

# **LODD RESPONSE FOR WYOMING FIRE DEPARTMENTS**

**Department of Fire Prevention  
& Electrical Safety**  
August 2010 – 4<sup>th</sup> Edition

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## *Department Of Fire Prevention & Electrical Safety*

**DAVE FREUDENTHAL**  
GOVERNOR

**LANNY APPEGATE**  
STATE FIRE MARSHAL

To: The Wyoming Fire Service

The Wyoming Department of Fire Prevention and Electrical Safety is committed to improving the health and safety of firefighters. This mission has created an accompanying interest in making sure that not only are our firefighters safe, but if tragedy should strike, their families, friends and fellow firefighters have a guide to assist them during the difficult times to come.

As such, we would like to present to you the Line of Duty Death (LODD) Manual for Wyoming Fire Departments. This manual is intended as an easy to use reference manual to aid any Wyoming fire department, which suffers the tragedy of a Line of Duty Death. It is the result of work done by a lot of individuals and I would like to thank all those who participated in its compilation.

A line of duty death and injury can occur at any time, during any response and on any incident, even in "routine" situations. The hope is that it will never happen to you, your department, or anyone you know, but should it occur the Department of Fire Prevention and Electrical Safety wanted you to have as many resources as necessary to help with this difficult time.

Recently US Fire Administrator R. David Paulison made the following comment:

"Fires don't distinguish. They kill volunteers and career firefighters alike. We must look beyond self-imposed labels to fight a common enemy. Only when we are a united fire service can we hope to meet the challenges."

We hope that your agency never has to experience a Line of Duty Death or Injury, but the Department of Fire Prevention and Electrical Safety is here to help you through these difficult times. If you should feel the need to contact us please do not hesitate, and thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Lanny Applegate  
Wyoming State Fire Marshal



# WYOMING FIREFIGHTER LODD RESPONSE PLAN

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## CONTACTS

**Call DCI Immediately  
DCI will contact the SFMO  
Fire Chief should contact SFMO directly within 24 hours**

<b>Wyoming Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI)</b>	<b>307-777-7545</b>
<b>DFPES Fire Investigator (DCI)</b>	<b>307-777-7545</b>
<b>Wyoming OSHA</b>	<b>307-777-7786</b>
<b>Wyoming State Fire Marshal (Cheyenne)</b>	<b>307-777-7288</b>
<b>DFPES Training Manager</b>	<b>307-777-7288</b>
<b>DFPES Riverton Office</b>	<b>307-857-6820</b>
<b>Department of Justice Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program</b>	<b>888-744-6513</b>
<b>National Fallen Firefighters Foundation</b>	<b>301-447-1365</b>
<b>Wyoming Workers' Safety &amp; Compensation</b>	<b>307-777-7441</b>
<b>Wyoming Retirement System</b>	<b>307-777-7691</b>
<b>Wyoming State Firemen's Association – Gene Diedtrich (Wyoming Fire Mutual Aid Program)</b>	<b>307-746-2180</b>



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## INITIAL STEPS TO TAKE

Here are important steps a department needs to take to help the firefighter's family, members of the department, and the community, for additional information see the section "Steps for Filing a PSOB Claim" on page 5.

1. Notify the family of the fallen firefighter.
2. Once you are sure this has happened, get information to members of the department, local and state officials, and the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation. Help is available from the Foundation's [Local Assistance State Teams](#). To report an LODD, please call toll free at 866-736-5868.
3. Contact the Department of Justice's Public Safety Officer's Benefits (PSOB) Program at (888) 744-6513. When you report a firefighter death, have basic information available on the incident, your department, and the fallen firefighter and his or her immediate next-of-kin.

PSOB offers a lump sum death benefit to survivors of public safety officers who die in the line of duty from a traumatic injury or heart attack. There are many procedures that need to be followed. Call PSOB even if you are not sure whether your firefighter's family will qualify for benefits under this program.

4. Use the checklist provided on page 2 to determine what needs to be done immediately, before and during the funeral, and longer term. Be sure you know what the requirements are in your jurisdiction for conducting an autopsy. You can call the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation and they will fax your state information.

If you would like to speak directly with another senior fire officer who has lost a firefighter in the line of duty and can offer some professional and personal support, contact the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation at (301) 447-1365.

5. Find out what benefits exist for survivors of fallen firefighters in Wyoming at [www.firehero.org](http://www.firehero.org) and rollover "Department Resources" and click "Benefits." Then start contacting the state officials for each program. Benefits may include lump sum death payments, workers' compensation, funeral benefits, pensions and retirement programs, scholarships, and non-profit/private support.
6. At the family's request, begin preparations for a fire service funeral or memorial service. The information included in this manual will help you plan a fitting tribute. Let the family know about organizations that provide funeral services and fire service uniforms free of charge. On page 10 there are Special Programs for Fallen Firefighters.

Let the family know the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation has a Survivors Benefits Guide and a network of survivors who can help them through the maze of paperwork. There is also a handbook available for departments on the full range of benefits for which a family may be eligible.



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## ACTION CHECKLIST

### First 24 Hours

#### **Notification**

Assign a 2- person team to notify the firefighter's family, in person, before releasing any information.

Notify all on- and off- duty personnel, including chaplain.

Notify elected officials and other key people in the community of the death.

Notify all other fire chiefs in the jurisdiction.

Notify the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program office (see page 14).

Notify Wyoming OSHA at (307) 777-7786.

#### **Family Support**

Designate a family support liaison (team) and offer to stay with the family around the clock.

Designate a hospital liaison, if appropriate.

Meet with the family to explain the support the fire department can provide and any immediate support they can offer. Be prepared to explain why an autopsy may be required.

Collect the deceased firefighter's department belongings to give to the family later. Inventory and document in the presence of a witness. If some belongings will be held during the investigation, explain this to the family.

#### **Department Support**

Contact the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation's Chief-to-Chief Network at (301) 447-1365, as needed, for assistance.

Arrange critical incident stress debriefing for the department (see page 89 for contact list).

#### **Dealing with the Incident**

Determine the type of firefighter fatality investigation to conduct in addition to the NIOSH investigation (i.e., internal or external board of inquiry; arson – accident or homicide – related).

Contact the departmental or jurisdictional attorney regarding possible legal issues.

#### **Dealing with the Community & the Media**

Appoint an appropriately trained Public Information Officer to coordinate media activities.

Prepare a summary of facts about the firefighter and the incident to use for public release of information.

Prepare a written statement for the chief or spokesperson to release to the media.

Hold a briefing with the media.

Schedule regular media briefings and forward updates as appropriate.



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## Day Two Through The Funeral

### Funeral/Memorial Service

Assist the family in planning the funeral as they choose.

Continue to inform department members of the details regarding the incident and the funeral/memorial service plans.

Coordinate plans for fire department participation in funeral.

### Family Support

Request that local law enforcement officials make routine checks of the family residence during the funeral and for several weeks afterwards.

Assist the family with tasks related to home maintenance, transportation for out-of-town family and friends, childcare, etc.

### Department Support

Monitor department members closest to the incident and the fallen firefighter to see how they are dealing with the loss.

## After The Funeral

### Family Support

Continue to invite the family to department events and activities.

Provide assistance with routine tasks (home maintenance, running errands, childcare, etc.).

Assign someone to assist the family in accessing all benefits for which they may be eligible.

Offer to "be there" at special times/events (children's activities, birthdays, holidays, etc.).

### Department Support

Assist department members in accessing additional support, as needed.

### Memorials & Tributes

Inform and include families in local, state, and national tributes to the firefighter.

Make the family aware of the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation and support programs for fire service survivors (contact number: 301-447-1365).

Plan to attend the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Weekend and to send an escort and honor guard unit for the family.

### Department Issues/Planning

Update Emergency Contact Information for all department members.

Create or revise the department's Line-of-Duty Death plan.



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## FINANCIAL BENEFITS CHECKLIST

Consider each of the following benefits. Are families of your department members eligible for them? If so, do you know how to access the benefits? Some of these are based on previous service. Does your department have personnel records that reflect these? Click [here](#), to see what is available in Wyoming.

Source of Benefit	Are these benefits available to your firefighters?			
	Yes	No	Need More Info	Notes/Action Needed
<b>FEDERAL</b>				
Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program				
Public Safety Officers' Educational Assistance Program				
Social Security				
Veterans' Benefits				
<b>STATE</b>				
One-time Death Benefit				
Workers' Compensation				
Funeral Benefits				
Retirement/Pension Plan				
Health Insurance				
Education Benefit for Children				
Education Benefit for Spouse				
<b>LOCAL GOVERNMENT</b>				
Health Insurance				
Life Insurance				
Education Benefits for Children				
Education Benefits for Spouses				
Employee Assistance Program				
Retirement/Pension Plan				
Final Paycheck				
<b>NON-PROFIT</b>				
Education Benefits for Children				
Education Benefits for Spouses				
Booster Club, 100 Club, Heroes, Blue Coats, etc.				
<b>PRIVATE</b>				
Individual insurance policies				
Individual estate planning				



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## STEPS FOR FILING A PSOB CLAIM

**Step 1 - Immediately** after the fatality the department/agency must:

1. Notify the family.
2. Secure the scene.
3. Begin an investigation of the incident.
4. Make arrangements for an autopsy.
5. Identify a department member to serve as a liaison between the department/agency and the PSOB office.

**Step 2 - Immediately** after being named the department's liaison, the liaison must:

1. Call PSOB staff at 1-888-744-6513.
2. Provide accurate, up-to-date information including:
  - Fire department/agency name
  - Liaison's name
  - Phone numbers for the department/agency and liaison
  - A fax number or mailing address so PSOB can send the claim initiation guidance letter
  - Deceased firefighter's name
  - Date of incident and date of death
  - A brief description of the incident

Relay the information very carefully and include only what is known. Do not speculate on the cause of death if you do not know it.

**On evenings, weekends, and holidays, leave a phone message with the liaison's name and telephone numbers.**

**Step 3 - PSOB responds.** After receiving the call, PSOB will fax or mail a "Claim Guidance Package" to the department liaison as soon as possible. The package will include:

- Claim initiation guidance letter
- Report of Public Safety Officer's Death form and Claim for Death Benefits form
- Consent to Release Confidential Information form
- PSOB Act



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**Step 4 - After receiving the Claims Guidance Package**, the department liaison should:

1. Meet with the claimant (the immediate next-of-kin) and together complete the Claim for Death Benefits and the Report of Public Safety Officer's Death forms.
2. Assure that the family provides a copy of the death notice.
3. Gather the other documentation requested in the claim initiation guidance letter.
4. Submit completed forms and all supporting documentation to PSOB as soon as possible.

**Step 5 - Upon receiving the documentation**, the PSOB specialist will:

1. Review the package.
2. May contact the department liaison and/or family if further information is needed.
3. Submits unresolved medical questions to an independent physician for review.

**Step 6 - PSOB staff evaluates the file** and prepare a determination which is routed for review by staff and the Office of General Counsel.

**Step 7 - If the claim is approved** the PSOB office will send a letter notifying the claimant and the department of the decision on the claim.

**Step 8 - If the claim is denied** the PSOB Specialist will:

1. Send a letter notifying the claimant and the department of the denial of the claim.
2. Provide information on the appeals process.



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## HELPING THE FAMILY: AT THE HOSPITAL OR THE MORGUE

- Have a member of the department drive the family to the hospital or morgue and stay for as long as necessary.
- Work with the hospital staff to secure a private room where the family can gather. This should be separate from the general waiting area, if possible.
- Assist the family in dealing with hospital staff. If you have EMT's in the department, ask them to help with their hospital contacts.
- Provide assistance to the family in making calls to relatives and close friends. Answer incoming calls for the family or get messages to them at the hospital.
- Work with the family to set guidelines for dealing with the media. The family may wish to have a member of the department speak for them.
- In cases of extended hospitalization, offer to assist with day-to-day tasks such as home maintenance, arranging childcare, or bringing meals and other necessities to the family.
- If the firefighter is taken to a specialized hospital out of the local area, assist with this process. Consider asking another department close to that hospital to assist you in supporting the family while the firefighter remains hospitalized. This is not solely a function of the department of firefighters. Church members, friends, or other family members may desire to help or assist.
- Encourage the family to spend time with the firefighter, regardless of the type of injury.
- If the firefighter's body is badly burned or disfigured, help prepare the family members for what they will see. Always allow family members to make the decision whether or not to view the body.
- Have someone available to drive the family home from the hospital after the death. Offer to help with continuing visits as much as resources allow. Offer to stay with the family at the house.
- Help the family keep track of incoming medical bills and organize files for claims.



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## **HELPING THE FAMILY: FROM TIME OF DEATH THROUGH THE FUNERAL**

- Contact the Department of Justice to notify them of the death. This will begin the process of reviewing eligibility for the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program.
- Contact the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation to notify them of the death. This will assure the beginning of emotional support for both the family and the department.
- Work with the family in planning the funeral. Remember that the family's wishes always come first. If they want a private funeral, the department can still hold a memorial service if the family will allow.
- If the family wants a fire service funeral, secure a uniform for the burial.
- If there are children in the family, consider creating a special role for them, such as riding on the fire truck in the funeral procession. (Be sure to ask the parent before this idea is presented to the children!)
- Offer to assist with lodging or transportation for out of town relatives and friends.
- Offer to have a member of the department stay with the family prior to the funeral. In smaller departments, consider rotating people as needed in order to maintain a department presence with the family. Church members, friends, and other family members may desire to help or assist.
- Have someone available for tasks such as answering the phone, driving the family to the funeral home to make arrangements, or running errands.
- Help coordinate household duties such as food preparation, cleaning, and childcare. Do necessary maintenance such as mowing the grass or clearing the snow.
- If donations are collected for the family, set up a bank account to deposit these funds at a location approved by the family.
- Coordinate with local law enforcement officials to make routine checks of residence/neighborhood.



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## HELPING THE FAMILY: ONGOING SUPPORT

- Only promise what you actually can do. Keep all your promises.
- Instead of saying, “Call if you need anything” offer to help with specific tasks and then follow through. For instance, say “I would like to come over on Friday to fix the fence.”
- Continue to talk with the family about your memories of the firefighter. Most families want to hear about their loved one, even if it is emotionally difficult.
- Remember that parents of a fallen firefighter need support and contact just like spouses and children do.
- Help with what the firefighter used to do; yard work, fixing things around the house, attending children’s sports and school events, etc.
- Take all steps necessary to secure benefits for the family. This process is often lengthy, so keep the family involved.
- Follow through with all steps necessary to secure benefits for the family. The process is often lengthy, so keep the family updated about this.
- Continue to invite the family to department events, but don’t be disappointed if they do not always attend.
- Remember that some events, such as holidays and the anniversary of the date of death, may be especially difficult for the family. Even families who seem to be doing well may need extra support and contact during these times.
- Contact the family before releasing any information on investigations, incident reports, etc.
- Consider creating some kind of tribute to the fallen firefighter to present to the family. This could be a local memorial, a video tribute, a scrapbook, or a scholarship in the firefighter’s name. Prepare a tribute that is fitting for your firefighter and special to the family.
- Provide survivors with information on the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation’s programs for survivors. Contact the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation to get support for the family at (301) 447-1365 or visit <http://www.firehero.org>.
- Encourage the family to attend the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Weekend and other local, state, and national tributes. Offer to help make travel arrangements and attend them with the family whenever possible.



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## SPECIAL PROGRAMS FOR FALLEN FIREFIGHTERS

### **Lighthouse Uniform Company**

Any firefighter, killed in the line of duty, will be provided, for burial purpose, at request of the immediate family, a Class A Dress Uniform.

There is no charge for the uniform, Maltese Crosses or appropriate rank collar pins. The only cost involved is for freight, which would be billed to the affiliated department.

The FALLEN FIREFIGHTER DRESS UNIFORM PROGRAM is a service provided by Lighthouse Uniform Company, with the hope that in some small way, it will help with the grieving process, and to also let firefighters across the country know, that the company is thinking of them and appreciates all they do in all of our communities.

**Contact:** Lighthouse Uniform Company - <http://www.lighthouseuniform.com>  
1-800-426-5225

### **Dignity Memorial®**

Recognizing the courage and selflessness of those who serve the public, Dignity Memorial® funeral, cremation and cemetery providers created the Public Servants Program for emergency service personnel. This benefit provides dignified and honorable tributes, at no cost, for career and volunteer law enforcement officers and firefighters who fall in the line of duty.

**Contact:** Dignity Memorial® - <http://www.dignitymemorial.com>  
1-800-344-6489

## RESOURCE LIST FROM THE NATIONAL FALLEN FIREFIGHTERS FOUNDATION

The National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF) has compiled a list of resources based upon recommendations from fire departments and grief specialists. The resource list contains information on the following; an autopsy guide, benefits, funeral guides, investigation, and specialized websites. Please check for current additions, new additions and updates to existing resources at their website, <http://www.firehero.org/resources/departments>.



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## NATIONAL FALLEN FIREFIGHTERS FOUNDATION WEBSITE MAP

### *Taking Care of Our Own*® Training

- Detailed information on the *Taking Care of Our Own*® training class
- Resources and support for forming state and regional line-of-duty death response teams
- Resources to help departments create line-of-duty death procedures
- Online forms to request information and support

### Benefits

- Comprehensive listing of survivor benefits by state
- Information on federal benefits for fire service survivors
- Information on benefits for survivors of federal firefighters
- Scholarship programs and information about other educational assistance

### Handling Line-of-Duty Deaths

- Resources to help departments immediately after the death of a firefighter
- Information about the Public Safety Officer's Benefits program
- Downloadable funeral guide
- Criteria for inclusion on the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial

### Fallen Heroes

- Searchable database of fallen fire heroes honored at the National Memorial
- Personal tribute pages created by families and friends
- Examples of how families, departments, and communities have honored fallen firefighters
- Comprehensive list of state memorials honoring fallen firefighters

### Family Programs

- Information on support programs for families
- Specialized grief brochures and recent issues of survivor newsletter
- A lending library of materials dealing with grief and loss
- Links to other resources and organizations
- Online forms to request information and support

### Fire Service Programs

- National initiatives to prevent firefighter line-of-duty deaths
- Ways for members of the fire service to be involved with the Foundation's programs

### Walk of Honor

- Searchable database of inscribed bricks on the Walk of Honor
- Images and information about the National Memorial Park

### Memorial Weekend

- Detailed information on this annual national event
- Information on how family members, friends, and members of the fire service can participate



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## STATE BENEFITS

The surviving spouse receives benefits based on a percentage of wages at the time of death compared to the Statewide Average Wage for 100 months. If there is no spouse, the child or each child will receive a portion of the spouse benefit in addition to their monthly benefit in accordance with Wyoming Statute 27-14-403(c). If there are no dependents and the case is compensable it will be opened for payment of funeral and medical expenses only.

Dependent children's benefits are calculated to the age of 21 or age 25 if mentally or physically handicapped, or if in post secondary education. This is subject to a cost of living adjustment annually.

The burial expenses of the deceased shall be paid in an amount not to exceed five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00) together with an additional amount of five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00) to cover other related expenses, unless other arrangements exist between the employer and employee under agreement.

In all cases of injury resulting in death, an Application for Death Benefits must be filed with the Division within one year from the date of death. The date of death, regardless of the date of injury, will be used to determine benefits.

The application for death benefits will be reviewed to determine if all appropriate documents were submitted to substantiate entitlement to surviving spouse and/or dependent children. Appropriate documents would include:

- Death Certificate
- Marriage Certificate
- Birth Certificate of surviving spouse
- Birth Certificate of each dependent child
- Adoption order if applicable
- If stepchildren are claimed as dependents, proof of spouse custody agreement must be received.

