

WESTERVILLE DIVISION OF FIRE

SUBJECT	EFFECTIVE DATE	RESCINDS
Funeral/Death procedures	February 2, 2001	
REFERENCE		NUMBER
Deputy Fire Chief		100-02-01

PURPOSE: To ensure the proper support and emotional care for a firefighter's family following the death or serious injury of an active member, retired member, past member, member of a firefighter's immediate family, or associate of the Westerville Division of Fire.

RESPONSIBILITY: It will be the responsibility for all Westerville Division of Fire employees to understand and follow this procedure.

POLICY:

It is the policy of the Westerville Division of Fire to provide liaison assistance to the immediate family of any member, as defined in this policy, who dies or is seriously injured. The Division will provide clarification and comprehensive study of survivor benefits, as well as other tangible and intangible emotional support during this traumatic readjustment for the surviving family. Funeral arrangements of the deceased are to be decided by the FAMILY, with their wishes taking precedence over the Division's or the Union's. Division personnel are encouraged to complete and maintain a confidential Personal Information Sheet to be kept in their personnel file. These may be updated at the individuals' request.

DISCUSSION:

Most families in which someone was killed say that the most traumatic moment of their life was the notification of the death of their loved one. Most recall vivid tunnel vision for a portion of it. Coordination of events following the injury or death of a firefighter is an extremely important and complex responsibility.

There are basically seven (7) types of circumstances that would affect the level of services a fire department would provide from the notification of death to the surviving family's follow-up process.

These types are:

- Type 1 On-duty incident relating to a series of events causing the firefighter to rapidly deteriorate from a healthy state to biological death.
- Type 2 On-duty incident relating to a series of events causing the firefighter to gradually deteriorate from a healthy state to biological death.
- Type 3 Off-duty incident relating to a series of events causing a firefighter to rapidly or gradually deteriorate from a healthy state to biological death.
- Type 4 A retired Division member who, through a series of events, deteriorates to biological death.
- Type 5 A past Division member who does not meet any of the above criteria but who, through a series of events, deteriorates to biological death.
- Type 6 A non-firefighting individual who has passed away, who may have some emotional or professional ties whereby fire division members would like to officially pay a formal tribute.
- Type 7 A member of the firefighter's immediate family as described in the collective bargaining agreement, Article 26.1.

Professionalism and compassion must be exhibited at all times as well as an obligation to the firefighter's family and to the fire service community. The actions of the Chief and members assigned to specific tasks

set the tone and the pace for the entire Division. In order to provide the best possible services and support for the firefighter's family, specific tasks may be assigned to selected members of the Division.

Their titles are:

- Notification Officer
- Hospital Liaison Person
- Family Liaison Person
- Division Liaison Officer
- Funeral Liaison
- Benefits Coordinator

An explanation of each of these responsibilities is contained in this guide. A firefighter may be called upon to perform more than one role.

PROCEDURES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Type 1 and Type 2

Will receive all procedures and responsibilities listed in this SOP.

Type 3

A **FAMILY LIAISON OFFICER** will be assigned to offer the following services:

1. Honor Guard
2. Pallbearers
3. Meals
4. Child care
5. Fire Division Chaplain
6. Procession (no caisson or flower car)
7. Formations
8. Taps
9. Last Alarm service
10. Appropriate readings/eulogy
11. Static equipment display (no crossed aerials)
12. Walk through
13. Post service reception
14. Flags at half staff and badge shrouding
15. Follow up family assistance
16. Family transportation
17. Pursue appropriate survivor benefits

Type 4

A **FAMILY LIAISON OFFICER** will be assigned to offer the following services:

1. Honor Guard
2. Badge shrouding
3. Pallbearers
4. Fire Division Chaplain
5. Formations
6. Readings/eulogy
7. Post services reception
8. Survivor benefits follow up

Type 5

A **FAMILY LIAISON OFFICER** will be assigned to offer the following services:

1. Pallbearers
2. Fire Division Chaplain
3. Readings/eulogy
4. Walk through

Type 6

A **FAMILY LIAISON OFFICER** will be assigned to offer the following services:

1. Pallbearers
2. Fire Division Chaplain
3. Readings/eulogy
4. Walk through

Type 7

A **FAMILY LIAISON OFFICER** will be assigned to offer the following services:

1. Pallbearers
2. Fire Division Chaplain
3. Readings/eulogy
4. Walk through
5. Fire Division representative (s) (in Fire Division vehicle for spouse and child(ren) only.

