

Firefighter Line-of-Duty Death



Guidelines

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**Department
of Commerce**

Division of State Fire Marshal

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The line-of-duty death of one of our firefighters can be one of the most traumatic experiences a fire department can 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. Unfortunately many fire departments are not prepared to handle such a tragic event.

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 you in preparing for and handling a line-of-duty death of a member of your fire department. The Guidebook should be used a reference to establish the protocols and procedures that best fit your department. Use and modify the materials to meet your needs. Pre-plan now – so that you can honor your fallen firefighter and help your extended families during a time of their greatest need.

Donald C. Cooper
Interim State Fire Marshal

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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 fire department be prepared to take the responsibility for seeing that the deceased firefighter's 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 this Guidebook is to aid fire departments with developing policies and procedures to handle a line of duty death of a member of the department. Additional resources will be identified and samples of forms and checklists will be provided. You are encouraged to use and modify the materials provided to meet your needs. The time to start your 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. SOP/SOG's 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, the development of SOP/SOG's, and identifying 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 info. 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)

SOP/SOG's

SOP's/SOG's should be developed 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 - SOP/SOG Samples.)

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 firefighter. 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
 - 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 fire department personnel
 - Mayor or Trustees
 - Coroner for an autopsy (refer to Resources Section)
- Initiate a thorough investigation into the incident
 - Recover & secure equipment
 - Secure the scene – consider it a possible crime scene
 - Establish an investigation team
- Contact support agencies
 - Provide for critical incident stress debriefing and grief counseling for the department.
 - State Fire Marshal's Office
 - Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program
 - National Fallen Firefighters Foundation
 - Union and/or state organization officials
 - 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.
- 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 equipment.
- Maintain records - interviews, radio tapes, incident report, and drawings.
- Have an autopsy performed in accordance with USFA 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 certified copies of the autopsy report and death certificate.
- ***Document - Document - Document***

Post-incident Issues

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

Continue to inform fire department members and officials of arrangements.

Solicit local 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

- 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. If you have EMT's in the department, ask them to help with their 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.
- In cases of extended hospitalization, 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 taken to a specialized hospital out of the local area, assist with this process. Consider asking another department close to that hospital to assist you in supporting the family while the firefighter remains hospitalized.
- Encourage the family to spend time with the injured firefighter, regardless of the type of injury.
- 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.
- Help the family to keep track of incoming medical bills and to organize files for claims.

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.
- Contact the State Fire Marshal's Office for assistance in providing benefits under the Volunteer Fire Fighters Dependents Fund.
- Contact union or other related agencies for assistance.
- 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 can still hold a memorial service.
- 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. In smaller departments, 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 religious services should always 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. For instance, say “I would like to come over on Thursday to fix the fence.”
- Continue to talk with the family about your memories of the firefighter. Most families want to hear about their loved one, even if it is emotionally difficult.
- Remember that parents of a fallen firefighter need support and contact just like spouses and children do.
- Help with what the firefighter 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 your firefighter 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 severely injured or deceased 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 firefighter. 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 highest ranking available Officer), Chaplin, Family Liaison Officer, and a firefighter friend of the family or close civilian family friend.

If the fallen firefighter's 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 fire 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"; or (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 firefighter, 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 firefighter, 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 firefighter, 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 department. Write down their telephone and pager 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 spokesperson 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 fire call (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 (Time/Date).

Media

The line-of-duty death of a firefighter is fortunately a rare occurrence for most fire 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 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 firefighter may also be given to:

- Local elected or governing officials
- Union officials
- Neighboring fire departments
- Public Safety Officers Benefit Program (1-888-744-6513)
- National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (1-301-447-1365)
- State Fire Marshal (1-888-243-0305)
- Elected State and Federal Senators and Representatives

Staff Assignments

In order to provide the best possible tribute to the fallen firefighter(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 can 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 now – before an incident occurs. 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. (NOTE: "Titles" and duties assigned to individuals may vary by department.)

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 City/Township 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 fire 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 by phone or pager.

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: type 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 Fund
4. Local insurance benefits
5. Workers' Compensation
6. Social Security
7. Veterans benefits
8. Union or State firefighter related organizations
9. State education benefits
10. Other local 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. Coordinated the notification of:
 - a. Local public officials
 - b. Local union
 - c. Surrounding fire departments
 - d. Public Safety Officers Benefit Program (888-744-6513)
 - e. National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (301-447-1365)
 - f. State Fire Marshal (888-243-0305)
 - g. State and federal elected officials
 - h. 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 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 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 include:

1. Coordinating with other departments that will be involved with the procession.
2. 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. Responsibilities include:

1. Ensuring the proper placement and formation of Department members, honor and color guards, pipers and other band members, 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 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.

Color Guard – A detail consisting of an American flag bearer and a State flag bearer.

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, firefighting traditions.

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 firefighter is off-duty and not relating to any emergency activities.

Type III – Death pertains to a retiree of the fire 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	X	
Walk Through	X	X	X

* Used only if deceased was a veteran.

**** *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 a thirty day mourning period.

All department flags will fly at half-staff from the time 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 home department. Following that will be all visiting uniformed firefighters, from the longest distance traveled to the least traveled. The City Mayor, Councilmen, 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 home department.

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 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 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' dress 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 other members of the home 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 with Pallbearers and Honor Guard Escort
- Immediate Family
- Fire Chief, Department Officers in descending order of rank, and Dignitaries from most local to most broad
- Home department uniformed personnel
- Visiting Department uniformed personnel from the longest distance traveled to the least traveled
- Home 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 Home Department Apparatus
- Visiting Department Apparatus from the longest to least distance traveled
- All other Home 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 home 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 home 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 "Firefighters, Attention" All firefighters will then come to attention, awaiting the command "Firefighters, Present Arms" which will signal the Pallbearers to begin carrying the casket down the Walk of Honor, and all firefighters 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 "Firefighters, Order Arms, Fall In" will be given, instructing the firefighters 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 Prayer / 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, who will present it as he explains,
"This flag is presented on behalf of a grateful _____ (city, township, county, etc.), 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 _____ Fire Department wish to thank _____ (rank and name) for his/her ____ (#) years of services to the citizens of this (city, township, county, etc) of _____ (name). Although you are gone, you will never be forgotten."
- At the conclusion, the Honor Guard Commander will command "Firefighters, Attention, Present Arms" and the bugler will begin to play 'Taps'.
- At the conclusion of 'Taps' the command "Firefighters, 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 commander will command, "Firefighters, 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 procession 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/Department Chaplain
- Funeral Coach, with Pallbearers immediately following family in one vehicle
- Car or Limousine with Immediate Family
- Fire Chief Car
- Additional Home 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.
- 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 Prayer / 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
- It is then appropriate for the dispatcher to announce this farewell message.
“The members of the _____ Fire Department wish to thank _____ (rank and name) for his/her ___ (#) years of services to the citizens of this (city, city, township, county, etc) of _____ (name). 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) and 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 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 Clergy then should step forward with the graveside message, which may include the Firefighter’s Prayer and 23rd Psalm (refer to Appendix I – Firefighter’s Prayer / 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 dispatcher to read this farewell message over the radio.
“The members of the _____ Fire Department wish to thank _____ (rank and name) for his/her ____ (#) years of services to the citizens of this (city, city, township, county, etc) of _____ (name). 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 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. You 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 for 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. Mayor
 - b. Local elected official from district
 - c. State or Federal officials
 - d. Family representative(s)
 - e. Union representative
 - f. Department representative's friend(s)
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

- Chaplin 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.

And 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.

- Officer in charge call the firefighters 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.
- Firefighters called 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
11. Reception/family announcements
12. Attention, dismissal

Suggested Graveside Services

- Chaplin 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 is 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 firefighter 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 firefighter 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 fire 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 firefighter was 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 and is currently in excess of \$250,000.

Following the death of a firefighter, the Department needs to identify a departmental liaison with the PSOB Program. The liaison then 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,
 - Fire 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 I – PSOB Fact Sheet)

Upon verification of the claim, the PSOB will notify the next-of-kin 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 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 is payable to the surviving spouse if he or she was living with the beneficiary at the time of death, OR if living apart, was eligible for Social Security benefits on the beneficiary's earnings record for the month of death. If there is no surviving spouse, the payment is made to a child who was eligible for benefits on the beneficiary's earnings record in the month of death.
- Monthly survivors' benefits paid to certain family members, including the beneficiary's widow or widower, dependent children and dependent parents.

Federal Employees

Federal employees, including seasonal wildland firefighters, may be eligible for additional benefits such as: federal Workers' Compensation; Federal Employees Retirement System; Civil Service Retirement and Disability Fund; Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) Program; and employer lump sum death benefits.

State of Ohio Benefits

Career Firefighters

Ohio Public Safety Officers Death Benefit Fund provides special benefits to eligible survivors. These include firefighters covered under the Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund (1-800-860-9599) and the Public Employees' Retirement System (1-800-222-7377). This benefit is a monthly death benefit that supplements benefits paid under the pension plans listed below.

If firefighter had not qualified for age and service retirement, then the eligible survivors receive the decedent's monthly "base pay" minus the benefits payable under the decedent's retirement plan. Spouse with no eligible children receives full "base pay." Spouse with children shares the "base pay" accordingly. Spouse continues to receive benefits until death. Unmarried children considered dependent until age 18 or age 22 if a student. Disabled children who are incapable of self-support are eligible for this benefit for life. Whenever there is an increase in the "base pay," the survivor benefits are increased accordingly.

If firefighter was a member of the Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund, spouse and dependent children receive a monthly pension with annual cost of living adjustment. There is a cap on the pension if receiving a full death benefit.

Survivors eligible for benefits under the Public Employees' Retirement System will receive either a lump sum benefit or monthly benefits, depending on who is designated as the beneficiary. Children can only receive monthly payments. Amount of benefit is based on a percentage of the employee's final average salary and on the number of eligible beneficiaries.

Volunteer Firefighters

The Division of State Fire Marshal manages the Ohio Volunteer Fire Fighters' Dependents Fund (1-888-243-0305) for the State. Fire departments having volunteer firefighters and that are part of a political subdivision must join the Fund. A private volunteer fire company may elect to join the Fund.

