



Honors Available to Family

Below is a list of honor that is available to the family of a fire fighter who died in the Line of Duty. Ultimate consideration should be given to the wishes of the family and all circumstances should be given the fullest consideration as to level of service and honors rendered. However, the absolute decision will be made by the Fire Chief, or appointed designee.

The following lists the honors and entitlements:

Level One Honors:

- Playing of taps
- Fold of American flag over grave
- Playing of bag pipes
- Department Honor and Color Guard
- Department Chaplain
- Station and apparatus bunting
- Static display of apparatus (at appropriate location)
- Ceremonial guard for casket
- Honorary Pallbearers
- Department apparatus used as caisson
- Department apparatus used as flower car/truck
- Family transportation (if requested)
- Department Casket Team
- Bunker gear, helmet and badge presentation
- IAFF medal presentation
- Bell Ceremony
- Final Tone-out
- Flag presentation
- Helicopter fly over
- Rifle Salute



Gravesite Services Checklist

- Confirm all information concerning the funeral grave-site location, date, and time
- Visit the gravesite and talk with the funeral director.
- Make a map of the Cemetery location and another map of the gravesite location.
- Plan the gravesite service
 - a. Where will motors, funeral coach, and family limo(s) stage to view the procession
 - b. Remember toilet facilities for family
 - c. How will the procession enter the ceremony
 - d. Where will the vehicles in the procession park
 - e. Who will notify the motors sergeant when to proceed to the gravesite
 - f. Where will the mounted patrol meet the funeral coach
 - g. Where will the family limo(s) park
 - h. Where will the motors park
 - i. Which direction will the gravesite canopy face
 - j. Where will all the uniformed guests stand in formation
 - k. Who will call commands to the formation
 - l. Where will the other guests stand
 - m. Where will the firing team be placed
 - n. Where will the bugler be placed
 - o. Where will the doves be placed
 - p. Where will the Pipe Band be placed
 - q. Who will notify aviation for the fly-by
 - r. Where will the sound system and speakers be placed
 - s. Where will the deceased's vehicle be parked
 - t. Obtain the names and addresses of all those who helped and how, for thank you's



Church Site Services Checklist

- Confirm all information concerning the funeral church-site location, date, and time
- Visit the church site and talk with the presiding religious person, music director, church custodian, and the funeral director.
- Make a map of the church location and a layout of the inside of the church
- Plan the church site service
 - a. How will motors, funeral coach, and family limo(s) arrive at the church
 - b. Who will advise their progress and ETA
 - c. Where will motors, funeral coach, and family limo(s) park at the church
 - d. Where will the Sheriff meet the family at the church
 - e. Where will the Honor Guard meet the funeral coach
 - f. Where will all the uniformed guests stand in formation
 - g. Who will call commands to the formation
 - h. Where will the other guests stand
 - i. Where will the deceased's vehicle be parked
 - j. When will the flowers arrive at the church
 - k. What religious concerns should we be aware of at the church
 - l. Is there a room where the family can wait before and after the service (toilets)
 - m. What will be the order of service
 - i. Make sure all participants know when they are to speak
 - n. Seating reserved for family, squad members, command staff, visiting VIPs, uniform officers from agencies, Sheriff's office uniformed employees, non-uniformed guests, others
 - o. Who will hand out the order of service programs
 - p. Select a supervisor for inside and outside responsibilities
 - q. Who will be ushers – make sure they know their responsibilities
 - r. Who will park vehicles at church site
 - s. Who will notify the motors sergeant when to leave the church
 - t. Obtain the names and addresses of all those who helped and how, for thank you's



Viewing/Vigil Division

The Viewing/Vigil Division (calling hours) will be established if so desired by the family(s)

The Viewing/Vigil Division Leader will report to the Planning Group Manager

Necessary information the Division needs:

1. Service date (usually 1-2 days prior to Memorial or Burial): _____
2. Location: _____
3. Time(s): _____

The duties and responsibilities of this Division are as follows:

