

Second Edition

# Funeral Procedures for Firefighters

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER FIRE COUNCIL



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# Introduction

Firefighting continues to be one of the nation's most hazardous professions. Approximately 100 firefighters die in the line-of-duty each year in the United States. It is only fitting, given the heroic efforts of fire service personnel that they be given the final respect they deserve.

Many volunteer fire departments do not have funeral procedures in place due to time restrictions. When a death occurs, departments are often unprepared to navigate the complexities of a fire service funeral. This manual not only addresses the funeral itself, but also other activities in connection with a firefighter fatality, e.g., investigation of the death, the state and federal fire agencies to notify, and how to navigate the process of collecting benefits.

This resource manual is intended as a guide, and while the basic procedures probably are acceptable for all types of firefighters, some ideas will

need to be altered or omitted depending on the department's particular situation and size. In addition, the member's ethnic or religious affiliation may dictate certain customs. It is important that the organizer of the funeral be sensitive to the particular situation and to the wishes of the family or household involved.

This manual is arranged in accordance with the sequence of a funeral's events and describes in detail the job responsibilities of each person assigned to handle particular aspects of the funeral. After a department reviews this manual and decides which tasks and assignments it wants to include in its own formal funeral procedures, it can adopt or adapt the relevant guidelines here as a checklist to follow in the event of a member's death.

The NVFC would like to thank the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation; The Federation of Fire Service Chaplains; and the Kentucky Firefighters Association for their assistance in the revision of this guide.



# Fire Department Funerals

## Circumstances that Entitle a Fire Department Funeral

There are six circumstances that generally entitle a fire department member or an individual affiliated with a department to receive a fire service funeral.

The circumstance categories are used by the department to decide whom it wishes to honor with a department funeral and the type of funeral appropriate. The six categories are:

### > Type 1 - Line-of-Duty Death

Any on-duty fire personnel who suffers a trauma or series of events that causes rapid deterioration from a healthy state to death.

### > Type 2 - Line-of-Duty Death

Any on-duty fire personnel who suffers a series of events causing a gradual deterioration from a healthy state to death.

### > Type 3 - Off-Duty Incident Death

Any off-duty incident involving a trauma or a series of events to fire personnel that causes a rapid or gradual deterioration from a healthy state to death.

The following categories are optional and should be decided by department policy:

### > Type 4 - Current or Past Member's Death

A member or honorary member of the department or volunteer association who is currently active or who has retired in good standing and suffers an event or series of events that results in his or her death.

### > Type 5 - Affiliate of the Department

An individual who has served in some capacity with the department, such as a Commissioner, Chief, Dispatcher, or other job function and does not meet any of the above criteria, but suffers an event or series of events that results in his or her death.



### > Type 6 - Non-Fire Fighting Individual Honored by the Department

A non-firefighting individual who through employment, volunteer association, professional or emotional ties suffers an event or series of events that results in his or her death. This may be applied to an individual the department or volunteer association wishes to pay a special tribute to for their contribution to the department and/or fire service. This may also be used when an immediate relative of a department member dies.

## Types of Funeral Services

Generally, there are four types of funeral services, as described below. These descriptions should serve as general guidelines only and may be adapted to fit each individual situation. It is most important to follow the family's wishes and give full respect to their expressed concerns.

### Formal Funeral Service

This type of service includes the use of apparatus, pallbearers, a color guard (optional), and a funeral detail composed of fire personnel in Class A uniforms. Other options include: badge shrouds, bagpipers, a bell service, a bugler, crossed ladders, a fire engine caisson, an honor guard, and station/vehicle bunting. This type of honor is usually reserved for a line-of-duty death. *(Circumstance Types 1 and 2)*

### Semi-Formal Service

This type of service includes the use of pallbearers, color guard (optional), and a funeral detail composed of fire personnel in Class A uniforms. Other options include: badge shrouds, a bell service, an honor guard, and station/vehicle bunting. This type of honor is usually reserved for an off-duty death of a current member or an affiliate. *(Circumstance Types 3, 4, and 5)*

### Non-Formal Service

This type of service includes the use of a funeral detail of fire personnel in Class A uniforms. Other options include: badge shrouds, a bell service, an honor guard, and station bunting. This type of honor is usually reserved for any non-firefighting personnel, a retired member or affiliate of the department or Volunteer Association or an immediate relative of a department member. Also included in this category would be an individual the department or volunteer association wishes to recognize for their contributions. *(Circumstance Type 6)*

### Private Service

This is a service closed to any outside participation with the exception of the immediate family. Usually this type of service is at the request of the family.



## Preparations

Being prepared for a funeral in the event of a death of a member or affiliate of the department can provide the members of the department as well as the surviving family members with emotional support by making it possible to smoothly and successfully handle the numerous details that will arise. In addition to having selected an overall procedure for funerals (such as described here), the following are suggested as preparations that can be made at any time and are recommended by the departments who use them.

### Personal Information Sheets

It is suggested that each member of the department complete a preplan or personal information sheet for use in case of death. This is an inventory of information designed to organize the member's personal affairs. See Appendix A. Annual updates are encouraged. This information will help the surviving family and the department to be aware of the individual's desires and the location of important documents. Each member should keep this information in a semi-private place where it is readily available and notify loved ones that it exists and where it will be kept. A sealed copy should be kept in the member's fire department personnel file, to be opened only in the event of death. Members should also be encouraged to have an updated living will prepared by a competent attorney. See Appendix H.

### Photographs

The department should maintain a current set of photographs of its members for media use. The release of the photos will be at the expressed desire of the surviving family.

### Resumes

A current resume should be maintained describing educational background, work experience, professional affiliations, and awards received. This can be kept in your department personnel file and will be helpful in the event of death to write an obituary, eulogy, or aid in the selection of readings.

### Department Identification Cards

These cards should be provided to all members of the department as a means of identification.



### Employee Benefits

Every department should be familiar with items that need to be closed out in the event of a death. The surviving spouse may look to the department for assistance with these matters. Some of these items are: 1) autopsy report; 2) final paycheck; 3) outstanding debts; 4) insurance policies; 5) Social Security (survivor's benefits); 6) special benefits (vacation pay, holiday/personal days' pay); 7) Association benefits; 8) Federal death benefits (Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB); see Appendix B); and 9) continuation of medical coverage for the surviving spouse and dependents.

### Uniform for Burial

Many departments will provide a uniform for burial. Whether a person wishes to be buried in uniform should be clearly expressed in the personal information sheet or by the surviving family. See Appendix H.

### Inventory of Necessary Equipment for Funeral

The following is a list of supplies that may be needed during a funeral service and/or mourning period. These may be kept on hand in the fire department stockroom:

- > Color guard standards.
- > Flag for casket (Some states have passed a Firefighters' Memorial Flag Act to honor firefighters who have died in the line-of-duty and have issued a directive prescribing standards and requirements for the use, display, distribution, and return of the Firefighters' Memorial Flag. Consult your state firefighter's association or local officials to see if this applies in your jurisdiction).
- > Black 3/4" plastic tape or elastic bands; and round-tipped scissors.
- > Black bunting.
- > White gloves.
- > Signs that read "Fire Department Courtesy Car" (approximately 6 should be inventoried).
- > Black ascots (local option).
- > Black berets (local option).

The above supplies may be obtained from the following sources:

- > Flags: City Hall, or identify closest supplier.
- > Color Guards: American Legion or VFW.
- > Additional white gloves: Army and Navy Store or identify closest supplier.
- > Additional vehicles: City, borough, township, police department, car dealers, members of the department.
- > Signs: Identify a local printer.
- > Black bunting: Identify a local supplier.

If a band is desired, it may be obtained from a school or other local group.

### Funeral Directors

Local Funeral Directors play a major role in the funeral-planning process. They should be made aware of the existence of any established departmental funeral policies or traditional guidelines. It is important for departments to remember their job is to assist the funeral director, not assume their role.

### Florists

Florists should be informed of special arrangements they may be called upon to develop for a firefighter funeral. Some suggestions are:

- > Maltese cross.
- > Member department's logo/patch.
- > Broken rung ladder.
- > Crossed pike pole and axe.
- > Helmet.

### National Fallen Firefighters Foundation's Local Assistance State Team

If a line-of-duty death occurs in your department the National Fallen Firefighter Foundation's Local Assistance State Team (LAST) can provide support and assistance. The Team can provide assistance in the following areas:

- > Expertise regarding the Public Safety Officers' Benefits program.



- > Honor Guard and Ceremonial Support.
- > Chaplain services.
- > Support from a fire service survivor.
- > Provide a behavioral specialist for the department and the family.
- > Offer information and access to various Federal, State, and local benefits.

Visit [www.firehero.org](http://www.firehero.org) for more information or call 1-866-736-5868 if assistance is needed.

## Job Responsibilities

The following describes the roles of the various job assignments involved in carrying out the funeral procedures: the Survivor Action Officer, the Family Liaison Officer, the Funeral Officer, the Funeral Detail, the Procession Officer, the Service Officer, the Cemetery Officer, and the Transportation Officer. If the department is small or is playing a lesser role in the family's funeral plans, one department member may take on the responsibilities of more than one of these positions.

### Chaplain

All departments are encouraged to have an active Chaplain program. The amount of involvement the Chaplain has will depend upon the family's wishes and/or religion. One option that can be proposed is a shared responsibility between the clergy of the family's choice and the department Chaplain. Here again, the family's wishes prevail.

Areas handled by the Chaplain will be:

- > Initial notification of next of kin, with the Chief or his/her designee.
- > Comfort and counseling of surviving family members.
- > Prayer service in the home.
- > Church services.
- > Cemetery interment.
- > Follow-up counseling for the surviving family members.

### Survivor Action Officer

It is recommended that the Chief assume or delegate the position of the Survivor Action Officer to oversee liaison to the next of kin and all funeral-related activities. Typically, the Survivor Action Officer is a special staff assignment. As a direct representative of the Fire Chief, the Survivor Action Officer should receive the full cooperation of the entire department.

The Survivor Action Officer coordinates the activities of a number of personnel assigned to handle specific aspects of the funeral arrangements and to assist the surviving family. His/her principal concern is the ongoing welfare of the next of kin. It is his/her responsibility to ensure whatever assistance is necessary is provided

to support the family throughout the crisis, conduct the funeral, and help settle the affairs of the deceased member.