Survivors are eligible for benefits under the Ohio Volunteer Fire Fighters' Dependents Fund if the volunteer dies while discharging duties or from exposure or injury received while discharging duties. The spouse receives a lump sum benefit plus monthly benefits. Each child receives a monthly benefit until age 18 or until age 23 if attending a post-secondary educational institution and completing a program of instruction each school year that satisfies the equivalent of at least two-thirds of the full-time curriculum requirements of the institution.

Workers' Compensation

The Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (1-800-644-6292) may provide a benefit of 66 2/3% of employee's average weekly wage. This is based on total earnings from all employers during the year prior to the injury. Minimum and maximum amounts apply and are adjusted annually. Upon remarriage, spouse receives a two-year lump sum and benefits terminate. Children are considered dependent until age 18, age 25 if a full-time student, or longer if disabled and incapable of self-support. A maximum of \$3,200 may also be available for burial expenses. Benefits do not apply if firefighter participated in a municipal pension fund and the amount of pension funds provided is not less than the Workers' Compensation benefit.

This includes off-duty firefighters responding to inherently dangerous situations regardless of whether within the limits of jurisdiction of regular employment or voluntary service.

Education Benefit

The Ohio Board of Regents, Student Aid Commission, State Grants and Scholarships Department (1-888-833-1133), may provide tuition and fee waivers for up to four years of undergraduate study at a state university or college, community college, university branch or technical college. Amount paid to private institution varies depending on the standard tuition of the public institutions. Must be a resident under age 26, or under age 30 if honorably discharged from the Armed Services of the United States. Spousal benefits are the same, except for age.

Crime Victims

Ohio Victims of Crime Compensation Program, Office of the Attorney General (1-800-582-2877) may provide assistance, however, the firefighter's death must have been the result of a violent crime such as arson. The amount of financial compensation varies depending on aid the family is already receiving and their need at the time. Can be used to cover medical costs, counseling, lost wages, and funeral expenses.

Local Benefits

Survivor benefits vary greatly by locality. 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 (e.g., Bluecoats). A special fund or trust may also be set up for the family.

Scholarship Programs

National Fallen Firefighter Foundation – offers annual financial assistance for higher education and training to families of firefighters honored at the National Memorial in Emmitsburg, Maryland. Children under age 30 and spouses are eligible for support. Also includes partnership with National Association of State Fire Marshals scholarship program. (1-301-447-1365)

International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) – the IAFF, through the *W. H. 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. (1-202-737-8484)

When documents are requested to support a claim, each must be an original or certified copy (e.g., raised seal and certifying officer's original signature).

Resources

Autopsy Guide

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 21727

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' 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

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

Contact: Federation of Fire Chaplains

Route 1, Box 155B

Clifton, Texas 76634

(254) 622-8514

www.emergency-world.com/chaplains

E-mail: chapdir1@aol.com

Final Farewell to a Fallen Firefighter: A Basic Fire Department Funeral Protocol.

Fire Engineering Magazine, 1993 (Email: williamm@pennwell.com for reprint)

Contact: Fire Engineering Magazine
Park 80 West, Plaza Two, 7th Floor
Saddle Brook, NJ 07663
(201) 845-0800 / FAX: (201) 845-6275

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. National Volunteer Fire Council, 1991
A Procedural Guide in the Event of Death in the Line of Duty of a Member of the Volunteer Fire Service. National Volunteer Fire Council, 1987.

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/manuals.html

An Honorable Farewell. Warren L. James, Fire Chief Magazine, October 1998

Contact: Fire Chief Magazine
35 E. Wacker Drive, Suite 700
Chicago, IL 60601-2198
(312) 726-7277 / FAX: (312) 726-0241

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
(202) 737-8484 / FAX: (202) 737-8418
www.iaff.org

Illinois Fire Chiefs Association, Funeral Service Guidelines, Funeral Committee

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

Investigations

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

(Available on line at www.iafc.org/downloads/06Investigations.PDF)

Contact: International Association of Fire Chiefs

4025 Fair Ridge Drive
Fairfax, VA 22033-2868
(703)-273-0911
www.ichiefs.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

Pre-incident Planning

A Guide to Help the Fire Service Prepare for a Line of Duty Death. Paul J. Antonellis, Jr., 1995

Contact: FPS Books and Videos

577 Main Street
Hudson, MA 01749
1-800-522-8528 or (978) 562-3554
www.fire-police-ems.com

Standard Operating Procedures for Line-of-Duty Deaths

The National Fallen Firefighters Foundation has copies of Standard Operating Procedures and Guidelines developed by fire departments across the country.

Contact: National Fallen Firefighters Foundation

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

Specialized Web Sites

Fallen Firefighter

www.fallenfirefighter.com

Provides guidelines, sample SOP's, funeral planning procedures and diagrams for a firefighter's funeral.

Firehouse

www.firehouse.com

Provides immediate information on incidents and hosts a forum on Line-of-Duty Death issues.

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 to download and adapt to local needs, as well as a clearinghouse listing honor guard. Lists survivor benefits for each state. Operates a Lending Library for resource materials.

United States Fire Administration

www.usfa.fema.gov/ffmem

Provides a listing of firefighter deaths. The current year listings reflect only the information USFA has received and do not indicate that a line-of-duty death will meet criteria for inclusion on the National Memorial.

Appendix A

LODD Checklist

LODD CHECKLIST

- _____ 1. **Personal Information Packets**
- _____ 2. **LODD Supply Kit (mourning bands, gloves, bunting, etc.)**
- _____ 3. **Radio discipline policy**
- _____ 4. **Notifications**
 - _____ a. **Family**
 - _____ b. **Fire Department Members**
 - _____ c. **Local officials**
 - _____ d. **Coroner for an autopsy/copies of death certificate**
 - _____ e. **Neighboring fire departments**
 - _____ f. **State/national officials**
- _____ 5. **Establish Investigative Team**
 - _____ a. **Recover and secure equipment**
 - _____ b. **Secure scene**
- _____ 6. **Contact support agencies**
 - _____ a. **CISM Team**
 - _____ b. **State Fire Marshal**
 - _____ c. **Public Safety Officers' Benefit Program**
 - _____ d. **USFA/National Fallen Firefighter Foundation**
 - _____ e. **Union/State organization officials**
- _____ 7. _____
- _____ 8. _____

LODD STAFF ASSIGNMENTS

Funeral Coordinator

- _____ 1. Notify off-duty personnel
- _____ 2. Lower departmental flags to half mast
- _____ 3. Notify other City/Township departments
- _____ 4. Notify neighboring fire departments
- _____ 5. Collect/forward deceased members personal items to FLO
- _____ 6. Contact support agencies for assistance-benefits
- _____ 7. Arrange for station coverage during funeral
- _____ 8. Arrange for law enforcement and other departmental assistance during funeral
- _____ 9. Arrange post-funeral meal/reception
- _____ 10. Coordinate all funeral arrangements with staff
- _____ 11. _____
- _____ 12. _____

Family Liaison Officer

- _____ 1. Notify deceased members family
- _____ 2. Contact hospital for family visit, if needed
- _____ 3. Coordinate family's funeral desires with department
- _____ 4. Coordinate benefit applications with family
- _____ 5. Arrange for family's child care as needed
- _____ 6. Make post-funeral follow-ups with family
- _____ 7. _____
- _____ 8. _____

LODD STAFF ASSIGNMENTS

Church Coordinator

- _____ 1. **Coordinate Viewing/Vigil with Funeral Home Director/FLO/Department**
- _____ 2. **Coordinate church services with church/Funeral Home Director/FLO/Department**
- _____ 3. **Coordinate burial clothing from Department**
- _____ 4. **Coordinate Department staff roles**
- _____ 5. **Coordinate Honor Guard**
- _____ 6. **Coordinate Pallbearers**
- _____ 7. **Coordinate/assist with services**
- _____ 8. **Assist participants with arrival/parking/seating**
- _____ 9. _____
- _____ 10. _____

Procession Coordinator

- _____ 1. **Coordinate staging areas**
- _____ 2. **Establish procession route**
- _____ 3. **Prepare maps/directions, as needed**
- _____ 4. **Establish/coordinate processional order**
- _____ 5. **Prepare Department vehicles**
- _____ 6. **Prepare stations, as needed**
- _____ 7. **Arrange for aerial apparatus**
- _____ 8. **Coordinate traffic staging with other agencies**
- _____ 9. _____
- _____ 10. _____

LODD STAFF ASSIGNMENTS

Cemetery Coordinator

- _____ 1. Establish placement of personnel and guests
- _____ 2. Coordinate staging, parking and security
- _____ 3. Coordinate standby medical personnel
- _____ 4. Coordinate flag presentation
- _____ 5. Coordinate Flag presentation
- _____ 6. Coordinate band, pipers, etc.
- _____ 7. Coordinate firing squad
- _____ 8. Notify participants of post-funeral arrangements
- _____ 9. _____
- _____ 10. _____

Public Information Officer

- _____ 1. Coordinate all media contacts
- _____ 2. Coordinate notifications
 - _____ a. Local public officials
 - _____ b. Local union
 - _____ c. Surrounding fire departments
 - _____ d. PSOB Program
 - _____ e. National Fallen Firefighters Foundation
 - _____ f. State Fire Marshal
 - _____ g. State and federal officials
 - _____ h. Other related State and local organizations
- _____ 3. Establish information numbers for public
- _____ 4. Prepare press kit
- _____ 5. Prepare printed programs for viewing and burial
- _____ 6. Manage VIP arrangements
- _____ 7. _____

Appendix B

Personal Information Packet Sample

Confidential Information Form

The information provided will be used ONLY in the event of your serious injury or death in the line of duty. Please take the time to fill it out fully and accurately because the data will help the department take care of your family and friends.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Last Name	First Name	Middle Name
Home Address		
City	State	Zip
Daytime Phone Number	Evening Phone Number	

FAMILY INFORMATION

Name of Spouse or Significant Other:
Home Contact Information (if different) Address: Phone:
Work Contact Information Name of Employer: Address: Phone: Pager/Cell Phone:
Special Considerations (i.e., health, age, etc.)