1. Liaison with mortuary
2. Liaison with clergy
3. Coordinate with service facility
4. Coordinate with Logistics Division if the body is moved to a site way from the mortuary
5. Make arrangements for the funeral director to receive the deceased's uniform in the event of a departmental funeral or if requested by the family. Obtain a uniform for burial if necessary
6. Service content and order (if any)
7. If this form of event is held it is the responsibility of this Division to provide Honor Guards for posting at or near the casket. Rotate guards every 15 minutes. Posting and changing of the guard is detailed in the Department's Honor Guard Protocol. Teams will not be present during the family's final viewing, unless requested by the family; this is the family's time to be alone.
8. Other considerations
 - a. Immediate family members should be escorted by department personnel to and from the viewing
 - b. Catholic protocols may include a rosary service in conjunction with the viewing. This may or may not require the participation of the Honor Guards
 - c. It is generally proper protocol for Honor Guard members to wear their uniform hat inside the church or mortuary including the time spent posted alongside of the casket. Gloves should also be worn.
 - d. The event is usually held one or two days prior to the Memorial or burial.
 - e. The casket may be open or closed
 - f. CISM members should be on site for counseling, if necessary



- g. Pictures of our fallen firefighter should be present. It is the responsibility of the Public Information Division to gather and provide these photos.
- h. Placement of flowers
- i. A Guest Registrar will make sure all visitors sign the Memory Book and receive service announcements or commemoratives. The funeral home staff may handle this task.



Memorial Service Division

The Memorial Service Division is responsible for planning and coordinating any and all arrangements for this main service for a fallen firefighter. The Division Leader will report directly to the Planning Group Manager.

Any questions regarding troop or casket movement, commands and flag etiquette should be referred to the Department's Honor Guard Protocol.

For proper planning to commence, it is very important that the following information be submitted to the Division, from the Planning Group Manager and Family Liaison Officer, as soon as possible.

- Date: _____
- Time: _____
- Location: _____
- Level of honors due to the member: _____
- Level of honors and involvement requested by the family:

- Open or closed service to the public and outside agencies? _____
- Open or closed casket? _____
- Preferred music? _____
- Preferred speakers? _____
- Will a bagpiper be used? _____
- Will last alarm ceremonies be used? _____
- Pallbearers? _____



Memorial Service Division responsibilities are as follows:

- Ensure the facility is large enough to handle anticipated large numbers. Prearrange possible locations and plan for overflow.
- Coordinate with Logistics for arrival and departure from the service
- Coordinate alignment of personnel for arrival and departure of casket at the memorial facility. Honor Guards flanked to left of entrance. Chiefs, staff officers, and dignitaries flanked to right of entrance. The family should enter and be seated prior to the casket being taken in. If seating is limited, some personnel may need to remain outside in ranks. If a bagpiper is used, the piper leads the casket in and out of the facility. At the conclusion of the service, the casket is taken out followed by the family.
- Coordinate with clergy for program content.
- Design the order of the program. The services should last no more than one hour and forty minutes. Coordinate with the Planning Group Manager on the starting time of the service.
- Design a seating plan – if indoors, determine capacity and obtain a floor plan. Include placement of family members, Department Staff Officers, city or county management, politicians, Chief Officers' visitors, Union Representatives (local, state, and national), Department personnel, civilian friends, visiting departments, retired FD officers, and general public.
- Coordinate the family' musical choices. How will they be performed – choir, soloists, recording, orchestra, or small instrument group?
- Secure an adequate public address system (if one is not already in place).
- Should the service take place outside, several other considerations must be made. Points for discussion are the need for a tent, seating, restrooms, water/refreshments, power supply, and shade for rehab
- Coordination with pallbearers. The designation of individual pallbearers will be the responsibility of the Family Liaison Officer in conjunction with the Honor Guard Commander.
- Conduct any rehearsals deemed necessary
- There should be ALS ambulances standing by
- Coordinate the overall program. Advise the Family Liaison Officer who will keep the family informed. Items for consideration are the number of speakers, content of the program, order of events and the need or desire for a Death Watch during the service.
- Who is going to present the Eulogy? Should be strong and well prepared.
- Assemble a photo display of the deceased(s) career. Coordinate with the Family Liaison Officer as well as the Public Information Division.
- Assemble a shadow box for presentation. This may include any or all of the following: badge, patches, hat hardware, and department picture.



- Select the ushers to be used and tasks for them to carry out.
- Coordinate with Department Chaplain(s).
- Set aside a quiet room for the family. This will be used before the service
- Last Alarm ceremony and helicopter flyover may be done at the Memorial Service, but preferably at the Internment
- Parking requirements
- Coordinate with the Public Information Division on the printed program for service
- Determine the desire for a video presentation during the service. This could include interviews with friends, pre-existing video clips of the deceased, or department video clips
- The flag that was flying at the member's last place of assignment is retired from duty and along with a memorial resolution from the office of your city or county administrator, is presented to the member's appropriate survivor by the Fire Chief or appointed designee (optional).
- Distribution of the memorial program.