Additional duties of the Survivor Action Officer are as follows:

- > Confirm that the next of kin has been notified by the Chief or Chaplain.
- > Notify all department personnel of the death.
- > Confirm the notification of all outside agencies and vacationing personnel.
- > Arrange to have flags lowered to half mast and bunting placed on station(s) as appropriate.
- > Ensure that the Emergency Command Center has been notified.
- > Follow up with contacts when funeral arrangements have been determined.
- > Personally collect all of the deceased's personal items from the station and deliver in person to the Family Liaison Officer.
- > Conduct a coordination meeting with the "task force" of officers as soon as possible to ensure all roles are being filled and all needs are being met.
- > Be a key contact person for outside agencies, news media and other departments in relation to the death and subsequent ceremony. Note: the Public Information Officer (PIO) might play this role instead of or in addition to the Survivor Action Officer.
- > Make appropriate arrangements for a post funeral meal and facility to handle a large group of people with the family's approval through the Liaison Officer.
- > Call a final meeting of the "task force" to establish the department's participation in the funeral services based upon the family's wishes.
- > Establish a timetable or schedule of events.
- > Identify times and places for group gatherings in accordance with ceremonies.
- > Contact all appropriate people and agencies with the schedule, meeting places, and any special instructions.



- > Contact support agencies as appropriate to arrange their assistance through the appropriate key person for bands, honor guards, firing squads, bugler.
- > Contact appropriate department personnel to arrange for finalization of required paperwork, forms, etc.
- > Obtain copies of the death certificate and provide to the department's human resources division.
- > Contact outside agencies for support during the funeral.
- > Establish milestones for future family follow up by the Family Liaison Officer, such as recognizing the anniversary of death each year, etc.

### Family Liaison Officer

The Family Liaison Officer reports directly to the Survivor Action Officer and is responsible for maintaining a communication link between the family and the department. The Family Liaison Officer provides the logistical support to the family throughout the funeral process and should have a department vehicle assigned to him/her throughout the process. The duties are as follows:

- > Along with the Chaplain, provide reassurance and support to the family after the official death notification.
- > Discuss all aspects of the funeral process and its ceremonies with the family and the Funeral Director. The Family Liaison Officer must be able to relay information to the department as to what level of involvement the department will have in the funeral process in accordance with the family's wishes.
- > Inform the family as to the various traditional fire service funeral options that can be included in a service. This is accomplished with the cooperation of the Funeral Director. These might include readings, music, honor guards, apparatus displays, and military formations. All of the requests made by the surviving family must be relayed to the Survivor Action Officer for delegation to the "task force" of officers.

The Family Liaison Officer may assist the family in determining:

- > Type of interment.
- > Which funeral home will be used.
- > Which church/large assembly area will be used.

- > Which clergy will be used, including the department chaplain.
- > Which cemetery will be used.
- > If the deceased will be buried in uniform.
- > Number of primary pallbearers and whether honorary pallbearers will be used.
- > The length of the wake (if any) and a tentative schedule.
- > The length of church service, as well as:
  - Readers of the Scripture.
  - What Scripture will be read.
  - Music at the church.
  - Who will deliver the sermon, eulogy, etc.
  - If there will be a last alarm bell service.
- > Graveside ceremony options include:
  - Presentation of the flag.
  - Firing squad.
  - Readings and who will perform them (see Appendix D for sample readings).
  - Eulogy and who will deliver it (see Appendix E for guidelines on preparing a eulogy).
  - Taps.
- > Items to Consider for the Procession:
  - Will a pumper be used as a caisson or will a conventional hearse be used instead? In some departments the engine from the deceased member's most recent duty station is taken out of service and used as the hearse, with minor modifications made to accommodate the casket.
  - Will a pumper or ladder truck be used as a flower car?
  - Will personnel walk alongside the caisson or drive in the procession?

The Family Liaison Officer also should:

- > Obtain all articles of clothing that the deceased will wear (except shoes) and deliver them to the Funeral Director/officer.
- > Identify and determine any other special considerations on behalf of the family and the special requests per the individual's personal information sheet.

- > Maintain 24 hour contact with the family for their assistance and the same contact with the Survivor Action Officer.
- > Obtain a recent photograph of the deceased for the Funeral Director.

The Family Liaison Officer may also be asked to address the following items by the family and the Survivor Action Officer:

- > Autopsy reports, birth certificates, marriage certificates, death certificates (Workers' Compensation) veteran or military records.
- > Check the individual's retirement plan - survivor benefits.
- > Veteran widow and children benefits and burial benefits.
- > Social Security - survivor benefits.
- > Insurance policies:
  - Continue medical plan for the family.
  - Life insurance
  - AD&D Insurance
  - Optional insurance
  - Widows and orphans funds
- > W-2 form.
- > Final paycheck, including sick leave and vacation time.
- > Income tax report.
- > Outstanding loans.
- > Transfer of ownership of property and vehicles to survivors.
- > Review all outstanding bills. Include the last medical and funeral expenses. Determine what is covered by insurance.
- > Advise survivors not to loan money.
- > Investigate possibility of college scholarships for dependents.
- > Mortgage insurance.
- > Workers' compensation.
- > Public Safety Officers Benefits (PSOB).

### Funeral Officer

The Funeral Officer's duties include the primary responsibility of ensuring that the wishes of the family and the special requests of the individual are coordinated with the Funeral Director and Chaplain. He/she provides coordination and interaction with the Funeral Director and the church and the cemetery, and arranges and directs the funeral procession. The Funeral Officer reports directly to the Survivor Action Officer and keeps him well informed during the planning process.

Duties include the following:

- > Establish a tentative schedule of events and the length of time for the mourning and burial process.
- > Determine which fire department vehicles will be used as caissons or flower vehicles.
- > Make arrangements for the surviving family to get from the funeral home to the cemetery.
- > Establish an honor guard schedule for the viewing at the funeral home.
- > Arrange for honorary and active pallbearers. Secure the bugler, color guard(s), band, and firing squad.
- > Obtain an American flag. (The Funeral Director secures a flag for veterans only).
- > Coordinate a formal walk-through of uniformed personnel during the viewing, with the agencies and Funeral Director, if desired. This includes seating arrangements.
- > Coordinate any prayer services to be conducted at the funeral home.
- > Develop a schedule and a brief set of instructions for uniformed personnel the day of the funeral. Be sure to coordinate with the funeral home. This includes:
  - Arrival time of uniformed personnel with specific instructions as to where to gather
  - Briefing and development of formations that will be used when the casket is removed
  - Briefing of proper protocols for entering and leaving the funeral home (see Appendix C for Military Standards)
  - Arrange with the department's photographer to record the entire funeral
  - Arrange with the PIO to establish guidelines for TV and press:

- At the church inside and/or outside
  - Funeral home inside and/or outside
  - Cemetery - general photo coverage and/or coverage of the immediate grave
- > Coordinate the vehicle staging with the Procession Officer and include the vehicle assignments for the department.
  - > Obtain white gloves for the pallbearers and black bunting for the station(s) and apparatus.

### Honor Guard

- > At least four honor guards are required.
- > One member of the honor guard shall be designated as the Officer of the Guard. He or she shall be responsible for obtaining the necessary equipment and scheduling of the honor guard members.
- > Two honor guards, one for the head and one for the foot of the casket, shall be scheduled for 15 minute shifts.
- > Honor guard uniforms shall be dress uniform or dark suits, white gloves and black 3/4" tape on official badges.
- > Honor guards shall stand at attention at their assigned positions for the duration of the 15 minute shift.
- > Honor guards may be used during viewing and prior to the service as custom dictates.

### Honorary Pallbearers

- > Personnel designated as honorary pallbearers, usually retirees or members of the deceased's company, shall at all times move ahead of the casket as it is moved.
- > The honorary pallbearers shall sit together in a designated area in the church during the service.
- > Dress for honorary pallbearers:
  - Retirees will normally wear civilian clothes.
  - Active members shall be in dress uniform.

### Active Pallbearers

- > The active pallbearer detail shall consist of six pallbearers plus an officer.
- > The officer of the detail shall contact the Funeral Officer for details.

- > The pallbearers will remain covered at all times while acting in that capacity and will wear white gloves.
- > The pallbearers will not salute while acting in this capacity.
- > The flag shall be placed over the casket with the blue field at the head over the deceased's left shoulder.
- > If the casket arrives at the church from the funeral home, then the active pallbearer detail shall position themselves to receive the casket in front of the church.
- > During the service the pallbearers will sit together in a designated area in the church with the funeral detail.
- > At the cemetery, after placing the casket over the grave site and upon the officer's command, the detail shall raise the flag to waist high over the casket and hold it there during the committal service. After the committal service is read, Taps may be sounded. The flag is then folded upon the officer's command in the prescribed military manner (see Appendix C) and presented to the widow (and mother) by the officer of the detail.
- > The detail, on orders of the officer, shall take a place with the funeral detail.
- > During the graveside service, where the flag is not draped over the casket, the pallbearers, after placing the casket over the grave site, on orders of the officer shall step back with the funeral detail and follow the procedures for the funeral detail.

### Funeral Detail

All members of the department not otherwise detailed will act as the funeral detail, in dress uniform, no gloves required.

- > The funeral detail will arrive as a group from the staging area prior to the arrival of the funeral coach at the church and take a position in front of the church on the right hand side as indicated in the diagrams in Appendix F, Funeral Formations.
- > For formal and semi-formal funerals the funeral detail will take a position in front of the church in two facing ranks with senior officers closest to the church.
- > As the active pallbearers move the casket from the coach the funeral detail will be called to attention by the Officer-In-Charge (OIC). If the casket is draped with the flag the OIC will order a hand salute as the casket passes. The command shall be "Present Arms!"

