

MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR A FIRE FIGHTER
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE 1.3.08

Original Date:	Approved by: Chief
Purpose – The purpose of this procedure is to ensure proper management as it relates to assistance, and guidance with regard to delegated responsibilities in the event of the death of a Fire Fighter, immediate family member or firefighter in the tri-county area.	
Intent – To ensure that the Fire Department offers assistance to the deceased member's family by: 1. Determining the family's wish as it relates to the Fire Department's assistance and/or participation in the Memorial Service. 2. Identify the levels of service (Honors) available to the family for the memorial ceremony.	
Forms Required: N/A	

I. AREAS ADDRESSED

- A. General Information
- B. Preparation Considerations
- C. Responsibility of Notification
- D. Duty Description of Key Personnel
 - 1. Survivor Action Officer
 - 2. Family Liaison Officer
 - 3. Benevolent Representative
 - 4. Procession Officer
 - 5. Honor Guard Coordinator
- E. Uniform Dress
- F. Level of Honors Provided
 - 1. Line Of Duty - Death while on an alarm
 - 2. On Duty - Death on duty but not on an alarm
 - 3. Off Duty - Death while off duty
 - 4. Retired

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5. Firefighter's immediate family (husband, wife, children, significant other).
6. Any firefighter in the tri-county area (Dade, Broward and Palm Beach).

II. General Information

- A. These procedures are designed to assist and guide key individuals in accomplishing task assigned to them.
- B. The conditions prevailing after the tragedy will, without a doubt, require specific organizational commitments to successfully meet each of the following objectives:
 1. Superior Organization and Coordination Efforts.
 2. Effective Communication between all parties concerned.
 3. Prevent "overload" on any one or more employees as it relates to task that must be accomplished.
 4. To ensure Moral and Emotional Support is provided to the next of Kin and Fire Department Personnel.
 5. To meet the Request and needs as determined by the surviving Family.
- C. It is most important to emphasize that Fire Department personnel involved with the coordination effort of any funeral have a clear understanding of his/her role(s).
- D. The Fire Department's responsibility does not include the duties of a funeral director but does include working closely with that agency in order to accomplish shared goals that are in the best interest of the deceased member's family.
- E. The three sections that should be reviewed for familiarity are:
 1. Initial Funeral Preparations
 2. Funeral Types and Honors
 3. Responsibility and Duty Description
- F. Fire Department Employees should be familiar with the procedures outlined herein.

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- G. In the event of a death, the Department is expected to act immediately, performing certain required tasks to assist in helping overcome the initial trauma and reducing anxiety to both the immediate family and immediate co-workers as well as to the overall Department.
- H. A determination should be made regarding the level of honors funeral that the deceased should receive, i.e., line of duty or line of duty related death or non-line of duty death honors. This decision will act as an initial guide on the suggested Department type of funeral service to be offered. This also acts as a guide on how the Department and the family will interact.
- I. The Fire Chief or his designee will inform personnel when to:
 - 1. Lower the American Flag at each station to half mast.
 - 2. Place a one inch black band across their badge.
- J. The next step recommended is to review the responsibility and duty descriptions of the following key personnel:
 - 1. Survivor Action Officer (S.A.O.).
 - 2. Family Liaison Officer (F.L.O.).
 - 3. Benevolent Representative (B.R.)
 - 4. Procession Officer (P.C.O.).
 - 5. Honor Guard Coordinator (H.G.C.).

III. Preparatory Considerations

- A. There are certain considerations that the Department should be aware of before the occurrence of a tragic event. The following considerations will significantly reduce the amount of confusion, anxiety, and emotional trauma that affect family friends and co-workers in the event tragedy strikes.

- 1. Chaplain/Clergy

The Fire Department chaplain can serve the Department's personnel on a day-to-day need. The Department chaplain can act as an assistant or liaison to the family's choice of clergy in helping the family with various spiritual needs.

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2. Personnel Information

Complete and thorough information should be immediately made available. Information should identify the following:

- a. Complete name of employee.
- b. Next of kin.
- c. Alternate next of kin.
- d. Religion and/or church or place of worship affiliation.

3. Funeral Director

Contact should be made with the local funeral director to introduce and explain Fire Department Funeral Protocols, i.e., Honor Guard participation in case there are any types of various needs the protocol may call for.

4. Florist

Special floral arrangements that may be considered:

- a. Maltese Cross
- b. Fire Department Badge
- c. Fire Department Patch

Note: Oftentimes the above design may show a cracked or broken article to signify the fire fighter's loss.