**Contact:** Wyoming Workers' Safety and Compensation Division, State of Wyoming Department of Employment, 1510 E. Pershing Blvd., Cheyenne, WY 82002 – (307) 777-7768 or visit <http://wydoe.state.wy.us>.

### Retirement/Pension Plan

**Volunteer Firefighters:** Volunteer Firemen's Pension Fund. The Firefighter must have been a member of the Fund prior to death. The surviving spouse would receive a monthly payment based on the age at the time the member entered the pension plan. For more information, please visit <http://retirement.state.wy.us/pdfs/volfirehandbook.pdf>.

**Career Firefighters:** Firemen's Pension Fund Act. **Plan A:** For firefighters employed prior to July 1, 1981, death benefit to the surviving spouse or children is 100% of the monthly benefit payable to the firefighter. If no spouse or children, dependent parents may receive the full benefit. **Plan B:** For firefighters employed after July 1, 1981, a monthly survivor's benefit is payable to your spouse



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or, if you do not have a spouse, is divided in equal shares among your dependent children. The amount of the survivor's benefit shall be the greater of:

1. Fifty percent (50%) of your final average salary, or
2. The service pension, based on credited service accrued to the date of your death.

**For more information contact:** Wyoming Retirement System, Fifth Floor West, 6101 Yellowstone Road, Cheyenne, WY 82002 at (307) 777-7691 or visit <http://retirement.state.wy.us>.

## **Education Benefit – Children**

Surviving dependents receive free tuition from the University of Wyoming or any Wyoming Community College for up to ten (10) semesters. If a dependent attends a community college and transfers to the University of Wyoming, the dependant will receive free tuition for a total of ten semesters.

Benefit is available to surviving dependents of volunteer and career firefighters who died while acting within the scope of their duties. Surviving dependents must have been under 22 years old at the time of the firefighter's death to qualify for the benefit.

## **Education Benefit – Spouse**

None.

## **Non – Profit or Private Organizations**

Wyoming Fire Mutual Aid Program  
P.O. Box 940  
Newcastle, WY 82701  
(307) 746-4410

Provides \$1,000 benefit based on contributions from other Wyoming firefighters. Firefighter must have been a member of the program prior to death.



# WYOMING FIREFIGHTER LODD RESPONSE PLAN

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Marshal

Department of  
Fire Prevention &  
Electrical Safety

## PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS' BENEFITS PROGRAM

Survivors of Federal civilian employees may be eligible for some or all of the following benefits:

**Public Safety Officers' Benefits**, administered by the Department of Justice

**Lump sum payment** for final pay and unused annual leave

Death gratuity payments for **burial expenses** approved by agency head

**Workers' compensation** benefits administered by the Department of Labor's Office of Workers' Compensation Programs

**Retirement** under the Civil Service Retirement System or the Federal Employees Retirement System administered by the Office of Personnel Management

**Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance** proceeds

**Health Insurance benefits**

**Social Security** survivors benefits administered by the Social Security Administration

**Educational benefits** for spouse and children

Families of fallen wildland firefighters may receive aid from **Wildland Foundations' Benefit Program**

For detailed information on the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Act, please visit the PSOB website at [http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/psob/psob\\_main.html](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/psob/psob_main.html).

The Public Safety Officers' Benefits Act of 1976, as amended, authorizes the Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, to pay a benefit to specified survivors of public safety officers found to have died as the direct and proximate result of a personal, traumatic injury involving external force sustained in the line of duty, and to claimant public safety officers found to have been permanently and totally disabled as the direct result of a catastrophic injury sustained in the line of duty.

On December 15, 2003, President Bush signed the Hometown Heroes Survivors Benefits Act. The law expands the Federal benefit to include heart attacks or strokes while engaged in non-routine stressful or strenuous emergency response or strenuous physical activity. The law also includes deaths while still on duty after such duties or within 24 hours. The new law applies to deaths from December 15, 2003, forward and is not retroactive.

Due to the unprecedented loss of life by public safety officers on September 11, 2001, Congress increased the one time payment to \$250,000, retroactive for all eligible deaths on or after January 1, 2001. The payment is adjusted each year on October 1 to reflect the percentage of change in the Consumer Price Index. As of October 1, 2009, benefit amount is \$311,810.00.

A public safety officer is defined to be any individual serving a public agency in an official capacity, with or without compensation, as a law enforcement officer, police, corrections, probation, parole and



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judicial officer, firefighter, rescue squad member or ambulance crew member. Retroactive to September 11, 2001, chaplains are included in the definition of a public safety officer.

A public agency means an agency of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and any territory or possession of the United States, or any unit of State or local government. **Seasonal wildland firefighters are included in this definition.**

The death benefit is payable in a lump sum to the spouse and eligible children of a deceased public safety officer. One half of the benefit would be paid to the spouse, and one half of the benefit would be paid, in equal amounts, to the eligible children. Eligible children are defined as children 18 years of age or younger, children 19 through 22 years of age who are fulltime students, and children 19 years of age or over and incapable of self support because of a physical or mental disability.

The death benefit is payable to a qualified survivor of a Federal employee in addition to death benefits payable to the survivor from the Civil Service Retirement System, the Federal Employees Retirement System, and Department of Labor's Office of Workers' Compensation Program under subchapter I of chapter 81 of title 5, United States Code.

Amendments to the Act in 2002 changed the hierarchy for benefits. If there is no surviving spouse or children eligible for the benefit, the payment will go to the person designated in the most recently executed life insurance policy, if that person survives the fallen public safety officer. Previously, the parents of a fallen firefighter received the benefit if there were no surviving spouse or eligible children.

## Death Benefits

The PSOB Program provides a one time financial benefit to the eligible survivors of public safety officers whose deaths are the direct and proximate result of a traumatic injury sustained in the line of duty. Information pertaining to eligibility, applying for and receiving benefits can be found at the PSOB website, [http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/psob/psob\\_death.html](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/psob/psob_death.html).

Forms that need to be completed include:

- Report of Public Safety Officer's Death
- Claim Form for PSOB Death Benefits
- Consent to Release Information form

\* **The report and claim forms may be completed and submitted at <https://www.psob.gov>.**

## Disability Benefits

The PSOB Program provides disability benefits to public safety officers who have been permanently and totally disabled by a catastrophic personal injury sustained in the line of duty if that injury permanently prevents the officer from performing any substantial and gainful work. Medical retirement for a line-of duty disability does not, in and of itself, establish eligibility for PSOB benefits. Information pertaining to eligibility, applying for, reviewing, and payment of disability benefits can be found at the PSOB website, [http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/psob/psob\\_disability.html](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/psob/psob_disability.html).

Forms that need to be completed include:

- Claim Form for PSOB Disability Benefits



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## LUMP SUM DEATH BENEFITS

### **Unpaid Salary and Leave Owed to Deceased Employee**

When a Federal employee dies in service, his or her survivors will receive a lump sum payment covering the deceased's final pay and unused annual leave. This lump sum is paid by the employing agency under the same order of precedence as the other payments described. **Seasonal wildland firefighters are included in this definition.**

### **Death Gratuity Payment**

PL 104-208 allows the head of the department or agency to authorize a death gratuity of up to \$10,000. This amount for burial costs and out-of-pocket expenses may be paid to the personal representative of any Federal employee who dies from an injury sustained in the line of duty. While the payment is discretionary, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) encourages all department and agency heads to make full use of this authority. This also includes an agency employee who dies after separation from service if death resulted from an injury sustained in the line of duty on or after August 2, 1990. **Seasonal wildland firefighters are included in this definition.**

Section 651 of this law also specifies that the amount paid under these authorities **may not be reduced** by any other amounts, including other benefits payable under the Federal Workers' Compensation program.

The gratuity, when combined with certain other payments, may not exceed \$10,000. The other payments that must be considered are:

- up to \$800 payable by the Department of Labor to a surviving spouse or children for funeral and burial expenses of a Federal employee who died as a result of injuries sustained in the line-of-duty;
- \$200 payable by the Department of Labor for reimbursement of the costs of termination of the deceased employee's status as a Federal employee;
- any amount paid under Public Law 103-332 to the representative of any employee of any department or agency with appropriations from a Department of Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act who is killed in the line-of-duty.



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## FEDERAL EMPLOYEES' COMPENSATION ACT

Below you will find a summary of the Federal Employees' Compensation Act. For more detailed information, visit the Department of Labor website, <http://www.dol.gov/dol/compliance/comp-feca.htm>.

### Workers' Compensation Benefits

The Federal Employees' Compensation Act is administered by the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs of the U.S. Department of Labor. It provides compensation benefits to civilian employees of the United States for disability or death of an employee resulting from personal injury sustained while in the performance of duty or to employment-related disease. **Seasonal wildland firefighters are included in this definition.**

It also provides for the payment of benefits to dependents if the injury or disease causes the employee's death. Detailed information is available at the [Department of Labor](#) website.

### Survivor Benefits

If no child is eligible for benefits, the widow or widower's compensation is 50% of the monthly pay at the time of death, if death was due to an employment-related injury or disease. If a child or children are eligible for benefits, the widow or widower is entitled to 45% of the pay and each child is entitled to 15%. The total compensation may not be more than 75% of the employee's pay or the pay of the highest step for GS-15 of the General Schedule, except when such excess is created by authorized cost-of-living increases.

If children are the sole survivors, 40% is paid for one child and 15% for each additional child, to be shared equally. Other persons such as dependent parents, brothers, sisters, grandparents, and grandchildren may also be entitled to benefits. The total compensation may not exceed 75% of the employee's pay or the pay of the highest step for GS-15 of the General Schedule, except when such excess is created by authorized cost-of-living increases.

**Compensation benefits will be reduced if the employee was covered under the Federal Employees Retirement System and the survivors are eligible for Social Security benefits based on the Federal employment**

Compensation to an employee's surviving spouse terminates upon his or her death or remarriage. However, a widow or widower's benefit continues if the remarriage takes place after the age of 55. On remarriage before age 55, a spouse entitled to compensation under this program will receive a lump sum equal to 24 times the monthly compensation payment to which the spouse was entitled immediately before the remarriage.

Awards to children, brothers, sisters and grandchildren terminate at the age of 18, unless the dependent is incapable of self-support, or continues to be a full-time student at an accredited institution, until he or she reaches the age of 23, or has completed four years of education beyond the high school level. Funeral and burial expenses not to exceed \$800 are payable. Transportation of the body to the employee's former residence in the United States is provided where death occurs away from the employee's home station. In addition to any burial expenses or transportation costs, a \$200 allowance is



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paid for the administrative costs of terminating an employee's status with the Federal Government. (See Lump Sum Death Benefits section for more information on burial expenses)

Payments for disability or death are increased by cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs). COLAs are applied to payments based on a disability or death that occurred more than one year before March 1 of each year. The COLA is effective on March 1 of each year and the increase is equal to the percentage change in the Consumer Price Index published for December of the preceding year.



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## RETIREMENT BENEFITS FOR SURVIVORS

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) administers both the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) and the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS). These systems only cover full-time employees. An eligible survivor of a Federal civilian employee killed in the line of duty may qualify for a recurring CSRS or FERS monthly survivor annuity. For more detailed information, please visit OPM's website, <http://www.opm.gov>.

In most cases, workers' compensation benefits and Federal retirement benefits cannot be paid for the same period of time. This means that the survivor must choose between the two benefits. In most cases, the primary benefits are paid by the Department of Labor. **If the survivor chooses benefits from the Department of Labor (workers' compensation), the survivor will receive a lump sum payment of the employee's retirement contribution under CSRS or FERS.**

For more information, please see Civil Service Retirement System Benefits on page 20 and Federal Employees Retirement System Benefits on page 22.



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## CIVIL SERVICE RETIREMENT SYSTEM BENEFITS

<http://www.opm.gov>

### **Monthly Survivor Annuity is Payable**

#### **To the Current Spouse if:**

- the employee who died completed at least 18 months of creditable civilian service,
- the employee who died was covered by the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) when he/she died, and
- the current spouse was married to the employee for at least nine months (if the death was accidental or there was a child born of your marriage to the employee, the nine month requirement does not apply).

If a court order awards part of the total survivor annuity to a former spouse, the current spouse will receive the remainder. If the former spouse loses entitlement because of death or remarriage before age 55, the current spouse may begin to receive the full annuity.

If the employee's death was job-related, workers' compensation benefits may be payable.

#### **To a Former Spouse if:**

- specified under a qualifying court order,
- the employee who died completed at least 18 months of creditable civilian service,
- the former spouse was married to the employee for at least nine months, and
- the former spouse did not remarry before reaching age 55 (unless he/she was married to the deceased for at least 30 years).

#### **To a Child if:**

- the employee completed at least 18 months of creditable civilian service, and
- the child is an –
  - unmarried dependent child under age 18, and/or
  - unmarried dependent child from age 18 to age 22, if attending an accredited educational institution full-time, and/or
  - unmarried, disabled dependent child if the disability occurred before age 18.

### **Lump Sum Benefit if Payable**

If an employee dies and no survivor annuity is payable based on his/her death, the retirement contributions remaining to the deceased person's credit in the Civil Service Retirement and Disability Fund, plus applicable interest, are payable.



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## Payees for Lump Sum Benefits

If a lump sum benefit is payable, it is paid to the first person eligible under the following order of precedence:

- to the designated beneficiary;
- if there is no such beneficiary, to the widow or widower;
- if none of the above, to the child or children, with the share of any deceased child distributed among the descendants of that child;
- if none of the above, to the parents in equal shares or the entire amount to a surviving parent;
- if none of the above, to the executor or administrator of the estate; or
- if none of the above, to the next of kin as determined under the laws of the State where the retiree lived.

## When Benefits Begin

### Widow or Widower

- Your survivor annuity begins on the day after the employee's or retiree's death. If you are eligible for benefits and we are unable to pay you because a former spouse is entitled, your annuity would begin the day after the former spouse loses entitlement to benefits.

### Former Spouse

- If you are a former spouse who was awarded a survivor annuity based on a court order, your survivor annuity begins to accrue on whichever days is later:
  - the day after the employee's or retiree's death, or
  - the first day of the second month after we receive a certified copy of the court order along with any additional necessary supporting documentation.
  - If you are eligible for benefits and we are unable to pay you because another former spouse is entitled, your annuity would begin the day after the former spouse loses entitlement to benefit.

### Child

- Your survivor annuity begins to accrue on the day after the employee's or retiree's death.



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## **FEDERAL EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT SYSTEM BENEFITS**

<http://www.opm.gov>

### **Basic Employee Death Benefit is Payable**

#### **To the Current Spouse if:**

- the employee who died completed at least 18 months of creditable civilian service,
- the employee who died was covered by the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) when he/she died, and
- the current spouse was married to the employee for at least nine months (if the death was accidental or there was a child born of your marriage to the employee, the nine month requirement does not apply).

#### **To a Former Spouse if:**

- a qualifying court order is on file at the Office of Personnel Management (OPM),
- the former spouse was married to the deceased for a total period of at least nine months, and
- the former spouse did not remarry before reaching age 55 (unless he/she was married to the deceased for at least 30 years).

### **Amount of Basic Employee Death Benefit**

- 50% of the employee's final salary (average salary, if higher), plus
- \$15,000 increased by Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) cost-of-living adjustments beginning 12/1/87. For deaths on or after 12/1/07, this amount is \$28,093.53. It will be updated by future CSRS cost-of-living adjustments.

### **Monthly Survivor Benefit is Payable**

#### **To the Current Spouse if:**

- the employee who died completed at least 10 years of creditable service (18 months of which must be creditable civilian service),
- the employee who died was covered by the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) when he/she died, and
- the current spouse was married to the employee for at least nine months (if the death was accidental or there was a child born of your marriage to the employee, the nine month requirement does not apply).

If a court order awards part of the total survivor annuity to a former spouse, the current spouse will receive the remainder. If the former spouse loses entitlement because of death or remarriage before age 55, the current spouse may begin to receive the full annuity.



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If the employee's death was job-related, workers' compensation benefits may be payable.

## To a Former Spouse if:

- specified under a qualifying court order,
- the employee who died completed at least 18 months of creditable civilian service,
- the former spouse was married to the employee for at least nine months, and
- the former spouse did not remarry before reaching age 55 (unless he/she was married to the deceased for at least 30 years).

## To a Child if:

- the employee completed at least 18 months of creditable civilian service, and
- the child is an –
  - unmarried dependent child under age 18, and/or
  - unmarried dependent child from age 18 to age 22, if attending an accredited educational institution full-time, and/or
  - unmarried, disabled dependent child if the disability (certified as such by the Social Security Administration) occurred before age 18.

The combined benefit of all the children is reduced by the total amount of child's insurance benefits that are payable (or would, upon proper application, be payable) under Title II of the Social Security Act for the same month to all children of the deceased based on the total earnings of the deceased. In many cases, the FERS children's benefit is reduced to \$0.

## Lump Sum Benefit if Payable

If an employee dies and no survivor annuity is payable based on his/her death, the retirement contributions remaining to the deceased person's credit in the Civil Service Retirement and Disability Fund, plus applicable interest, are payable.

## Payees for Lump Sum Benefits

If a lump sum benefit is payable, it is paid to the first person eligible under the following order of precedence:

- to the designated beneficiary;
- if there is no such beneficiary, to the widow or widower;
- if none of the above, to the child or children, with the share of any deceased child distributed among the descendants of that child;
- if none of the above, to the parents in equal shares or the entire amount to a surviving parent;
- if none of the above, to the executor or administrator of the estate; or
- if none of the above, to the next of kin as determined under the laws of the State where the retiree lived.



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## When Benefits Begin

### Widow or Widower

- Your survivor annuity begins on the day after the employee's or retiree's death. If you are eligible for benefits and we are unable to pay you because a former spouse is entitled, your annuity would begin the day after the former spouse loses entitlement to benefits.

### Former Spouse

- If you are a former spouse who was awarded a survivor annuity based on a court order, your survivor annuity begins to accrue on whichever day is later:
  - the day after the employee's or retiree's death, or
  - the first day of the second month after we receive a certified copy of the court order along with any additional necessary supporting documentation.
- If you are eligible for benefits and we are unable to pay you because another former spouse is entitled, your annuity would begin the day after the former spouse loses entitlement to benefit.



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## INSURANCE BENEFITS

### **Life Insurance Benefits**

Beneficiaries of employees covered under the Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) Program are entitled to Basic insurance death benefits.

Family members must report the death to the human resources office of the deceased's agency. The following information should be included:

- deceased employee's full name
- deceased employee's Social Security Number
- date of death

The Basic insurance amount is equal to an employee's annual salary, rounded up to the next thousand-dollar amount, plus \$2,000. (A higher amount is payable if an employee was under age 45 at the time of death.)

If an employee elected Option A (standard optional insurance) and/or Option B (additional optional insurance), beneficiaries will receive those death benefits also. Option A coverage is \$10,000. Option B comes in 1-5 multiples of an employee's salary.

In addition, Basic insurance and Option A have accidental death and dismemberment (AD&D) benefits. However, there is no AD&D coverage with Option B. Accidental death benefits for Basic insurance benefits are equal to the Basic insurance amount; accidental death benefits for Option A are \$10,000. These benefits are payable in addition to regular death benefits.