- The command to end the salute shall be “Order Arms!”
- > After the casket passes the OIC will order “at ease” and the funeral detail will file into the church according to rank and sit in a designated area of the church. Head covering is removed upon entering the church.
  - > After the service the funeral detail, on order of the OIC will file out of the church and in the case of a formal funeral take a position on the right of the entry as indicated in the diagram.
  - > If the services are semi-formal, the funeral detail will form facing ranks on both sides of the entry with senior officers closest to the hearse.
  - > As the flag-draped casket is brought out of the church, the detail is brought to attention and a hand salute is executed on order of the OIC.
  - > The funeral detail rides as a group in designated cars to the cemetery and also between the funeral home and the church.
  - > The funeral detail at the cemetery again forms two ranks according to rank from the location of the hearse to the grave site, with officers closest to the grave.
  - > As the flag-draped casket is removed from the hearse by the active pallbearers, the funeral detail executes a hand salute on order of the OIC, “Present Arms.” If the casket is not covered by the flag they stand at attention.
  - > After the casket is placed over the grave the funeral detail forms rank in front of the grave, highest rank on the right.
  - > If Taps is sounded, uniformed members should execute hand salute on order of the OIC.
  - > During religious graveside services all personnel will bow their heads at the words, “Let us pray.”
  - > All personnel except the active pallbearers while holding the flag will follow the example of the officiating clergy. If he/she uncovers they will uncover. If he remains covered, they will remain covered.

### Procession Officer

The Procession Officer has the primary responsibility of coordinating the transportation arrangements and funeral procession from the funeral home to the church

and then finally to the cemetery. The following duties fall within his/her responsibility:

- Attend the coordination meeting and determine the following:
- > Names and locations of the funeral home, church, and cemetery.
  - > Decide if a pumper or other fire department vehicle will be used as a caisson.
  - > Develop tentative time schedule of events.
  - > Decide if the procession will involve walking personnel such as an honor guard, band, and/or pallbearers.
  - > Establish a simple systematic scheme for staging and coordinating vehicles in each location. The scheme should include areas large enough to accommodate large numbers of emergency vehicles. The staging areas should be within a block or two of the funeral home or church preferably at a fire station, school, or park where ample parking and assembly areas are available. This group can then “march” as a unit to the church or funeral home to act as a Funeral Detail.
  - > Obtain sufficient rolls of black plastic tape along with small round-tipped scissors that can be carried in a pocket and made available in the assembly areas for all uniformed personnel to place a horizontal black band over their badges.
  - > Determine any special considerations the procession may need to consider by contacting the Family Liaison Officer. These include:
    - Will the procession drive past the deceased’s home, fire station, or other locations?
    - Will a special line-up of equipment be needed at any point in the procession for purposes of showing respect?
    - Will crossed aerial equipment be used over the cemetery entrance for the procession to drive under? If so, the request for the equipment should be forwarded to the Survivor Action Officer. The actual coordination of the aerals is done by the Procession Officer.
    - Coordinate the vehicle staging at the church and cemetery with the “task force.”
  - > Upon completion of the above tasks, make contact with the appropriate agency (Sheriff’s office, police

department, etc.) to determine a route and appropriate traffic control.

- > Create maps that indicate the route and any other specific instructions to be distributed at the briefing prior to the funeral service. The maps should include locations of: the fire department(s); the funeral home; the church; the Chief Officer and dignitary assembly area; firefighter's assembly area; auxiliary parking areas; motels for out-of-town guests (including phone numbers); vehicles for the funeral procession; the cemetery and grave; and food service areas. It should also map out the route of the funeral procession. On this map or on a separate sheet include a copy of a diagram showing the proper arrangement and movement of personnel to the various sites. Sufficient quantities of the map should be reproduced for anticipated guests.

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

- > Lead car (Sheriff's patrol car, police department car, etc.).
- > Flower caisson or car.
- > Hearse or pumper.
- > Immediate family limousines or cars.
- > Pallbearers and honor guard in cars.
- > Fire Chief's car.
- > Other department vehicles.
- > Sheriff's office, police department (or other appropriate agency) detail.
- > Local government officials in cars.
- > Neighboring and visiting staff vehicles.
- > Neighboring and visiting apparatus.
- > Other municipal vehicles.
- > Friends of the family private vehicles.
- > Rear car (Sheriff's patrol car, police department car, etc.).

With extremely large funerals, line up the vehicles two across.

If appropriate, contact the Survivor Action Officer to determine which apparatus will be used as a caisson

and/or flower vehicle(s). Once this has been determined the Procession Officer must assure the following items are taken care of:

- > Apparatus are thoroughly cleaned and hose beds stripped.
- > Bunting placed on the appropriate apparatus.
- > The hose bed adapted to allow for the placement and removal of the casket.

### Service Officer

The Service Officer has the primary responsibility of coordinating all of the activities and ceremonies at the church if a religious funeral has been requested by the family. Additional duties include:

- > Attending the coordinating meeting and determining the following from the Survivor Action Officer and the Family Liaison Officer:
  - Tentative scheduling
  - Location of the church
  - Clergy to be used, including the Chaplain(s)
  - Scripture to be read and readers
  - Type and length of the service
  - What ceremonial items are being requested by the family (e.g., last alarm bell service – see Appendix D)
  - Musical arrangements to be used (such as bag pipes or Amazing Grace)
  - Special musical arrangements
  - Who will deliver the eulogy
  - Contacting the Procession Officer and coordinating the vehicle staging for the procession
- > Making seating arrangements for those attending the church service. Dedicated seating should be provided for the following:
  - Family
  - Pallbearers
  - Honor guard
  - Uniformed personnel
- > Considering formations and coordinating the same during the arrival and removal of the casket from the church. Reviewing military commands for the formations and issuing them where appropriate. See Appendix F for Funeral Formations.

- > Ensuring that specifically assigned medical personnel be provided at the cemetery for the family should they require immediate medical assistance.
- > Upon dismissal of the formation, giving instructions as to the location of the post-funeral meal (determined by the Survivor Action Officer and Family Liaison Officer).

### Cemetery Officer

The Cemetery Officer is primarily responsible for the coordination and preparation of the events from the time the procession vehicles are stopped at the cemetery and the people exit their vehicles. He or she is also the liaison to the cemetery staff. Additional duties include the following:

Attending the coordination meetings and determining from the Survivor Action Officer and Family Liaison Office the following information:

- > What type of interment will be used:
  - Burial
  - Crypt
  - Cremation
- > If the family wishes to have:
  - Taps played
  - Firing squad
  - Scripture read and who will read it
  - A band

Upon receipt of this information, the Cemetery Officer should be responsible for the following:

- > Scheduling and coordinating the sequence of events for the family. This includes coordinating the requests for special items.
- > Ensuring that the pallbearers are familiar with and understand the process of folding and presenting the flag(s) to the widow (and mother if present).
- > Managing the formation of personnel (see Appendix F) and issuing of orders as appropriate and consistent with the Military Standards (see Appendix C).
- > Ensuring that the cemetery takes care of all the necessary items such as:
  - Overhead protection for the immediate family at the burial site

- A public address system if one is required

### Transportation Officer

The Transportation Officer will be responsible for arranging the transportation of all visiting out-of-town guests to and from the airports and funeral service. This includes but is not limited to the following:

- > Airports.
- > Hotels, motels.
- > Funeral services.
- > Cemetery.
- > Food service areas.

*Note: Where there are insufficient fire department cars, consider the use of other municipal cars, surplus sheriff patrol cars, and private vehicles. Provide signs for these vehicles approximately 18 inches long by 6 inches high to read "Fire Department Courtesy Car."*

Also included in the Transportation Officer's duties is arranging for housing as necessary for any overnight guests. This will include arrangements for transportation to the food service areas for visiting chief officers, dignitaries, and firefighters.

If the funeral will be attended by several dignitaries, it is suggested that a member of the department be appointed to specifically handle their arrangements. Responsibilities of a dignitary coordinator may include, but is not limited to:

- > Contacting the staff point of contact for each dignitary to be aware of any special arrangements or requests and provide them with a detailed summary of events.
- > Arranging transportation for dignitaries, if needed.
- > Designing a seating plan.
- > Consult with the family to decide if dignitaries will participate in the service.
- > Designing a plan for the procession if dignitaries will be included.
- > Arrange a private meeting between dignitaries and the family where private condolences can be expressed. Be sure to have the family's permission before setting up a meeting.

## Initial Actions

Any of a wide variety of scenarios can directly or indirectly cause the death of a firefighter. The death may occur at a variety of locations and a variety of times. The department may have to react to one of the following situations:

- > Death at the scene.
- > Dead on arrival at the hospital.
- > Alive upon arrival at the hospital, but expires later.
- > Injuries or distress not detected at the scene and the individual dies later.

In all cases, a series of steps must be taken to ensure that the cause of death is accurately reported and investigated. These need to be implemented by the on-scene Incident Commander as soon as possible. The immediate steps include the following:

- > Secure the scene if necessary.
- > DO NOT make statements to the media about the individual's name or personal information until the next of kin has been notified.
- > Notify the following individuals by telephone, to insure confidentiality:
  - Chief and Chaplain(s)
  - Direct supervisor (if applicable)
  - Investigation team (Department investigator, law enforcement officer, safety officer)
  - Department photographer

*NOTE: All radio traffic relating to the incident should be kept to a minimum. This will help to insure that the next of kin is not notified by an unofficial source, but rather by the Chief or his designee and the department's Chaplain.*

- > Activate an investigation team.
- > Appoint a liaison to the hospital (if appropriate).
- > Assign the ranking officer available and the department's Chaplain to obtain the individual's Personal Information Sheet, review it, and follow any specific directions in notifying the next of kin.
- > Assign the PIO to obtain from the investigative team the information needed to draft a preliminary news release concerning the incident. Remind the PIO to have the information approved by the Incident Com-



mander and ensure that the notification of next of kin has occurred before releasing any information about the victim to the news media.

- > Activate a Critical Incident Stress Debriefing Team, if appropriate. The death of a firefighter is psychologically traumatic for the members of the department. Reaction to such emotional stress can affect each individual differently. It has been demonstrated that psychological counseling shortly after a traumatic incident can be extremely beneficial. The debriefing is primarily an educational session, emphasizing that unusual dreams or emotions are probably normal reactions to abnormal situations.
- > Initiate any appropriate measures necessary to activate all Federal (PSOB), State (Workmen's Compensation), and departmental (insurance) death benefit payments. Additionally, membership organizations

that offer benefits in the event of injury or death should be contacted to file a claim. For example, members of the National Volunteer Fire Council are eligible to receive a \$10,000 Accidental Death or Dismemberment policy.

