

# LINE-OF-DUTY FUNERAL GUIDE

*If you're in the fire service, you've felt the unmistakable void when a fellow firefighter falls in the line-of-duty. Whether from a sudden violent incident or through a job-related illness, the loss of a colleague can be devastating for a fire department or local union. Yet they are faced with the overwhelming responsibility of providing guidance and comfort to the families of the fallen and organizing a memorial to properly commemorate those brave brothers and sisters who lost their lives in the line-of-duty.*

*The California Fire Foundation has produced this guide to help fire departments and local firefighter unions through the funeral planning process in the immediate aftermath of a line-of-duty death. It reflects decades of experience the Foundation has gathered providing support and solace for firefighters and their families and honoring the proud legacy of those who paid the ultimate price.*

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As per IAFF Guidelines:

- A. *After the notification of a death of a member, the Office of the Chief of the Department should immediately inform Union Office/Officials and the fire department chaplain.*
- B. *The fire department should be informed that local union official(s) wish to accompany department officials that are dispatched to notify next of kin. After the family has been officially notified, the fire department and the local union should notify all on-duty members.*

Please refer to IAFF's web site at <http://www.iaff.org/HS//LODD/policy.html> to obtain proper notification procedures.

In addition, notification should be made to California Professional Firefighters and the California Fire Foundation so that an alert to CPF leadership can be sent to all locals in California the next business day.

## FLAG PROTOCOL

- A. *After notification of the line-of-duty death is completed, flags at all jurisdictions' properties (government center, fire stations, schools, etc.) should be lowered to half-staff in honor of the fallen firefighter.*  
**According to government code, the Governor of the State of California must authorize the lowering of the flags to half-staff. The California Fire Foundation can assist with this notification process.**
- B. *Flags at jurisdictions' properties should remain at half-staff from date of death through the day of committal (burial).*
- C. *Flags at fire stations and the union hall should remain at half-staff for a period of 30 days. Funeral bunting, if used, should also remain on fire stations and the union hall for 30 days.*
- D. *After the notification of the line-of-duty death is completed, badge shrouds should be placed across the face of each member's badge. Badge shrouds should remain on the badge from the date of death through the day of committal (burial).*

If communication and notification assistance is required by a local, California Professional Firefighters and the California Fire Foundation can be contacted during business hours at: (916) 641-1707 or [cafirefoundation@cpf.org](mailto:cafirefoundation@cpf.org)

## LINE-OF-DUTY DEATH NOTIFICATION PROCESS

As per IAFF Guidelines:

- A. *The local union president must immediately appoint an individual with the sole responsibility of planning the fallen firefighter's funeral.*

**Many locals choose to appoint a small committee to plan for the fallen firefighter's funeral.**

- B. *In order for the local union to be fully prepared, the following initial information must be gathered from the fallen firefighter's family as soon as possible. A union/department member should be immediately assigned as a family contact to assist the family and serve as the liaison between the family and those planning the funeral. The family liaison should keep some of the following questions in mind. Please refer to page eight (8) for a form to document memorial wishes.*

- Do they want a funeral with full department honors?
- Do they want a church funeral? If so, what church?
- Who is their choice of priest, minister, rabbi or other religious representative?
- Where is the funeral home?
- Who is the funeral director?
- Was he/she a military veteran?

- C. *If the family requests a departmental funeral, the funeral director should be notified. The funeral director makes arrangements with the church, cemetery, etc. The union/department should 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.*
- D. *A list of pallbearers must be obtained from the family. Honor guard members should be selected, usually chosen from house and company members, and scheduled to stand at the casket during the viewing at the funeral home.*
- E. *Site selection must begin immediately for the memorial service (if planned) and for a reception following the funeral/memorial service. Vendors such as floral companies and transportation services should be solicited immediately for assistance.*
- F. *The local union must determine the availability of the following:*
  - white gloves
  - union pins
  - badge shrouds
  - bunting (fire stations/union hall)



G. *The family liaison should assess the need for a printed memorial program and work with the family to gather biographical material and photographs.*

H. *If necessary, secure space from local hotel(s).*

I. *Establish a liaison with the police department.*

- *Request that the police department send an announcement to law enforcement of the line-of-duty death with as much detail as possible, including funeral arrangements, department and union addresses, and phone numbers of the local union representative responsible for funeral.*
- *Request that the police provide detail in a marked car at deceased's home during the entire funeral period.*
- *Request that the police have a representative at the planning meetings who can assist with logistical coordination including traffic, crowd control, out-of-town firefighters, parking, etc.*

California Professional Firefighters and the California Fire Foundation are available as a resource to help with any of the above protocol. Memorial programs, funeral arrangements and other forms of support are available to those departments or locals who require assistance.