FAMILY INFORMATION

Names and DOB of Children	
Name:	DOB:
Name:	DOB:
Name:	DOB:
Name:	DOB:
Name:	DOB:
Name:	DOB:

CONTACT INFORMATION

Please list, in order, family or friends you would like the department to contact. If needed, provide additional names on a separate sheet. *If the contact is a minor child, please indicate the name of the adult to contact.*

Name	Relationship
Home Contact Information	
Address:	
Phone:	
Work Contact Information	
Name of Employer:	
Address:	
Phone:	Pager/Cell Phone:
Special Considerations (i.e., health, age, etc.)	

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name	Relationship
Home Contact Information Address: Phone:	
Work Contact Information Name of Employer: Address: Phone: Pager/Cell Phone:	
Special Considerations (i.e., health, age, etc.)	

Name	Relationship
Home Contact Information Address: Phone:	
Work Contact Information Name of Employer: Address: Phone: Pager/Cell Phone:	
Special Considerations (i.e., health, age, etc.)	

NOTIFICATION INFORMATION

List the department member(s) you would like to accompany a chief fire officer to make the family notification

Name:

Name:

List anyone else you want to help make the notification (e.g., your minister)

Name:

Relationship:

Home Contact Information

Address:

Phone:

Work Contact Information

Name of Employer:

Address:

Phone:

Pager/Cell Phone:

REMINDER: The INFORMATION provided will be utilized by the department at the time of your death to assist your family in preparing for your funeral and obtaining the benefits available to them.

Make sure someone close to you knows this information.

GENERAL INFORMATION

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Are you a veteran of the U.S. Armed Services? If yes: What branch: _____ Are you entitled to a military funeral? ___ Yes ___ No Do you desire a military funeral? ___ Yes ___ No Do you desire the American Flag on your casket? __ Yes __ No
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Are you a designated organ donor? <i>If yes, coordination with the medical examiner is required.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Do you have written instructions regarding life support measures? Location: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Do you have a will? Location: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Do you have an attorney? Name: _____ Phone: _____

FUNERAL ARRANGEMENT INFORMATION

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Do you have any prearranged funeral plans?
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Are there any prearranged cremation plans?
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Is there a preference? ___ Burial ___ Cremation If cremation, what is the preference for disposition of the ashes? Desire: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Is there a cemetery preference? Location: _____ Phone: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Has a cemetery plot been purchased? Location: _____ Plot Number: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Is there a funeral home preference? Name: _____ Phone: _____

FUNERAL ARRANGEMENT INFORMATION

Yes No **Are flowers to be omitted in lieu of a favorite charity, agency or organization?**

If yes, identify:

Yes No **Do you have a preference as to who will deliver the eulogy?**

If yes,

Name: _____ **Phone:** _____

Yes No **Do you have any favorite songs?**

If yes, identify:

Yes No **Do you have any favorite poems?**

If yes, identify:

Yes No **Do you have any favorite readings?**

If yes, identify:

Yes No **Do you have any favorite scriptures/verses?**

If yes, identify:

Yes No **Do you request a fire department funeral?**

Yes No **Do you request the service of a clergy member?**

Affiliation: _____

Location: _____

Contact: _____ **Phone:** _____

Yes No **Are you a member of a fraternal organization?**

If yes, is their participation requested? ___ Yes ___ No

Pallbearers

List preferences for Pallbearers:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Insurance Policies

<u>Company</u>	<u>Policy Number</u>	<u>Location</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

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:

This form will be confidential and sealed in your Personal Information Packet. In the event of your death or serious injury, this form will be utilized to ensure that you are cared for.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Next of Kin Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

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

Notary Public

CONFIDENTIAL FORM – NOT TO BE RELEASED EXCEPT UPON THE EVENT OF THE DEATH OR INJURY OF THIS INDIVIDUAL.

Appendix C

SOP / SOG Samples

Fire Department STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Personal Information Packet	DATE:
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PURPOSE

The Fire Department's response to a firefighter's death or serious injury will greatly affect how surviving family members, co-workers, and the community copes with the unexpected tragedy. Part of the pre-planning for such a tragedy is collecting information on each and every member. In the event of such a tragedy, this information is vital for a quick and compassionate response to the family, friends and co-workers. The Personal Information Packet (PIP) will help the Department be prepared with current data on each employee.

POLICY

It is the responsibility of each member of the Department to maintain current information in the member's Personal Information Packet. Information in the PIP is considered CONFIDENTIAL and is to be utilized ONLY in the event of the death or serious injury of the member.

PROCEDURE

1. Each member of the Department will receive a Personal Information Packet upon implementation of this SOP or upon hire.
2. The completed Personal Information Packet shall be returned to the Department within seven days. The PIP will be sealed and filed in the member's personnel folder.
3. Each year, during the member's performance appraisal, the member will have an opportunity to update the PIP. If NO CHANGE TO THE EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION is necessary, a member will be required to initial, date and note that there are no changes. If changes need to be made, a member may update the PIP as needed.
4. Since the information in the Personal Information Packet is essential for the department to provide family assistance in the event of death or serious injury, a member may request to update their PIP at anytime.

Fire Department STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Line of Duty Death or Serious Injury	DATE:
Notification	

PURPOSE

To establish standard guidelines and procedures that will serve the purpose of notifying family members of personnel who are either severely injured or have deceased while in the line of duty.

POLICY

It shall be the responsibility of the Fire Chief, or the Chief's designee to properly notify the next of kin of a firefighter who has suffered severe injuries or has died in the line of duty. The Fire Chief may designate a Family Liaison Officer to assist in making the notification and/or to inform the survivors.

All information given to the media will be by the Fire Chief or designated Public Information Officer.

PROCEDURE:

- A. The Fire Chief or designee will personally make the notification. The Fire Chief may also appoint a Family Liaison Officer to assist in informing the survivors. The notification team MUST familiarize themselves with the circumstances of the death and the personal data concerning the death, BEFORE making the notification. By having a second person in attendance, the Fire Chief will be able to leave shortly after to return to the scene if necessary. The second person shall remain to see what they can do for the surviving family, getting additional medical help for the survivors if needed, being a compassionate listener.
- B. The name of the injured or deceased MUST NEVER be released by the Department before the immediate family is notified. DO NOT inform neighbor(s) 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.
- C. If there is knowledge of a medical problem with an immediate survivor, medical personnel should be available at the residence to coincide with the death notification.
- D. Notification MUST ALWAYS be made in person and NEVER ALONE. Notification to the family will be done in dress uniform, if possible, and in a marked Fire Department vehicle. The Chief and the Family Liaison Officer should conduct the OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION. However, if the aforementioned persons are not readily accessible, notification should not be delayed until these people can be gathered. If there is an opportunity to get to the hospital prior to the death of the personnel, DO NOT WAIT for the delegation to assemble. Attempt to bring the spouse to the hospital. The family should learn from the Department FIRST and not from the press or other sources.
- E. NEVER make a death notification on the doorstep of the personnel's home. Ask to be admitted to the home. Ask the survivor if he/she would like to sit down. Inform family member slowly and clearly of the information that the Department has. If specifics of the incident are known, the Family Liaison Officer should relay as much information as possible to the family. Answer all questions honestly. Be sure to use the firefighter's first name during notification. If the firefighter has died, relay that information. NEVER give the

family a false sense of hope. Use words such as “died” and “dead” rather than “gone away” or “passes away”. Offer to make phone calls, if the survivor wishes.

- F. DO NOT take any personal clothing, jewelry, billfold, purse, etc., to the notification.
- G. If the member of the Department has been seriously injured and transported to the hospital, a Hospital Liaison should be established to coordinate activities between the Department, the family and the hospital.
- H. If the family requests to visit the hospital, they should be transported in a marked Fire Department vehicle. It is highly recommended that the family NOT drive themselves to the hospital. If the family insists on driving, a uniformed firefighter should accompany them in the family vehicle.
- I. If young children are at home, the Family Liaison Officer should arrange for babysitting needs. This may involve co-worker’s spouses or friends known to the family, or other family members. Transportation of the children to a relative’s home, or a similar arrangement, should be done in a Fire Department vehicle.
- J. Prior to departing for the hospital, the Family Liaison Officer should notify the hospital staff and the Hospital Liaison (by telephone if possible) that a member(s) of the family is enroute to the hospital.
- K. The deceased or severely injured firefighter’s parents should also be afforded the courtesy of a personal notification if possible. Use a uniformed firefighter with a Department vehicle, if possible.
- L. If immediate survivors live beyond the local area, the Family Liaison Officer will ensure that the appropriate jurisdiction is contacted requesting a personal notification.
- M. The Chief or designee (and union official, if appropriate) should respond to the residence or the hospital to meet the family, as quick as possible.
- N. 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. If the media has obtained the firefighter’s name, they must be instructed to withhold the firefighter’s name pending notification of the next of kin. Personnel shall NOT give out any information of the incident. This will be done by the Chief or his designee.
- O. In the event of a line-of-duty death, the Dispatcher will transmit a message prepared and/or approved by the Fire Chief similar to the following: ***“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 fire call (Number, Location, Date and Time)”***. Record it in the Department logbook.
- P. 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. (Control conversations in the area of the family). An Investigation Team should be assigned the scene of the area where the incident occurred should be secured. Secure all gear, equipment involved in the area. Photograph the total area and equipment.
- Q. Provide a debriefing and critique for personnel involved in the incident.
- R. Assure notification of ALL off-duty and vacationing personnel.

Fire Department STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Line of Duty Death or Serious Injury	DATE:
Ceremony / Staff Assignments	

PURPOSE

It is the intent of this polity to ensure that every member of this Department both active and retired who passes away will have the option of a Departmental funeral and assistance.

When it is learned that one of our active or retired members has passed away, it will be the responsibility of the Fire Chief, or designated Family Liaison Officer, to contact the family. If a responsible family member requests the Department's assistance, the Chief will appoint a Funeral Coordinator.

The Funeral Coordinator, with approval of the Chief, will determine the highest level of participation the Department can provide, depending upon the cause of death.

DEFINITIONS

1. **Line of duty death:** When an active member of the Department passes away while performing emergency activities, that member shall be given the highest honors. Level 1
2. **Active member of Department:** When any member who is in good standing with the Department passes away for any reason other than Line of Duty death, that member shall be eligible for a Level 2 or below participation by the Department.
3. **Retired member of Department:** Any time a retired member's (in good standing) family requests the Department to participate, the highest level is 3.