### **Additional Areas of Departmental Support (Optional)**

- > Provide the family transportation to the hospital.
- > Assign an officer to serve as the communication link between the department and the family. It is the responsibility of this Family Liaison Officer to communicate the family's wishes to the department concerning the department's level of involvement in the funeral service. An immediate issue is whether the family wants to interact with the media and what they want said to the press. The department should defer to the family's wishes regarding personal information about the deceased as much as possible and provide support as needed.
- > Assign an officer to serve as the coordinator for the implementation of the department's involvement in the funeral service. It is the responsibility of the Funeral Officer to manage the logistics of the funeral service with the cooperation of the funeral home director.

### **Initial Roles of Personnel**

#### **Hospital Liaison**

One person should be appointed as a Hospital Liaison, who reports directly to the hospital and acts as liaison between the hospital and incident commander via telephone. This person should accept the following responsibilities:

- > If death occurs, request that blood gases be drawn as soon as possible.
- > Ensure that no sensitive information is released to the news media.
- > Collect all personal articles if family is not yet present at the hospital.
- > Keep incident commander apprised of the condition of the individual if an injury has occurred.

#### **Public Information Officer**

The Public Information Officer (PIO) obtains from the investigative team the information necessary to docu-

ment the facts of the incident and begin a preliminary news release concerning the incident. Under no circumstances should the PIO release any information about the individual until the next of kin has been notified and until the information has been approved by the Incident Commander. The PIO role carries with it the following responsibilities:

- > Gather all facts pertaining to the incident.
- > Gather background information pertaining to the firefighter.
- > Prepare a brief statement.
- > Wait for approval and notification of next of kin before releasing any information to the news media.

The roles of both the Hospital Liaison and Public Information Officer should be maintained until instructions are received from the Incident Commander or the Chief. The activation of department support will be contingent upon the specific situation and expressed desires of the family. The department should provide support to accomplish the goals of the funeral service and to the surviving family members without assuming financial responsibility for the funeral service.

### **Procedures for Notification**

Prompt notification of the next of kin cannot be stressed enough in the case of a line-of-duty death. No one wants to hear of the death of a loved one over a television or radio broadcast.

Departments should appoint a Notification Officer. Normally the Chief or his designee fulfills this role and is accompanied by the Chaplain when making a death notification. Notification by some other form of communication other than in person, say by telephone, is acceptable only in exceptional cases. Extreme emotional trauma is not uncommon when one is notified of the death of a loved one, and care should be taken to ensure that the next of kin are not alone at this time.

The official notification serves a three-fold purpose: assures the next of kin that the information is valid; provides a knowledgeable source of information concerning the death; and assures the next of kin that assistance is available at a time when they need it most. The Notification Officer and Chaplain should be prepared to stay with the next of kin until a family member

or friend arrives. As soon as is appropriate, they should determine if the family has a particular person, preferably a close family friend and department member, to act as Family Liaison Officer.

Prior to visiting the survivors, the Notification Officer should be familiar with the circumstances of the death and the personal data concerning the individual. Be sure the Notification Officer has official fire department identification in his/her possession. Also be absolutely certain of the status of the firefighter, check and double check with the hospital, and insist on an official pronouncement of death before proceeding. Clear the release of information with the incident commander to be certain the information is correct.

If the next of kin arrives on the scene, it is a good idea to provide them with some type of identification, such as an armband or something similar. Tell them that this is to assist the department in locating them if they are needed. This also is to alert emergency personnel to be careful of making comments when the next of kin are nearby.

After notification of the next of kin, the Public Information Officer, Emergency Command Center, and the deceased's religious groups will need to be notified.

The Chief will give instructions to dispatch the death announcement. Usually, station flags are lowered to half staff, and the front of the station is draped in black bunting for seven days after the funeral. A news conference should be arranged to ensure that the media obtain the most factual information.

In addition to the above, others need to be notified:

- > State Fire Marshal's Office.
- > State Worker's Compensation Board (within 48 hours).
- > Department's Worker's Compensation Board.
- > National Fire Academy/U. S. Fire Administration.
- > State Fire Incident Reporting System.
- > Federal Public Safety Officers' Benefit Program (PSOB).



## Description of Funeral Options

The families of the deceased or the deceased's own personal information sheet should help to make the decision about how simple or elaborate the funeral will be. The department may offer certain options for the family to consider, but ultimately, it is the family who makes the final decisions. The options to consider include the following:

### Honor Guards

If an honor guard is requested by the family, it becomes the responsibility of the funeral director and the department to assure that the request is honored. Ideally, a list of honor guards or members comprising an honor guard will be available. Typically, the honor guards are to report in their dress uniforms and outfitted in white gloves. If two honor guards are used (a fire department and military honor guards), they are to be placed at the head and foot of the casket. Four honor guard members should be present during viewing hours to periodically relieve the members standing guard at the casket.

### Pallbearers

If the family chooses to use fire department personnel as pallbearers, it must be determined which firefighters the family would like to have in the service; usually six to eight are needed. They wear dress uniforms and white gloves; berets are optional.

The pallbearers are exempt from following the majority of orders given to the remainder of the formation because of the specific responsibility they are assigned. The instructions to the pallbearers on the removal, handling, and transporting of the casket should be given by the Funeral Director.

Sometimes, at the discretion of the member's fire department, a piece of fire apparatus is used as a caisson to carry the casket. In this case, the pallbearers would be assigned to drive and ride on the apparatus from the beginning to the end of the funeral procession.

A practice session before the funeral is recommended if possible.

Traditionally, the casket is draped with an American flag for veterans and all uniformed personnel, but this is



optional. If this is done, three of the pallbearers need to remove, fold, and present the flag(s) to the widow and mother (if present) at the cemetery. Two pallbearers are assigned to fold the flag by military standards and present it to the third pallbearer who, in turn, presents it to the next of kin. At the time of the funeral, it must be determined who will accept the expense of the flag, the department or the family. See Appendix C, Military Standards and Flag Folding Procedures for instructions on folding the flag.

### Transportation

A department vehicle and driver may be offered to the immediate next of kin during the viewing and funeral period. This is entirely at the discretion of the department.

### Meals

With the amount of arrangements that have to be dealt with and the emotional distress that accompanies a death, meals are often a bother for the deceased's family. Traditionally, family and friends provide food, or unions or associations may be able to provide for these needs, including preparation, delivery and financial support. Should these arrangements be needed, the Chief should appoint someone to coordinate these efforts.

### Child Care

If child care presents a problem for the family during the viewing and funeral period, this need should be identified and assistance provided.

### Procession

The family may indicate the desire for a procession from the funeral home and/or church to the cemetery. The procession process starts with the staging of vehicles at the funeral home prior to the funeral beginning and ends upon arrival at the cemetery. Specifics usually are under the direction of the Funeral Director with the cooperation of the Procession Officer, the Church Officer, and the Cemetery Officer. Among the options to consider:

- > Use of department vehicle(s) as caisson, flower car, and/or miscellaneous transportation
- > Procession route, which may include a drive or walk by the deceased's fire station or home, or other special considerations
- > Providing a static display of apparatus if requested and appropriate on the procession route
- > Providing crossed ladders or aerial equipment if requested and appropriate at the cemetery entrance

A pumper may be appropriate as a caisson to carry the casket. Should this option be exercised, the apparatus will have to be taken out of service for a period of time, cleaned, draped in bunting, and retrofitted or adapted to easily accept the casket.

### Flower Apparatus

A piece of fire apparatus can serve as a flower vehicle in the procession. It will have to be taken out of service, cleaned, draped in bunting, and retrofitted to carry flowers.

### Last Alarm Service

A traditional bell ringing ceremony at the end of the church service may be exercised, signifying the firefighter's last alarm. A short reading accompanies the ringing of the bell. See Appendix D.

### Musical Arrangements

Here again, the family selects the musical arrangements for the service and cemetery, to include choirs, bands, bagpipes, singers, organ arrangement, etc. These are coordinated through the Family Liaison Officer.

### Readings

The family should decide the appropriate Scripture readings or verses and who will read them. Arrangements are made with the family's church and clergy for both the church and cemetery services. See Appendix D for sample readings.

### Eulogy

Typically, the family decides what, when, and where the eulogy will be presented. This may be appropriate at any one of the steps in the entire ceremony, at the funeral home, the church, or the cemetery. A clergy member, family member, or friend from the department may perform this task. The Family Liaison Officer makes the appropriate contacts with the church and cemetery representatives, as well as the Funeral Director, to coordinate the delivery of the eulogy on behalf of the family if desired. See Appendix E for guidelines on preparing a eulogy.

### Crossed Aerial Ladders

Should the family wish to have crossed aerial ladders at the cemetery entrance, the Family Liaison Officer should forward this request to the Survivor Action Officer for coordination and approval. The implementation of this request is handled by the Procession Officer.

**Static Equipment Display of Outside Equipment**

The family may choose to exercise a static display of department apparatus with fire personnel at attention and saluting the passing casket, during the procession. This final tribute may be set up anywhere; however, it is usually at the church, fire station on the procession route, or at the cemetery entrance. The Procession Officer is responsible for handling the placement of all vehicles during the procession.

**Burial in Uniform**

The department usually provides the uniform should the family wish to bury the deceased this way. The Family Liaison Officer will deliver the clothing to the Funeral Director upon request. See Appendix H.

**Closed Casket**

If the family wishes for a closed casket, a picture of the deceased in uniform and the deceased's clean helmet may be placed on top of the casket or displayed on a small table near the casket during the viewing. These can later be presented to the family.

**Walk Through**

A scheduled walk-through paying tribute to the deceased may be exercised either at the church or the funeral home as a form of paying tribute from fellow firefighters. This should be coordinated with the Funeral Director and the Funeral Officer. If this is done, the fire personnel line up single file by rank and agency. The formation then files through single file past the casket, stopping briefly to pay respects. The contingent then exits the chapel or funeral home.

**Refreshments or Post Services Reception**

Should the family approve, an after-services reception may be held at a church hall, school cafeteria, or fire station. The Survivor Action Officer should coordinate the event, calling upon affiliated agencies to assist in donating food for the service.

**Bunting**

Station and apparatus bunting should be available for a department to use on short notice. It may be appropriate to purchase it on a regional basis. The front of the station will be draped with black bunting until seven days after the funeral. Should fire trucks be used for caissons or flower carts, they too should be bunted.