5. Fire Department's Family Awareness

Every fire fighter and his or her family should be aware of the services available prior to a tragedy striking.

Having this type of relationship with the family can certainly reduce some of the initial anxiety experienced during this tragic time.

IV. Responsibility of Notification

- A. Prompt and judicious notification of the next of kin is of extreme importance in the case of line of duty death.

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B. Notification to the next of kin should always be made prior to the release of any information to the news media regarding the death of a fire fighter.

C. Notification shall be made by the Fire Chief or his designee (in person whenever possible).

Note: Official notification serves to assure the next of kin a valid, knowledgeable source is providing them information regarding circumstances surrounding the death of their loved one.

D. The notification officer should always be prepared to assist the next of kin with the immediate emotional trauma associated with the notification. A friend, co-worker, friend of the family or a clergy member (Department chaplain) may be of assistance.

E. The person making the notification shall:

1. Familiarize themselves with the circumstances of the death and the personal data concerning the deceased before making the notification.

2. Determine:

a. If the family has a particular person, specifically a close family friend and Department member, to act as Family Liaison Officer.

b. At what level the family would like the Fire Department to participate and/or assist in the Memorial Service.

3. Once the notification has been made the Fire Chief or his designee will authorize an official announcement be released to the news media.

V. Duty Descriptions of Key Personnel

A. Survivor Action Officer

1. The Fire Chief will assume the position of Survivor Action Officer or appoint someone to act as his representative in providing liaison with the next of kin.

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2. The Survivor Action Officer is a direct representative of the Fire Chief and should receive the full cooperation of the entire Fire Department.
3. The Survivor Action Officer is responsible for the management of several important activities. His principal concern is the ongoing welfare of the next of kin.
4. He will render whatever assistance is necessary in settling the personal affairs of the deceased member's family through the crisis.
5. The Survivor Action Officer coordinates the activities of a number of "key" personnel assigned to handle specific aspects of the funeral arrangements and to assist the surviving family. Some of the "Key" Personnel include:
 - a. Family Liaison Officer: 24-hour notification for surviving family, information source, logistical contact.
 - b. Procession Officer: Arranges and directs the funeral procession.
 - c. Ceremonial Service Officer: (Honor Guard coordinator or designee)
6. Additional duties of the Survivor Action Officer include:
 - a. Assure next of kin notification has occurred.
 - b. Assure Department notification of death has been completed.
 - c. Ensure appropriate press release is made to media from the Public Information Officer.
 - d. Arrange to have flags lowered to half-mast (where appropriate) and bunting placed on station(s).
 - e. Notify police department.
 - f. Notify other local city fire departments.
 - g. Personally collect all of the deceased's personal items from the station and forward same to the Family Liaison Officer.
 - h. Conduct a coordination meeting with key personnel as soon as possible (Family Liaison Officer, Procession

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Officer, and Ceremonial Service Officer/Honor Guard Coordinator).

- i. Ensure that the Public Relations Bureau (PIO) remain the key contact persons for outside agencies, news media, and other departments in relation to the death and subsequent ceremony.
- j. Call the final key personnel coordinators meeting together, and establish what the family would like to have in relation to the type of Fire Department services that are available.
- k. Establish time tables.
- l. Identify times and places for group gatherings in accordance with ceremonies.
- m. Provide key personnel and agencies with the schedule of events and any special instructions.
- n. Contact other support agencies to coordinate their assistance with key personnel:
 - (1) Honor Guards
 - (2) Honorary Pallbearers

B. Family Liaison Officer

- 1. Should respond to the deceased's residence and provide reassurance and support to the family during or after formal notification is made by the Fire Chief or his designee.
- 2. Must be prepared to discuss all parameters of the funeral process and its ceremonies, and counsel the family in its decisions.
- 3. Must be in constant communication with the Survivor Action Officer, relaying the information as to the family's request and level of involvement in the funeral process.
- 4. The family will determine if they wish to use immediate family members as pallbearers, and the Family Liaison Officer can assist if the family wishes to use deceased member's co-workers or other members of the Department as pallbearers.
- 5. Must assist the family in determining:
 - a. Will the deceased be in uniform?