NOTIFICATION

1. It shall be the responsibility of the Fire Chief to properly notify the next of kin of a firefighter who has suffered severe injuries or has died. The Chief may personally make the notification and/or designate a **NOTIFICATION OFFICER** to inform the family. You **MUST** familiarize yourself with the circumstances of the death and the personal data concerning the death before making the notification. By having a second person in attendance, the Chief will be available to leave shortly after to return to the scene if necessary. The second person remains to see what they can do for the family, getting additional medical help for the family if needed, being the compassionate listener. Once the notification has been made, the **NOTIFICATION OFFICER** will advise the Chief. At this point, the official press release may be released to the press and the public, preferably in writing.
 - A. The Chief may utilize mutual aid resources to take over the scene. All personnel should be free to be relieved.
 - B. The Chief may make contact with the local Police Department and have the Police assign a **POLICE LIAISON OFFICER** for the entire process.
2. The name of the injured or deceased **MUST NEVER** be released before the immediate family is notified. Do **NOT** tell neighbors of the death before telling the family. If asked, tell them you need to find the family regarding a medical emergency and ask if they know where they are.
3. If there is knowledge of a medical problem with an immediate family member, medical personnel should be available at the residence to coincide with the notification.
4. Notification **MUST ALWAYS** be made in person and **NEVER ALONE**. Notification of the family will be done in a Fire Division uniform and in a marked Fire Division vehicle. The Chief, or a representative, Fire Chaplain, close friend, or another firefighter's survivor could appropriately accompany the **NOTIFICATION OFFICER**. However, if the aforementioned persons are not available, notification should not be delayed until these people can gather. If there is an opportunity to get to the hospital prior to the death of a firefighter, **DON'T WAIT** for the delegation to gather. Attempt to bring the spouse to the hospital. The family should learn of the death from the Division **FIRST**, and not from the press or other sources. This is not the time to make idle promises to the family (i.e. "we'll promote him posthumously", "we'll retire his badge").
5. **NEVER** make a death notification on the doorstep. Ask to be admitted to the house. Ask the family member if he/she would like to sit down. Inform family members slowly and clearly of the information that you have. If specifics of the incident are known, the **NOTIFICATION OFFICER** should relay as much information as possible to the family. Answer all questions honestly. Be sure to use the firefighter's first name during the notification. If the firefighter has died, relay that information. Never give the family a false sense of hope. Use word such as "died" and "dead" rather than "gone away" or "passed away". Offer to make phone calls if the family wishes.
6. Additional issues for Notification:
 - a. Just be there. When everything else is done, don't go. Never leave a person who is in shock alone.

- b. Assume guard position. Ward off well meaning relatives who try to cheer up the family and “take their mind off it”. Perhaps the most harm can come from being brave and avoiding proper grieving.
 - c. Don’t lie to children about the death or injury. They need to know the basic facts.
 - d. Keep the use of alcohol and tranquilizers to a minimum.
 - e. Make a list of names and phone numbers for the family to call if they need assistance (doctor, police, relatives, friends, your numbers, station numbers). Place the list near the phone.
 - f. Avoid overwhelming the family. It is possible the family is trying to accomplish too much too soon.
7. **DO NOT** take any personal clothing, jewelry, billfold, purse, etc. to the notification.
 8. If the family requests to visit the hospital, they should be transported in a marked Fire Division vehicle. It is highly recommended that the family **NOT** drive themselves to the hospital. If the family insists on driving, a uniformed firefighter should accompany them in the family vehicle.
 9. If young children are at home, the **NOTIFICATION OFFICER** must arrange for babysitting needs. This may involve a co-worker’s spouse known to the family, transportation of the children to a relative’s home, or a similar arrangement, transported by a Fire Division vehicle.
 10. Prior to departing for the hospital, the **NOTIFICATION OFFICER** should notify the hospital staff and the **HOSPITAL LIAISON** (by telephone if possible) that a member(s) of the family is en-route to the hospital.
 11. The deceased or severely injured firefighter’s parents should also be afforded the courtesy of a personal notification, if possible, by a uniformed firefighter with a Division vehicle.
 12. If immediate family live beyond the central Ohio area, the **NOTIFICATION OFFICER** will ensure that the local Police Division contacts the appropriate jurisdiction requesting a **PERSONAL** notification. Arrangements should be made to permit simultaneous telephone contact between the family and the Fire Division **NOTIFICATION OFFICER**.
 13. The Chief, or a high ranking representative, and a Union official, should respond to the residence or the hospital to meet the family as quickly as possible.
 14. In the event of an on-duty death, the external monitoring of fire frequencies may be extensive. Communications regarding notifications should be restricted to the telephone whenever possible. If the media has somehow obtained the firefighter’s name, they should be advised to withhold the firefighter’s name pending notification of next of kin. Members shall **NOT** give out any information of the incident. This will be done by the Chief or his designee.
 15. In the event of a line-of-duty death, the Chief or the **DIVISION LIAISON OFFICER** will transmit a message prepared and/or approved by the Chief similar to the following:
 “It is with deep regret that the Chief announces the death of (rank, name, company) who lost his/her life in the line of duty while participating in operations on a response to (number, location, date, time).”
 And record same in the Division logbook. Death other than line-of-duty:
 “It is with deep regret that the Chief announces the death of rank (retiree), name, on/at time/date.”
 16. If family members arrive on the scene during on-going operations, it is important to identify them and keep them out of the direct flow of operations, particularly if the body is still trapped or on the scene (watch what is said around the family)/
 - A. Secure the scene or the area where the incident occurred.
 - B. Secure **ALL** gear and equipment involved in the area.
 - C. Photograph the total area and equipment.
 17. Assure notification of **ALL** off duty and vacationing personnel.
 18. Notify City Manager’s Office