## LINE-OF-DUTY DEATH FUNERAL

For line-of-duty departmental funerals, the following protocol should be arranged:

- A. *One appointed family liaison is responsible for assisting the family, including escorting them into church and showing them to their seats. The department should select a chief-in-charge for directing and coordinating fire department and firefighter involvement in funeral.*
- B. *The honor guard should post colors prior to the church service. The honor guard should be posted outside the church on both sides of the entrance. Department personnel, union officials, firefighters and dignitaries should line up with honor guard facing the street. The family passes between ranks. In all instances, the family should enter the church ahead of any dignitaries. Ushers should keep the front right part of the church open for members and delegates. After the deceased is greeted, all attendees march into the church and are seated in the following order:*

- Fire chief
- Union president
- International principal officer(s)
- State principal officer(s)
- Local union officials
- Deceased's company
- Delegation of department's chief officers
- Members of department
- Members of other fire departments

C. *All remain standing until all firefighting delegations are in place.*

D. *At the conclusion of the service, ushers will direct the firefighting delegation to the street where they resume original places, facing the church, under direction of the chief-in-charge. Pallbearers then proceed out of church with the deceased followed by the family and other mourners. The chief-in-charge gives the command for salute as the deceased is brought from the church and placed in the hearse.*

E. *After services, the funeral director assembles procession. The chief-in-charge directs all firefighting personnel, preceded by colors, to march ahead of procession to a designated pass-in-review position. If desired, a designated fire house can be chosen for pass-in-review. Fire house should have apparatus on apron, with all on-duty personnel at attention, bells tolling as procession passes. Afterwards, pass-in-review procession proceeds to cemetery.*

Additional examples and detailed explanations for fire service funerals can be found in the Chaplains Manual for fire department funerals on the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation web site, located at: [www.firehero.org](http://www.firehero.org)



## ADDITIONAL PREPARATION TIPS

California Professional Firefighters and the California Fire Foundation have devised a checklist for each firefighter to fill out to further prepare for a line-of-duty death.

The following information should be held in a known place with specific individual(s) entitled to access it in the event of a line-of-duty death.

- **PERSONAL INFORMATION OF FIREFIGHTER**  
Name, date of birth, Social Security Number, driver's license number
- **FIREFIGHTER'S PREFERRED FAMILY LIAISON**  
Firefighter should identify a preferred family liaison to notify next of kin in the event of a line-of-duty death. List all contact numbers for liaison. Firefighter should make sure liaison has all of his/her family's contact information as well.
- **NEXT OF KIN INFORMATION**  
Firefighter should list next of kin's schedule and contact info so that he/she can be found quickly at all times.
- **FAMILY INFORMATION**  
Firefighter should list any other family members, their contact information and schedules in case they need to be contacted immediately.
- **FINANCIAL INFORMATION**  
Firefighter should list all banks, credit institutions and accounts he or she holds. Include account titles, numbers, location of keys, etc. and provide next of kin with location of this information.
- **PROFESSIONAL CONTACTS**  
Firefighter should list any attorneys, accountants, insurance company/agents, or financial planners and their contact information. Next of kin should be provided with the location of this information.
- **WILL/TRUST**  
Firefighter should create a will or trust and keep it up to date. List where the original copy is located, which date the will or trust was executed on, named executor of will/trust, and attorney/will preparer. Next of kin should be provided with the location of this information.

Below is a listing of important documents that should be kept in a safe place. Next of kin or other designee should be provided with the location of these documents.

- Marriage certificate
- Birth certificate/children's birth certificates
- Adoption papers (if applicable)
- Divorce papers/child support documents (if applicable)
- Military discharge papers (if applicable)
- Veteran's papers (if applicable)
- Social Security Card
- Income and tax records
- Firearms and registrations
- Vehicle title

Below is a listing of common assets that should be accounted for and kept in a safe place. Next of kin or other designee should be provided with the location of this information.

- Real estate holdings
- Investments: Stocks, bonds, money markets, mutual funds
- Deferred compensation: Retirement funds, 401(k)s
- Life insurance policies





## MEMORIAL WISHES

Hemet Firefighters Local 2342 has produced a form for their firefighters to complete regarding memorial wishes. With Local 2342's permission, we have re-printed this form for your use.