**Half Staff Flag Protocol**

The affected department can lower its American flag to half mast from the time of notification that a department member has passed away until 1700 hours the day of the funeral and interment. When a flag is at half mast, no other flags should be flown on the same halyard.

The Chief of the affected department can petition the local government to lower their flag(s).

**Badge Shrouding**

Shrouding of a badge is accomplished by placing a 1/2" to 3/4" piece of black material horizontally at the badge's midpoint entirely around the badge. The shroud should be placed on badges at the time of notification of the death and may remain on the badge for a 30-day mourning period.



## Appendix A

### Personal Information Sheets

Fire departments are encouraged to have up-to-date personal information sheets for each firefighter. Personal information sheets can be helpful in the event of a personnel injury or death because they provide department officials and family members with easy access to important information in a timely and organized manner. Forms should be confidential and updated on an annual basis and may provide information in the following categories:

- > Contact information.
- > Family information.
- > Personal information (i.e. physician, attorney, accountant, bank, etc.).
- > Location of a will.
- > Insurance policies.
- > Funeral and burial preferences.
- > Awards, decorations, and achievements.
- > Final wishes.

To view a sample form that can be altered to fit the needs of your department, visit: [www.nvfc.org/LODD](http://www.nvfc.org/LODD).



## Appendix B

### Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Information

#### PSOB Program

The PSOB Program provides death benefits in the form of a one-time financial payment 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 or certain eligible heart attacks or strokes.

- > As of October 1, 2009, the amount of the PSOB benefit is \$311,810 for eligible deaths. 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. For each death and disability claim, the award amount is solely determined by the actual date of the officer's death or disability. To view past or current benefit amounts, view [PSOB Benefit Chart](#).
- > The PSOB Program provides disability benefits for public safety officers who have been permanently and totally disabled by a catastrophic injury sustained in the line of duty if that injury permanently prevents the officer from performing any gainful work. Medical retirement for a line-of-duty disability does not, in and of itself, establish eligibility for PSOB benefits.
- > As defined by Congress in Public Law 90-351 (Sec. 1217), a public safety officer is an individual serving a public agency in an official capacity, with or without compensation, as a law enforcement officer, firefighter, or member of a rescue squad or ambulance crew. Retroactive to September 11, 2001, chaplains also are included in the PSOB Act definition of a public safety officer.

#### Hometown Heroes

On December 15, 2003, the Hometown Heroes Survivors Benefits Act expanded the circumstances under which public safety officer deaths resulting from heart attacks and strokes may be covered by the PSOB program.

- > The Hometown Heroes Act establishes a statutory presumption that public safety officers who die from a heart attack or stroke following a nonroutine stressful or strenuous physical public safety activity or training, died in the line of duty for benefit purposes.
- > The Hometown Heroes presumption may be overcome by "competent medical evidence to the contrary."
- > The Hometown Heroes Act excludes actions of a "clerical, administrative, or nonmanual nature" from consideration.

#### Additional Information and Assistance

##### Website

The PSOB website is a great resource with detailed descriptions, frequently asked questions, and a PSOB checklist, visit [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/psob/psob\\_heroes.html](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/psob/psob_heroes.html).

For more information regarding Hometown Heroes, visit [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/psob/psob\\_heroes.html](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/psob/psob_heroes.html).

To view additional Line of Duty Death resources, visit [www.nvfc.org/page/657/In\\_the\\_Line\\_of\\_Duty.htm](http://www.nvfc.org/page/657/In_the_Line_of_Duty.htm).

##### PSOB Call Center

The PSOB Call Center is fully staffed Monday through Friday from the hours of 7:00 a.m. 0- 7:00 p.m., Eastern time.

To reach a representative, call 1-888-SIGNAL13 (744-6513).

## Appendix C

### Military Standards and Flag Folding Procedures

#### Position of Attention

Assume the position of attention on the command “Fall In” or the command “Attention.”

To assume this position:

- > Bring your heels together smartly so that the heels are on the same line with the toes pointing out equally, forming an angle of 45°.
- > Keep your legs straight without locking your knees.
- > Hold your body erect with your hips level, chest lifted and arched, and your shoulders square and even.
- > Let your arms hang straight, without stiffness, along your sides with the back of the hands outward: curl your fingers so that the tips of the thumbs are alongside and touching the first joint of your forefingers.
- > Keep your thumbs straight and along the seams of your trousers with all fingertips touching the trouser legs.
- > Keep your head erect and hold it squarely to the front with your chin drawn in so that the axis of your head and neck is vertical.
- > Look straight to the front.
- > Rest the weight of your body equally on the heels and balls of your feet.
- > Remain silent except when replying to questions or when directed otherwise.

#### Rest Positions at the Halt

##### Parade Rest

Typically, “Parade Rest” is commanded from the position of attention only. The command for this movement is “Parade, Rest”.

To assume this position:

- > On the command of “Rest,” move your left foot ten (10) inches to the left of your right foot.
- > Keep your legs straight, resting your weight equally on the heels and balls of both feet.
- > Simultaneously, place your hands at the small of your back and centered on your belt.

- > Be sure to keep the fingers of both hands extended and joined, interlocking your thumbs so that the palm of the right hand is outward.
- > Hold your head and eyes facing front.
- > Remain silent and do not move.
- > Change in position may be to return to attention or at ease for dismissal.

*Note: On the preparatory command for attention, immediately assume Parade Rest when at the position of at ease. If for some reason, once a subordinate element is already at attention they remain so and do not execute parade rest on the preparatory command nor does the subordinate leader give a supplementary command.*

##### Stand at Ease

The command for this movement is “Stand at Ease”. On the command of execution, “Ease” execute parade rest, but turn your head and eyes directly toward the commander. “At Ease” or “Rest” may be commanded from this position.

##### At Ease

The command for this movement is “At Ease”. On the command “At Ease” you may move; however, you must remain standing and silent with your right foot in place. “Rest” may be commanded from this position.

##### Rest

The command for this movement is “Rest”. On the command “Rest” you may move, talk, smoke, or drink unless otherwise specified. You must remain standing with your right foot in place. “At Ease” may be commanded from this position.

#### Facing at the Halt

##### Facing to the Flank

Facing to the flank is a two (2) count movement. The command is “Left (Right) Face”.

To execute this move:

- > On the command of execution, “Face” slightly raise your right heel and left toe, and turn 90 degrees to the left on your left heel, assisted by a slight pressure on the ball of your right foot.
- > Keep your right leg straight without stiffness.

- > On the second count, place your right foot beside your left foot, resuming the position of “Attention”.
- > Hold your arms as at “Attention” when executing this movement.

### Facing to the Rear

Facing to the rear is a two (2) count movement. The command is “About, Face”.

To execute this move:

- > On the command of execution, “Face” move the toe of the right foot to a position touching the ground approximately one-half the length of your foot to the rear and slightly to the left of the left heel.
- > Rest most of your weight on the heel of the left foot, and allow your right knee to bend naturally.
- > On the second count, turn to the right 180 degrees on the left heel and ball of the right foot, resuming the position of attention.
- > Hold your arms as at “Attention” when executing this movement.

### Hand Salutes

#### Present Arms

The hand salute is a one count movement. The command is “Present, Arms”.

To execute this move:

- > On the command of execution, “Arms” raise the right hand to the forehead and with the tip of the forefinger; touch the rim of the visor slightly to the right of the right eye.
- > The fingers and thumb are extended and joined, palm down.
- > The outer edge of the hand is barely canted downward so that neither the palm nor the back of the hand is visible from the front.
- > The upper arm is horizontal with the elbow inclined slightly forward and the hand and wrist straight.

#### Order Arms

“Order arms” from this salute is a one count movement. The command is “Order Arms”.

To execute this move:

- > On the command of execution, “Arms” return your hand smartly to your side, resuming the position of Attention.

### Aligning the Squad

The squad leaders should command the squad to the appropriate interval prior to giving the command for alignment.

To align the squad to “Normal Interval”, the commands are Dress Right, Dress, and Ready, Front. These commands are given only when the men are at “Order” or “Sling Arms”.

- > On the command of execution, “Dress” each man except the right flank man turns his head and eyes to the right and aligns himself on the right flank man.
- > Each man (except the left flank man) extends his left arm and positions himself by short right or left steps until his right shoulder touches the fingertips of the man on his right.
- > On the command of execution, “Front” each man lowers his arm smartly to his side. At the same time he turns his head and eyes to the front and resumes the position of “Attention”.

*Note: If the squad leader desires exact alignment, he marches (on the command of execution, Dress) by the most direct route to a position on line with the squad, “Halts” one step from the right flank man, and “Faces” down the line. From this position, he verifies the alignment of the squad, as necessary, calling them by name or number. The squad leader remains at “Attention” taking short steps to the right or left as necessary, he faces to the half right in marching, returns parallel to the formation, faces to the left, and commands Ready, Front. These procedures also apply when aligning the squad at close or double interval.*

### Aligning the Squad at Close Interval

To align the squad at “Close Interval”, the commands are “At Close Interval Dress Right”, “Dress” and “Ready, Front”.

- > The movement is executed in the same manner prescribed for alignment at normal intervals, except the squad members obtain close interval.

### Aligning the Squad at Double Interval

To align the squad at “Double Interval” the commands are “At Double Interval Dress Right”, “Dress” and “Ready, Front”.

- > These commands are given only when the troops are “Unarmed” or at “Dress”, each man (except the right flank man) turns his head and eyes to the right and aligns himself on the right flank man.
- > At the same time, each man (except the right flank man) turns his head and eyes to the right and aligns himself on the right flank man.
- > At the same time, each man (except the right and left flank man) extends both arms and positions himself by short right or left steps until his fingertips are touching the fingertips of the men on his right and left.
- > The right flank man raises only his left arm and the left flank man raises only his right arm.

### Aligning the Squad in Column

To align the squad in column, the command is “Cover”.

- > On this command, each man (except the number one man) raises his left arm to a horizontal position, fingers extended and joined, palm down, and obtains an arm’s length plus approximately six inches (from the fingertips) to the back of the man to his front.
- > At the same time, each man aligns himself directly behind the man to his front.
- > To resume the position of attention, the command “Recover” is given.
- > On this command, each man lowers his arm smartly back to his side.