LEVELS OF DEPARTMENTAL PARTICIPATION

The Funeral Coordinator (with the Family Liaison Officer, when assigned) will meet with the family to determine the highest level of participation the Department can perform. After the level of participation has been agreed upon with the family, the Funeral Coordinator will meet with the Fire Chief for final approval.

The funeral detail should be operated like an incident. The Funeral Coordinator will act as the Incident Commander. Additional Officers will be assigned by the Funeral Coordinator as required.

Funeral Service Options

OPTION	LEVEL I	LEVEL II	LEVEL 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	X	
Walk Through	X	X	X

* Used only if deceased was a veteran.

STAFF ASSIGNMENTS

Funeral Coordinator

The Funeral Coordinator will be the overall uniformed officer in charge. This officer may have additional Section Officers that will report directly to his/her position.

The Funeral Coordinator is the liaison between the Department and the Funeral Director, religious representative of the family and any other organization that the family has designated to perform the final ceremony.

It is the Funeral Coordinator's responsibility to meet with a family member to select if desired, the pallbearers and escort personnel to ensure they understand what will happen both at the church and if needed, at graveside. This meeting should include the Funeral Director and any other organization that might be involved in the ceremony.

If the fallen member has been in the Armed Services, a flag may be draped over the coffin. This requires the pallbearers and the Funeral Coordinator to fold it and present it to the highest ranking chief officer who will in turn present it to the designated family member.

At all times the Funeral Coordinator must keep the wants and wishes of the family in mind.

Church Coordinator

The Church Coordinator reports to the Funeral Coordinator and acts as Funeral Coordinator in his/her absence. The Church Coordinator will work with the Family Liaison Officer and the Funeral Home Director to ensure that the needs and desires of the family are being met.

The Church Coordinator will formulate a plan for seating/standing and apparatus parking at both the church/funeral home and graveside.

The Church Coordinator will recruit necessary personnel to assist in the parking and seating of all personnel and persons attending the ceremony, both at the church/funeral home and graveside.

Procession Coordinator

The Procession Coordinator reports to the Funeral Coordinator and coordinates activities with the Family Liaison Officer. He/she is responsible for coordinating the funeral procession from the funeral service to the cemetery, including staging, route selection, traffic control, and vehicle/personnel placement.

The Procession Coordinator is responsible for all transportation of family members, pallbearers, and escort detail from a predetermined location to the funeral home/church; from the church to the graveside; and from graveside back to a predetermined location (e.g., family home, church, headquarters, etc.).

The Procession Coordinator has the authority to procure sedans, vans or any equipment that will be needed for the ceremony. He/she will recruit qualified drivers, ensure they are dressed in a Class "A" uniform, and provide the drivers with a route (map) to the family pick-up point and back to the funeral home/church.

The Procession Coordinator will ensure that if an accident or incident should happen the proper paperwork is filled out and the Funeral Coordinator notified.

The Procession Coordinator will be responsible to ensure that all equipment is returned and that all keys are returned to the assigned person.

Cemetery Coordinator

The Cemetery Coordinator reports to the Funeral Coordinator and coordinates activities with the Family Liaison Officer.

The Cemetery Coordinator is responsible for events at the cemetery from the time the processional arrives until the end of the service and everyone has left the cemetery.

The Cemetery Coordinator will ensure that any details or instructions regarding post-funeral gatherings are disseminated.

Family Liaison Officer

The Family Liaison Officer (FLO) is the primary Fire Department connection with the family. The FLO should assist and counsel the family in all parameters of the funeral process and ceremonies.

The Family Liaison Officer should also assist the family in obtaining available benefits.

The FLO should be assigned a Department vehicle for the entire funeral process and should be available to the family 24-hours a day by phone or pager.

Public Information Officer

The Public Information Officer (PIO) should coordinate and disseminate, with the approval of the Chief, all information regarding the line-of-duty death.

The PIO is responsible for preparing, conducting and/or coordinating all news releases. This includes media information packets and printed service programs for viewing and burial.

The PIO will coordinate and manage VIP arrangements as needed.

Honor Guard

The Honor Guard, when requested by the family, will be a detail of the Department in dress uniform, with white gloves, that will be positioned at the head and foot of the casket. They may also escort the casket to the funeral and cemetery. They can also act as pallbearers.

Color Guard

The Color Guard, when required, will be a detail assigned as bearer of the American and State flags.

Pallbearers

The pallbearers, approved by the family, shall follow the instructions of the Funeral Coordinator.

CONDUCT OF MEMBERS IN UNIFORM

Members of the Funeral Escort - in full uniform - shall assemble quietly and in an orderly manner in the immediate vicinity of the place designated, at least fifteen minutes prior to the time of the service. They shall conduct themselves in such a manner which does not detract from the solemnity of the occasion. Members attending funeral services in uniform will be expected to consider themselves members of the detail, and be governed by the officer in charge.

Members in uniform should place black tape horizontally over the uniform badge covering the seal.

When all other guests have been seated, the Escort shall file in, with ranking officers preceding. They shall stand before their seats until the Escort is wholly in position and on a signal from the Funeral Coordinator shall seat themselves simultaneously.

AFTER SERVICE INSTRUCTIONS - ESCORT

Upon conclusion of services, the Escort shall file past the casket either preceding or following other guests according to instructions from the Funeral Coordinator. The Escort shall then form ranks facing each other near the funeral coach, at the parade rest, and on either side of the procession, being sure to leave room for pallbearers to complete the ranks adjacent to the funeral coach.

The Funeral Coordinator shall, upon seeing the procession leave the door of the Chapel, bring his men to attention with the order, "Detail, Attention!" When the procession reaches the Funeral Coordinator, he shall render the order, "Hand Salute!" The hand salute shall be held until the procession has reached the funeral car and the doors are closed, at which time on the count of "Two" the salute will be completed. The Detail will then be dismissed to go to their transportation and proceed to the gravesite, or to follow other instructions given by the Funeral Coordinator.

PROCESSION ORDER - VEHICULAR

Procession order for funeral components shall be: Colors; clergy; vehicle used to transport coffin; pallbearers, if riding inside apparatus, otherwise following immediate family; immediate family; Fire Chief; Dignitary cars; Home Department apparatus, visiting department apparatus, Department personnel in personal vehicles; visiting department personnel in private vehicles; and other vehicles.

Emergency vehicles in the procession shall not use red lights. During the passage of the procession, personnel positioned with apparatus along the route shall turn on red lights and stand at attention.

PROCESSION ORDER – MARCHING

Procession order for funeral components shall be: Piper/Drummer; Colors; clergy; vehicle used to transport coffin; pallbearers, if riding inside apparatus, otherwise following immediate family; immediate family; Fire Chief; Department Officers; Dignitaries; Department uniformed personnel, visiting department personnel, Department apparatus; visiting department apparatus; and other vehicles.

FIREFIGHTER'S FUNERAL AND GRAVESIDE SERVICES

If the family so requests, this service may be given by a Chief Officer.

AT GRAVESITE

Immediately upon arrival at the gravesite, the Escort shall form in ranks at the funeral car, where the Funeral Coordinator shall bring them to attention. When the pallbearers have placed the casket in position and have formed ranks, the Funeral Coordinator shall give the command "Hand Salute!" The salute shall be held until the casket passes him, and at the count of "Two" the salute shall be completed. At this time the Escort shall form ranks behind the pallbearers, or at some other location designated by the Funeral Coordinator or Funeral Director. At the conclusion of the graveside service, the Funeral Coordinator shall dismiss the Escort.

WHERE FLAG IS USED ON CASKET

In situations where the Flag is used to cover the casket, (stars are draped over the left breast, and nothing is placed on top of the Flag) upon completion of the graveside service, two members of the Department shall be assigned to fold the Flag in a military manner and the ranking officer in attendance shall present it to the family or next of kin.

CONCLUSION OF GRAVESIDE SERVICES

Upon completion of the graveside services, a Department representative will be assigned to stay with the family until guests have departed. The representative should utilize judgment as to the proper time to excuse himself. It would be appropriate for the representative to be someone who might be a friend or good acquaintance of the family.

RECEPTION

At the conclusion of the service, the Department may host a reception for attendees. The Funeral Coordinator will assign personnel to the detail.

APPARATUS PARTICIPATION FOR OTHER FIRE AGENCIES

If requested and travel distance permits, the Fire Chief may approve sending a contingent of personnel and apparatus to represent the Department at funerals for a line of duty death for active members of another fire agency.

Fire Department STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Line of Duty Death or Serious Injury	DATE:
Survivor Benefits	

PURPOSE

To establish standard guidelines and procedures that will serve the purpose of assisting family members, of personnel who are either severely injured or have deceased while in the line of duty, receive the benefits entitled to them.

POLICY

It shall be the responsibility of the Fire Chief, or the Chief's designee to properly notify State and Federal agencies of a firefighter who has suffered severe injuries or has died in the line of duty. The Fire Chief may designate a Benefits Officer to assist the survivors in obtaining benefits.

PROCEDURE

The Fire Chief or designee (Benefits Officer) will personally make the notifications. The Fire Chief may also appoint a Family Liaison Officer to coordinate the efforts between the survivors and the Department.

Twelve copies of the Death Certificate should be ordered through the Funeral Director for processing benefit claims.

NOTIFICATION LIST- FEDERAL

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Public Safety Officers' Benefit Program
Bureau of Justice Assistance
Washington, D.C. 20531
1-888-744-6513

Call with the following information:

1. Deceased name, occupation and title/rank
2. Widow/widower's name
3. Names and DOB of children
4. Widow/widower's mailing address
5. Fire Department Name
6. Name, phone number and address of Contact Person
7. Description of incident

Upon receipt of the above information by the Department of Justice, forms will be forwarded to the Fire Department for completion.

In order for a firefighter's surviving dependents to receive the Federal Public Safety Officer's Benefit, certain tests must be made before death, or at the time of death.

1. It is necessary to obtain a complete blood toxicology report primarily concerning blood alcohol and Carbon Monoxide levels.
2. In cases involving a non-traumatic injury, such as a heart attack, it is also necessary to obtain a complete blood toxicology report as stated above. It is imperative that they receive an accurate toxicology report to complete benefit payments. If local labs are unable to get accurate Carbon Monoxide levels below 10%, contact the Department of Justice and they will be able to run the test.
3. A certified copy of the autopsy must be provided and if no autopsy was performed, an affidavit stating one was not performed must be provided.