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- b. Obtain all articles of clothing that the deceased will wear (except shoes) and deliver them to the funeral director or officer.
- c. Obtain a recent photograph of deceased for funeral director (Personnel File or family may have a photo).
- d. Deliver background information on deceased to individual delivering funeral eulogy.
- e. Determine what ceremonies will take place at the cemetery.
 - (1) Type of Honor Guard Presentation
 - (2) Band (bagpipe, bugle ensemble)
 - (3) Readings
 - (4) Eulogy and who will deliver it (clergy or Fire Chief)
 - (5) Firing Squad (if veteran)
 - (6) Taps
 - (7) Last Alarm 3 bells (line of duty death or death directly related to injuries suffered as a result of line of duty)
 - (8) Will a pumper be used to carry the coffin (Line of duty death only), or will a conventional hearse be used instead?
 - (9) Will a pumper or ladder truck be used as a flower car?
 - (10) Will personnel walk alongside the vehicle used to carry the coffin?
 - (11) Identify and determine any other special considerations on behalf of the family: special request, etc.
 - (12) Maintain 24-hour contact with family for their assistance and the same contact with the Survivor Action Officer.
- f. The Family Liaison Officer may assist and/or provide direction for the Family as they begin to deal with the following items:
 - (1) Autopsy reports, birth certificates, marriage certificates, beneficiary documents, VA or military records.
 - (2) All Fire Department benefit entitlement.

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C. Benevolent Representative

1. This person must work closely with the Family Liaison Officer in:
 - a. Notifying and coordinating all activity with organizations that should or could provide benefits to the deceased and family.
 - b. Coordination of activities with volunteers to assist the bereaved family (food, lodging, etc).
 - c. Assist the Family Liaison Officer with any immediate financial assistance that may be needed.

2. The Benevolent Representative should also be familiar with and obtain the necessary forms from organizations that must be completed by the bereaved family.
 - a. Credit Union
 - b. City Of Pembroke Pines:
 - c. Fire Fighter's Pension Fund
 - d. Pay Roll Check
 - e. Life Insurance Plan
 - f. Workers Compensation
 - g. Fire Fighter's Union Life Insurance Plan
 - h. State Of Florida Fire Fighter's Death Benefit Act (if applicable).

D. Procession Officer

1. The Procession Officer has the primary responsibility of coordinating the funeral procession from the funeral home to the church and then finally to the cemetery. The following duties fall within his responsibility:
 - a. Attend the coordination meeting and determine the following:
 - (1) Name of funeral home.
 - (2) Name of church.

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- (3) Name of cemetery.
- (4) Tentative time schedule.
- (5) Will procession involve walking?

- b. The Procession Officer should then develop a simple, systematic scheme for staging and coordinating vehicles at each location.

He should determine any special considerations the procession may involve by contacting the Family Liaison Officer. These include:

- (1) Will the procession drive past the deceased's home, fire station or other significant landmark?
- (2) Will a special line up of equipment be needed at any point in the procession?
- (3) Will crossed aerial equipment be used over the cemetery entrance for funeral units to proceed under?
- (4) Coordinate the vehicle staging at the church and cemetery with the appropriate key people.

- c. Upon completion of the above and any other details necessary for accomplishing the task, the Procession Officer may need to contact the local police department if the funeral home has not already made these arrangements.

- (1) Determine a route.
- (2) Determine appropriate traffic control.
- (3) Request local police department to coordinate efforts with other police departments along the procession route.
- (4) Develop maps indicating the route and any other specific instructions. These maps should be made available at the funeral home prior to the beginning of the service.

Note: The protocol for aligning the proper sequence of vehicles in a procession is basically as follows from first to last:

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- (a) Police escort
 - (b) Vehicle transporting the flowers
 - (c) Hearse/pumper caisson
 - (d) Immediate family limousines or cars
 - (e) Pall bearers and honor guard.
 - (f) Fire Chief's vehicle.
 - (g) Dept. Apparatus and visiting units
 - (h) Staff and Department vehicles.
 - (i) Municipal Officials and Administrators (Mayor, City Manager, Commissioners).
 - (j) Other municipal vehicles.

 - (k) Friends of family - private vehicles.
 - (l) Rear - Police or Fire vehicle (all lead and rear vehicles must be equipped with lights and sirens). Note: With extremely large funerals, it may be advisable to form the vehicles two abreast while moving.
- (5) Depending on the level of "Honors" provided, the Procession Officer has the responsibility of contacting other Fire Departments to determine the number of apparatus and vehicles that will be provided for the procession.
- (6) Once the above has been established, the Procession Officer must assure the following items are taken care of in relation to the Fire Department vehicles.
- (a) Apparatus cleaned and hose bed stripped if there is not a vehicle available without hose.
 - (b) Bunting placed on the apparatus to be used.
 - (c) Hose bed adapted to easily facilitate casket placement and removal (a casket mount system can be located Metro Dade Fire Rescue).