Suggested Order for Memorial Service

1. Posting of colors
2. Invocation
3. Prayer
4. Opening remarks and greetings
5. Special music
6. Scripture reading and minister's remarks
7. Speakers: City or county administrator, state/federal politicians, family representative, union representative, department representative
8. Eulogy – chief or designee
9. Special music
10. Presentations (may be done at service or interment)
11. Closing remarks/prayer
12. Last alarm ceremony (if desired, but probably at interment)
13. Retiring of colors
14. Bagpipes
15. Dismissal instructions



Suggested Last Alarm Ceremony

Chaplain or Department reads or recites:

“The men and women of today’s fire service are confronted with a more dangerous work environment than ever before. We are forced to continually change our strategies and tactics to accomplish our tasks.

Our methods may change, but our goals remain the same as they were in the past; to save lives and to protect property, sometimes at a terrible cost. This is what we do, this our chosen profession, this is the tradition of the firefighter.

The fire service of today is ever changing, but it is steeped in traditions over 200 years old. One such tradition is the sound of a bell.

In the past, as firefighters began their tour of duty it was the bell that signaled the beginning of that day’s shift. Throughout the day and night, each alarm was sounded by a bell, which summoned these brave souls to fight fire and to place their lives in jeopardy for the good of their fellow citizens. And when the fire was out and the alarm had come to an end, it was a bell that signaled to all, the completion of the call. When a firefighter had died in the line of duty, paying the supreme sacrifice, it was the mournful toll of the bell that solemnly announced a comrades passing.

We utilize these traditions as symbols, which reflect honor and respect of those who have given so much and who have served so well. To symbolize the devotion that these brave souls had for their duty, a special signal of three rings, three times each (3-3-3), represents the end of our comrades’ duties and that they will be returning to quarters. And so, to those who have selflessly given their lives for the good of their fellow man, their tasks completed, their duties well done, to our comrades, their last alarm, they are going home.”

Officer in charge calls firefighters to attention.

Uniformed personnel called to present arms.

Bell is struck three times, thrice (3-3-3), just three times, or 4 sets of five (5-5-5-5).

Uniformed personnel called to order arms.

Firefighters at ease or seated.



Interment Division

The Interment Division is established to manage all arrangements for a interment service in response to a departmental death. The Interment Division Leader shall report directly to the Planning Group Manager.

The graveside service normally consists of a short religious service and several Fire Department traditions.

Refer to the Department's Honor Guard Protocol for proper movement, commands, and flag etiquette.

Remember that the arrival at the cemetery is a very difficult time for family members. A long wait before the service begins can cause a great deal of anxiety. If an extremely long motorcade or delays are anticipated, it may be advisable to arrange for a family waiting room. It is imperative to have a parking plan at the cemetery. Cemeteries usually have traffic plans and know exactly how many vehicles can be accommodated.

Critical information for the Interment Division:

1. Open or closed service to the public
2. Location
3. Anticipated time of arrival
4. Number of anticipated guests

This Division is responsible for:

1. Organizing program with coordination through Family Liaison Officer
2. Setting formation
3. Providing seating for at least the family and VIPs
4. Providing restrooms if deemed necessary
5. Distribution of maps to the reception location
6. Medical personnel on standby. Coordinate with the Memorial Service Division.
7. Shade or rehab area.
8. Rehab/canteen trucks (Red Cross, Salvation Army)
9. Liaison with cemetery
10. Liaison with clergy
11. Coordinate, with the Honor Guard Commander, the flag presentation to family
12. Coordinate the presentation of Shadow Box or badge to the family



13. Create a parking plan
14. Provide a sound system
15. Coordinate a fly over (if necessary)
16. Coordinate Bell Ceremony
17. Provide electrical power
18. Coordinate the Final Tone-out
19. Provide and coordinate a bugler for playing of Taps
20. Coordinate bagpiper
21. Relocation of flowers
22. Coordination of Rifle Salute (if veteran)



Suggested Program for Interment

1. Assembly
2. Placement of casket at grave (Bagpiper plays during placement)
3. Opening prayer
4. Scripture reading
5. Committal reading, closing prayer
6. Rifle Salute (if veteran)
7. Taps
8. Flag folding
9. Flag presentation
10. Presentation of helmet, gear, and shadow box or badge
11. Presentation of IAFF medal
12. Bell Ceremony
13. Fly over
14. Final Tone-out
15. Bagpiper (optional)
16. Dismissal