatal heart attack or stroke while on duty or not later than 24 hours after participating in a physical training exercise or responding to an emergency situation, is presumed to have died in the line of duty for purposes of public safety officer survivor benefits.

At the present time, less than 50% of the firefighters and rescue personnel who lose their lives during emergency incidents, have the survivors receive the proper benefits. In many cases, the department is ignorant of the benefit, but more often proper procedures have not been followed.

Insurance agents can be a great asset to their emergency service clients by keeping themselves up-to-date on current requirements and status of the PSOB, informing the clients of changes, and making themselves available when the need arises to assist in filing claims.

An extremely important requirement of the PSOB is for a postmortem examination and a proper blood gas test to be performed. It is the awesome responsibility of the department's chief officer to make sure that the pathologist, medical examiner, and/or coroner of the jurisdiction, is aware of the particular requirements of the PSOB Act and the necessary tests be performed. When insurance agents review the fire department's insurance program, a review should be made on the department's standard operating procedures in handling personnel line-of-duty deaths.

Ensure that the department knows how to contact the Department of Justice, that it should be notified as soon as possible (within hours) after the incident and the importance of the blood test and postmortem. An agent may be one of the first persons notified about the accident and could be a great asset in a very trying time for a department. When the Bureau of Justice Assistance is called, the representative will need basic information as to the circumstances of the death and will give guidance for further information that is needed to complete the contact.

To obtain current information or notification of a death, call: (202) 307-0635 or (888) 744-6513 or write to:

Public Safety Officer's Benefits Program

Bureau of Justice Assistance

810 7th Street, NW

Washington, D.C. 20531