If a firefighter is injured to the point of permanent disability, he/she is eligible for a one-time lump sum payment equal to the current benefit listed above provided they meet the following criteria:

1. They are totally disabled and will never be able to hold another job.
2. They receive the maximum benefit from their primary workmen's compensation claim.
3. They are released from the Fire Department.

UNITED STATES FIRE ADMINISTRATION

Notify the U. S. Fire Administration (USFA), National Fallen Firefighters Foundation by telephone in the event of a firefighter line-of-duty death so they can provide assistance and also lower the flags over the Fallen Firefighters' Memorial in respect.

National Fallen Firefighters Foundation
Emmitsburg, MD
301-447-1365

NOTIFICATION LIST – STATE

State Fire Marshal

Fire Prevention Bureau
Reynoldsburg, OH
1-888-243-0305

NOTIFICATION LIST – MISCELLANEOUS

Depending on individual situations, additional benefits available to survivors may be available from:

Social security Administration
US Department of Veteran Affairs
Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund or Ohio Public Employees Retirement System
Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation
Ohio Victims of Crime Compensation Program
Ohio Board of Regents, Student Aid Commission
International Association of Fire Fighters

Fire Department STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Line of Duty Death or Serious Injury Investigation	DATE:
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PURPOSE

This procedure describes the activities, roles and responsibilities that are required in the event an employee is seriously injured or killed in the line-of-duty. It establishes the need for, and membership of, an Investigation Team. This policy details the procedures the Investigation Team should follow in conducting its investigation.

DEFINITIONS

Serious Injury — any injury sustained in the line-of-duty which is, or may become life-threatening or will disable the employee for a substantial period of time.

Line-of-duty Death - The death of any member of the Fire Department while on duty, or while undergoing medical treatment for any injury or disease resulting from such duty is considered a line-of-duty death. This also includes the death of a Fire Department member while traveling in connection with such duty.

PROCEDURE

As soon as possible after a line-of-duty death has occurred, the Fire Chief shall assign an Investigation Team to conduct an investigation of the circumstances of the event. The objective of this team shall be to thoroughly analyze and document the events leading to the death and to make recommendations aimed at preventing similar occurrences in the future. This procedure may also be utilized in the event of a serious accident involving Fire Department personnel that may or may not have resulted in death or injuries.

The principal goal of the Investigation Team shall be to identify the causal factors pertaining to the event and to recommend actions that would prevent or reduce the risk of a similar event. A secondary objective shall be to obtain, document and secure evidence that may be a factor in any regulatory actions or litigation resulting from the incident.

If the death occurred at a fire scene, the Investigation Team report shall be separate and distinct from any fire cause investigation. A copy of the fire investigator's report shall be included in the final report package. The Investigation Team report and all related documentation shall be an internal Fire Department administrative report.

The investigation of incidents involving death or serious injury to Fire Department members shall be directed by an officer designated by the Fire Chief. The Investigation Team shall report through the designated Team Leader, who shall be responsible for the management of the investigative process.

The Investigation Team shall include a Chief Officer, Fire Department Safety Officer, a Fire Investigator and such additional personnel as may be required by the specific circumstances of the event. All members of the Department shall give their full and complete cooperation to the Investigation Team.

Duties and Responsibilities of the Investigation Team:

1. Gathering and analysis of all physical evidence relating to the event.
2. Interview of all witnesses with direct or indirect knowledge of the circumstances.

3. Documentation of radio traffic, telephone conversations, photographs, film, videotape and related information.
4. Consultation with persons having special knowledge of the factors involved in the incident, including experts and consultants from the private sector.
5. Liaison with other agencies involved in investigation of the incident.
6. Development of a comprehensive written report of the incident, including conclusions and recommendations.

The Investigation Team Leader shall establish and maintain an ongoing liaison with the Department's legal office relating to the investigation.

It is the policy of the Fire Department to cooperate fully with all other governmental agencies having legal cause to be involved in the investigation of a Line-of-duty death incident, and to cooperate voluntarily, when appropriate, with organizations working in the areas of fire service occupational safety and health education and training.

Other governmental agencies that may be involved in an investigation include:

United States Fire Administration

National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health

Law Enforcement Agencies

State Fire Marshal

The participation of these agencies shall be at their own discretion, depending on the circumstances of the particular incident. These agencies may or may not produce their own reports of the incident with recommendations or corrective actions. These reports do not supercede the Investigation Team Report.

The Investigation Team shall utilize the resources of individuals and agencies outside the Fire Department to assist in the investigation and/or provide technical consultation when necessary.

These resources may include:

National Fire Protection Association

International Association of Fire Chiefs

Ohio Fire Chiefs Association

International Association of Fire Fighters

Consultants

Testing Laboratories

American Petroleum Institute

DOCUMENTATION

The Investigation Team shall ensure that the scene of the incident is fully documented, including diagrams, photographs and observations.

When feasible, all witness interviews shall be recorded and/or transcribed. When recording and/or transcription is not feasible, the investigator's notes of the interview shall be filed.

1. Employees shall have the right to have legal or a union representative present during an interview.

2. The Investigation Team shall coordinate its activities with the Police Department to avoid interference in any criminal investigation relating to the incident.

The Investigation Team shall:

1. Obtain and secure tapes and printouts of telephone and radio conversations and CAD transactions relating to the incident. The pertinent aspects of the radio and telephone tapes shall be transcribed.
2. Gather and document any physical evidence relating to the incident. Physical evidence shall be secured and labeled, and the chain of custody procedures maintained.
3. Obtain, examine and secure all protective clothing, breathing apparatus and equipment used by the personnel involved in the incident as soon as is feasible. A complete physical description of the protective clothing, breathing apparatus and equipment shall be included in the report of the incident. (A performance status report shall be conducted by a qualified professional on all safety equipment).
4. Review and comment on the application of policies and procedures to the incident, the observance of procedures, their effect on the situation and recommendation for changes, additions or deletions.
5. Attempt to obtain any photographs, videotape or other information relating to the incident from news media or other sources. Such evidence shall be obtained with the written agreement that it is to be used only for investigative and educational purposes.
6. Interact and cooperate with Fire Investigator and Law Enforcement personnel in their activities related to the incident.
7. When feasible, the Investigation Team shall obtain copies of autopsy reports, medical treatment records, injury reports and other information relating to members involved in the incident.

The Fire Chief shall determine the schedule and method of presentation for the final report of the Investigation Team.

In cases involving a Line-of-duty death it is not recommended that a formal post-incident analysis be held.

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] [names] was/were killed in the line of duty. Details of 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.

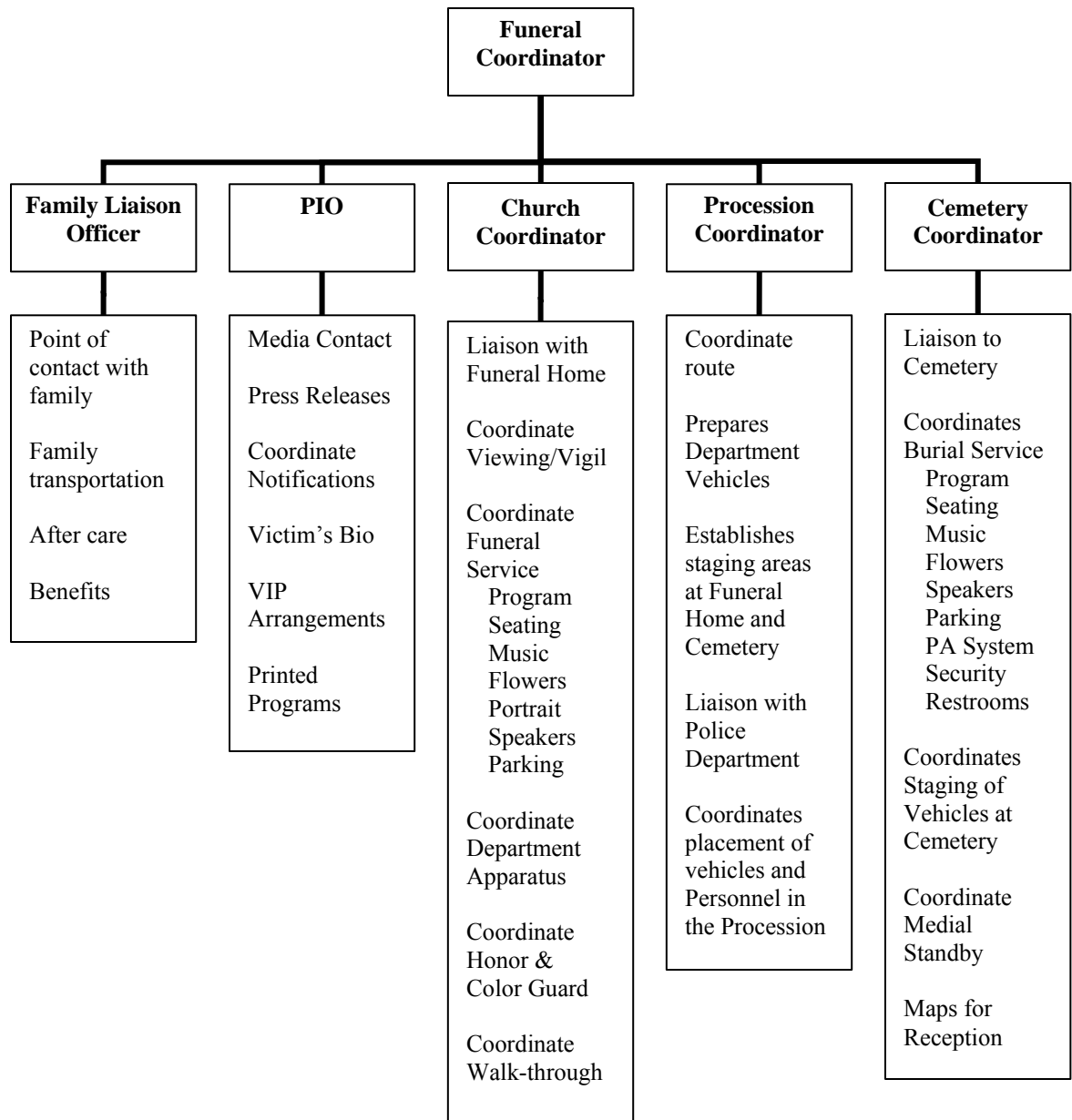
This is a difficult time for the entire Fire Department, and we will need to come together to get through it. All of us know when we choose firefighting as a career that this type of occurrence is possible. But that does not make it any less tragic or any less difficult to bear once it actually happens.