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E. Honor Guard Coordinator

1. Is primarily responsible for the coordination and preparation of the events when the procession vehicles are stopped and people exit the vehicles.
2. Is responsible for being the liaison with the cemetery staff.
3. Additional duties include:
 - a. That he attends the coordination meetings and determines from the Survivor Action Officer and Family Liaison Officer the following information:
 - (1) What type of interment will be used?
 - (a) Burial
 - (b) Crypt
 - (c) Cremation
 - (2) Does family wish to have:
 - (a) Taps Played
 - (b) Firing Squad (when appropriate)
 - (c) Last Alarm 3 Bells (line of duty death only)
 - b. Upon receiving the above information the Honor Guard Coordinator should be responsible for:
 - (1) Scheduling and coordinating the sequence of events with the Survivor Action Officer.
 - (2) The development of the formation of personnel and issuing of orders as appropriate and consistent with Military Standards (see section on Military Standards).

VI. Uniform and Dress

- A. Fire Fighters shall wear the dress uniform, which includes white long sleeve shirt and pants pressed, shoes shined and tie with gold or silver tie clip.

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Note: Off duty personnel are encouraged to wear the Department Dress Uniform out of respect for the family and the fallen Fire Fighter(s).

B. Pallbearers, Ushers and Honor Guard

1. Shall wear the Department dress uniform with shirt and pants pressed, shoes shined and belt buckles polished.
2. In addition, the above personnel will wear white gloves, hat and tie.

VII. Level of Honors Provided

A. Death "In the Line of Duty"

Any Department Fire Fighter who dies at the scene of a call or succumbs later to injuries that were sustained related to an alarm may receive the following honors:

1. One Engine - casket in the bed if requested
2. As many apparatus, rescue units, staff vehicles possible within the Department.
3. Invitation to other Departments to provide apparatus and equipment for the procession.
4. Drive by assigned station.
5. Bunker gear (helmet, coat and pants) placed in line up of personnel at assigned station.
6. Minimum of six Pallbearers (can be additional Honorary Members).
7. Minimum of five Honor Guard Members posted at 15 minute intervals, two at the casket, two at the door and one at the register.
8. Honor Guard Procession and Flag Folding Ceremony (Seven Honor Guard Members)

FIRE RESCUE

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9. Crossed Ladders
10. Fire Fighter's Last Alarm
11. Family will be presented with the American Flag and Medal of Valor from the Fire Chief or his designee.

B. Death "On Duty"

Any Department Fire Fighter who dies "On Duty" but not related to an alarm may receive the following Honors:

1. One Engine (casket located in hearse)
2. As many apparatus, rescue units, staff vehicles possible within the Department.
3. Invitation to other Departments to provide apparatus and equipment for the procession.
4. Minimum of six Pallbearers (can be additional Honorary Members).
5. Minimum of five Honor Guard Members posted at 15 minute intervals, two at the casket, two at the door and one at the register.
6. Honor Guard Procession and Flag Folding Ceremony (Seven Honor Guard Members)
7. Family will be presented with the American Flag by the Fire Chief or his designee.

C. Death "Off Duty"

Any Department Fire Fighter who dies "Off Duty" (from injuries not related to an alarm), may receive the following honors:

1. One Engine (casket located in hearse)

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2. As many apparatus, rescue units, staff vehicles possible within the Department.
3. Minimum of six Pallbearers (can be additional Honorary Members).
4. Minimum of five Honor Guard Members posted at 15 minute intervals, two at the casket, two at the door and one at the register.
5. Family will be presented with the American Flag by the Fire Chief or his designee.

D. Death of a "Retired Fire Fighter"

Any Fire Fighter who is retired from the Fire Department and whose funeral service will be held in either Dade, Monroe, Broward or Palm Beach County may receive the following Honors:

1. As many Department Staff Vehicles as Needed
2. Minimum of three Honor Guard Members posted at 15 minute intervals, two at the casket and one at the register.
3. Flag Folding Ceremony (Four Honor Guard Members)

If possible have 1 to 2 Honor Guard Members posted at the front door.

E. Death of a "Firefighter's immediate family member"

Any retired or active Firefighter's immediate family member from the Fire Department and whose funeral service will be held in either Dade, Monroe, Broward or Palm Beach County may receive the following Honors:

1. Honor Guard Members posted at the front door. (Time intervals depend on number of Honor Guard Members).

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F. Death of a Firefighter in the Tri-County area:

1. Send up to one spare apparatus or support unit depending on circumstances of death with Honor Guard Members on unit.