If the Federal employee had assigned ownership of the life insurance policy, it shall be paid according to a particular order. If the Federal employee did not assign ownership and there is no valid court order, the benefits are paid in the following order:

- first, to the beneficiary designated by the Federal employee;
- second, if there is no such beneficiary, to the widow or widower;
- third, if none of the above, to a child or children, with the share of any deceased child distributed among descendants of that child (a court will usually have to appoint a guardian to receive payment for a minor child);
- fourth, if none of the above, to parents of the deceased in equal shares or the entire amount to the surviving parent;
- fifth, if none of the above, to the executor or administrator of the deceased's estate;
- sixth, if none of the above, to the deceased's other next of kin as determined under the laws of the State where the deceased lived.

Life insurance benefits are not considered taxable income to recipients for income tax purposes. Life insurance benefits are paid in addition to any workers' compensation, Social Security, or Federal retirement pension benefits.



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## Health Insurance Benefits

If a Federal civilian employee dies while enrolled for self and family coverage under the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program, all eligible family members will continue to be covered under FEHB as long as at least one family member is entitled to an annuity as a survivor. Eligible survivors are entitled to the same benefits and Government contribution as active and retired employees enrolled in the same plan. The survivor annuitant's share of the premium normally is deducted from the annuity payments. The survivor needs to take no action. The change in enrollment will be processed by the employee's former agency and OPM.

FERS survivors may be entitled to continue their FEHB coverage even if they will not receive a monthly survivor annuity benefit. Spouses who are entitled to receive the FERS Basic Employee Death Benefit and child survivors whose FERS survivor annuity benefits are reduced by the amount of Social Security benefit payable, may continue their health benefits enrollment by payment of premiums directly to OPM.

Eligible family members include a spouse who was married to the Federal civilian employee at the time of death and unmarried dependent children under age 22. This includes:

- a legitimate child;
- an adopted child;
- a stepchild, foster child, or recognized natural child who lived with the deceased in a regular parent-child relationship;
- a recognized natural child for whom a judicial determination of support has been obtained, or to whose support the employee made regular and substantial contributions; and/or
- an unmarried disabled child, regardless of age, if the disability occurred before the age 22.



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## SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS

Below you will find a summary of Social Security benefits. For more detailed information, visit the Social Security Administration website, <http://www.ssa.gov>.

### **Survivor Benefits**

Social Security will pay survivor benefits to a surviving spouse and dependent children. For the spouse to qualify, he or she must be at least age 60, or between the ages of 50 and 59 and disabled, or any age and caring for a child under the age of 16 or a disabled child. Children may qualify for benefits if they are under age 18 (or under age 19, if in high school) or disabled. Dependent parents and former spouses may also qualify for survivor benefits. The amount of the benefit depends on the deceased employee's Social Security earnings and the number of survivors eligible for benefits.

### **Lump Sum Death Payment**

A lump sum of \$255 is payable to a surviving spouse provided the deceased employee and the spouse were living together at the time of death, or the surviving spouse is entitled to survivor benefits. If there is no surviving spouse, the lump sum is paid to children who are eligible for benefits. Otherwise, the lump sum is not payable.

## EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS

This Department of Justice program provides educational assistance to children and spouses of law enforcement, fire and emergency public safety officers killed or disabled in the line of duty. Available only to those survivors who have received benefits under the Public Safety Officers' Benefits program listed under one-time death benefits.

The benefits may be used solely to defray educational expenses, including tuition, room and board, books, supplies, and other education fees. Covers all eligible survivors of public safety officers killed or permanently disabled on or after January 1978. Information pertaining to eligibility, applying for and receiving benefits, can be found at the PSOB website, [http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/psob/psob\\_education.html](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/psob/psob_education.html).

Forms that need to be completed include:

- Claim Form for PSOB Education Benefits
- Additional Educational Assistance Statement
- PSOEA Fact Sheet

**For more information, contact:  
PSOB  
Bureau of Justice Assistance  
810 7<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20531  
(888) 744-6513**

### **National Fallen Firefighters Foundation Sarbanes Scholarship Program**

This program offers educational assistance to spouses, children, and stepchildren of firefighters honored at the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial in Emmitsburg, Maryland. Application form and information are available online.



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## WILDLAND FOUNDATIONS' BENEFITS

### **Associated Airtanker Pilots**

To aid families of fallen tanker pilots, Associate Airtanker Pilots (AAP) has established a memorial fund. Proceeds are presented directly to the families.

Contact:

Associated AirTanker Pilots  
AAP Memorial Fund  
P.O. Box 336  
Cloverdale, CA 95425-0336  
<http://www.airtanker.org>

### **Wildland Firefighter Foundation**

The Wildland Firefighter Foundation provides emergency support services to the families of wildland fallen firefighters. It offers emergency grants, grief counseling, advocacy, and other services.

Contact:

Wildland Firefighter Foundation  
2049 Airport Way  
Boise, ID 83705  
(208) 336-2996  
<http://www.wffoundation.org>



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## FILING A “HOMETOWN HEROES” CLAIM CHECKLIST

### Part A: Department Information

1. Complete the PSOB Report of Public Safety Officer’s Death form and have it signed by the head of the Fire Department.
  - Find and print this report online at [http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/psob/death\\_rpt.pdf](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/psob/death_rpt.pdf) OR you can now apply online, <https://www.psob.gov/default.aspx>.
  - Check to see that every field on the form has been completed.
  - If submitted in hard copy, check that the form has been signed.
  - Be sure to identify any other benefits the public safety officer’s survivors have received, or are entitled to receive as a result of the officer’s death, as requested on the form.
2. Provide documentation to support the volunteer status of the department, as applicable.
  - Visit the PSOB website for specific instructions regarding how to prepare this document, [http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/psob/VolFFStatus\\_Instructions.pdf](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/psob/VolFFStatus_Instructions.pdf).
3. Prepare a statement, on department letterhead, and signed by the department head, accounting for the 24-hour period prior to the onset of the officer’s heart attack or stroke. Have the statement note the hours the officer was on duty, and give detailed information on all of the officer’s on-duty actions during that time.
  - This is one of the most important pieces of information the PSOB Office needs to fully review this claim. The statement you prepare should “tell the story” regarding what happened to the fallen officer, and include all unique details or circumstances regarding any non-routine stressful or strenuous physical activity that may have taken place.
  - Because the Hometown Heroes Act identifies a 24-hour “window” to review for actions, this information is critical to a review of claims submitted under the Act.
  - For a brief “reminder” of the Act’s requirements [42 U.S. C. 3796(k)], see below:
    - K. For purposes of this section, if a public safety officer dies as the direct and proximate result of a heart attack or stroke, that officer shall be presumed to have died as the direct and proximate result of a personal injury sustained in the line of duty, if –
      1. that officer, while on duty –
        - a. engaged in a situation, and such engagement involved non-routine stressful or strenuous physical law enforcement, fire suppression, rescue, hazardous material response, emergency medical services, prison security, disaster relief, or other emergency response activity; or
        - b. participated in a training exercise, and such participation involved non-routine stressful or strenuous physical activity;
      2. that officer died as a result of a heart attack or stroke suffered –
        - a. while engaging or participating as described under paragraph (1);
        - b. while still on that duty after so engaging or participating; or
        - c. not later than 24 hours after so engaging or participating; and
      3. such presumption is not overcome by competent medical evidence to the contrary.
    - L. For purposes of subsection (K), “non-routine stressful or strenuous physical” excludes actions of a clerical, administrative, or non-manual nature.
  - Visit the PSOB website for the PSOB Act and regulations, including definitions, [http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/psob/PSOB\\_Act\\_and\\_Regulations\\_2007\\_rev.html](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/psob/PSOB_Act_and_Regulations_2007_rev.html).



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4. Provide all investigation, incident and/or accident reports for the officer's on-duty activities in the 24 hours prior to his or her heart attack or stroke.
  - These are reports that would have already been prepared, and can simply be copied and included in the packet. Make sure that copies are legible, and all pages are provided.
  - Should any of these reports not exist, prepare a brief statement that no such reports were created.
  - Review the reports for any unique expressions or abbreviations that might have been used, and provide a "key" to help the PSOB Office more quickly review and understand what is being said in the reports.
5. Provide medical documentation about any response to the heart attack or stroke (like an ambulance run sheet) and any treatment of the officer prior to his death.
  - If no information is available regarding the response or treatment, note and submit on department letterhead.
6. Include an autopsy report and toxicology report, if available. If these reports do not exist, provide a statement signed by the head of the department (or the medical examiner) explaining that no autopsy and/or toxicology was performed.
  - When no autopsy and/or toxicology was performed, departments often overlook providing this statement to the PSOB Office – please check twice to ensure that it is included.
7. Include a copy of the officer's death certificate.
  - While most PSOB claims are submitted with a death certificate, sometimes it is illegible or contains information inconsistent with other documentation submitted. Review the death certificate carefully, and provide any follow up information, if necessary.

## **Part B: Survivor Information**

1. Have the survivor/claimant complete the PSOB Claim for Death Benefits form.
  - Find and print this form online, [http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/psob/death\\_claim.pdf](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/psob/death_claim.pdf) OR it can be completed online, <https://www.psob.gov/default.aspx>.
  - Check to see that every field in the form has been completed.
  - If submitted in hard copy, check that the form has been signed.
2. Provide the officer's current marriage certificate, if applicable. If the officer was divorced, provide divorce decrees for all the officer's – and current spouse's previous marriages, including references to physical custody of any children, if applicable.
  - If any of the officer's and current spouse's previous marriages ended in death, death certificates for those spouses need to be included with the PSOB claim as well.
3. Provide birth certificates for all the fallen officer's surviving children and step-children, regardless of age or dependency, identifying the children's parents, if applicable.
  - Survivor information takes time to collect, often involving multiple outreach efforts to obtain. Never hesitate to call the PSOB Office with any questions you might have regarding identifying and collecting survivor information.

Please visit [http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/psob/OJP\\_HH\\_FAQ.pdf](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/psob/OJP_HH_FAQ.pdf) for frequently asked questions regarding Hometown Heroes.



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## LODD INVESTIGATIONS - ICHIEFS

### Objectives

The investigation of a line-of-duty death may serve several different purposes. The most important objective, in every case, is to prevent the same situation from occurring in the future. We should never be satisfied until we can be sure that we are doing everything in our power to prevent accidents, injuries, occupational illnesses and line-of-duty deaths.

### Primary Objectives

1. To determine the direct and indirect causal factors which resulted in a line-of-duty death, particularly those factors that could be used to prevent future occurrences of a similar nature, including:
  - Identifying inadequacies involving apparatus, equipment, protective clothing, standard operating procedures, supervision, training, or performance.
  - Identifying situations that involve an unacceptable risk.
  - Identifying previously unknown or unanticipated hazards.
2. To ensure that the lessons learned from the investigation are effectively communicated to prevent future occurrences of a similar nature. (When appropriate, this should include dissemination of the information through fire service organization and professional publications.)

### Additional Objectives

3. To satisfy the requirements of the Public Safety Officer Benefits (PSOB) Program and other entitlements.
4. To identify potential areas of negligence and causal factors that could result in criminal prosecution or civil litigation.
5. To ensure that the incident and all related events are fully documented and evidence is preserved to provide for additional investigation or legal actions at a later date.
6. To provide factual information to assist those involved who are trying to understand the events they experienced.
7. To provide the information to other individuals and organizations that are involved in the cause of fire service occupational safety and health.



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## **Complicating Factors**

Investigations are often complicated by factors and situations that could cause the investigation team to lose sight of the true objectives and damage the credibility of the completed report. The investigators must have a firm understanding of their mission and must have the support and independence necessary to perform a thorough and unbiased investigation.

The investigation team may be placed in the uncomfortable position of investigating the actions of friends, co-workers and superior officers. There may be pressure to find a particular individual or one isolated act or omission responsible for the fatal incident. There may also be a desire to absolve an individual of responsibility or to protect the reputation of the fire department. Emotional reactions are natural when a fatality occurs and they can be magnified when accusations are made or when an individual feels personal responsibility. The investigation should attempt to separate the emotions from the facts and present an unbiased analysis of the incident.

The mission of the investigation team must be directed and limited to finding facts and developing recommendations that are based only on the facts. Any instruction that attempts to alter the mission is inappropriate and any suggestion that a bias or cover-up is involved is a serious accusation.

A report that is based on factual information should speak for itself. The facts should be documented and available for review and the conclusions and recommendations should be clearly supported. In most cases a series of contributing factors will be found, leading to a number of recommendations.

Accusations of negligent acts and determinations of personal responsibility or liability are beyond the scope of a fact-finding report. If the report presents facts that lead to a conclusion of this nature, it is up to administrative, regulatory, or legal bodies to initiate appropriate actions.

There are times when significant facts cannot be determined with certainty. The actions of the victim may have been based upon circumstances that only the victim could describe. Other factors may be subject to conflicting theories or contradictory evidence. In these situations it is up to the investigation team to investigate as thoroughly as possible and to differentiate, in the report, between established facts and speculation or expert opinion. A report should never be based on unsupported assumptions.

A further complication may arise if there are any suggestions of criminal responsibility for an incident. In these situations it is essential to work closely with the appropriate law enforcement agencies to coordinate activities and share information during the investigation. This will depend on the nature of the suspicion and the relationship between the investigating agencies. In most cases it is possible to develop a positive working relationship that allows the investigation of both aspects of the situation to proceed.

## **Investigation Team**

An investigation of a line-of-duty death is not a job for one individual. A thorough investigation will usually require at least 3-5 individuals and may involve a larger team. The fire department should have a plan that identifies an investigation team that will be immediately activated when an incident occurs. Designated team members should respond to the scene of the incident to begin the investigative procedures as soon as possible.

The plan should identify more than one potential team leader and several potential team members. The assignment process should be planned and documented based on the availability of designated individuals and particular circumstances of the incident. The team members should be immediately reassigned from their regular duties to devote their full efforts to the investigation. In larger departments there may be a duty roster system or a primary designated individual and number of potential alternates. Smaller departments may plan to work together, assembling a team from a mutual aid group or from more than one agency.



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The ideal team leader should be thoroughly familiar with fire department operations, with health and safety issues, and with investigative techniques. Because few individuals possess true expertise in all three of these essential areas, the team should be assembled to combine the abilities of different individuals who can contribute to the project. The fire department safety officer should be a member of the team and may be the best choice to be the team leader. The team leader should be the individual who is most capable of managing and leading a group effort with these and other needed abilities.

## **Investigative Authority**

One of the most important considerations in appointing the team leader is to delegate the necessary authority to conduct a complete and thorough investigation. While the fire chief has the ability to assign and delegate the authority to any member of the department, a team leader who holds command or management level rank can usually function more efficiently in gaining cooperation and coordinating team efforts. The individual should also be respected for expertise, impartiality and conscientious work. No other officer should have the authority to interfere with the investigation.

## **Team Members**

A list of potential team members should be maintained based on individual abilities and qualifications. At least one member of the team should be trained and qualified in investigative procedures, preferably with specialized training in accident and injury investigation. A trained and qualified fire investigator or accident investigator can provide the other team members with guidance on the proper collection and preservation of evidence, managing interviews and preparing investigative reports.

The team should include members who are very familiar with the type of activities and hazards that were involved in the incident, with the safety procedures that should apply to the situation, and with the organization and operations of the department. Additional capabilities that may be needed include photographers, video specialists, and experts in other areas that may apply to the particular situation. Some of these individuals may not need to be assigned to the team on a full time basis if their skills are available when needed.

It may not be possible to find all of these qualifications within the fire department. For example, a traffic accident involving a fire apparatus will require an individual who is qualified to investigate accidents involving heavy trucks. This individual may have to be “borrowed” from a state or local police agency or it may be necessary to contract with a private investigator.

One of the first concerns of the team leader will be to identify the individuals or the particular capabilities that will be needed to investigate the incident. The plan should identify individuals who would be called upon, depending on the specific situation. If the plan does not identify anyone with expertise in the particular area of concern, one of the highest priorities will be to locate and engage the services of a qualified individual. The plan should provide a mechanism to quickly arrange for the services of any outside assistance that could be needed. The local law enforcement agency may be able to provide valuable assistance, particularly in managing and documenting evidence.

The plan should provide for the immediate response of a designated or provisional team leader and at least one or two additional team members when a fatal incident occurs. The remaining team members should be reassigned from their regular duties to the investigation team within 12-24 hours.



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## Immediate Actions

There are several actions that should be implemented immediately when a line-of-duty death or a serious accident occurs.

The Incident Commander should direct the following actions:

### 1. **Isolate the Scene**

The scene of the incident should be secured and guarded; only those individuals who have a specific reason to enter should be allowed inside the perimeter. An officer and as many members as are necessary should be assigned to secure the scene. Police assistance may be necessary to establish and maintain scene security. Senior officers should respect the need to preserve the scene for the investigation team and not use their privilege of rank to violate the perimeter.

The sooner that isolation is implemented, the easier it will be to investigate the scene and to account for any disruptions of the physical evidence. The only reasons to violate this rule would be to provide medical treatment in an attempt to save the victim or to control a fire that could destroy the evidence. If an obviously dead body is present, the scene should be left undisturbed for the investigators. The scene should be maintained until all physical evidence has been documented, photographed and measured.

### 2. **Impound Evidence**

All items that could have a bearing on the investigation should be impounded and protected until they can be turned over to the investigation team. In the case of a fire fatality, items such as protective clothing and breathing apparatus will be extremely important in the investigation. Physical evidence should be handled in the same manner as evidence from an arson investigation or criminal investigation. A qualified fire investigator would usually be the most appropriate team member to manage the physical evidence.

Every reasonable effort should always be made to rescue, treat, and transport a victim to a hospital, if there is any possibility of preserving life. In this process protective clothing, breathing apparatus and other items may be removed from the victim and could be easily misplaced. The Incident Commander should immediately assign someone to take custody of any items that are removed from the secured area and to turn them over to the investigation team. Any necessary movement of evidence should be noted and recorded.

### 3. **Document the Condition of Safety Equipment**

Information relating to the performance of protective clothing, breathing apparatus and other safety equipment is extremely significant in fatalities that occur during fire suppression operations and hazardous materials incidents. This information should be documented by written notes and supported by photographs. If the victim must be moved, or if it is necessary to remove protective clothing and equipment before the investigation team arrives, it is important to note the condition of pertinent items.

#### **Questions on the Condition of Safety Equipment\***

\*Note: This list would apply to a firefighter who died in a fire suppression incident. A similar set of concerns would apply to any other type of situation.

#### **Breathing Apparatus**

Was the victim wearing SCBA?

Was the face piece in place?

Was there pressure remaining in the air cylinder?

Were the valves in their normal positions?

Were the straps and other components in their normal use configuration?



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Was there any visible damage to the SCBA?  
Were any components missing?  
Where were they found?  
How old was the SCBA?  
When was the last test?  
If needed, were the repairs made?

### **Personal Alert Safety System (PASS) and Radio**

Was the victim carrying a PASS device?  
Was it turned on, and how do you know?  
Was it functioning when the victim was found?  
Did the victim have a portable radio or any other equipment?  
Where was it found?  
Was it in operable condition?

### **Protective Clothing**

Was the victim wearing full protective clothing?  
Was any protective clothing damaged?  
Had the victim removed any item of protective clothing?  
Where was it found?  
Did the victim have/wear all the required personal protective equipment?

The investigation team should implement the following steps:

#### **4. Photograph the Scene**

The scene should be diagrammed and photographed in the same manner that a crime scene would be documented. Large color prints are the preferred method of documentation. If the fire department does not have a qualified photographer, a police photographer should be requested to provide this service, under the direction of the team leader. All photographs should be delivered to the team leader.