At this time our thoughts and prayers are with the _____ [name] family. I urge you to support them in any way you can.

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

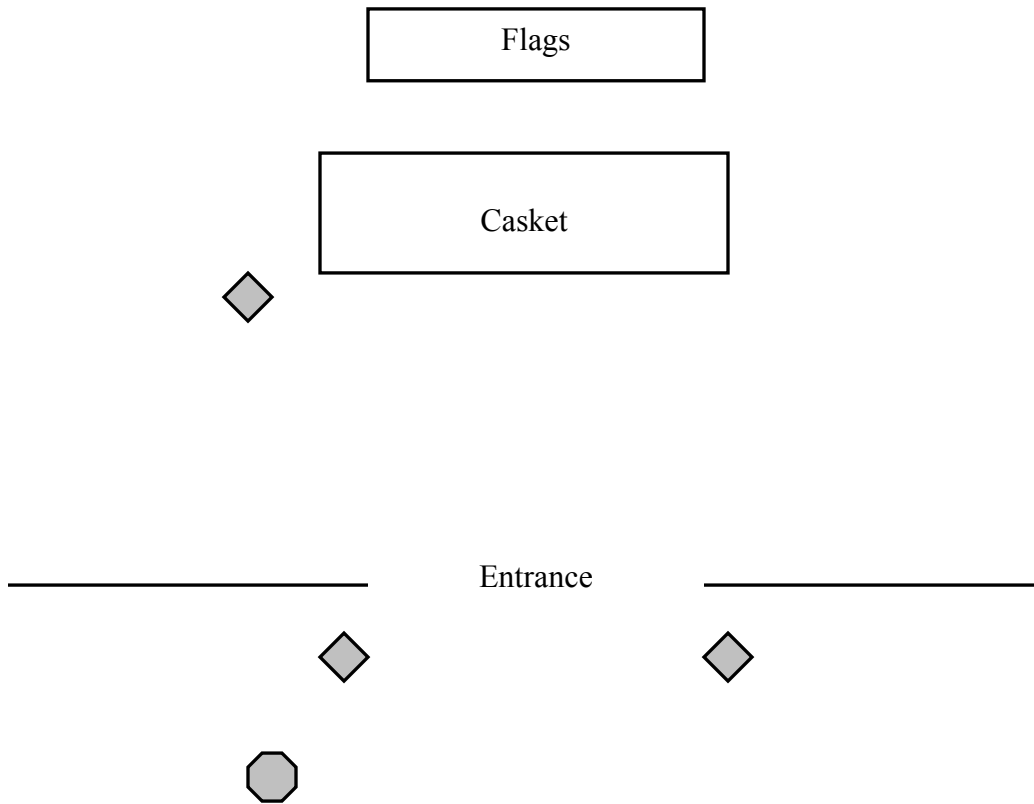
Funeral Staff Assignments



Appendix F

Funeral Service Diagrams

VISITATION



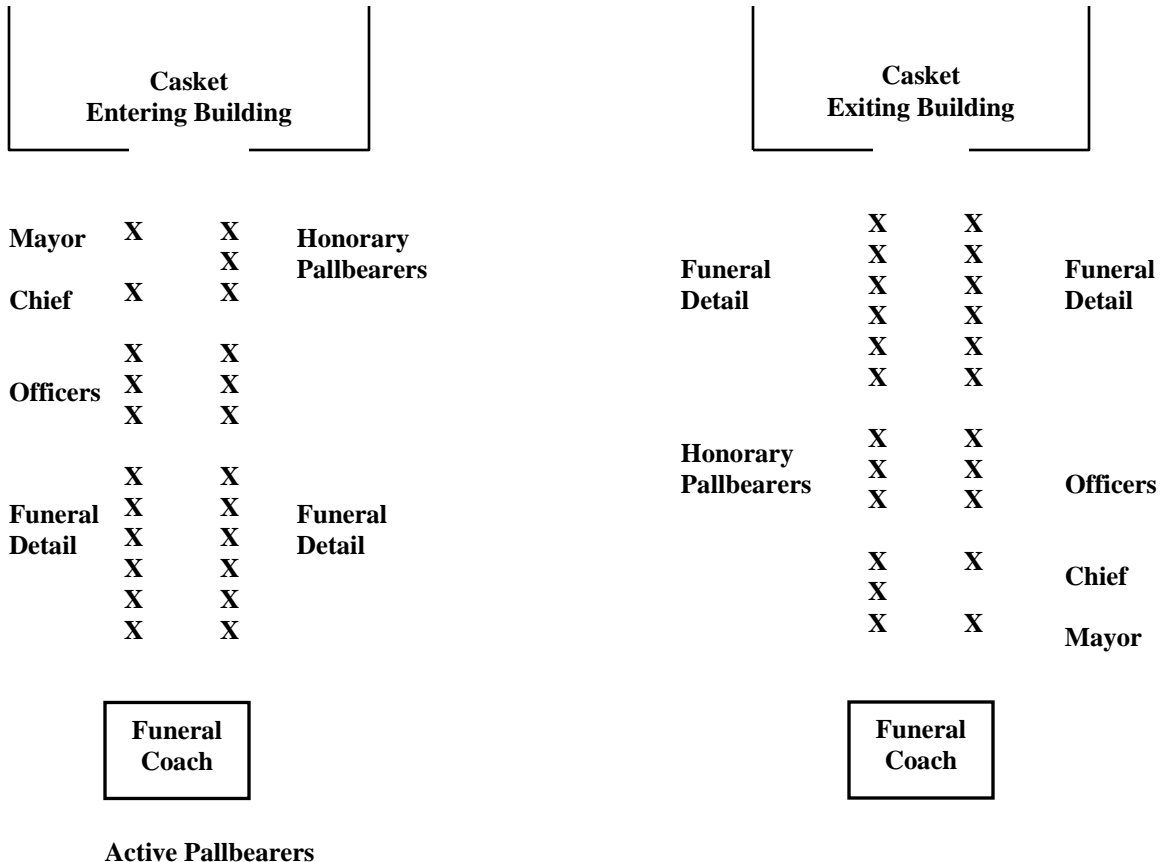
Honor Guard Member – One Department member to stand at attention by the casket during the entire time of visitation. Rotate individuals every 30-60 minutes.



Chief or other Fire Department officer

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.



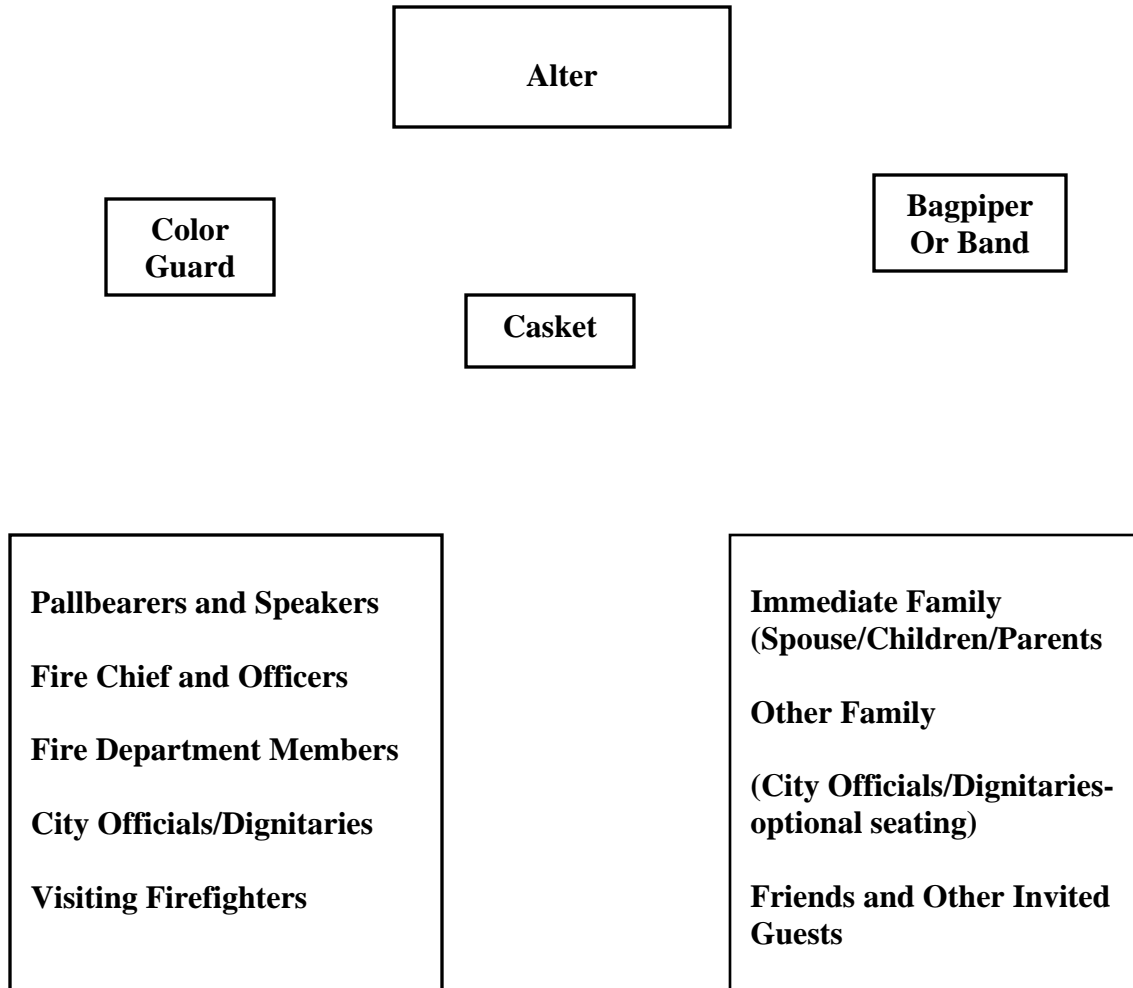
Active Pallbearers

Honorary Pallbearers may be members of the Fire Department.