### Marching the Squad

- > For short distances only, the squad may be marched forward while in a line formation.
- > When marching long distances, the squad is marched in column.
- > To form a column formation from a line formation, the command is “Right, Face”.
- > When a column formation is originated from a line formation at close interval, the squad may be marched for short distances at the half step with less than correct distance.

- > To obtain correct distance while marching with less than correct distance, the command is “Extend, March”.
- > On the command of execution, “March”, the number one man takes one more 15 inch step and then steps off with a 30 inch step.
- > All other members begin marching with a 30 inch step at the approximate same point as the number one man or as soon as correct distance has been obtained from the man to their front.

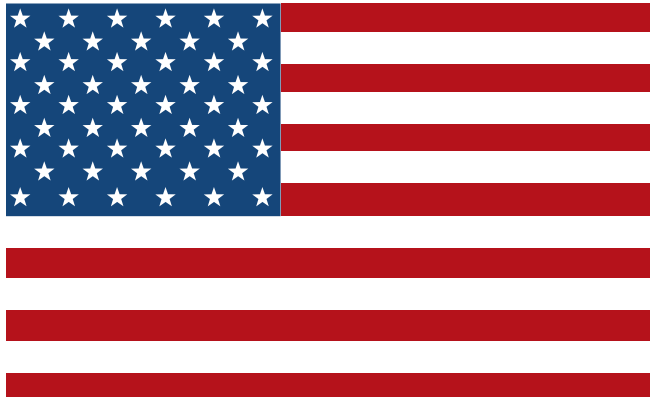
### Cremated Remains

- > When remains are cremated and the ashes interred with military honors, the foregoing instructions will govern, with necessary modifications.
- > Military regulations provide that where the cremated remains are carried by hand one man will be detailed to carry the receptacle containing the ashes. Four (4) other men will function as bearers of the Flag of the United States.
- > When the receptacle containing the ashes is carried from the conveyance into the chapel, from the chapel to conveyance, or from the conveyance to the grave, the flag bearers follow with the flag folded in proper manner and carried by the leading flag bearer on the right.
- > When the receptacle has been placed on the stand before the chancel of the chapel, or in the conveyance, the folded flag is placed beside the receptacle. If the caisson is equipped with casket container for the receptacle, the open flag is laid upon the container as prescribed for a casket.
- > When the remains of the deceased are conducted to a crematory and the ashes are to be interred with military honors later, the ceremony consists only of the escort to the crematory. Arms are presented as the remains are borne into the crematory. The firing of volleys and the sounding of Taps are omitted. However, if the funeral ceremony is held at the crematory and no further military honors are anticipated, the volleys may be fired and Taps sounded at discretion of the commanding officer.

## Flag folding procedures

(Courtesy of the American Legion)<sup>1</sup>

The traditional method of folding the flag is shown below.



A)



Straighten out the flag to full length and fold lengthwise once.

B)



Fold it lengthwise a second time to meet the open edge, making sure that the union of stars on the blue field remains outward in full view. (A large flag may have to be folded lengthwise a third time.)

C)



A triangular fold is then started by bringing the striped corner of the folded edge to the open edge.

D)



The outer point is then turned inward, parallel with the open edge, to form a second triangle.



E)



The diagonal or triangular folding is continued toward the blue union until the end is reached, with only the blue showing and the form being that of a cocked (three-corner) hat.

To view the United States Flag Code for additional information regarding the presentation and use of the American flag, visit: [www.legion.org/flag/code](http://www.legion.org/flag/code).

<sup>1</sup> [www.legion.org/flag/folding](http://www.legion.org/flag/folding)

## Appendix D

### Sample Readings for Funeral Services

*Note: The following readings and prayers are suggestions only. Prayers and readings should reflect the religious beliefs of the honoree and be included only after speaking with the surviving family.*

#### LEADER:

O God, who heals the broken in heart, and binds up their wounds, look in tender pity and compassion upon your servants whose joy has turned to mourning. Leave them not comfortless, but grant that they may be drawn closer to one another and to you by their common sorrow. Fill their souls with the light and comfort of your presence. Grant unto them such a vision of that life wherein all mysteries shall be revealed, and all tears be wiped away, that they may be able to endure. Dwell with them and be their God, until the day breaks and the shadows flee.

We are gathered here on this occasion to pay our respects to a firefighter who has answered his/her final call on this earth. He/she was a loyal member of this association. He/she stood forth as a real man/woman, highly regarded by his brother and sister firefighters.

Let the words of the 23rd Psalm give comfort:

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want: He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters: He restores my soul. He leads me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for you are with me. Your rod and your staff comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil, my cup overflows. Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

God's message comes to us from the book of Ecclesiastes, Chapter 3:

There is a time for everything: A time for every occupation under heaven . . . A time for giving birth . . . A time for dying . . . A time for planting . . . A time for uprooting what has been planted . . . A time for suffering . . .

A time for healing . . . A time for tears . . . A time for laughter . . . A time for mourning . . . A time for dancing . . . A time for loving . . . A time for hating . . .

What does man gain for the effort that he makes? I contemplate the tasks that God gives to mankind for labor. All that he does is apt for its time: But though He has permitted man to conserve time in its wholeness, man cannot comprehend the work of God from beginning to end. I know there is no happiness for man except in pleasure and enjoyment while he lives. And when man eats and drinks and finds happiness in his work this is a gift from God.

#### MINISTER:

Let us pray ...

O Lord, we implore you to grant this mercy to your departed servant that he who in his desires served his fellow man may not receive punishment for his misdeeds: So that as charity and love unite him with us on earth, your mercy may unite him with you in heaven. Amen. Let us consider the words of Psalm 90:

Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations, before the mountains were brought forth or ever you had formed the earth and the world. From everlasting to everlasting you are God. You turn man back to the dust and say "Turn Back O Children of Men". For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night. You sweep men away: They are like a dream, like grass which is renewed in the morning: In the morning it flourishes and is renewed: In the evening it fades and withers.

For we are consumed by your wrath; we are overwhelmed. You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your countenance. For all our days pass away under your wrath, our years come to an end like a sigh. The years of our life are three score and ten, or even by reason of strength fourscore: Yet their span is but toil and trouble: They are soon gone and we fly away. Who considers the power of your anger, and your wrath according to the fear of you? So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom. Return, O Lord, how long? Have pity on your servants: Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love that

we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad as many days as you have afflicted us, and as many years as we have seen evil, let your work be manifest to your servants, and your glorious power to their children. Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish you. The work of our hands upon us. Our second scripture reading is taken from St. Matthew:

When the son of man comes in his glory escorted all the angels then he will take his seat on his throne of glory.

All the nations will be assembled before him and he will separate men one from another as the shepherd separates sheep from goats. He will place the sheep on his right hand and the goats on his left. Then the king will say to those on his right hand, "Come you whom my father has blessed": Take for your heritage the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food: I was thirsty and you gave me drink: I was a stranger and you made me welcome: Naked and you clothed me: Sick and you visited me: In prison and you came to me. Then the virtuous will say to him in reply: "Lord, when did I see you hungry and feed you: Thirsty and gave you drink?" "When did I see you a stranger and make you welcome: Naked and clothe you: Sick or in prison and go to see you?" And the king will answer, "I tell you solemnly, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me."

Let us pray.

O God, who said as long as you did it for one of these, my children, you did it for me, grant a fitting reward to your fireman who has given his time and energy for the good of others. To him who gave up his rest at all hours of the day and night, grant eternal rest: To him who has answered his final alarm on earth, grant a place of refreshment, joy and peace . . . AMEN.

**LEADER:**

Because of this man and other firefighters, our lives are free: Because of them our families live: Because of them our homes are blessed. Let us not enshroud their memory with thoughts of sorrow. Tears or words of sympathy cannot bring back the comfort of those loving hands. Only the solemn pride of service to others is theirs who live to remember.

Firefighters and friends, let us here pledge ourselves anew to united service, to consecrate and dedicate our work by a devotion to mutual helpfulness in the protection of those left behind. And finally, to you, the family, the relatives, and the intimate friends of our departed firefighter, we realize how futile are mere words to express our deep and abiding sympathy in your loss. May you be consoled with our promise for continued devotion to firefighting and for the protection of property and life of our fellow firefighters.

**MINISTER:**

And now, let us pray together The Lord's Prayer...

Our Father who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come.  
Thy will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us,  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
forever.

AMEN.

**LEADER:**

Holy Father, in these moments of remembrance, lift our hearts and minds above the shadowy darkness of death to the light of your presence. We thank you for the life of our comrade now removed from our association. We are grateful for his devotion to a firefighters' duty, for his dedication to the preservation of life and property, for the way he faced danger in his service to the community.

We ask the comfort of your blessing upon his family. May they be sustained by pleasant memories, a living hope, the compassionate friends, and the pride of duty well done. Grant them peace and freedom from fear. Finally, we pray your guidance and strength for those who continue to battle the fiery foe. Grant safety to those who engage in the constant war against the destructive

force of the flame and explosion. Keep them who devote themselves to the work of a firefighter in your hands. So may they be free of the danger of fire . . . AMEN.

**MINISTER:**

The blessing . . .

The Lord bless you and keep you,

The Lord make his face shine upon and give you peace, The Lord lift up the light of his presence upon you,

Now and always . . . AMEN.

*- Prayer Courtesy of the Cumberland County Volunteer Fireman's Association*



**A Firefighters Prayer**

We call upon You for strength and guidance.

Look kindly upon us in our needs.

Teach us to look always to You for assistance, as our fellow citizens look to us.

Give us courage, that we may import courage to others. Make us studious, and give us pride and joy in our work.

When the gong sounds, calling us to duty, give us speed and efficiency.

As our siren wails, ride with us through the city streets, shielding us from danger.

On the fire scene, may our officers and men always work as an honorable, courageous and victorious team.

Walk with us through the terror of flame and explosion.

May our hearts be always ready if we should be summoned before our Eternal Chief in the midst of our labors.

Through our ministrations to our suffering fellow-men, we dedicate our lives humbly to Your praise and glory.

In joy or sorrow, we ask only that You may be pleased with our service, that when the Last Alarm shall have sounded for us, we may receive our eternal assignment with you.

AMEN

*-Author Unknown*



### **A Fire Chief's Prayer**

*(In memory of L. Marvin Mokma, Chief, Holland Fire Dept.)*

I am called to many duties, Lord  
And now I've been called home.