#### **5. Arrange for an Autopsy**

An autopsy should be conducted for every line-of-duty death. If the death is fire related, the medical examiner should be requested to look particularly at blood gases, including carboxyhemoglobin levels and other products of combustion. An alcohol level test is also necessary to meet the requirements of the Public Safety Officer Benefits Program.

#### **6. Identify Witnesses**

It is often impossible for the investigation team to interview all of the witnesses at the scene or immediately after the incident. The immediate priorities should be to obtain essential information from individuals who were directly involved and to identify witnesses for later follow up.

### **Second-Stage Actions**

The immediate actions will generally require several hours and should be conducted according to a documented and established plan. The second stage will usually begin on the following day, when the full investigation team meets to plan the remainder of the investigation and to make assignments for different functions. It is up to the team leader to identify the resources that will be needed and to establish a plan to manage the investigation. There will be information to gather and analyze witnesses to be interviewed, references to be checked and a report to be prepared.



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## 7. Conduct Interviews.

Full interviews should be conducted with every fire department member involved in the event. At a major incident this may have to be confined to those who were at the scene at the time of the fatal event or who were in any way involved with the victim before or during the event. All interviews should be recorded, with the consent of the witness (record that, too), and notes should be documented. The list of witnesses to interview will often grow as different leads are followed. Anyone who has information that could be significant should be encouraged to inform the investigation team and every contact should be interviewed, including members of the general public.

One objective should be to locate and interview anyone who makes a statement reported in the news media. These statements often confuse the issues in the early stages of an investigation; finding the person who made a statement is usually the best way to determine its accuracy. The team should obtain and review copies of all news broadcasts and published accounts of the incident.

The reporters themselves should be interviewed, if their reports suggest some factor not consistent with the information found by the team. These individuals should be approached as any other witness—by requesting their assistance in determining exactly what happened.

## 8. Develop a Time Line

The compilation of records, radio tapes and other data should allow the team to establish a basic time line for the incident. The time line establishes the sequence of events chronologically, sometimes to the second. Additional information should be added to the time line as it is obtained, until the time line can be used to fully describe;

- ....who did what, and who saw what,
- ....at what location, and at what time?

This is one of the basic building blocks of an investigation process. In establishing a time line it is important to synchronize the time base for different records. Misleading information may result if times are compared from different sources, assuming that the clocks were synchronized at the time of the incident. The investigation team should verify the times that are recorded for a verifiable simultaneous event and apply the appropriate correction factor to all other time measurements.

## 9. Examine Physical Evidence

All physical evidence, including protective clothing and equipment that was impounded at the scene, should be thoroughly examined by qualified personnel. All findings should be thoroughly documented and photographed. It may be necessary to have certain items inspected or tested by qualified experts or by testing laboratories. It is important to maintain the chain of custody for all physical evidence as it is examined by different individuals and to ensure that reports are obtained and the items are returned to a secure area.

## 10. Research Documents

All existing departmental standard operating procedures, training materials, and similar sources of guidance that would apply to the situation should be reviewed to determine:

1. How the situation “should” have been handled.
2. Whether or not it was handled in the expected manner.
3. Whether or not this would have had an impact on the outcome.

Records should be examined to determine if the individuals involved had received the proper training in the relevant topics.



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All applicable NFPA standards, ANSI standards, OSHA regulations and similar information that could relate to the events should also be studied. NFPA annual reports on firefighter deaths and injuries should be consulted to determine if similar situations have occurred in other departments and the conclusions from those reports should be compiled. If possible, the full reports from those incidents should be obtained.

Where equipment or apparatus is involved, specifications and maintenance records should be obtained. Operators should be asked if any problems were previously noted and a determination should be made if required inspections and repairs had been completed on schedule. Talk to the maintenance crew.

## 11. Expert Assistance

There are several situations that will require the assistance of qualified experts. Apparatus failures, particularly those that involve aerial devices, should be examined by mechanical engineers and metallurgists who are qualified to determine the specific cause of the failure. Breathing apparatus should be examined and tested, if it was involved in any manner.

Expert assistance is available in many different areas. If the needed expertise is not available within the fire department, it is an excellent investment to find the best individual to assist the team in specific areas or to be part of the entire investigation. Where an incident has become extremely controversial, it may be advisable to have a recognized independent investigator participate in the investigation or review the evidence to develop an independent report.

## 12. Obtain Legal Advice

Legal issues will involve nearly every aspect of a line-of-duty death investigation. Where potential criminal action is a possibility, the safety investigation should be independent, but must be coordinated with the appropriate law enforcement agencies. Issues of potential liability, including product liability and possible violations of occupational health and safety laws, will be a consideration in almost every case. These factors should not be allowed to restrict the investigation, but it is advisable to consult an attorney and to have the report reviewed by the fire department's attorney before it is released.

### Analysis & Report Development

There is no magic formula for how to compile and analyze all the data necessary to conduct a thorough investigation and prepare a report. It requires time and effort to fully understand, prepare, and develop a comprehensive report on a complicated situation. The team members should work toward a full understanding of the events that occurred, the responsibilities and actions of key individuals, the factors that made the department vulnerable to a fatal incident, and the actions that should have been taken or should be implemented now to prevent a similar occurrence in the future.

Every component of the "puzzle" should be followed back to its root cause. For instance, the evidence may suggest that an individual was not properly trained to handle a particular situation. This should be followed back to determine if the training was available, if the individual was trained, was trained in an improper procedure, or had taken action that was inconsistent with training that had been provided. This could lead to a recommendation for refresher training, for training in a new area, for a change in the procedure that training is based upon, or for a system to ensure that members attend all training classes.

Every contributing or suspected contributing factor should be followed back to a conclusion and tied in with all other factors to develop a complete report. The investigation team should continue its efforts until the team members are satisfied that they fully understand what happened, why it happened, and what steps need to be taken to prevent a similar occurrence in the future.



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The information should be compiled into a written document, supported by photographs, diagrams, and supporting data to fully present the facts of the incident. Additional supporting information should be maintained in the investigation files.

## **Report Presentation**

The report should be presented to the fire chief as a completed document. In most cases, the presentation of the document should occur at a meeting with all of the team members present. The team leader should present an overview of the report, including all conclusions and recommendations, using audio-visual aids to illustrate the presentation. The fire chief and other staff members should be prepared to ask questions of the team members.

The report should also be presented to the fire department Health and Safety Committee. In most cases, the majority of the investigation team members will be members of the Health and Safety Committee or directly involved with the committee's functions. The Health and Safety Committee should be involved in the development of the investigation procedure and plan.

The Health and Safety Committee should review the full report, paying particular attention to the recommendations to prevent future occurrences of a similar nature. As a representative body, the Health and Safety Committee adds credibility to the investigative process and to the final report. The committee should be asked to endorse the recommendations of the investigation team, if the report is considered inaccurate or inadequate or if the recommendations are not feasible. The ultimate responsibility is the fire chief's.

A special presentation of the report for the members who were involved in the incident should be considered. This should be discussed with the critical incident stress team to determine if there are individuals who would have a difficult time attending such a presentation. In most cases, the presentation and discussion of the report with the members involved will help to bring closure to the situation. The final report should then be released to the department. This may involve printing and distributing a document or a presentation by the team at a training session. Every member of the department should see the final report or a presentation of its major points.

Under most state laws, the release of the completed report makes it a public document, accessible to the news media and any interested party. Supporting documents and evidence that remains in the investigative file may or may not be accessible. If there is a known media interest in the report, copies should be made available to reporters who have requested it. Copies should also be sent to organizations involved in firefighter health and safety, including the United States Fire Administration, National Fire Protection Association, and International Association of Fire Chiefs. Copies should also be sent to other fire departments that have requested information on the incident and to all individuals and organizations that provided assistance in the investigation.

## **Restricting Release**

While one of the basic principles contained in the procedure is the value of conducting an open investigation and sharing the results for educational purposes, there will be cases where the possibility of litigation being brought against the department is a major concern. In these cases the attorneys representing the fire department will probably be strongly opposed to releasing any potentially damaging information. Anything that the investigation team finds in its investigation could potentially be used against the department and, under litigation discovery procedures, the department can be forced to release all observations and reports, including all evidence compiled in the investigation. The department may be forced to release information even if it has proven to be inaccurate through the internal investigation. There may be certain privileges or other restrictions regarding release of the report. These privileges may arise from privacy laws and be applicable to the description of the decedent and bar release to any but the decedent's representatives, or bars release if the report bears upon a criminal investigation, or under certain limited circumstances if the report is produced as a result of a critical self-analysis designed to identify methods of improving operations. Any restrictions on the release of the report should be coordinated with the department's attorney.



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The concern over discovery should never restrain a fire department from taking corrective action to avoid another incident. The courts have generally found that taking action based upon knowledge gained from an adverse incident to prevent a recurrence of an event is not an admission of responsibility for the original event. Conversely, corrective action which was recommended, but not implemented, prior to the incident may be construed to be evidence of negligence and possibly even gross negligence. The decision of when to release the final report will have to be determined through discussions between the fire chief and attorneys.

## News Media

The news media often generate an atmosphere of tension around an investigation, fueled by the speculation and accusations that may surround an incident. The possibility that an individual may have been negligent or that some inappropriate act may have caused a death makes an excellent news story, particularly when fire department members are willing to be quoted. These same feelings may come to the surface when an investigation is perceived as a “cover-up” or a “witch hunt,” which does not help any situation.

Media inquiries should be directed to the team leader or the department’s Public Information Officer (PIO). While the investigation is in progress, it is appropriate to provide information on how the investigation is being conducted. No findings should be released until the full report is completed and reviewed. Certain information, such as the medical examiner’s report, will be released as public records at the same time they are available to the investigation team.

When the time comes to release the final report, copies should be made available to the news media through the Public Information Officer (PIO). The PIO may recommend a press conference or for the team leader to be available for interviews, if there is a high level of news interest in the report.

In some cases it will be necessary to interview reporters who covered the incident as witnesses. News photographs and videotape have been valuable in several investigations and most news organizations will provide copies if the department will make an official request with assurance that they will be used only to support the investigation and subsequent training objectives.

## Cooperation with Other Agencies

A line-of-duty death will require a high level of cooperation among the fire department investigation team and other agencies and organizations that will be involved in investigating or seeking information on the incident. This may include organizations that have a statutory authority or responsibility to investigate the incident and others that have legitimate reasons to be involved or to be interested in the results. There may also be organizations that are requested to assist the fire department investigation team. The best policy is to be extremely cooperative with other agencies that have a recognized reason to be involved in the investigation.

The investigation team assigned by the fire chief should be the authority having jurisdiction over the internal investigative process. If the incident is a fire, the investigation team should be on the scene before fire department operations are completed and should retain control of the scene as long as is necessary to conduct the investigation. If it is not a fire incident, control of the scene may fall within the jurisdiction of another agency and the investigation team will have to seek their cooperation to complete its on scene research.

If the incident is a vehicle accident or a situation where some other agency has primary jurisdiction for the investigation, the team leader will have to establish a close liaison with that agency. Most public agencies will recognize the need for the fire department to conduct an investigation and will work cooperatively with the investigation team.



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## **Fire Cause Investigator**

A fire cause investigation may be carried out concurrently with the safety investigation. If there is evidence of arson or other criminal acts, the situation will become much more complicated. The investigation of the safety factors involved in the incident must continue, while a high level of coordination is provided with fire investigation and law enforcement investigators. The fire department should retain custody of the scene until both sets of investigators have completed their examination and gathering of evidence.

The best approach to a situation that involves parallel fire cause and safety investigations is to meet with the law enforcement agencies and establish a cooperative relationship. There is no reason to compromise a fire cause investigation, particularly where there is a possibility that criminal activity is responsible for the death of a firefighter; nor should a criminal investigation stand in the way of the safety analysis. The two activities can sometimes be completed independently, where the area of origin and the area where the death occurred are physically separate. In other cases the investigations can be mutually supportive.

Where a possible arson investigation is involved, the investigation team may have to carefully control evidence and limit the release of information until the law enforcement authority having jurisdiction is comfortable having it released. In most cases the criminal issues, particularly the specific cause of a fire, will not be critical issues in the safety investigation and the release of a safety report should not compromise a criminal prosecution.

## **Medical Examiner**

In most areas the medical examiner or coroner has the responsibility to make the official determination of cause of death and may send an investigator to the scene. The on-scene investigative responsibility is sometimes delegated to the police agency. These investigators are generally not experts at investigating fires or fire deaths and will usually be pleased to work with the fire department team to gather their information.

The remains of the deceased should be turned over to the medical examiner for an autopsy. The Public Safety Officer Benefits Program requires certain tests to be reported by the medical examiner and the list should be provided before the autopsy. The results of the autopsy should be incorporated into the investigation report.

The U.S. Fire Administration published a standard protocol for firefighter autopsies in 1995. The publication focuses on the specific causal factors that are of concern in a line-of-duty death, particularly relating to toxicity and thermal injuries. It is a good idea to establish a relationship with the medical examiner when developing the investigation procedure, since the pace of events when an incident occurs makes this a poor time to explain the need for a special autopsy.

## **OSHA**

The employer is usually required to notify the state agency that is responsible for occupational safety and health, or the Occupational Safety and Health Administration of the federal government, of any line-of-duty death. (This will depend on the relationship between the state agency and the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration.) In most cases this agency will send an investigator to prepare a report on the incident. The orientation and approach of the investigating agency varies considerably from one state to another.

The role of OSHA is primarily to investigate the employer on behalf of the employee. The investigation is intended to determine if the employer was in violation of occupational safety and health laws in a manner that could have caused or contributed to the death or injury of the employee. The employer is usually considered to be responsible for any violation, even if the victim's own negligence caused the accident, because it is presumed to be the employer's responsibility to ensure the employees comply with all health and safety regulations. The employer may be fined or subject to other penalties if violations are found.



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The OSHA investigation may take one of several courses. The OSHA investigator will usually invite the union to participate in any discussion relating to the investigation as the representative of the employee. In many fire departments, the union and the department have a joint commitment to an effective health and safety program and share an equal interest in determining causal factors and corrective actions. Where there has been labor-management conflict, particularly over health and safety issues, an OSHA investigation may become a tense situation for management.

The OSHA investigator may not be extremely familiar with fire department standard operating procedures and may have to rely on fire department members to explain the standard operating procedures and to help interpret the regulations that apply. The best policy is usually to be open and cooperative, to demonstrate to the investigator that the department is not trying to conceal anything and is dedicated to a full and open investigation. In many cases, an open invitation to participate and to share in the conclusions of an investigation has created a positive relationship with OSHA investigators.

An OSHA investigator may insist on conducting a completely independent investigation or may refuse to work with management investigators. In some cases the investigator may appear to be committed to finding fault with the department for violations ranging from minor to major. This can create a very difficult situation for the investigation team and requires sound legal advice. This should not deter the fire department from conducting its own thorough and honest investigation and from being willing to share the results with other investigating agencies, although the city attorney may insist on reviewing any report before it is released.

Unfortunately, in some cases, the OSHA report has cited the fire department for violations that were insignificant or imagined because of investigators who were unfamiliar with fire department operations and applicable standards. In other cases major violations have been overlooked. These situations are often difficult to avoid and even more difficult to correct, particularly when the reports are released to the public.

## **Insurance Carrier**

Many cities and fire departments are insured by private insurance carriers, while others are self-insured and have their own loss management offices. The insurer's organization may be able to assist the team in obtaining expert assistance in particular areas or in conducting some form of research to support the investigation. The insurer may also have training materials, guides, forms, and other materials that can assist the team in conducting or preparing to conduct an investigation.

In the case of a line-of-duty death, the insurance carrier and/or the city's loss management department will almost definitely want to be kept informed on the progress of the investigation. The insurer may send its own investigation team, particularly when there will be a claim to be paid. The investigator who represents the department's insurance carrier should be supportive of a good internal investigation and should be looked upon as an asset to the investigation team. The extent of the insurer's direct involvement will depend on their relationship with the fire department and their expertise in the type of situation under which the incident occurs.

## **USFA**

The United States Fire Administration (USFA) and the National Fire Academy (NFA) are both very concerned with fire service health and safety issues. The USFA has requested to be notified immediately of any line-of-duty death and to be sent a copy of all investigation reports. The USFA also serves as a point of contact for the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program.

The USFA contracts with a private sector investigative organization to prepare reports on incidents of national interest and significance; this includes most incidents of multiple firefighter deaths and could include single fatalities in unusual circumstances. USFA does not have any investigative authority and the primary objective is to report and disseminate information that would be of interest to the fire service and other agencies, as well as



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supporting the USFA's health and safety projects. The report is for informational purposes only and is always submitted to the local jurisdiction for review and approval before it is released. In some cases, USFA will request copies of the fire department's investigative reports or send a contractor to gather information from the local jurisdiction's investigation team.

If requested by the fire department, USFA has the ability to dispatch a contracted investigator to assist or advise the local jurisdiction in conducting the investigation, in some cases within hours of the occurrence. Most of the USFA contracted investigators are well qualified to assist the investigation team and are probably involved in more line-of-duty death investigations than any other investigators. The request should be made directly to the USFA by calling 301-447-1000.

## **NFPA**

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has a continuing interest in firefighter health and safety, particularly as it relates to the development of NFPA standards. For many years NFPA has sent investigators to prepare reports on major incidents and often to assist local investigators. The NFPA investigation reports are primarily informational and often describe the relationship between NFPA standards and the incident. They are carefully limited to a factual discussion of the incident and are often published in NFPA periodicals and presented at NFPA meetings.

NFPA has no investigative or enforcement powers and participates in investigations only at the invitation or with the approval of the authority having jurisdiction. If requested by the local jurisdiction, NFPA is usually willing to send an investigator to assist the fire department investigation team. NFPA also has a staff of specialists in several different areas of fire protection who are available for consultation on unusual cases.

## **Other Investigators**

It is not unusual for a line-of-duty death to become the focus of multiple official and unofficial investigations in addition to those mentioned above. One of the characteristics of our current society is intense interest in establishing fault or blame for an incident. This may extend as far as accusations of criminally negligent acts and demands for criminal prosecution of individuals who are considered to be responsible for a line-of-duty death. While such charges are very rarely filed against fire departments or against individual officers or members, the accusations have caused many difficult situations.

In some cases, law enforcement agencies and prosecutors have launched their own investigations into incidents, adding unwanted pressure and complexity to an already tense situation. When these situations occur, the best policy for the fire department is to continue conducting its own investigation and to offer to share its findings with other investigators. Whether or not to invite the other agencies to participate along with the fire department's internal investigation team will depend on several factors, including jurisdiction and the relationship between the organizations. The accusers may attempt to discredit the internal investigation and use their legal authority to conduct their own investigation. At these times it is important to have good legal advice and a well established plan of conducting a thorough and honest internal investigation.

## **PSOB**

The Public Safety Officer's Benefits Act (Public Law 94-430) is intended to pay a sum in excess of \$311,810.00 (as of October 1, 2009) to the survivors of any firefighter who dies or is permanently disabled in the line-of-duty. A claim must be made to the Department of Justice, either by the survivors or by the involved fire department on their behalf. The responsibility rests with the claimants to submit a claim, so that determination of eligibility can be made. The PSOB staff should be contacted at 202-307-0635 or 1-888-744-6513 as soon as possible after a death occurs to ensure that the proper documentation is assembled and submitted.



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## LODD INVESTIGATIONS – WYOMING OSHA

All workplace fatalities or catastrophes (3 or more employees hospitalized as a result of a single incident) need to be reported to OSHA within 8 hours of the event. Please allow OSHA to determine jurisdiction for the investigation (OSHA jurisdiction requires an employer/employee relationship so OSHA has no jurisdiction in volunteer situations or if the deceased is the owner of a company setup as a sole proprietorship).