Name and address of preferred funeral home:

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I have the following pre-arrangements:

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Name and address of church, synagogue or mosque:

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Clergy/contact person:

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Preferred site for memorial service:

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Procession to grave site to include (fire apparatus?):

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Name(s) of officiating clergy:

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Other speakers: **Name**

**Department/Relationship**

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Names of pallbearers:

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Preferred flowers:

After funeral, send flowers to:  rest home  hospitals  other: \_\_\_\_\_

Donations (instead of flowers) to: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred musical selections: \_\_\_\_\_

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Favorite readings:

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Clothing:

Purchase \_\_\_\_\_ at time of need.  Select \_\_\_\_\_ from my wardrobe.

Jewelry: wedding ring:  leave on or  return to family other: \_\_\_\_\_

I prefer:

Burial @ \_\_\_\_\_ Type of casket: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of marker: \_\_\_\_\_ Inscription/emblem: \_\_\_\_\_

Cremation to be handled by: \_\_\_\_\_

Ashes to be scattered: \_\_\_\_\_

Other instructions: \_\_\_\_\_

Special firefighter funeral requests:

Sounding of last alarm (bell or siren)

Fire department Honor Guard

Color Guard

Procession with fire equipment

Bagpipes

Gun salute

American flag draped on casket

Fire department spokesman read eulogy

Casket displayed on engine

Other instructions:

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Other fire departments to be notified:

Department

Contact Person

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Other special requests or instructions:

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## CALIFORNIA FIREFIGHTERS MEMORIAL WALL

In the heart of Sacramento's Capitol Park stands a tribute – one that immortalizes the extraordinary commitment and uncommon courage of the men and women in the fire service. Built of bronze and limestone, the California Firefighters Memorial honors the spirit of those who put their lives on the line each day. After ten years in the making, the Memorial was formally unveiled on April 6, 2002 and the names of some 800 fallen firefighters were etched into the Memorial Wall. Since then, state elected officials and other dignitaries as well as hundreds of family members of fallen firefighters have traveled to Capitol Park to honor their lost loved ones. In a solemn ceremony each year, additional fallen firefighter names are added to the Memorial Wall.

### Criteria:

- Any death of a firefighter (past or present) due to traumatic injury or injuries which occurred on the job or as a result of the job.
- Any death of a firefighter where the family of the deceased qualifies for a line-of-duty death benefit under the regulations of the U.S. Public Safety Officers' Benefit Program.
- Any death of a firefighter where the family of the deceased qualifies for a line-of-duty death benefit under California's Workers' Compensation regulations.
- Any death of a firefighter which does not fall under the above stated criteria may be submitted by application to have the unique circumstances of the death reviewed further for consideration. This evaluation/ appeal process will be reviewed by the California Fire Foundation Board of Directors and they shall make the final determination as to qualification.

**For more information please call the California Fire Foundation at  
(800) 890-3213 or email [cafirefoundation@cpf.org](mailto:cafirefoundation@cpf.org).**



## IAFF FALLEN FIREFIGHTER MEMORIAL FOUNDATION WALL OF HONOR

### For application criteria and procedures:

Please contact JoAnn Wiley at  
(202) 824-8639 or [jwiley@iaff.org](mailto:jwiley@iaff.org)

## THE FIREFIGHTER'S PRAYER

This poem is often used at Line-of-Duty Death Memorials and has been included in this guide for your reference.

*When I am called to duty, God  
Wherever flames may rage  
Give me strength to save a life  
Whatever be its age.*

*Let me embrace a little child  
Before it is too late,  
Or save another person from  
The horror of that fate.*

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

*I want to fill my calling  
To give the best in me  
To guard my friend and neighbor  
And protect their property.*

*And, if according to your will  
I must answer my final call,  
Bless with your protecting hand  
My family one and all.*

-ANONYMOUS







## CALIFORNIA LAST ALARM SERVICE TEAM (CAL-LAST)

The sudden loss of a firefighter in the line of duty invariably comes as a shock to all – not just the family but also the fallen firefighter’s department or local union.

To address this need, the California Fire Foundation has collaborated with the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF) to provide comprehensive support for local fire departments that lose one of their own in the line of duty. In a landmark partnership, the California Fire Foundation – a 501(c)3 non-profit organization formed in 1987 to serve firefighters, their families and their communities – has been designated as the exclusive administrator of this unique and extensive line-of-duty death assistance program for the state of California. The California Last Alarm Service Team (Cal-LAST), funded by the Department of Justice, provides departments and local unions with an experienced team providing support on every aspect of a line of duty death:

- **Grief counseling**
- **Family benefits consulting**
- **Funeral and memorial service arrangements**

The California Fire Foundation’s exclusive partnership with the NFFF to provide LAST support in California is unique in that it recognizes not only traumatic line-of-duty deaths, but also those fatalities occurring from illness directly related to the firefighting occupation.

For more information visit  
[www.cafirefoundation.org](http://www.cafirefoundation.org)