I've had to leave the ones I love  
To stand before your throne.

I'll not complain, it's not my way  
But there are some things I'll ask  
And please, Lord, grant them to me  
For the loved ones I hold fast.

I dare to ask because I know  
How you've blessed in the past.

I've learned to trust your grace, O Lord  
That's how I've come this far

So now, O God, I humbly pray, Hear this Fire Chiefs prayer.

Bless my wife and family—so often left alone,  
They knew where I was going and  
Trusted you to bring me home.

Well, now I'm home and wait for them  
Keep them within the faith—that one day,  
Someday, we'll be together in this place.

And O dear God, bless my men  
I trained them as best I could.

I tried to do your will with them  
And lead them as You would.

I need to know You're with them Lord  
Or else how can I stay  
And peacefully enjoy this place of endless day.  
This heaven where there is no night,  
No fire to kill and burn

I guess that's why it's now my rest, my place, my turn.

And Lord, be with my community  
And keep it safe as it can be  
For all its folks are special, and very dear to me.

They are all my friends, and by your grace  
I served them as best I could

So hear this Fire Chiefs prayer, O Lord  
And grant it please — I already knew You would.

AMEN

*- Dennis B. Wilcox, Chaplain, Holland Fire Department*

### Firefighter's Funeral and Graveside Services

*Three (3) strokes on the gong or chimes*

In His infinite wisdom, the Supreme Chief of the Universe has one more sounded to last alarm, and our brother has answered his last call to duty.

When the hour of death comes, it is faith and knowledge that alleviate our sorrow and that comfort us; faith in God and knowledge that He has called our brother home.

God sent our brother into our midst so that we might enjoy his love, his friendship, and his loving devotion--so that we might know his virtues, and bury his imperfections.

Because of these things, we cling to the memory of our pleasant associations with our brother and cherish the hope that when the Supreme Chief sounds that last alarm for us, we shall answer that call to our Father's home and there find our brother waiting to welcome us once more.

\_\_\_\_\_ was born \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Name) (Date)

He was appointed to the Fire Department on \_\_\_\_\_ as a \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_.

He retired on \_\_\_\_\_ and answered his last alarm on \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Date)

(or answered his last alarm while performing his duty to his fellow men on \_\_\_\_\_). His departmental record shows \_\_\_\_\_ years, \_\_\_\_\_ months, \_\_\_\_\_ days of faithful service. He leaves to mourn: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

We give our love and heartfelt sympathy to the bereaved family and loved ones.

### "Last Alarm" Ceremony

The life of a firefighter is closely associated with the ringing of a bell.

As he (she) begins his (her) hours of duty; it was the bell that started it off. Through the day and night, each alarm is sounded by a bell, that called him (her) to fight fire and to place his (her) life in jeopardy for the good of his (her) fellow man.

And when the fire is out and the alarm has come to an end, the bell rings three times to signal the end.

And now \_\_\_\_\_ has completed the task, his (her) duties well done and the bell rings three times in memory of, and, in tribute to, his (her) life and service.

*Ring bell three times*

## APPENDIX E

### Preparing a Eulogy

The family should decide if there will be a eulogy and who they would like it to be delivered by. The family should also be consulted when deciding where in the service or ceremony the eulogy will fit best. If a eulogy is decided upon, the Family Liaison Officer should make the appropriate contacts and advise the Funeral Officer so the proper arrangements can be made.

Writing a eulogy can be an emotional process. A eulogy should pay tribute to the deceased and offer comfort to surviving family and friends.

When writing a eulogy it is important to:

- > Do your research. Talk to family members and friends of the deceased to get a better understanding of their accomplishments, honors and awards, and significant achievements.
- > Include personal stories and anecdotes. If you do not have personal stories or memories, include ones gathered from family and friends.
- > Stick to a theme. Your remarks should have structure and be organized.
- > Prepare a draft. Be sure to offer condolences and acknowledge family members and close friends of the deceased.
- > Celebrate the person's life; don't dwell on their death or the events that lead up to it.
- > Be sure to practice giving your remarks and receive feedback in necessary.
- > Identify someone who would be willing to finish your remarks if you are overcome with emotion.
- > Express the fire department's support for the family.

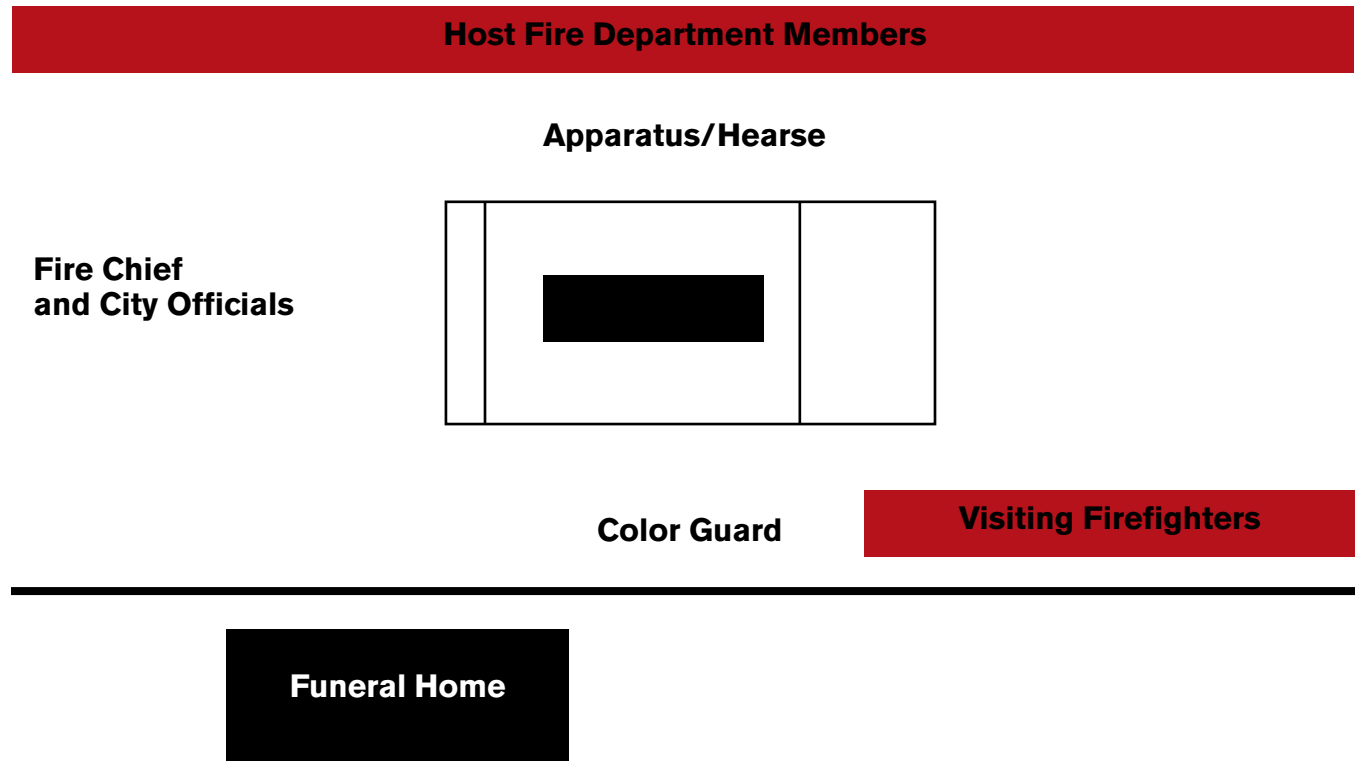


# APPENDIX F

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## Suggested Funeral Formations

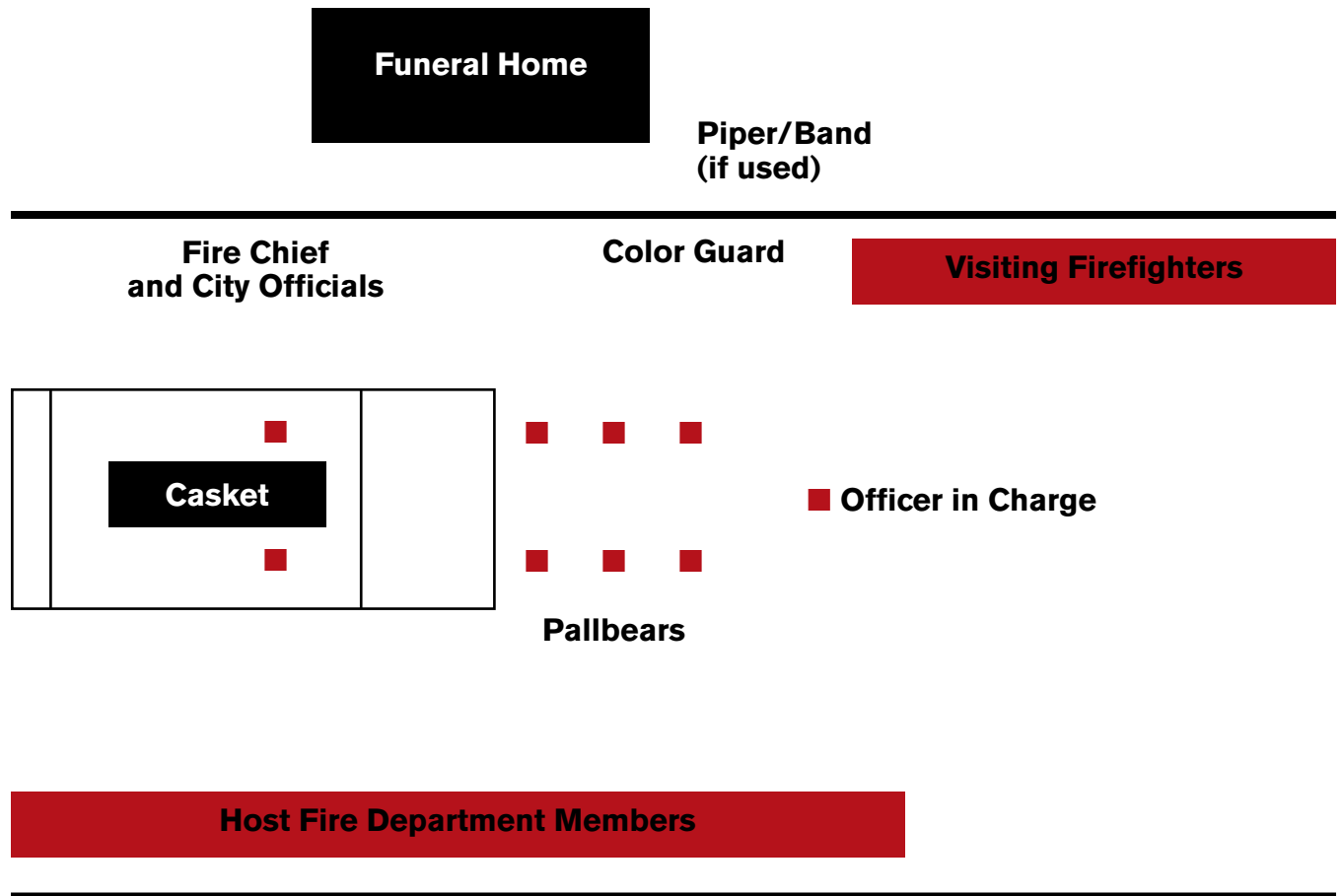
*(Courtesy of the Federation of Fire Chaplains)*