If OSHA is going to investigate an incident, the Compliance Supervisor or Program Manager will assign one or two investigators to the case. They will ask that the site, or project/processes, be shut down and the site preserved as much as possible.

Investigators will arrive as quickly as possible (considering the driving time across the state).

An Opening Conference will be conducted with a representative of all involved employers. A site survey will be conducted. This survey usually involves videotaping, taking still photos, and measurements of the scene. Once the survey has been conducted the investigators will release the site to the original agency or their designee. Evidence may be collected from the scene. OSHA personnel will conduct private, recorded interviews with witnesses and other key personnel.

Issues examined during the investigation include, but are not limited to, employee training, the employer's written programs (policies and procedures), compliance with the programs, and the employees use of personal protective equipment. The scope of the investigation will be based on the circumstances of the event.

The average length of time to complete an investigation file is approximately 90 days. If it has been determined that any OSHA regulations have been violated, the employer may be issued citations. The employer will receive the citation packet via certified mail.

The employer has the right to contest the citations and/or to participate in an informal conference (within OSHA) to resolve any differences. If the employer and OSHA are unable to resolve differences, then the case goes to a contested case hearing.



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## LODD INVESTIGATIONS – NIOSH

### **Fire Fighter Fatality Investigation and Prevention Program: Program Description** Reprinted from CDC/NIOSH website - <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/fire>

The United States currently depends on approximately 1.1 million firefighters to protect its citizens and property from losses caused by fire. Of these, approximately 313,000 are career/paid and approximately 823,000 are volunteers. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the U.S. Fire Administration estimate that on average, 100 firefighters die in the line of duty each year.

In fiscal year 1998, Congress recognized the need for further efforts to address the continuing national problem of occupational firefighter fatalities, and funded NIOSH to conduct independent investigations of firefighter line-of-duty deaths.

#### **Fire Fighter Fatality Investigations**

The NIOSH Fire Fighter Fatality Investigations and Prevention Program (FFFIPP) conducts investigations of firefighter line-of-duty deaths to formulate recommendations for preventing future deaths and injuries. The program does not seek to determine fault or place blame on fire departments or individual firefighters, but to learn from these tragic events and prevent future similar events.

The objectives of the program are to:

- better define the magnitude and characteristics of line-of-duty deaths among firefighters,
- develop recommendations for the prevention of deaths and injuries, and
- disseminate prevention strategies to the fire service.

#### **Traumatic Injury Deaths**

The program uses the Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) model to conduct investigations of fireground and non-fireground fatal injuries resulting from a variety of circumstances such as motor vehicle incidents, burns, falls, structural collapse, driving incidents and electrocutions. NIOSH staff also conducts investigations of selected non-fatal injury events. Each investigation results in a report summarizing the incident, and includes recommendations for preventing future similar events.

NIOSH staffs with respirator expertise also assist with investigations in which the function of respiratory protective equipment may have been a factor in the incident. The NIOSH staff evaluates the performance of the self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) as a system, and will conduct evaluations of SCBA maintenance programs upon request.

#### **Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) Deaths**

NFPA data show that heart attacks are the most common type of line-of-duty deaths for firefighters. NIOSH investigations of these fatalities include assessing the contribution of personal and workplace factors. Personal factors include identifying individual risk factors for coronary artery disease. The workplace evaluation includes the following assessments:

- estimating the acute physical demands placed upon the firefighter
- estimating the firefighter's acute exposure to hazardous chemicals
- assessing efforts by the fire department to screen for coronary artery disease
- assessing efforts by the fire department to develop fitness and wellness programs



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## Information Dissemination

The Fire Fighter Fatality Investigation and Prevention Program posts all investigative reports onto the NIOSH website and notifies a list serve membership of each posting. In addition to website postings, printed copies of related publications are also available.

## What to Expect During a NIOSH Investigation

NIOSH is notified of a line-of-duty death in a number of ways, including notification by the United States Fire Administration (USFA), a fire department representative, the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF), or the State Fire Marshal's Office. NIOSH conducts investigations of both career and volunteer firefighter line-of-duty deaths.

Once notified of a fatality, a NIOSH representative will contact the fire department to make the necessary arrangements to conduct the investigation. NIOSH investigators will review all applicable documents (e.g., department standard operating procedures, dispatch records, the victim's training records, coroner/medical examiner's reports, death certificates, blueprints of the structure, police reports, photographs and video). Additionally, investigators will interview fire department personnel and firefighters who were on the scene at the time of the incident. NIOSH will also work closely with other investigating agencies. When needed, NIOSH will enlist the assistance of other experts, such as experts in motor vehicle incident reconstruction or fire growth modeling.

Once the investigation is complete, NIOSH will summarize the sequence of events related to the incident, and prepare a draft report. Each department and union representative (if applicable) or family (where applicable) will have the opportunity to review this portion of the report in draft form to ensure it is technically accurate. The report is then finalized with the addition of recommendations for preventing future deaths and injuries under similar circumstances. In selected cases, NIOSH will also enlist the assistance of subject matter experts to review complete draft reports. Once the fire department and union (if applicable) and family (where applicable) have received the final copy of the NIOSH report, it is made available to the public through the Fire Fighter Fatality Investigation & Prevention Program website.

## Who do I contact for further information?

If you have any questions regarding the NIOSH Fire Fighter Fatality Investigation and Prevention Program, please contact the NIOSH Division of Safety Research at:

National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health  
Division of Safety Research  
Surveillance and Field Investigations Branch  
1095 Willowdale Road, M/S H-1808  
Morgantown, WV 26505-2888  
Phone: (304) 285-5916  
FAX: (304) 285-5774



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## CHIEF TO CHIEF NETWORK

A line-of-duty death forever changes the fire department or agency and the community. So where does a chief turn for support after this tragedy?

The Chief-to-Chief Network grew out of a need expressed by chiefs who had lost a firefighter in the line-of-duty. They said that they felt very isolated after the death of a firefighter and that they had no one to turn to for advice and support.

The National Fallen Firefighters Foundation has established a network of senior fire officers who have one thing in common. They have all experienced the death of a firefighter in the line-of-duty and understand what a department goes through.

### **How It Works**

- Immediately after learning about a line-of-duty death, the Foundation gathers information about the incident and the fire department.
- The Foundation then arranges for a chief-to-chief contact; matching chiefs by criteria such as department size and location, career or volunteer status and the nature of the incident.

### **Chief-to-Chief Support**

Network members share information on issues such as:

- incident follow-up and investigations
- support for the fallen firefighter's family and coworkers
- funeral and memorial service arrangements
- requests for information from media and community
- personal feelings of loss

### **All discussions are confidential.**

The Foundation also identifies a fire service officer or chaplain in a nearby area who can personally provide funeral guides and other resources within the first 24 hours. These officers are graduates of the Foundation's training program on handling line-of-duty deaths.

For more information, contact the Foundation at 301-447-1365 or visit, <http://www.firehero.org>.



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## SURVIVOR ACTION OFFICER (SAO) - ICHIEFS

- A. The fire chief will assume the position of survivor action officer or appoint someone to act as his or her representative in providing liaison and support with the family of a firefighter killed in the line of duty. The SAO is a special staff assignment. As a direct representative of the Fire Chief, the SAO should receive the full cooperation of the entire fire department. The SAO will appoint assistants and delegate responsibilities as required to successfully complete all assigned duties.
- B. The SAO is responsible for the management of several important activities. His or her principal concern is the ongoing welfare of the next of kin. The officer shall render all necessary assistance to help the family through the crisis.
- C. The SAO coordinates and supervises the activities of a number of key personnel assigned to handle the specific aspects of the funeral arrangements and to assist the surviving family. These key personnel include:
1. Family Liaison Officer - Remains on call to the surviving family 24 hours a day to assist and support as needed. Provides the SAO with regular updates on the family's status and needs. This officer probably needs a backup to provide on-going assistance over a multi-day period.
  2. Funeral Officer - Provides coordination and interaction with the Funeral Director and other personnel on funeral arrangements.
  3. Service Officer - Provides coordination and interaction with the church to arrange the funeral service.
  4. Final Committal Officer - Provides coordination with others involved in the funeral arrangements in order to arrange all details at the final committal site.
  5. Procession Officer - Arranges and directs the funeral procession.
- D. Additional duties for the SAO include:
1. Assure next-of-kin notification has been properly accomplished.
  2. Officially notify all fire department stations of the death and passing on the order to have flags lowered to half-staff and making arrangements to notify off-duty and vacationing personnel.
  3. Notify the following personnel and agencies, as appropriate, of the death:
    - a) Union president and/or Firefighters Association representative (national, state and local).
    - b) Officials from other local government offices.



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- c) Other fire and police departments.
4. Making appropriate follow-up contacts when the funeral arrangements and schedules have been determined.
5. Work with the Family Liaison Officer to determine the desired method of collecting the deceased firefighter's personal items from the fire station.  
**NOTE:** If the next of kin desires to collect items from the locker personally, the contents should be screened in advance and any inappropriate material removed.
6. Conduct a coordination meeting with the key personnel as soon as possible so that everyone understands the family's wishes regarding options chosen for the funeral ceremony. Once the funeral procedures are established, instruct all key personnel to make the appropriate contacts and setting a date and time for a final coordination meeting.
7. Conduct a final coordination meeting with key personnel to:
  - a) Establish schedule and timetables.
  - b) Identify times and places for group gatherings as required by the ceremonies.
  - c) Re-contact all appropriate individuals and agencies with the schedule, meeting places, and special instructions.
8. Serve as a key contact person for outside agencies, news media, and other fire departments in relation to the death and subsequent ceremonies. This duty may be handled by a department Public Information Officer.
9. After obtaining family approval through the Family Liaison Officer, making appropriate arrangements for a post-funeral reception and a facility to handle a large group of people.
10. Arranging for a fire department member to be on hand at the residence to assist the family and provide for security during the funeral and funeral-related activities. Additional meals for immediate family members will also be provided as needed.
11. In career departments, coordinate with the appropriate local government office to arrange for a final paycheck and for the completion of any required paperwork.
12. Contact neighboring fire departments and arrange for mutual aid stand-in fire and ambulance companies during the funeral.
13. Ensuring accessibility to the family for the duration of the funeral process.
14. Coordinating meals for the family and assuring ongoing family contact by the Family Liaison Officer.
15. Assure that all department functions continue as required.



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## FAMILY LIAISON OFFICER - ICHIEFS

In every incident involving the death of a firefighter, or when the death of an injured firefighter appears imminent, the Fire Chief will assign a Family Liaison Officer. This individual will perform the following duties:

- A. The family liaison officer should have a fire department vehicle, pager, and portable radio assigned to him or her for the entire funeral process.
- B. Immediately report to the deceased's residence or that of the next of kin, or to the medical facility or morgue, and provide reassurance and support to the family. Ensure that the NEEDS OF THE FAMILY come before the wishes of the department or any other official.
- C. Be prepared to discuss all aspects of the funeral process and counsel the family in its decisions. Relay to the Fire Chief the family's wishes on the level of the department's involvement in the funeral process. These considerations include:
  1. The family liaison officer will make the family aware of what the department can offer in the way of assistance based on the type of death.
  2. The family should be made aware of churches with seating capacities large enough to accommodate projected attendance at the funeral. However, any alternate church will need to be made aware that the family minister of fire department chaplain will officiate at the service. The department must only make the family aware of the alternatives. It is the family's choice.
  3. The family liaison officer will brief the family on fire department funeral procedures (i.e., 21-gun salute, presenting of the flag, playing of Taps, Last Alarm, the ladder archway, etc.).
  4. The family liaison officer will see that family and friends are afforded proper recognition during the funeral and funeral procession.
- D. The family liaison officer will assist the family in determining eight primary pallbearers and the optional honorary pallbearers. Make suggestions only if the family asks for some.
- E. Assist the family in determining:
  1. The type of final committal.
  2. Which funeral home will be used.
  3. Which clergy will be used (whether or not the fire department chaplain will be used).
  4. Which cemetery will be used.



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5. Whether to bury the deceased in a fire department uniform and, if so, how to obtain one.
  6. Alternate clothes for burial and delivering them to the funeral director.
  7. A photograph of the deceased and delivering it to the funeral director.
  8. Length of the wake and a tentative schedule.
  9. The length of the funeral service to include:
    - a) Readers of scripture.
    - b) What scriptures will be read.
    - c) Music to be used and individuals to perform the music.
    - d) Who will deliver the funeral sermon and/or eulogy.
    - e) Will Last Alarm bell service be used.
  10. Length of wake and establishing a tentative schedule.
  11. Ceremonies that will take place at the cemetery:
    - a) Band or Piper.
    - b) Honor Guard/Firing Party.
    - c) Readings.
    - d) Eulogy and who will deliver it.
    - e) Taps/Last Alarm.
    - f) Will a pumper be used as a caisson or will a conventional hearse be used.
    - g) Will a pumper or ladder truck be used as a flower car.
    - h) Will personnel walk alongside the caisson or ride in the procession schedule.
  12. Identify and determine any other special considerations on behalf of the family.
- F. Be available to the family on a 24-hour basis to assist in any way necessary.
- G. Address the following items with the family:
1. Autopsy report.
  2. Obtaining birth certificates, marriage certificates, death certificates, or VA or military records.
  3. Determine the benefits for which the survivors may be eligible, including:
    - a. Fire department benefits due to surviving beneficiaries.
    - b. VA spouse and children's benefits and burial benefits.
    - c. Social Security benefits.
    - d. Federal Public Safety Officers' Benefits for spouse and other survivors.



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- e. State benefits for survivors of fallen firefighters.
  - f. Educational assistance and scholarship programs for spouses and children.
  - g. Life and health insurance plans (personal and city) including funeral benefits.
  - h. Final paycheck, including sick leave, vacation payoff, and W-2 forms.
  - i. Deferred compensation account.
4. Offer to identify lawyers, accountants and/or financial advisors to assist with legal and financial issues. Ask the family if they already have advisors to help with the following:
- a. Transfer ownership of property and vehicles to survivors.
  - b. Review all outstanding bills before payment by survivors for legality and accuracy. This should include last illness, previous debts, and funeral expenses. Some bills may be covered by insurance.
  - c. Change name on all bank accounts.
  - d. Check on mortgage insurance.
  - e. Explore damages resulting from the circumstances of the death.
  - f. Income tax report.
  - g. Loans outstanding that may be insured, including credit union loans.
  - h. Advise survivors not to loan money to any person, especially friends and relatives. Advise them to put any available funds in the bank. There will be ample time to invest wisely after a greater degree of stability returns to their lives.
  - i. Check on possible worker's compensation claims with an attorney.
  - j. Check on any possible third party lawsuits with an attorney. For example, the surviving family of a firefighter at a fire that is hit by a vehicle may be able to sue the operator of the vehicle.
- H. Be constantly alert for ways to help the family of a fallen firefighter cope with the tragedy. Immediately relay any special needs to the Fire Chief to obtain the resources to meet those needs.



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## FUNERAL OFFICER - ICHIEFS

- A. The funeral officer will coordinate with the family liaison officer and the funeral director to insure that the wishes of the deceased firefighter family concerning all aspects of the funeral are carried out.
- B. Attend all meetings called by the Survivor Action Officer to determine the following:
  - 1. The schedule of events and the length of time the mourning and burial process will involve.
  - 2. Whether fire department vehicles will serve as a caisson or flower carrier. If they are not used, make alternate arrangements with the funeral director.
- C. If the firefighter's immediate family has not requested limousine service from the funeral home on the day of the funeral, ask the funeral director to provide the service and send an invoice for the service to the fire department.
- D. Coordinate with Honor Guard members to establish an Honor Guard schedule at the funeral home and church.
- E. Coordinate a formal walkthrough of uniformed personnel during the period of viewing with the departments involved and with the funeral director. This includes seating arrangements.
- F. Work with the fire department chaplain or clergy member designated by the family to coordinate any prayer services to be conducted at the funeral home and forward this information to the Survival Action Officer.
- G. Develop a schedule for uniformed personnel to follow the day of the funeral at the funeral site. This includes:
  - 1. Arrival time for uniformed personnel and specific instructions where to gather.
  - 2. Briefing and practice of formations that will be present when the casket is removed.
  - 3. Briefing on proper protocols for entering and leaving the funeral site.
- H. Coordinate vehicle staging with the Procession Officer, including arrangements for fire department vehicles. Ensure the availability of sufficient personnel to properly direct and stage incoming apparatus and vehicles.
- I. Obtain from the Family Liaison Officer the uniform or other clothing that the deceased will wear during viewing and deliver it to the funeral director.
- J. Coordinate with the Family Liaison Officer on special readings or eulogies.
- K. Obtain white gloves for all fire department pallbearers.



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## PROCESSION OFFICER - ICHIEFS

The Procession Officer is responsible for coordinating the procession from the funeral home to the church or other service area (if necessary) and from there, or other funeral site, to the place of final committal. Duties include:

- A. Attend all coordination meetings to determine the following:
  1. Name of the funeral home.
  2. Name of the church or other service location.
  3. Name of the place of final committal.
  4. Use of an engine as a caisson or a conventional hearse.
  5. Use of an engine as a flower carrier.
  6. Schedule of events the day of the funeral.
  7. The logistics of the procession:
    - a. Honor Guard
    - b. Band or Pipers
    - c. Pallbearers
- B. Establish a system for staging and coordinating vehicles at all locations where funeral activities will occur. Coordinate the vehicle staging with appropriate key personnel (service officials, officials at the site of final committal). Ensure that sufficient personnel are available at all staging locations to efficiently direct and stage apparatus and vehicles.
- C. Coordinate with the Family Liaison Officer to determine any special circumstances affecting the procession. These may include:
  1. Passing the firefighter's home, fire station, or other special location.
  2. Special static displays of equipment and personnel at locations on the procession route.
  3. The use of crossed aerial ladders at the entrance to the site of the final committal or other location. If used, contact the Survival Action Officer to obtain the necessary apparatus.
- D. Contact local law enforcement authorities for assistance in working with the funeral director to:
  1. Establish routes for the procession.
  2. Determine traffic control needs.
    - a. Traffic rerouting and street closings at the funeral home and funeral site. Contact the appropriate government agency or department to obtain barricades if needed.
    - b. Traffic control at any special assembly points used.
    - c. If necessary, post "No Parking" signs around the funeral home, church, and any other assembly points.
    - d. Directing staged vehicles as they line up for processional(s).
  3. Arrange for procession escorts.



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- E. Develop maps showing the procession route and other needed information. Maps will be handed out at the briefing at the funeral site prior to the beginning of the service and sent to attendees from out of town. Post them on the department's website along with times and required dress.
- F. Align vehicles in the procession in coordination with the funeral director:
1. Lead Escort
  2. Fire department vehicle used as flower carrier.
  3. Hearse or engine used as caisson.
  4. Family vehicles.
  5. Pallbearers (if not riding on flower vehicle and caisson).
  6. Honorary pallbearers.
  7. Honor Guard/Color Guard.
  8. Fire Chief's vehicle.
  9. Other host fire department vehicles.
  10. Local Law enforcement vehicles.
  11. Local officials' vehicles.
  12. Vehicles from other fire departments.
  13. Vehicles from other police departments.
  14. Vehicles of family friends and other private vehicles.
  15. Rear Escort.
- G. If a fire department apparatus serves as a caisson and/or flower vehicle, contact the SAO and determine which apparatus will be used. Ensure that the following preparations have been made.
1. Apparatus is thoroughly cleaned and hose beds stripped.
  2. Hose dividers are removed from the apparatus serving as a caisson.
  3. The hose bed on the caisson engine is adapted to easily facilitate casket placement and removal. This needs to be coordinated with the funeral director.
  4. Apparatus operators wear full dress uniforms while driving.
  5. Deceased firefighter's bunker gear is placed in a riding position on the caisson with the bunker boots turned backwards.
  6. If used, bunting and/or funeral flags are affixed to the apparatus.