National and State Fire Officials may be placed with Chief Officers and/or as Honorary Pallbearers.

The Funeral Detail consists of all uniformed members of the Department and uniformed visiting firefighters.

INSIDE THE CHURCH



NOTE: Any dignitaries should be seated either to the side of all firefighters, or directly behind them.

Appendix G

Funeral Procession Diagrams

MARCHING PROCESSION

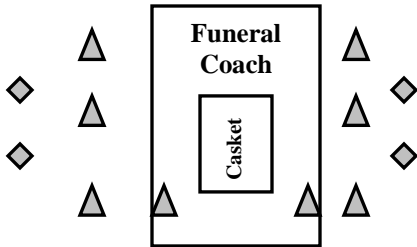
Drummer Piper Drummer

Color Guard

Clergy/Department Chaplin

◇ Honor Guard

△ Pallbearers



Immediate Family

Fire Department Officers

Dignitaries

Fire Department Members

Visiting Departments

Fire Department Apparatus

Visiting Department Apparatus

Other Vehicles

VEHICLE PROCESSION

Police Department Escort

Lead Vehicle – Funeral Home

Funeral Coach

Immediate Family

Pallbearers

Fire Department Officers

Dignitaries

Fire Department Apparatus

Visiting Department Apparatus

Fire Department Members-POV

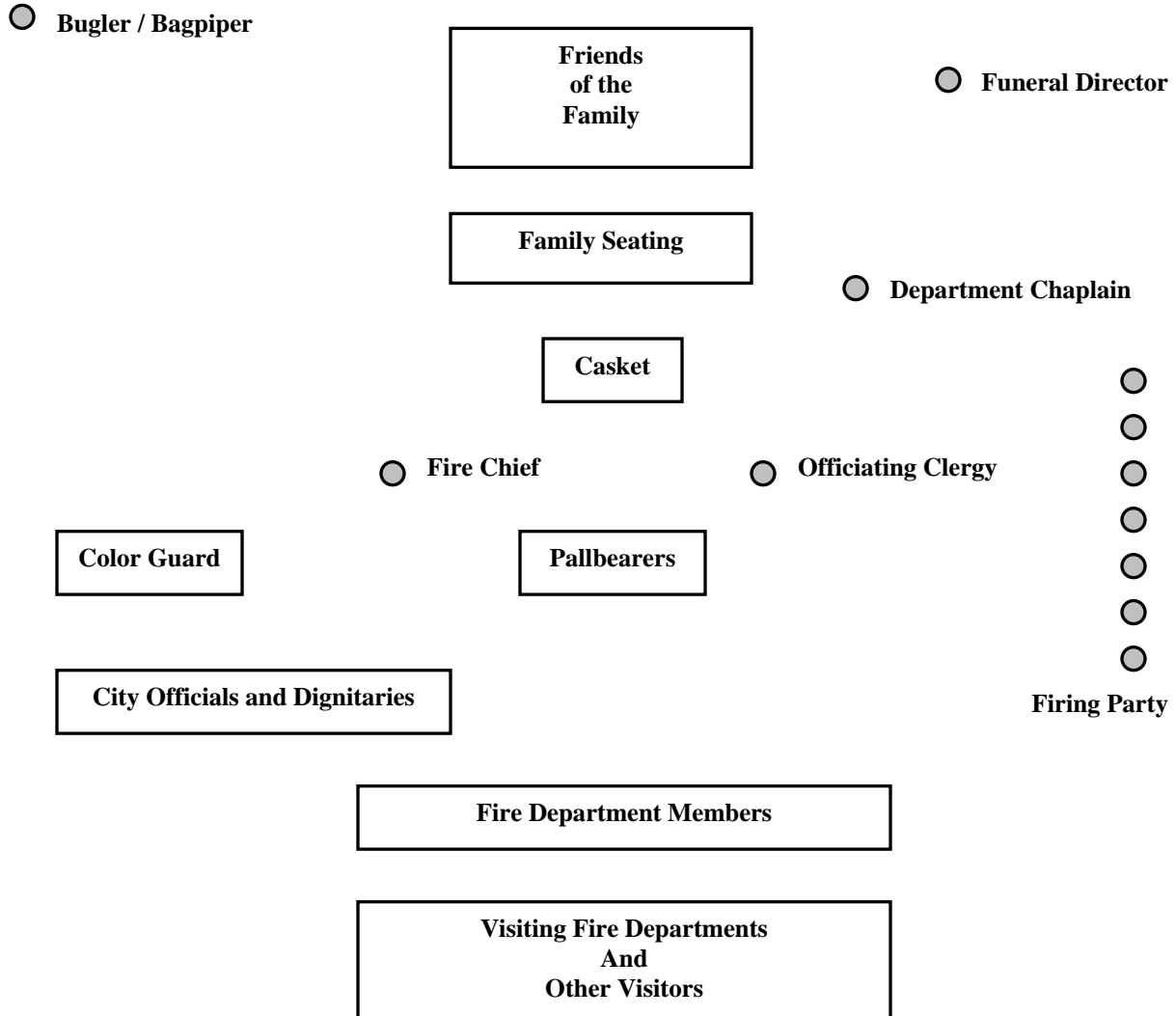
Visiting Department Members-POV

Other Vehicles

Appendix H

Cemetery Service Diagrams

CEMETERY SERVICE



NOTE: If the Firing Party is from a veteran's organization, the Firing Party will stay in that formation until their presentation is complete. After the presentation is completed, the Firing Party will give a 21 gun salute, after which they may leave. If the Firing Party is not with a veteran's organization, the members of the Firing Party will normally stay in formation for the entire grave side service.

Appendix I

Firefighters Prayer / 23rd Psalm

Firefighter's Prayer

When I am called to duty God
Whenever flames may rage
Give me strength to save a 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
And hear the weakest shout
And quickly and efficiently
Put the fire out.

I want to fill my calling
To give the best in me
To guard my friends and neighbors
And protect their property.

And if according to Your will
I must answer death's call
Bless with Your protecting hand
My family one and all.

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

PSOB Fact Sheet

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Justice Programs
Bureau of Justice Assistance

BJA Bureau of Justice Assistance
Fact Sheet

Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program

History

The Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Act (42 U.S.C. 3796, et seq.) was enacted in 1976 to assist in the recruitment and retention of law enforcement officers and firefighters. Specifically, Congress was concerned that the hazards inherent in law enforcement and fire suppression and the low level of state and local death benefits might discourage qualified individuals from seeking careers in these fields, thus hampering the ability of communities to provide for public safety.

The PSOB Act was designed to offer peace of mind to men and women seeking careers in public safety and to make a strong statement about the value American society places on the contributions of those who serve their communities in potentially dangerous circumstances.

The resultant PSOB Program, which is administered by the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), presents a unique opportunity for the U.S. Department of Justice; federal, state, and local public safety agencies; and national public safety organizations to become involved in promoting the protection of public safety officers before tragedies occur. Each year, the PSOB Program receives substantial information about line of duty deaths and encourages public safety agencies to adopt model policies that can help guide an agency through the tragic event of a line of duty death.

PSOB Service Standards Commitment

The mission of the PSOB staff is to assist public safety officers, their agencies, and their families before, during, and after a tragedy occurs. Three core values guide our daily operations and measure our performance. They are:

- We will respond rapidly and accurately to PSOB death and disability benefits claims.
- We will be humane in our support of public safety officers, their agencies, and their families.
- We will seek and pursue opportunities to expand our assistance to the public safety field.

To improve our response time, we continuously assess our allocation of staff and organizational processes. To ensure accuracy, we will use medicolegal experts and independent legal analyses from outside the PSOB Program.

To provide our services in the most sensitive and professional manner, PSOB staff receive training on key issues associated with grief, critical incident stress, and posttraumatic stress disorder. We also solicit and use information provided to us on the tone and impact of our verbal and written communication with the public safety field.

One example of the PSOB Program giving more to the field is a series of regional training sessions conducted to help law enforcement agencies prepare for the loss of an officer. It is essential that all public safety agencies be prepared to effectively assist the family, fellow officers, and the community to move forward in the aftermath of a tragedy.

Our commitment to support the public safety community has never been stronger, and it will continue to grow.

PSOB Program Benefits

The PSOB Program provides a one-time financial benefit to the eligible survivors of public safety officers whose deaths are the direct and proximate result of a traumatic injury sustained in the line of duty. The benefit was increased from \$50,000 to \$100,000 for deaths occurring on or after June 1, 1988. Since October 15, 1988, the benefit has been adjusted each year on October 1 to reflect the percentage of change in the Consumer Price Index. (*Contact PSOB for current benefit amount.*)

The PSOB Program provides the same benefit to public safety officers who have been permanently and totally disabled by a catastrophic personal injury sustained in the line of duty if that injury permanently prevents the officer from performing **any** gainful work. Medical retirement, workman's compensation, or social security benefits for a line of duty disability do not, in and of themselves, establish eligibility for PSOB benefits.

The PSOB Program also includes the Public Safety Officers' Educational Assistance (PSOEA) Act. This Act expands upon the former Federal Law Enforcement Dependents Assistance Program to provide financial assistance for higher education of the spouses and children of federal, state, and local public safety officers permanently disabled or killed in the line of duty. The educational assistance may be used to defray relevant expenses, including tuition, room and board, books, supplies, and education-related fees. Please see the separate PSOEA Program Fact Sheet for further information.

Since 1977, on average, the PSOB Program has received 275 benefit claims each year for line of duty deaths of public safety officers. PSOB Program staff responds rapidly and with sensitivity to requests for assistance from claimants and public safety agencies. They also provide moral support and, when necessary, referrals to organizations such as Concerns of Police Survivors (COPS) and the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF), which can provide long-term support for surviving family members and coworkers of deceased public safety officers.

PSOB Program Effective Dates

The effective dates for PSOB Program benefits are as follows:

Death Benefits

- State and local law enforcement officers and firefighters are covered for line of duty deaths occurring on or after September 29, 1976.
- Federal law enforcement officers and firefighters are covered for line of duty deaths occurring on or after October 12, 1984.
- Members of federal, state, and local public rescue squads and ambulance crews are covered for line of duty deaths occurring on or after October 15, 1986.
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) personnel and state, local, and tribal emergency management and civil defense agency employees are covered for deaths occurring on or after October 30, 2000.