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## Suggested Church Formations

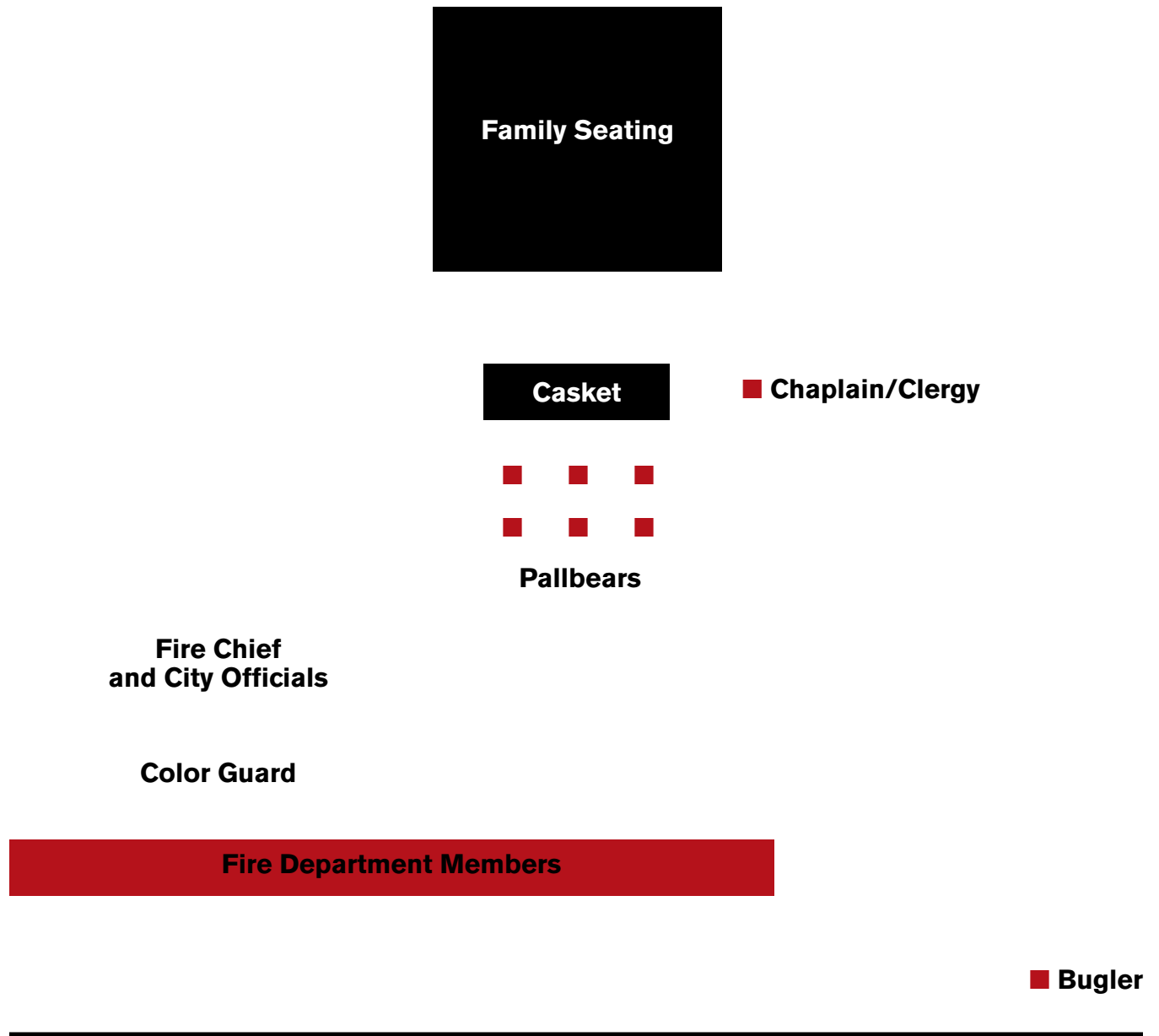
*(Courtesy of the Federation of Fire Chaplains)*



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## Suggested Final Committal Service Formations

*(Courtesy of the Federation of Fire Chaplains)*

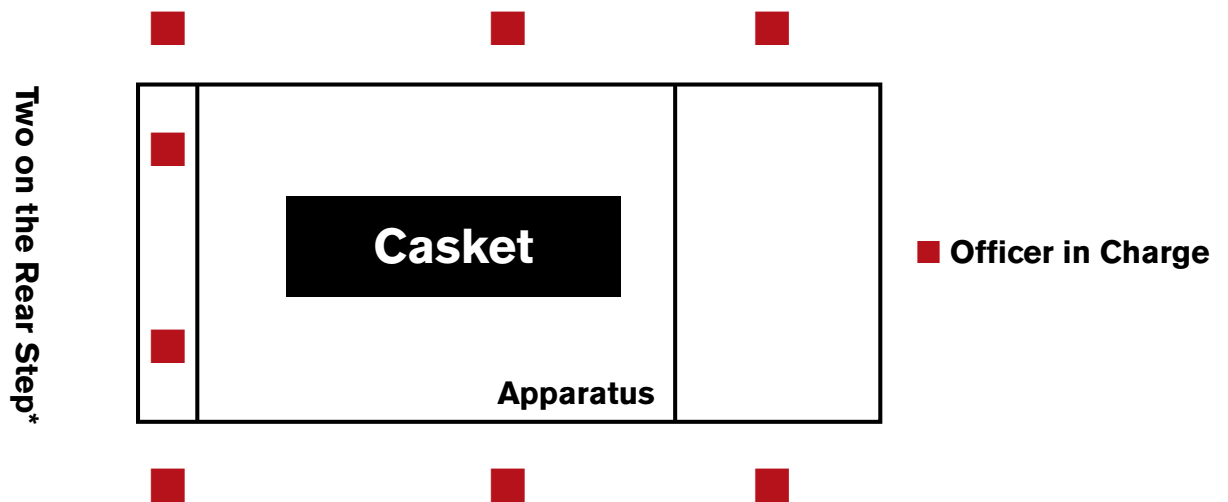


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## Pallbearers' Location When Marching

*(Courtesy of the Federation of Fire Chaplains)*

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\*Note: Check to see if this practice is allowed in your jurisdiction.

## Appendix G

### Involving Your Fire Corps Team or Auxiliary

Fire department funerals can be complex, stressful, and time consuming. If your department has an active Fire Corps team or other non-operational support group like an auxiliary, they can be utilized to help in the aftermath of the death of a department member. One way they can assist is in the planning and implementing of the funeral service.

Tasks that Fire Corps or other non-operational members can perform include:

- > Work with the funeral home regarding details of having a fire service funeral.
- > Help with the staging of the funeral procession.
- > Coordinate parking at the cemetery.
- > Direct pedestrian traffic to ensure guests and participants know where they need to be.
- > Serve food to members of the department, family and guests after the funeral.
- > Provide clean-up services.
- > Bring food to on-duty department members at the station during the funeral service.

Fire Corps teams and other non-operational support units can be a great asset during a time of loss. Departments can integrate citizen volunteers into funeral procedure planning to help ensure they have the proper personnel in place to deal with a firefighter death.



## Appendix H

### Additional Resources

The following is a list of organizations that provide assistance with preparing for and performing a firefighter funeral:

> **Wills for Heroes Foundation**

The Wills for Heroes Foundation is a nonprofit organization that provides legal documents free of charge to the nation's first responders, including wills, living wills, and powers of attorney. For more information visit [www.willsforheroes.org/](http://www.willsforheroes.org/).

> **The Lighthouse Uniform Company's Fallen Firefighter Dress Uniform Program**

The Lighthouse Uniform Company's Fallen Firefighter Dress Uniform Program seeks to provide Class A uniforms for burial purposes to firefighters killed in the line of duty. There is no charge for the uniform, only freight. For more information visit [www.lighthouseuniform.com/fallenffprogram/](http://www.lighthouseuniform.com/fallenffprogram/).

> **The National Fallen Firefighters Foundation**

The National Fallen Firefighters Foundation offers several programs and resources for departments to prepare for and handle a line of duty death. To access resources and information for departments visit [www.firehero.org/resources/departments/](http://www.firehero.org/resources/departments/).

> **International Association of Fire Fighters**

The International Association of Fire Fighters has several resources dealing with line of duty deaths for union members. To access these resources, visit, [www.iaff.org/HS/LODD/index.html](http://www.iaff.org/HS/LODD/index.html).

> **The International Association of Fire Chiefs**

The International Association of Fire Chiefs has several downloadable resources for line of duty deaths located under their Safety and Health Section on their Documents to Download page. To access these resources visit [www.iafc.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=20](http://www.iafc.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=20).

> **The Federation of Fire Chaplains**

The Federation of Fire Chaplains is a nonprofit organization that provides guidance for departments to cultivate successful chaplaincies. The Federation provides resources from how to start a chaplaincy program to how to administer aid, comfort, and counsel in times of hardship. To access these resources, visit [http://firechaplains.org/?page\\_id=168](http://firechaplains.org/?page_id=168).



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