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## FUNERAL SERVICE OFFICER - ICHIEFS

The Funeral Service Officer has the primary responsibility of coordinating all of the activities and ceremonies at the church or funeral site. Duties include:

- A. Attend coordination meetings and obtain the following information from the Survivor Action Officer and Family Liaison Officer:
  1. Schedule of events.
  2. Location of the service.
  3. Clergy involved, including the fire department chaplain.
  4. Readings and readers.
  5. Type and length of service.
  6. Requested ceremonial items:
    - a. Badge presentation
    - b. Special readings
    - c. Special eulogies
  7. Music and musicians.
  8. Information on the deceased firefighter, both professional and personal. Give this information to the person delivering the tribute or eulogy.
- B. Contact the Procession Officer and coordinate vehicle staging at the service location.
- C. Make seating arrangements for those attending the service. In addition to family members, provide dedicated seating for:
  1. Pallbearers
  2. Honor Guard
  3. Uniformed personnel
  4. Dignitaries
- D. Determine the formations to be used and coordinate them during the arrival and removal of the casket from the location of the service. Review military commands for the formations and issue them when appropriate.
- E. Develop a program for the service and give it to the Family Liaison Officer to discuss with the family. Ask if they want any special prayer cards and, if so, provide a draft.
- F. After approval by the family, print the program and prayer cards, if used.



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## FINAL COMMITTAL SERVICE OFFICER - ICHIEFS

The final Committal Service Officer is responsible for the preparation and coordination of events at the site of the final committal. These duties start at the time the procession vehicles arrive and people exit the vehicles. The officer is also responsible for liaison with personnel who manage and operate the final committal site. Duties include:

- A. Attending coordination meetings and obtaining the following information from the Survivor Action Officer and Family Liaison Officer:
  1. Type of final committal:
    - a. Burial
    - b. Placement in a crypt
    - c. Cremation
  2. Family requests:
    - a. Final Alarm Service
    - b. Taps
    - c. Firing Squad
    - d. Readings and readers
    - e. Music and musicians
- B. Schedule and coordinate the sequence of events that will take place at the final committal site. This includes coordinating any special requests received from the Survivor Action Officer or Family Liaison Officer.
- C. Develop the type and location of formations for the uniformed personnel and their locations. Issue appropriate orders consistent with military standards.
- D. Ensure that the officials at the final committal site take care of all necessary items, such as:
  1. Overhead protection for immediate family.
  2. Seating for the immediate family.
  3. A public address system if needed.
- E. Ensure that Honor Guard members are thoroughly familiar with folding and presenting the flag to the next of kin.
- F. Coordinate with the Survivor Action Officer to see if any family members have medical conditions requiring emergency medical personnel and equipment at the site.
- G. Upon dismissal of the formation, announce the location of the post-funeral reception, if any.



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## FIVE PRINCIPLES OF NOTIFICATION

### 1. In Person

- Always do the notification in person, never by phone!
- For family members living out of the local area, arrange for authorities in that area to make the notification in person.
- Immediately find the firefighter's emergency contact information to know who needs to be notified in person. Usually, the spouse (or unmarried partner) and parents of the firefighter should be the first priority.

### 2. In Time and with Certainty

- Before making notification, have positive identification of the deceased firefighter. Obviously, errors in identity can cause extreme trauma.
- Never discuss a fatality over the radio. This may result in a family member receiving the news before you can notify them in person.
- Quickly gather as much information about the incident as soon as possible before making the notification. Survivors will have questions.
- Get to the survivors quickly. Don't let the media notify them first.

### 3. In Pairs

- Have two people present to make the notification. Survivors may experience severe emotional or physical reactions when they learn of the death.
- Use the employee's emergency contact information to identify a uniformed member of the fire service to accompany the department's representative. It is helpful to have the department chaplain or a friend of the firefighter's family, too.
- Take two vehicles, if possible. This will allow one of you to take a survivor to the hospital, if necessary, while the second person stays with other survivors.
- Before you arrive, decide who will speak and what that person will say.

### 4. In Plain Language

- Clearly identify yourself and present identification, and then ask to come in.
- Notification should take place in a private setting.
- If you don't know the family member, make sure you are talking to the right person.
- Begin with "I have very bad news," or "I'm so sorry to have to tell you this."
- Use the words "died" and "dead" rather than terms such as "passed away" so the message is absolutely clear. Speak slowly. Get to the point quickly.
- Calmly answer the survivor's questions. It is fine to say, "I don't know" if you don't.
- Use his or her name when referring to the firefighter, rather than saying "the body".

### 5. With Compassion

- Allow survivors to express emotions. Do not try to talk them out of their grief.
- Accept your own emotions. It's okay if you cry during notification, but stay calm.
- Never leave immediately after making a notification. Offer to help the survivor call friends or family members. Do not leave before someone else arrives.
- Do not take the firefighter's personal items with you when you make the notification. Tell the family they will receive them later. Most survivors will need some time before they feel able to deal with these items.
- Provide the survivor the opportunity to see the deceased firefighter, even if the body is badly disfigured. Offer to transport the family to where the firefighter is, and help prepare them for what they will see.
- Before leaving, write down important information, including the names and phone numbers of the department personnel who will work with the family.
- Have one member of the department stay with the family, unless the family declines.



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## GRIEF RESOURCES

### General Sites

- **AARP Grief Programs** - Toll-free support line, articles, journaling materials, online support groups, and resources for widows and widowers. <http://www.aarp.org/relationships/grief-loss>
- **Grief and Healing Discussion Page** - A grief-related site with a message board providing opportunities to give and receive help with other grieving people. <http://www.webhealing.com>
- **Journey of Hearts: A Healing Place in Cyberspace** - Provides resources and support for the unique issues of both new and long-term grief. <http://www.journeyofhearts.org>
- **Good Grief** - Literature and grief support information. <http://www.good-grief.org>
- **Griefnet** - An extremely comprehensive site that has good sources for literature as well as many specialized support groups, memorials and chat rooms. <http://www.griefnet.org>
- **GROWW-Grief Recovery Online** - 24-hour general chat room, plus scheduled chats that focus on specific types of loss. <http://www.groww.org>
- **HospiceNet** - Answers basic questions about the grief process and self-care during that time. <http://www.hospicenet.org/html/bereavement.html>
- **National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization** - Nationwide listing of local hospice support groups. <http://www.nhpc.org/templates/1/homepage.cfm>

### Finding Support Services

- **American Association of Pastoral Counselors** - Clergy who have been trained and are experienced in helping people work through loss. <http://www.aapc.org>
- **Angels of Valor from Grief Recovery Online** - Chat room specifically for family members of those killed in the line of duty, including firefighting, law enforcement, and military; the facilitators of this site are also survivors. <http://www.groww.com>
- **Griefnet** - An extremely comprehensive site that has good sources for literature as well as many specialized support groups, memorials and chat rooms. <http://www.griefnet.org>
- **National Hospice Organization** - Nationwide and local hospice referrals, includes a state-by-state listing of hospices. <http://www.nho.org>

### Online Memorials

- **The Virtual Memorial Garden** - Bulletin board for posting memorials to loved ones. <http://catless.ncl.ac.uk/vmg>
- **Virtual Memorials** - Site which provides space for and assistance with developing memorial pages for loved ones, including photographs and graphics. <http://www.virtual-memorials.com>

### For Widowed Spouses

- **WidowNet** - Site by and for widows and widowers. Focus on self-help and helping one another. <http://www.widownet.org>
- **WidowSource** - Information and suggestions on issues including money, dating, family, and health. <http://www.widowsource.com/home.html>
- **YoungWidow** - Specialized information for widows under age 50, includes chats and a bulletin board; created by a survivor. <http://www.youngwidow.com>



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## For Parents

- **Alive Alone** - Resources for parents with no surviving children, founded by a survivor. <http://www.alivealone.org>
- **Bereaved Parents USA** - Online self-help support group for bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings. <http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org>
- **Compassionate Friends** - An international support group for bereaved parents and siblings. Provides support, referral and information. <http://www.compassionatefriends.org>
- **Parents of Murdered Children (POMC)** - Site for parents of murdered children. <http://www.pomc.com>

## For Siblings

- **The Sibling Connection** - Resources for those who have experienced the death of a sibling at any age. <http://www.counselingstlouis.net>

## For Teens and Kids

- **Beliefnet: Help for Grieving Children** - Articles by Helen Fitzgerald, a nationally known specialist in children's grief and a small group facilitator at the Foundation's annual Memorial Weekend. <http://www.beliefnet.com/Health/Health-Support/Grief-and-Loss/2001/02/Resources-The-Grieving-Child-And-Teen.aspx#child>
- **The Dougy Center** - Nationwide listing of specialized local programs for grieving children and teens. <http://www.dougy.org>
- **Kidsaid** - Site for children and teens. Includes opportunities to post stories, questions, artwork, and a message board. Sponsored by GriefNet. <http://kidsaid.com>
- **Hospice Net** - General guidelines for talking with children about death and grief. <http://www.hospicenet.org/html/child.html>



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## TYPES OF FUNERALS – FEDERATION OF FIRE CHAPLAINS

Level One: A line-of-duty or job-related death. This may include an inactive member whose death has stemmed from an injury sustained during active duty.

Level Two: A non-job-related death of an active member.

Level Three: A non-job-related death of an inactive or affiliate member.

### Suggested Funeral Service Options

Level One	Level Two	Level Three
American Flag	American Flag	American Flag
Badge shrouds	Badge shrouds	Badge shrouds
Bagpipers		
Bell service	Bell service	Bell service
Bugler		
Color Guard		
Crossed ladders		
Eulogy	Eulogy	
Fire engine caisson	Hearse	Hearse
Fire service flag	Fire service flag	Fire service flag
Flower unit	Flower unit	
Honor Guard	Honor Guard	Honor Guard
Honor detail	Honor detail	
Pallbearers, active	Pallbearers, honorary	Pallbearers, honorary
Station bunting	Station bunting	Station bunting
Vehicle bunting	Vehicle bunting	
Walkthrough	Walkthrough	Walkthrough



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## FUNERAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

There are many ways for the department to offer help for the funeral or memorial service. Some families will welcome all offers of help, while others may choose to have no departmental involvement. The family must always be allowed to make that choice.

### **Honor Guard**

If the family requests an Honor Guard, the Funeral Officer should coordinate with Honor Guard personnel to schedule Honor Guard activities according to the family's and funeral director's wishes. The following basic rules apply to these activities.

- Two Honor Guard members should be posted at the casket. During viewing hours, they should be posted at the head and at the foot.
- There should be a minimum of four Honor Guard members for each set of viewing hours.
- Honor Guard members should rotate at 15-minute intervals. Relief guards should march up together. Posted guards should come to attention and smartly make the transfer and then march off together.
- Posted Honor Guard should assume the position of parade rest.
- American and department flags (or state flag, if there is no departmental flag) should be posted at the casket.
- Honor Guard members should wear a Class A uniform, if available, with white gloves. They should use black mourning bands over uniform badges. If a department does not have Class A uniforms, dress uniforms are an acceptable option.

### **Pallbearers**

Should the family choose to use department members as pallbearers, it is the Family Liaison Officer's responsibility to ask which firefighters the family would like to use. There should be between six and eight pallbearers. They should wear Class A uniforms with hats and white gloves.

- Due to their specific responsibilities, pallbearers are exempt from following the majority of orders given to the remainder of the formation.
- The Funeral Officer, assisted by the Funeral Director, should give instructions on removing, handling, and transporting the casket.  
If a fire engine serves as a caisson, pallbearers should hold a practice session the day before the funeral. If this is not possible, pallbearers should report to the funeral home several hours before the beginning of the service for a protocol briefing and practice.
- If the casket is draped with a flag to present to the next of kin, three pallbearers will be instructed on the proper method of removing, folding, and presenting the flag. Two pallbearers will fold the flag and present it to the third pallbearer who, in turn, will present it to the next of kin. The Final Committal Officer will coordinate the flag folding. If the casket is not draped with a flag, the department can present a pre-folded flag to the next of kin.
- If fire department engines serve as caisson and flower vehicle, pallbearers should ride on them. If engines are not used, the department will provide the pallbearers other department vehicles for the procession.

### **Transportation**

- The department should offer a fire department vehicle and driver to the immediate family during the viewing and funeral period. The Family Liaison Officer normally arranges for this service.
- The department should ensure that the next of kin have limousine service available on the day of the funeral.



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## Meals

- The department should plan to provide meals for the deceased firefighter's family at least until after the funeral. Friends of the family and members of the department and auxiliaries may help provide these meals.
- The Survivor Action Officer, in conjunction with the Family Liaison Officer, will determine the need and coordinate providing the meals.

## Family Liaison Officer

Regardless of the circumstances surrounding the death, or the deceased firefighter's status in the department, a Family Liaison Officer should be assigned to make contact with the family. The officer will determine the amount of involvement the family wants from the department. The officer will provide this information to the Survivor Action Officer. The Family Liaison Officer will assist the family throughout the process.

## Initial Family Support

The department will determine this based on the family requests as relayed by the Family Liaison Officer. The department should assign appropriate key personnel as the needs arise. **The department should not act on assumptions without contacting and getting the consent of the immediate family.**

## Fire Department Chaplain

The amount of involvement the chaplain has will be determined by the family. One option is a shared responsibility between the family's clergy and the department chaplain. Should the department chaplain be requested, the following are areas of responsibility:

- Comfort and support for family members
- Prayer services at the funeral home
- Church services
- Final committal
- Follow-up support for the family
- Departmental or community memorial services

## Procession

The family may request a procession from the funeral home or church to the place of final committal. The procession involves staging vehicles at the funeral home or church prior to the funeral, directing vehicles as they leave for the place of final committal, and staging of vehicles upon arrival there.

Specific considerations include:

- Department vehicles used as caisson, flower car, and for transportation.
- Coordination with the funeral director to determine the procession route, including a drive by the deceased firefighter's fire station or home. If the procession passes the fire station, apparatus should be parked on the apron. Firefighters on duty should assemble outside, come to attention as the procession passes, and toll a muffled bell as the caisson or hearse passes.
- Static displays of apparatus along the procession route.
- Crossed ladders or aerial equipment at the funeral home, church, or place of final committal entrance.



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## Caisson

A fire department engine may be appropriate as a caisson to carry the casket. If an engine is used, personnel must take it out of service for a period of time and prepare it as follows:

- Thoroughly wash and wax the engine.
- Remove hoses and dividers.
- Add available mourning flags or bunting.

- The operator of the engine should be in dress uniform.
- In the event of inclement weather, an enclosed hearse should carry the casket and the apparatus should serve as a flower car.

## Flower Car

- A fire department engine may also serve as a flower vehicle. If so, personnel must take it out of service and prepare it as indicated above for a caisson. Hoses and dividers need not be removed.

## Formations

Special formations may be appropriate at the following points:

- Walkthrough of all attending firefighters at the funeral home or church.
- Honor Guard formations on either side of the casket's path from the funeral home to the hearse or caisson.
- Honor Guard formations on either side of the casket path during entry to and exit from the church.
- Honor Guard formations on either side of the casket path from the hearse or caisson to the place of final committal.

## Taps

Taps may be sounded by one or more buglers at the place of final committal. The location of the bugler should be approximately 75 feet from the final committal site.

## Firing Party

A military-type firing party may be used at the final committal. If so, the party will fire three volleys 75 feet from the final committal site. This type of salute may startle people at the service, especially in times of heightened national security. The family should be aware of this.

## Musical Selections

A band, a piper, an organist, a choir or soloists may play or sing during various funeral ceremonies. The Family Liaison Officer should discuss this option with the family and communicate its wishes to the Funeral Officer.

## Last Alarm Service

A traditional bell-ringing ceremony at the end of the church service or committal service usually signifies the firefighter's last alarm. A short reading accompanies the ring of the bell.

## Readings

Numerous scripture passages and fire-service-related readings are appropriate during the funeral services. The Family Liaison Officer will work with the family to determine if they would like any readings and who should read them.

## Eulogy

A eulogy may be appropriate at any point in the funeral ceremonies. The family should decide who will deliver the eulogy and when it is fitting. The Fire Chief, a clergy member, the department chaplain, or a close family friend from the fire department may be asked to perform this task. The Family Liaison Officer will make the necessary contacts and advise the Funeral Officer.



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## **Crossed Aerial Ladders**

If the family wishes to have the crossed aerial ladders at the entrance to the final committal site, the Family Liaison Officer will forward this request to the Survivor Action Officer for approval and coordination.

## **Static Equipment Display**

During the processions, the family may choose to have a static display of department apparatus and crews at attention and saluting the passing casket and family vehicle. This final tribute may be set up at the funeral home or church, at key locations along the procession route, at a fire station on the procession route, or at the place of final committal entrance. The Family Liaison Officer will communicate this request to the Survivor Action Officer.

## **Burial In Uniform**

If the family chooses to bury the deceased firefighter in the departmental uniform, the Family Liaison Officer will deliver the uniform to the Funeral Officer or funeral director. If the family selects non-departmental clothing, the Family Liaison Officer should deliver this.

## **Presentation of Fire Department Badge**

As part of the funeral service at the funeral home or church, the Fire Chief may present the badge and name tag worn by the deceased firefighter to the next of kin. The items should be in a framed display containing a department uniform patch. Administrative and support personnel will work with the Fire Chief to obtain the badge and name tag actually worn by the firefighter and to obtain duplicates to be placed on the burial uniform.

## **Closed Casket**

If the family requests a closed casket, the family may wish to place a picture of the firefighter in uniform along with the firefighter's dress hat on top of or next to the casket.

## **Walkthrough**

A walkthrough of firefighters at the funeral home may occur to pay tribute to the deceased firefighter. If so, the Funeral Officer will schedule the walkthrough and have firefighters form a line by department. The formation will pass single file by the casket with each firefighter stopping briefly to pay tribute.

## **Post-services Reception**

A reception may be held following the funeral. A church hall, school cafeteria, fire station, or other facility may serve for this purpose. The Survivor Action Officer will coordinate the event and ask department members, the firefighters association, or local service organizations to assist in donating and/or preparing food.

## **Memorial Fund**

Fire department members and local organizations may want to start a memorial fund for the deceased firefighter's family. The Survivor Action Officer should work with local financial organizations in establishing this fund. The family should be involved in deciding how this will occur. The officer will emphasize to the family the importance of working with a local bank to avoid legal complications.

## **Flags at Half-staff**

Upon notification that a fire department member has died, the Fire Chief will direct that all station flags be lowered to half-staff. They will remain at half-staff until 1700 hours the day of the final committal. When the American flag is at half-staff, no other flags will fly on the same pole. For line-of-duty deaths, the Fire Chief will request that the local officials ask other facilities to fly their flags at half-staff.



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## Badge Shrouding

- The shroud should appear on badges at the time of notification of the death and should remain on the badge until after the funeral and final committal. For line-of-duty deaths, the badge shrouds will remain in place for a 30-day mourning period.
- To shroud a badge, place a ½” to ¾” piece of black material horizontally around the badge at its midpoint.
- If the chaplain’s badge contains a cross, a crescent, tablets, or the Star of David, the chaplain’s badge remains uncovered.