Disability Benefits

Federal, state, and local law enforcement officers, firefighters, and members of public rescue squads and ambulance crews are covered for catastrophic personal injuries sustained on or after November 29, 1990. FEMA personnel and state, local, and tribal emergency management and civil defense agency employees are covered for such injuries sustained on or after October 30, 2000. The public safety officer must be separated from his or her employing agency for medical reasons, and must be receiving the maximum allowable disability compensation from his or her jurisdiction, in order to initiate a claim for PSOB disability benefits. Eligible officers may include persons who are comatose, in a persistent vegetative state, or quadriplegic.

Public Safety Officers Eligible for PSOB Program Benefits

Under the PSOB Program, a *public safety officer* is a person serving a *public agency* in an official capacity, with or without compensation, as a law enforcement officer, firefighter, or member of a public rescue squad or ambulance crew. *Law enforcement officers* include, but are not limited to, police, corrections, probation, parole, and judicial officers. *Volunteer firefighters* and *members of volunteer rescue squads and ambulance crews* are covered under the program if they are officially recognized or designated members of legally organized volunteer fire departments, rescue squads, or ambulance crews.

In October 2000, Public Law 106-390 (Sec. 305) designated FEMA employees as public safety officers under the PSOB Act if they are performing official, hazardous duties related to a declared major disaster or emergency.

The legislation also indicates that state, local, and tribal emergency management or civil defense agency employees working in cooperation with FEMA are, under the same circumstances, considered public safety officers under the PSOB Act.

A *public agency* is defined as the United States; any U.S. state; the District of Columbia; the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico; any U.S. territory or possession; any unit of local government; any combination of such states or units; and any department, agency, or instrumentality of the foregoing. To be eligible for benefits, a public safety officer's death or total and permanent disability must result from injuries sustained in the line of duty. *Line of duty* is defined in the PSOB regulations (28 C.F.R. 32) as any action that the public safety officer whose primary function is crime control or reduction, enforcement of the criminal law, or suppression of fires is authorized or obligated by law, rule, regulation, or condition of employment or service to perform. Other public safety officers--whose primary function is not law enforcement or fire suppression--must be engaged in their *authorized* law enforcement, fire suppression, rescue squad, or ambulance duties when the fatal or disabling injury is sustained.

Survivors Eligible for Program Death Benefits

Once BJA approves a claim for death benefits, the benefit will be paid to eligible survivors in a lump sum, as follows:

- If there are no surviving children of the deceased officer, to the surviving spouse.
- If there is a surviving child or children and a surviving spouse, one-half to the child or to the children in equal shares and one-half to the surviving spouse.
- If there is no surviving spouse, to the child or in equal shares to the children.
- If none of the above apply, to the parent or in equal shares to the parents.

Under the PSOB Act, *child* is defined as any natural child who was born before or after the death of the public safety officer, or who is an adopted child or stepchild of the deceased public safety officer. At the time of death, the *child* must be 18 years of age or younger; or 19 through 22 years of age and pursuing a full-time course of study or training, if the child has not already completed 4 years of education beyond high school; or 19 years or older and incapable of self-support due to a physical or mental disability.

For PSOB Program benefits to be paid, a public safety officer must be survived by an eligible survivor; public safety officers cannot pre-designate their beneficiaries.

PSOB Program Limitations and Exclusions

No PSOB Program benefit can be paid:

- If the death or permanent and total disability was caused by the intentional misconduct of the public safety officer or if the officer intended to bring about his or her own death or permanent and total disability.
- If the public safety officer was voluntarily intoxicated at the time of death or permanent and total disability.
- If the public safety officer was performing his or her duties in a grossly negligent manner at the time of death or permanent and total disability.
- To a claimant whose actions were a substantial contributing factor to the death of the public safety officer.
- To non-civilian members of the military serving as law enforcement officers, firefighters, or rescue squad or ambulance crew members, or to any of their survivors.

PSOB benefits do not cover death or permanent and total disability resulting from stress; strain; occupational illness; or a chronic, progressive, or congenital disease (**such as heart or pulmonary disease leading to a heart attack**), unless there is a traumatic injury that is a substantial contributing factor in the death or permanent and total disability. Medical proof of the traumatic injury (such as a blood test for carbon monoxide poisoning) may be necessary for coverage in these cases.

Reduction of Benefits

The PSOB Program benefit is reduced by certain payments made under the District of Columbia Code and may itself reduce benefits under Section 8191 of the federal Employees' Compensation Act. However, state and local benefits must not be reduced by benefits received under the PSOB Act, and the PSOB benefit is not reduced by any benefit received at the state or local level.

Interim Payment

If BJA determines an urgent claimant need before the final action of paying a death benefit, an interim benefit payment not exceeding \$3,000 may be made to the eligible survivor(s) if it is probable that the death is compensable.

Attachment and Tax Exemption

PSOB death and disability benefits are not subject to execution or attachment by creditors. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has ruled that the benefit is not subject to federal income tax (IRS Ruling No. 77-235, IRS 1977-28) or to federal estate tax (IRS Ruling No. 79-397).

Attorneys' Fees

The PSOB Act authorizes BJA to establish the maximum fee that may be charged for services rendered to the claimant by another party in connection with any PSOB claim filed with BJA. Contracts for a stipulated fee and contingent fee arrangements are prohibited by PSOB regulations (28 C.F.R. 32.22(b)). BJA assumes no responsibility for payment of claimant attorney fees (28 C.F.R. 32.22(d)).

Filing a Claim

Eligible survivors or disability claimants may file claims directly with BJA or through the public safety agency, organization, or unit in which the public safety officer served. In most cases, the public safety agency provides BJA with sufficient information to determine whether the circumstances of the death or permanent and total disability support a benefit payment. The public safety agency prepares a Report of Public Safety Officer's Death or Permanent and Total Disability Claim Form to accompany the claim for death benefits completed by the eligible survivor(s) or, in the case of disability claims, the prerequisite disability certification package completed by the injured officer. BJA will determine whether and to whom a benefit should be paid.

For Further Information

For more information about the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program or to share your observations and recommendations, please contact:

U.S. Department of Justice Response Center

1-800-421-6770 or 202-307-1480

Response Center staff is available Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. eastern time.

Bureau of Justice Assistance

Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program

810 Seventh Street NW.

Washington, DC 20531

202-307-0635

Toll Free: 1-888-SIGNAL13 (744-6513) or Fax: 202-616-0314

World Wide Web: www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA

Bureau of Justice Assistance Clearinghouse

P.O. Box 6000

Rockville, MD 20849-6000

1-800-688-4252

World Wide Web: www.ncjrs.org

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July 2001

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Justice Programs
Bureau of Justice Assistance

BJA Bureau of Justice Assistance
Fact Sheet

Public Safety Officers' Educational Assistance Program

The Federal Law Enforcement Dependents Assistance (FLEDA) Act was enacted in October 1996 to enhance the appeal of service in civilian federal law enforcement agencies by providing financial assistance for higher education to spouses and children of federal law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty. Congress and the President amended the Act in 1998 to provide educational assistance to spouses and children of police, fire, and emergency public safety officers killed in the line of duty, thus creating the Public Safety Officers' Educational Assistance (PSOEA) Program. The PSOEA Program also makes assistance available to spouses and children of public safety officers permanently and totally disabled by catastrophic injuries sustained in the line of duty.

Background

By amending the FLEDA Act, Congress and the President extended educational assistance to include not only the families of federal law enforcement officers but all public safety officers. In so doing, they made an important statement about how vital our public safety officers are to our nation's safety.

The PSOEA Program recognizes that benefits available to these families through the Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program, administered by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice, are often consumed by basic needs and are not sufficient to support costs of higher education. For many families, however, access to higher education is instrumental in their ability to move forward in the aftermath of a line-of-duty tragedy.

PSOEA Program Benefits

The PSOEA Program provides an educational assistance allowance to eligible survivors of public safety officers whose deaths or permanent and total disabilities are the direct and proximate result of a traumatic injury sustained in the line of duty.

PSOEA benefits may be used solely to defray educational expenses, including tuition, room and board, books, supplies, and education-related fees. The amount of assistance is determined by whether the student attended school as a full-time, three-quarter-time, or half-time student. Also, the amount of assistance is subject to change consistent with the current computation of educational assistance allowance set forth in Title IV of the Higher Education Act, Section 3532 of Title 38, United States Code.

PSOEA Program Effective Dates

Under the PSOEA Program, the families of federal, state, and local police, fire, and emergency public safety officers are covered for line-of-duty deaths that occurred on or after January 1, 1978. The effective date for families of permanently and totally disabled federal law enforcement officers is October 3, 1996. Families of state and local police, fire, and emergency public safety officers are covered for line-of-duty permanent and totally disabling injuries that occurred on or after October 1, 1997. Families of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) personnel and state, local, and tribal emergency management and civil defense agency employees are covered for such injuries sustained on or after October 30, 2000.

Eligibility for PSOEA Benefits

The PSOEA Program stipulates that PSOEA benefits are to be provided directly to dependents who attend a program of education at an eligible educational institution and are the spouses or children of federal, police, fire, and emergency public safety officers whose deaths or permanent and total disabilities are covered by the PSOB Program (42 U.S.C. 3796 et seq.). Public safety officers' children are no longer eligible for assistance, however, after their 27th birthday, absent a finding by the Attorney General of extraordinary circumstances. Assistance under the PSOEA Program is available for 45 months of full-time education or training or for a proportional period of time for a part-time program.

For Further Information

For more information about the PSOEA Program, to obtain a copy of the PSOEA regulations and application form, or to share your observations and recommendations, please contact:

Public Safety Officers' Educational Assistance Program

Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program
Bureau of Justice Assistance
810 Seventh Street NW.
Washington, DC 20531
1-888-SIGNAL13 (744-6513) or Fax: 202-616-0314
World Wide Web: www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA

Bureau of Justice Assistance Clearinghouse

P.O. Box 6000
Rockville, MD 20849-6000
1-800-688-4252
World Wide Web: www.ncjrs.org

Clearinghouse staff is available Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. eastern time. Ask them to place you on the BJA mailing list.

Department of Justice Response Center

1-800-421-6770 or 202-307-1480

Response Center staff is available Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. eastern time.

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July 2001