## Flag Presentation

When the casket is draped with a flag, an appropriate flag presentation ceremony should take place immediately before the conclusion of the committal service.



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## FUNERAL CEREMONIES – FEDERATION OF FIRE CHAPLAINS

If the family requests, the following personnel may take part in the ceremonial portion of the funeral:

- a. A Chief.
- b. Six or eight pallbearers.
- c. A Color Guard of four firefighters and one officer.
- d. A bugler and piper, pipe band, or drummer.

Due to the important role of pallbearers and Color Guard, a practice session should occur the day before the funeral. If not possible, these personnel must report to the funeral home several hours before the service for a protocol briefing and practice. The funeral director will instruct the pallbearers on how to handle the casket.

If the procession will include firefighters marching from one point to another, the Procession Officer must coordinate with the Funeral Officer, Service Officer, or Final Committal Officer to establish an assembly point, order of alignment, and route for the march. If marching will occur, a drummer should be part of the parade contingent to provide a steady cadence. Cadence should not be called verbally. Determine an appropriate assembly point for department personnel participating in the march. Visiting fire personnel will assemble at the end point of the march.

- a. Basic alignment for the elements of a march is:
  1. Color Guard.
  2. Pipe band/drummer.
  3. Host fire department members.
  4. Apparatus caisson or hearse:
    - (a) The Officer-in-Charge (OIC) will walk immediately in front of the caisson or hearse.
    - (b) Three pallbearers will march on either side of the caisson or hearse.
    - (c) Two pallbearers will ride on the tailboard of the caisson or walk immediately behind the hearse. If there are only six pallbearers, two Honor Guard members will assume this position.
  5. Family's cars.
  6. Friends' cars.

**Note: Check to see if this practice is allowed in your jurisdiction.**  
**Note: If the immediate family of the deceased firefighter desires to join in the march, they will fall in immediately behind the caisson or hearse and will receive an Honor Guard escort.**

- b. If the casket will be driven from the funeral home to the church, the following should occur:
    1. Determine an assembly point several blocks from the church for department personnel and the pipe band/drummer.
    2. Assign an assembly point for visiting fire department members at the church on the church side of the street.
    3. Immediately after loading the casket at the funeral home, transport the Color Guard to the fire department meeting location.
    4. Have the pallbearers board the apparatus, with two of them remaining on the rear step.
- Note: Check to see if this practice is allowed in your jurisdiction.**



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5. With a police escort, have the apparatus proceed slowly to the meeting point with the fire department contingent.
6. Line up the procession in the same order as listed above.
7. Direct the pallbearers to dismount and march as follows:
  - (a) The OIC in front of the apparatus.
  - (b) Two or three pallbearers on each side of the apparatus.
  - (c) Two pallbearers on the rear step.

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

- c. When the procession arrives, the following should occur:
  1. As the procession nears the location of the service, move the Color Guard to the side and allow the pipe band/drummer and fire department members to pass.
  2. Near the entrance to the service area, assemble the pipe band.
  3. Line up the national, state and local dignitaries near the entrance, leaving room for the Color Guard.
  4. When marching fire department members arrive at the location of the service, move them to the other side of the street. When they are in place, give the command, "Right face."
  5. When personnel line the street on both sides and face the center, begin the Color Guard march toward the service site followed by the apparatus or hearse. Leave a space between the Color Guard and hearse. The service assembly OIC commands "Present arms" (hand salute).
  6. As the Color Guard arrives, assemble it near the front of the church.
  7. Move the apparatus to the front of the service site and shut off the engine.
  8. Have the service assembly OIC command, "Order arms."
  9. Assemble pallbearers at the rear of the apparatus, with two in the hose bed, and prepare to remove the casket.
  10. Have the Honor Guard OIC command, "Present arms."
  11. Have the pipe band play as the pallbearers carry the casket to the entrance. If the chaplain or cleric performs a blessing at the rear of the apparatus, the pipe band should delay playing until the pallbearers begin to move.
  12. Have the pallbearers escort the casket to the front of the service area.
  13. Have the assembled fire department personnel file into the area and take positions in the designated seating areas.

## **At the close of the service, the following should take place:**

- a. Fire personnel file out and assemble in specified areas in the following order:
  1. Visiting fire service personnel.
  2. Department personnel.
  3. National, state and local dignitaries.
  4. Color Guard.
- b. At the funeral director's signal, the pallbearers move to the front of the location for the service and escort the coffin to the rear.
- c. The service assembly OIC commands, "Detail, attention."
- d. When the casket arrives at the rear, the OIC commands, "Present arms."
- e. If used, the piper/pipe band plays.
- f. The pallbearers move slowly to the rear of the hearse or apparatus to load the casket.
- g. After loading, the pallbearers face each other and the OIC commands, "Detail, present arms." The pallbearers give a hand salute.



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- h. The OIC commands, "Order arms" for all personnel.
- i. The Color Guard officer commands, "Color Guard, dismissed."
- j. The OIC commands, "Detail, dismissed" to the pallbearers.
- k. The Color Guard, bugler/piper, and OIC enter the waiting fire department vehicles for transportation to the place of final committal. The pallbearers will ride on the caisson or other apparatus directly behind the caisson.
- l. Fire personnel and national, state and local dignitaries prepare to leave for the place of final committal.
- m. The Procession Officer and assistants direct vehicles taking part in the procession to the place of final committal.

## Upon arrival at the place of final committal, the following will take place:

- a. The fire department personnel and Color Guard take up positions in formations as determined by the Final Committal Officer.
- b. If space permits, the Color Guard assembles near the place of final committal.
- c. The bugler is 75 feet away from the grave and will await the command from the OIC.
- d. When the caisson or hearse is in position, the pallbearers take up positions at the rear and remove the casket.
- e. The pallbearers carry the casket and place it on the grave stand. The family and other guests follow.
- f. As the pallbearers begin to move the casket, the OIC commands, "Detail, attention" and all fire department personnel come to attention. When the pallbearers place the casket on the gravestand, the OIC commands, "Parade rest."
- g. If the family wants the casket draped, two pallbearers will drape it with an American flag. If the casket is not draped, an already folded flag will be placed on the casket for presentation.
- h. The chaplain and/or cleric will conduct the committal service and lead in the final prayer.  
**Note: If not part of the funeral or religious service, the "Last Alarm" ceremony may occur at this point. The OIC orders "Present arms" prior to the ringing of the bell. The hand salute should occur during the playing of Taps.**
- i. The OIC next commands, "Detail, attention" and "Present arms." A hand salute follows; the Color Guard presents arms and dips the departmental flag. The hand salute occurs during the playing of Taps.
- j. The bugler plays Taps.
- k. The OIC commands, "Order arms."
- l. At the conclusion of Taps, the Honor Guard removes the American flag from the casket and folds it. The Honor Guard Officer presents the folded flag to the fire chief who, in turn, presents it to the family.
- m. The funeral director gives words of thanks on behalf of the family and indicates the conclusion of the services.
- n. The OIC commands, "Detail, dismissed."



# WYOMING FIREFIGHTER LODD RESPONSE PLAN

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## **HANDLING DIGNITARIES – FEDERATION OF FIRE CHAPLAINS**

When a firefighter dies in the line-of-duty, many elected officials and fire service leaders show their respect by attending the funeral or memorial service. While the family of the fallen hero should always command the most attention, departments should also be prepared to handle dignitaries who plan to attend.

Most departments understand their local elected officials will attend the ceremony honoring a local firefighter. Senior elected officials may even have a role in the fire department funeral. Since the World Trade Center Disaster, more state, national, and international officials have attended fire service funerals, especially those that involved multiple fatalities or received special attention.

Departments should be prepared to handle attendance by the following dignitaries:

### **Federal Officials**

- President or Vice President
- Cabinet Members, including Secretary of Homeland Security
- Members of Congress
- FEMA Director
- United States Fire Administrator
- Other Federal agency officials, including U.S. Forest Service and Department of Interior officials, may attend a wildland firefighter's ceremony

### **State and Local Government Officials**

- Governor or Lieutenant Governor
- State Legislators
- State Fire Marshal or Agency Officer with Fire Program Oversight
- Local Elected Officials, including city and county

### **National and State Fire Service Officials**

- IAFC President, Officers, or Division/District Representatives
- IAFF General President, Officers, or Division/District Representatives
- National Volunteer Fire Council President or Officers
- State Fire Chief Organization Officers
- State IAFF Officers
- State Volunteer Fire Council Officers
- National Fallen Firefighters Foundation Representative



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A department should include a section or branch to handle dignitaries in its official line-of-duty death funeral plan. Many departments establish an Incident Management System to run the funeral or memorial service.

Here are some actions to consider:

- Immediately assign a dignitary coordinator, and publicize this person's contact information. If necessary, assign others to assist.
- Prepare a fact sheet with pertinent information on the department, the fallen firefighter, and the ceremony.
- As soon as possible, make contact with dignitaries' coordinators. Senior level government officials may have both a security detail and a staff point of contact. Be prepared to handle different requests for the same senior official's appearance.
- Establish a plan for meeting and transporting dignitaries to the service.
- Set up a seating plan, and designate a holding area for dignitaries.
- Determine in advance if any of the dignitaries will be introduced or acknowledged during the service. If so, by whom?
- Determine if dignitaries will speak during the service. This decision must be made in consultation with the family. Decide on the length of the remarks and in which part of the service.
- Decide the order in which dignitaries will ride in the procession and stand at the graveside service. Remember that the family members should always be in the first cars before any dignitaries.
- Determine if dignitaries will have direct contact with the survivors. This is best done in a private setting with no media coverage. Make sure the family wants this to happen.
- Provide information to dignitaries before their arrival. If possible, provide dignitaries with a background sheet and a summary of events, even if they are not speaking at the service.
- Be aware that agendas, schedules and even the people coming may change several times up to the actual event. Stay flexible!



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## Sample BACKGROUND SHEET

### Funeral/Memorial Service Information

Date:  
Time:  
Location:  
Type of service: (funeral or memorial service):  
Estimated length of service:

Dignitary Coordinator:  
Coordinator's contact information: (phone/cell phone/pager/email)

### Fallen Firefighter/Department Information

Name of Fallen Firefighter:  
Age:  
Name of Department:  
Status: (career/volunteer/contract)  
Length of service:

Date of Death:  
Brief Description of the Incident:

Name, relationship and age of each immediate survivor:

Name of Chief:  
Contact information:

Special circumstances, if any:



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**Note: The Dignitary Coordinator should complete a sheet for each dignitary who will attend the service.**

## Dignitary Information Form

Name:

Title:

Name of dignitary's chief of staff or designated point of contact:

Contact information:

Names and titles of people who will accompany dignitary:

Estimated Time of Arrival in area:

Mode of transportation?

Estimated Time of Departure:

Mode of transportation?

Will dignitary require local transportation to/from ceremony?

Are there security considerations?

If so, contact information for security detail coordinator:

Special requests:

Connections to fire service or member of the fire service:



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## PREPARING A EULOGY

If you are asked to deliver a eulogy for a fallen firefighter from your department, here are a few guidelines that may help you gather your thoughts and prepare a fitting tribute.

### Research

- Get the key facts - age, nickname, names of family members and closest friends, timeline of key events in the person's life, personal and professional accomplishments, honors and awards received.
- Ask friends and family members for stories that illustrate how they want to remember their loved one. If you use one of these stories, remember to acknowledge the source. For example, "Jim's daughters told me ..." or "Ann's father reminded me that ..."
- Include information about the firefighter's character and personality. What was the firefighter proudest of in his or her life? For what would he or she want to be remembered?
- If you knew the firefighter, include personal anecdotes and memories.
- If you did not know the firefighter personally, say that! Speak with people who did, especially those who shared years of friendship and memories.

### Organize

- You may want to use a theme to tie your presentation together. For example, "Jack loved adventure," or "In everything he did, Don reached out to help other people."
- It may help to put your ideas on note cards and then arrange them in a logical order for your presentation.

### Draft

- Begin by expressing your condolences and the department's sense of loss.
- Acknowledge family members, including spouse or significant other, children, parents, siblings, and close friends.
- Focus on the person's life, not the circumstances that led to the death.
- Include funny stories. Even in the midst of deep grief, it is important to smile. And remember to mention the source of the story, if appropriate.
- Include a statement of support from the department. The department must follow through on any promised support, so only promise what you can ensure will be delivered.
- Acknowledge the department member who is acting as the liaison for the family.
- Have a printed copy of the final eulogy ready for the family and others who may want one.

### Practice

- Review and practice your remarks before the service. If you are nervous about speaking in front of other people, practice speaking in front of someone you trust to give you honest, supportive feedback.
- It is okay to show emotion!
- Have a back-up plan so someone else can take over if you cannot finish speaking.
- Be prepared to adjust your planned remarks. Before you speak, another person may use some of the same stories or information. Acknowledge this or have other stories ready.
- Above all, remember not everyone is a great orator. However, families will remember the sincerity of your words and your kindness forever.

### Reference Materials

***Funerals with Love*** - Suggestions for structuring, writing, and delivering a eulogy; a downloadable book is available for a fee. <http://www.funeralswithlove.com/eulogy.htm>

***Grief Loss & Recovery*** - Step-by-step guideline to writing a eulogy. <http://www.grieflossrecovery.com>

***A Labor of Love: How to Write a Eulogy*** - Downloadable book available for a small fee; also available in paperback. <http://www.eulogybook.net>



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## PRE-INCIDENT PLANNING

The pre-incident planning for a line of duty death includes gathering information about your personnel, the development of Standard Operating Procedures and identifying different resources that are available.

### Personal Information Packets

Personal Information Packets should be developed for each member of the department. The packet should include; emergency contacts, wishes/desires of the member, children, funeral/memorial service information, special request information, etc.

### Standard Operating Procedures

Standard Operating Procedures should be developed to address notification practices, media announcements, funeral procedures, etc.

### Resources

Resources need to be available, including local, state, national and fire related support organizations. A list of available resources can be found on page 85.



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## PRE-INCIDENT PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The Foundation has compiled elements from several plans that address line-of-duty death procedures. These sample elements reflect how various departments have prepared to deal with the tragedy of a line-of-duty death. These are by no means the only things that can be done. These elements can help you establish the basis for a plan for your department.

### **Basic Plan Elements**

### **Sample Elements from Existing Department Plans**

#### **1. Policy**

A. It will be the responsibility of (department name) to provide assistance to immediate survivors

**OR**

B. This plan recognizes that the goal of (department name) is to help people and provide assistance at every opportunity. This includes assisting the department's fire service family, especially when a member suffers a serious injury or dies in the line-of-duty.

#### **2. Purpose**

A. The purpose of this policy is to direct (department name) to provide proper care for the deceased firefighter's family. The FAMILY should make all decisions regarding funeral arrangements, with their wishes taking precedence over those of the department.

**OR**

B. The purpose of this policy is to offer assistance to all members of the department's fire service family after a line-of-duty death. This policy will help the department prepare for and respond to circumstances in a professional and compassionate manner.

#### **3. Definitions**

A. Line-of-Duty death: A death which is the direct result of taking any reasonable or emergency response action that an active firefighter is authorized or obligated to perform.

B. Survivors: Immediate family members including: spouses, all children, including legally adopted children; parents; siblings; and significant others.

C. Benefits: Financial payments, scholarships, tax benefits, and special programs available to the immediate next-of-kin of the fallen firefighter.

You may want to add other definitions based on the specificity of the plan.



# WYOMING FIREFIGHTER LODD RESPONSE PLAN

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## Procedural Components

## Sample Statements

### 1. Establishing a Family Support Team

The department's Family Support Team will be responsible for necessary functions before, during, and after the funeral. The Chief will activate the team as needed. Members of the team will handle the following responsibilities, based on department resources:

1. Liaison between the team and the chief.
2. Overall coordination of the team.
3. Benefits coordination; only one department member should be authorized to work with the family on death benefits.
4. Transportation and lodging coordination for out-of-town family members.
5. Mediate coordination to release information about the incident, arrange media coverage of the funeral or memorial service, and provide privacy to the family.
6. Hospital liaison to relay information between medical personnel and the family.
7. Funeral or memorial service coordination including services and burial arrangements, traffic, honor guard, etc.
8. Family liaison to provide personal support for the immediate family, usually at the home. Personal support includes duties such as screening calls and visits, providing local transportation, assisting with burial arrangements, etc.

### 2. Notify Survivors

The department will establish a notification policy for survivors of fallen firefighters. This will include the following elements:

1. Getting all department members to provide emergency contact information and updating the information annually. This will allow members to name a member of the department who should be part of the notification team.
2. Designating senior department personnel, and backups, who will make the notification.
3. Notifying immediate family members in person before release of any information to anyone else. If members live out of the area, make arrangements for in-person notification by the local department.
4. Having two members of the department make the notification. Don't hold up notification if the designated department members are not readily available.
5. If needed, driving family members to the hospital in a department vehicle and getting them to the proper area. If the family wants to drive their own car, have a member of the department accompany them.

### 3. Notifying Members the Department

Once the family has been notified, members of the department should learn of the incident from the department before it hears about it through the media. The department will establish procedures to ensure this notification, including:

1. Notifying all on-and-off duty chiefs.
2. Notifying all chaplains.
3. Preparing a short summary of known facts about the incident and the deceased and/or critically injured for the Chief and all other spokespersons to use.
4. Working with the personnel officer, to confirm the basic information about the firefighter(s), including: correct spelling of name, age, and next-of-kin.
5. Preparing a memo to all members of the department that includes confirmed information.
6. Establishing procedures to notify off-duty members.
7. Keeping all members informed of funeral arrangements and memorial services.



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## Procedural Components

## Sample Statements

### 4. Notifying Others

Other members of the community need to be notified after the family and the members of the department. Each community will need to tailor this list to its unique circumstances. However, the plan should include the following elements:

1. Making sure a short summary of known facts about the incident and the deceased and critically injured is available for the Chief and all other spokespersons to use.
2. Establishing a priority checklist of whom to call that includes name and title, office and home contact information, etc. For example:

- Elected officials
- Employee Association official
- Safety Officer
- Public Safety Officer's Benefits staff
- Fire service organizations

### 5. Working with the Media

The department should take steps to ensure notification of the family before giving any information to the media. Procedures to follow include:

1. Giving no personal information out to the media, even if they are on the scene, until confirmation of family notification has occurred.
2. Using the basic information gathered on the incident and the deceased and/or critically injured. (Refer to Notifying the Department)
3. Preparing and clearing a written statement for the Chief to deliver or release.
4. Setting up a media briefing, either at the hospital or other location.
5. Designating a department backup to handle coverage of the incident if it is still ongoing so primary PIO can concentrate on handling information on the fatality.

### 6. Dealing with the Hospital

The critically-injured firefighter will be transported to a local hospital. The department will establish procedures to deal with local hospitals. This will include the following elements:

1. Meeting with hospital officials to discuss appropriate waiting areas for family, co-workers, and the media should a line-of-duty death occur.
2. Ensuring that the hospital information liaison has access to medical personnel to obtain information and access for the family and to provide approved information to the media coordinator.
3. Having a member of the department available to the family at all times to assist them and ensure their privacy.
4. Assigning a member of the department to ensure collection of the deceased's personal property.
5. Arranging transportation for the family back to their residence.

If the critically-injured firefighter must be transported to a medical center out of the local area, the department will establish procedures to assist the family in that location. These include:

1. Helping arrange transportation for the firefighter and the family, as required.
2. Contacting fire department officials in that area and arranging support for the family similar to that offered above.



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## Procedural Components

## Sample Statements

### 7. Assisting the Family Before & During the Funeral

The department will ensure that the family's wishes come first. The department will establish procedures, including:

1. Meeting with the family to explain what support the department can offer.
2. Giving the family a pager or cell phone number where a fire service liaison can be reached at any time.
3. Providing information on different options for funeral arrangements, including a full honors fire service funeral.
4. If the family chooses to have a fire service funeral, working with them on details.
5. If the family chooses to have a private service, working with them as requested.
6. Requesting local law enforcement officials to make routine checks on the family's residence for several weeks.
7. Assisting with household responsibilities such as running errands, mowing the lawn, answering the phone, etc.

### 8. Providing Benefit Information to the Family

The department will maintain an up-to-date list of death benefits available to survivors. The department will establish procedures on dealing with the family, including:

1. Assigning a benefits coordinator to handle all contact with survivors. The coordinator will help the survivors access and process required paperwork.
2. Providing a list of financial planners and legal advisors that the survivors may want to contact.

### 9. Assisting the Family After the Funeral

The department will maintain contact with the family and establish procedures to ensure ongoing support, including:

1. Continuing to invite the family to department events.
2. Ensuring all death benefits have been processed.
3. Considering the establishment of a permanent tribute such as a scholarship, dedication of a facility, etc.
4. Referring the family to the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation for information on its Survivor Support Network.
5. Helping the family attend national and state memorial services.

### 10. Establishing a Community Response Network

The department will consider setting up a community response network that can be activated if a tragedy occurs. The department will work with the community to establish procedures that allow immediate support to the family, including:

1. Working with the Highway Patrol on providing or escorting family members from out of town.
2. Contacting local funeral homes to determine if they defer funeral costs and offer burial plots for line-of-duty deaths of public safety officers.
3. Working with local hotels, motels and restaurants to provide lodging and meals for families attending the funeral.
4. Finding childcare providers to assist families with small children during this period.
5. Identifying local banks that will provide services to the family for handling donations and other death-related transactions.



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## DEVELOPING STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

The National Fallen Firefighters Foundation has the following resources available to assist your department in developing a line-of-duty death plan. If you would like to receive copies of these resources, contact the Foundation at (301) 447-1365.

### **Glendale Fire Department- Arizona**

- Career department
- Department size: 101 to 250
- Size of population served: 100,000 to 200,000

### **Tempe Fire Department - Arizona**

- Career department
- Department size: 101 to 250
- Size of population served: 100,000 to 200,000

### **City of Yuma Fire Department – Arizona**

- Career department
- Department size: 101 to 250
- Size of population served: 50,000 to 99,999
- Guide to investigating a line-of-duty death

### **Long Beach Fire Department - California**

- Career department
- Department size: 251 to 500
- Size of population served: Over 200,000

### **Montrose Fire Department - Colorado**

- Combination department
- Department size: 26 to 50
- Size of population served: 10,000 to 50,000

### **Florida Division of Forestry - Florida**

- State agency utilizing career and volunteer firefighters

### **Dixon Fire Department - Illinois**

- Combination department
- Department size: 1 to 25
- Size of population served: 10,000 to 50,000

### **East Alton Fire Department - Illinois**

- Combination department
- Department size: 1 to 25
- Size of population served: 10,000 to 50,000
- Includes funeral service guidelines

### **Skokie Fire Department - Illinois**

- Career department
- Department size: 101 to 250
- Size of population served: 65,000
- *Only Available on CD-ROM*



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## **Charlotte Fire Department - North Carolina**

- Career department
- Department size: 500 to 1,000
- Size of population served: Large metropolitan area

## **Westerville Division of Fire - Ohio**

- Career department
- Department size: 100 to 250
- Size of population served: 10,000 to 50,000

## **Corpus Christi Fire Department - Texas**

- Career department
- Department size: 251 to 500
- Size of population served: Over 200,000

## **North Shore Fire Department - Wisconsin**

- Career department
- Department size: 100 to 250
- Size of population served: 65,000

## **Funeral Procedures**

### **Orange County Fire Department - California**

- Combination department
- Department size: Over 1,000
- Size of population served: Large metropolitan county

### **Chicago Fire Department - Illinois**

- Career department
- Department size: Over 1,000
- Size of population served: Large metropolitan area
- Includes administrative duties after a line-of-duty death

### **Western Missouri Fire Chiefs Association - Missouri**

- Funeral policy
- Funeral equipment resource list

## **EMS Standard Operating Procedures**

### **Sussex County Emergency Services - Delaware**

- EMS department
- Department size: 51 to 100
- Size of population served: 100,000 to 200,000

## **Other Resources**

**Line-of-Duty Death Resource Guide:** Comprehensive 50-page guide that contains information on pre-incident planning, notification, family and fire department support, and resources for departments.



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## FIREFIGHTER LIFE SAFETY INITIATIVES

### **16 Initiatives to Save Lives Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives**

Recognizing the need to do more to prevent line-of-duty deaths and injuries, the Foundation has launched a national initiative to bring prevention to the forefront.

The first major action was to sponsor a national gathering of fire and emergency services leaders. Organized by the Foundation, the Firefighter Life Safety Summit held in Tampa, Florida, in March 2004 produced 16 major initiatives that will give the fire service a blueprint for making changes.

The Foundation will play a major role in helping the U.S. Fire Administration meet its stated goal to reduce firefighter fatalities by 25% within 5 years, and by 50% within 10 years. The Foundation sees fire service adoption of the Summit's initiatives as a vital step in meeting this goal.

1. Define and advocate the need for a cultural change within the fire service relating to safety, incorporating leadership, management, supervision, accountability and personal responsibility.
2. Enhance the personal and organizational accountability for health and safety throughout the fire service.
3. Focus greater attention on the integration of risk management with incident management at all levels, including strategic, tactical, and planning responsibilities.
4. Empower all firefighters to stop unsafe practices.
5. Develop and implement national standards for training, qualifications, and certification (including regular recertification) that are equally applicable to all firefighters, based on the duties they are expected to perform.
6. Develop and implement national medical and physical fitness standards that are equally applicable to all firefighters, based on the duties they are expected to perform.
7. Create a national research agenda and data collection system that relate to the initiatives.
8. Utilize available technology wherever it can produce higher levels of health and safety.
9. Thoroughly investigate all firefighter fatalities, injuries, and near misses.
10. Ensure grant programs support the implementation of safe practices and/or mandate safe practices as an eligibility requirement.
11. Develop and champion national standards for emergency response policies and procedures.
12. Develop and champion national protocols for response to violent incidents.
13. Provide firefighters and their families access to counseling and psychological support.
14. Provide public education with more resources and champion it as a critical fire and life safety program.
15. Strengthen advocacy for the enforcement of codes and the installation of home fire sprinklers.
16. Make safety a primary consideration in the design of apparatus and equipment.

# Survivor Intake Form

Information about survivors and their wishes – to be completed by notifier.  
(This form is to be filled out at the time of notification and retained by the notifier)

Name(s) of Survivor(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Person Providing Information (if different): \_\_\_\_\_

Address of Survivor(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Community: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: Home \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_

Relation to the deceased: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of funeral home to which the body of the deceased should be sent:  
\_\_\_\_\_

If the survivor has no preference in funeral homes, would they like the medical examiner to choose one? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Do any survivors wish to see the body of the person who has died?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Will decide later.

Are there any special items that might have been in the possession of the person who died (such as jewelry or a donor card)?

List: \_\_\_\_\_

Others to be contacted by notifier (other kin, unmarried partners, roommates, etc.):  
\_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Persons contacted by notifier to provide support to the survivor:  
\_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Notes:

Signature of the notifier: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## EMPLOYEE EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

(Online at [www.firehero.org](http://www.firehero.org))

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

### PERSONAL INFORMATION

Last Name	First Name	Middle Name
Home Address		
City	State	Zip
Phone Number		
(    )		

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Family or friends you would like the department to contact. Please list in the order you want them contacted. If needed, provide additional names on the back of this sheet.

**NOTE: If the contact is a minor child, please indicate the name of the adult to contact.**

Name
Relationship
Home Contact Information
Address:
Phone:
Work Contact Information
Name of Employer:
Address:
Phone:
Pager/Cell phone:
Special Circumstances – such as health conditions or need for an interpreter
Name
Relationship
Home Contact Information
Address:
Phone:
Work Contact Information
Name of Employer:
Address:
Phone:
Pager/Cell phone:
Special Circumstances – such as health conditions or need for an interpreter

<b>List names and dates of birth of all of your children.</b>	
Name:	DOB:
Name:	DOB:
Name:	DOB:
<b>List the department member(s) you would like to accompany a chief fire officer to make the notification.</b>	
Name:	
Name:	
<b>List anyone else you want to help make the notification. (for example, your minister)</b>	
Name:	
Relationship:	
Home Contact Information	
Address:	
Phone:	
Work Contact Information	
Name of Employer:	
Address:	
Phone:	
Pager/Cell phone:	

**OTHER INFORMATION**

**Make sure someone close to you knows this information.**

Religious Preferences Religion: Place of Worship: Address:			
Funeral Preferences Are you a veteran of the U. S. Armed Services?   yes   no If you are entitled to a military funeral, do you wish to have one?   yes   no Do you wish to have a fire service funeral?   yes   no			
Please list your membership in fire service, religious, or community organizations that may provide assistance to your family:			
Do you have a will?   yes   no If yes, where is it located or who should be contacted about it?			
List all life insurance policies you have: <table border="0"> <tr> <td><u>Company</u></td> <td><u>Policy Number</u></td> <td><u>Location of Policy</u></td> </tr> </table>	<u>Company</u>	<u>Policy Number</u>	<u>Location of Policy</u>
<u>Company</u>	<u>Policy Number</u>	<u>Location of Policy</u>	
Is beneficiary information current? This may determine who gets Federal benefits.			
<b>Special Requests</b>			
If you are an organ donor, coordination with the medical officials will be necessary. List any other requests here.			

Form last updated on \_\_\_\_\_



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## WEBSITE RESOURCES THROUGHOUT MANUAL

### **SPECIAL PROGRAMS FOR FALLEN FIREFIGHTERS**

Lighthouse Uniform Company - <http://www.lighthouseuniform.com>

Dignity Memorial - <http://www.dignitymemorial.com>

### **SPECIALIZED WEB SITES**

Firehouse - <http://www.firehouse.com>

National Fallen Firefighters Foundation - <http://www.firehero.org>

United States Fire Administration - <http://www.usfa.fema.gov/dhtml/inside-usfa/ffmem.cfm>

### **BENEFITS**

Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance - <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA>

Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program - [http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/psob/psob\\_main.html](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/psob/psob_main.html)

PSOB Program: Educational Assistance - [http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/psob/psob\\_education.html](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/psob/psob_education.html)

PSOB Report and Claim Forms Fillable Online - <https://www.psob.gov>

NFFF, State Benefits - <http://www.firehero.org/resources/benefits/wy.html>

PSOB Program: Death Benefits - [http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/psob/psob\\_death.html](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/psob/psob_death.html)

Attorney General's Guide to the Hometown Heroes Survivors' Benefit Act -

[http://staging.firehero.org/resources/benefits/HH\\_Guide.pdf](http://staging.firehero.org/resources/benefits/HH_Guide.pdf)

### **FUNERAL GUIDES**

Chaplain's Manual: Fire Department Funerals - <http://www.firehero.org/resources/departments/chaplainsmanual.pdf>

IAFF Recommended Protocol for LODD - <http://www.iaff.org/hs/LODD/funeralprotocol.html>

IFCA, Funeral Service Guidelines, Funeral Committee -

[http://www.illinoisfirechiefs.org/mydata/service/FuneralServiceGuidelines\\_59\(1\)\\_59.doc](http://www.illinoisfirechiefs.org/mydata/service/FuneralServiceGuidelines_59(1)_59.doc)

Funeral Procedures for Firefighters - [http://www.nyfc.org/files/documents/funeral\\_procedures.pdf](http://www.nyfc.org/files/documents/funeral_procedures.pdf)

### **INVESTIGATIONS**

Guide for Investigation of a Line of Duty Death - <http://iafc.org/associations/4685/files/06Investigations.pdf>

The Aftermath of Firefighter Fatality Incidents: Preparing for the Worst -

<http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/tr-089.pdf>

NIOSH Fire Fighter Fatality Programs and Reports - <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/fire>

### **AUTOPSIES**

Firefighter Autopsy Protocol - [http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/firefighter\\_autopsy\\_protocol.pdf](http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/firefighter_autopsy_protocol.pdf)



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## DELIVERING A EULOGY

Funerals with Love - <http://www.funeralswithlove.com/eulogy.htm>

Grief Loss & Recovery - <http://www.grieflossrecovery.com>

A Labor of Love, How to Write a Eulogy - <http://www.eulogybook.net>

## GRIEF RESOURCES

### General Sites

AARP Grief Programs - <http://www.aarp.org/relationships/grief-loss>

Grief and Healing Discussion Page - <http://www.webhealing.com>

Journey of Hearts: A Healing Place in Cyberspace - <http://www.journeyofhearts.org>

Griefnet - <http://www.griefnet.org>

GROWW-Grief Recovery Online - <http://www.groww.org>

HospiceNet - <http://www.hospicenet.org/html/bereavement.html>

National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization - <http://www.nhpco.org/templates/1/homepage.cfm>

### Finding Support Services

American Association of Pastoral Counselors - <http://www.aapc.org>

Angels of Valor from Grief Recovery Online - <http://www.groww.com>

Griefnet - <http://www.griefnet.org>

National Hospice Organization - <http://www.nho.org>

Support Services to Surviving Families of LODD – C.O.P.S. - <http://www.nationalcops.org/agenciesforms/support.pdf>

### Online Memorials

The Virtual Memorial Garden - <http://catless.ncl.ac.uk/vmg>

Virtual Memorials - <http://www.virtual-memorials.com>

### Resources for Widowed Spouses

WidowNet - <http://www.widownet.org>

WidowSource - <http://www.widowsource.com/home.html>

YoungWidow - <http://www.youngwidow.com>

### Resources for Parents

Alive Alone - <http://www.alivealone.org>

Bereaved Parents USA - <http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org>

Compassionate Friends - <http://www.compassionatefriends.org>

Parents of Murdered Children (POMC) - <http://www.pomc.com>

### Resources for Siblings

The Sibling Connection - <http://www.counselingstlouis.net>

### Resources for Teens and Kids

Beliefnet: Help for Grieving Children - <http://www.beliefnet.com/Health/Health-Support/Grief-and-Loss/2001/02/Resources-The-Grieving-Child-And-Teen.aspx#child>



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The Dougy Center - <http://www.dougy.org>

Kidsaid - <http://kidsaid.com>

Hospice Net - <http://www.hospicenet.org/html/child.html>

## MISCELLANEOUS

Worker's Compensation - <http://wydoe.state.wy.us/doe.asp?ID=9>

Retirement/Pension Plan - <http://retirement.state.wy.us>

Department of Labor - <http://www.dol.gov/dol/compliance/comp-feca.htm>

Office of Personnel Management - <http://www.opm.gov>

Social Security Administration - <http://www.ssa.gov>

Associated Airtanker Pilots - <http://www.airtanker.org>

Wildland Firefighter Association - <http://www.wffoundation.org>

NIOSH - <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh>

Snowy Range CISM Team - <http://www.angelfire.com/biz7/srcism>



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## FORMS

The Report and Claim forms may now be completed and submitted online,  
<https://www.psob.gov/default.aspx>.

The following checklist and forms can be found here,  
[http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/psob/psob\\_main.html](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/psob/psob_main.html).

### Checklist for Public Safety Agencies Filing a PSOB Death Claim

#### Death Benefits

- Report of Public Safety Officer's Death
- Claim Form for PSOB Death Benefits
- Consent to Release of Information

#### Educational Benefits

- Claim Form for PSOB Education Benefits
- Additional Educational Assistance Statement
- PSOE A Fact Sheet

#### Disability Benefits

- Claim Form for PSOB Disability Benefits



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## CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS DEBRIEFING TEAMS

The following CISM Teams are organized and available for responses within the state:

- **Snowy Range CISM Team - National Registered Team**  
Peer Coordinator: Dave Smith, Laramie  
Mental Health Coordinator: George W. Doherty, Rocky Mountain Region Disaster  
Mental Health Institute  
**CONTACT:** 800-821-3711      Email: [rockymountain@mail2emergency.com](mailto:rockymountain@mail2emergency.com)
- **Sweetwater ASSIST CISM Team - Wyoming Registered Team**  
Peer Coordinator: Sgt Randy Hanson, Rock Springs Police Department  
Mental Health Coordinator: Michael Bauer, S.W. Counseling  
**CONTACT:** 307-352-1575      Email: [randy\\_hanson@rswy.net](mailto:randy_hanson@rswy.net)
- **Fremont County CISM Team**  
Peer Coordinator: Sgt Jerry Evagelatos, Sheriff's Department  
Mental Health Coordinator: Open  
**CONTACT:** 307- 857-3604      Email: [jerryev@trib.com](mailto:jerryev@trib.com)
- **Campbell County CISM Team**  
Team Coordinator: Bob Rudichar [rudichabw@ccmh.net](mailto:rudichabw@ccmh.net)  
Peer Coordinator: Charlie Messenheimer  
Mental Health Coordinator: Robin Voigt  
**CONTACT:** 307-680-1519
- **WSH CISM Team (State Hospital) - Wyoming Registered Team**  
Peer Coordinator: Jeremy Hill  
Mental Health Coordinator: Pamela R. Fuller, Ph.D.  
**CONTACT:** 307-789-3464 Ext. 0
- **Uinta CISM Team - Wyoming Registered Team**  
Peer Coordinator: Sgt. Dennis Hutchinson, Uinta County Sheriff's Office  
Mental Health Coordinator: Pamela R. Fuller, Ph.D.  
**CONTACT:** 307-789-3464 Ext. 0
- **Southeast Wyoming CISM Team**  
Acting Coordinators: Dori Clark & Don Heiduk  
**CONTACT:** 307-637-6525 or, during business hours 307-637-6507 or 307-633-4756
- **Sheridan CISM**  
Administrative Coordinators: Michelle Cunningham & Jennifer Shassetz at Sheridan Police Dept.  
**CONTACT:** 307-672-2413
- **Casper CISM Current**  
Acting Coordinators: Lt. Stewart Anderson & Theresa Simpson  
**CONTACT:** 307-235-9205



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## ACRONYMS

AD&D	Accidental Death & Dismemberment
AAP	Associate Airtanker Pilots
CSRS	Civil Service Retirement System
COLA	Cost of Living Adjustment
FACE	Fatality Assessment & Control Evaluation
FEGLI	Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance
FEHB	Federal Employees Health Benefits
FERS	Federal Employees Retirement System
FFFIPP	Fire Fighter Fatality Investigations & Prevention Program
IAFC	International Association of Fire Chiefs
IAFF	International Association of Fire Fighters
LODD	Line-of-Duty Death
NFFF	National Fallen Firefighters Foundation
NFA	National Fire Academy
NFPA	National Fire Protection Association
NIOSH	National Institute for Occupational Safety & Health
OSHA	Occupational Safety & Health Administration
OIC	Officer-in-Charge
OPM	Office of Personnel Management
PIO	Public Information Officer
PSOB	Public Safety Officer's Benefits
SCBA	Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus
SAO	Survivor Action Officer
USFA	United States Fire Administration