ASSISTANCE FOR EFFECTED FIREFIGHTERS AND SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

1. Firefighter’s on the scene should be relieved as quickly as possible to call (via cell phone) home to his/her family to say that they are okay
2. Firefighter’s who were on the scene or arrived moments after a member was seriously injured or killed, should be relieved as quickly as possible. These members are working every day

with the effects of man's inhumanity to man, and the loss of a coworker is often the most profound emotional stressor they will experience in their job as a firefighter. The Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Team may be called to the scene to provide one on one peer support.

3. Firefighters and other emergency personnel who may have been emotionally affected by the serious injury or death of another firefighter should attend a CISM debriefing held by the CISM Team. It is not sufficient to support only the person in uniform. Instead, it is necessary to support the entire environment in which the uniformed person operates. That includes the firefighter's family. Most importantly, the debriefing process should also work to strengthen the bonds which hold the worker's, their families, and the organization together. The Chief, or his designee, should notify the CISM Team. Immediately after a line-of-duty death is NOT the time to hold a debriefing. Members that request to leave the scene should be given that option.
4. Family members and significant others who may have been emotionally affected by the serious injury or death of a firefighter will be offered a Spousal Debriefing. The Chief, or his designee, will notify the CISM Team to set up same.
5. Follow-up debriefings may need to be set up in the weeks following the incident.
6. Make contact with the City Employee Assistance Program.

ASSISTING THE FAMILY AT THE HOSPITAL

1. The first official, other than the Chief or his representative, to arrive at the hospital becomes the **HOSPITAL LIAISON**. The **HOSPITAL LIAISON** is responsible for coordinating the activities of hospital personnel, the firefighter's family, firefighters, the press and others. This position shall be maintained until properly relieved or until otherwise instructed by their superior. These responsibilities include:
 - A. Arrange with hospital personnel to provide an appropriate waiting facility for the family, the Fire Chief, the **NOTIFICATION OFFICER**, and only those requested by the immediate family.
 - B. Arrange a separate area for fellow firefighters and friends to assemble.
 - C. Establish a press staging area.
 - D. The Fire Chief or the **NOTIFICATION OFFICER** shall make any and all press releases and any information, **subsequent to the immediate family being notified**.
 - E. Ensure that medical personnel relay pertinent information regarding a firefighter's condition to the family on a timely basis and before such information is released to others.
 - F. Notify the appropriate hospital personnel that **ALL** medical bills relating to the injured or deceased on duty firefighter should be directed to the Westerville Division of Fire. The family should not receive any of these bills at their residence. This may require the **HOSPITAL LIAISON** to re-contact the hospital during normal business hours to ensure that proper billing takes place.
 - G. Ensure that the family is updated regarding the incident and the firefighter's condition upon their arrival at the hospital.
 - H. Arrange transportation for the family back to their residence (by Fire Division vehicle).
2. If it is possible for the family to visit the injured firefighter before death, they should be afforded that opportunity. A firefighter should "prepare" the family for what they might see in the emergency room and should accompany the family into the room for the visit if the family requests. Medical personnel should advise the family of visitation policies and, in the event of death, may need to explain why an autopsy might be necessary.
3. The **NOTIFICATION OFFICER** should remain at the hospital while the family is present.
4. Do NOT be overly protective of the family. This includes the sharing of specific information on how the firefighter met his/her death, as well as allowing the family time with the deceased firefighter. When death is sudden, viewing and touching the body can be part of the healing process. It should NOT be forced. Touching too, may be a needed expression of love. You should give the family members as much time as they want to be with the deceased.

SUPPORT OF THE FAMILY DURING THE WAKE AND FUNERAL

1. The Chief or his designee, and/or a Union Official will meet with the firefighter's family at their home to determine their wishes regarding Division participation in the preparation of the funeral or services. All possible assistance will be rendered. Information regarding funeral arrangements may be available in the members personnel file.
2. **WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE FAMILY**, the Chief will assign a **FAMILY LIAISON PERSON**. The Chief will also designate a **DIVISION LIAISON PERSON, FUNERAL LIAISON** and a **BENEFITS COORDINATOR**.
3. Cremation is now an option widely used, often because it lowers costs. But there are some cautions. If there is direct cremation with NO family viewing of the body and no physical contact, accepting the death can be more difficult. This is especially true for children and older adults. A memorial service could still be desirable. A memorial service can do more. It brings support of friends and the community.
4. Let the child(ren) participate in the family sorrow. If shielded, he/she may feel rejected, as though he/she does not belong. Let the child(ren) see the parent's grief. NEVER make the child(ren) do something they do not want to.
5. Make time for the child(ren). It is important to understand that children do not necessarily express their emotions in words. They often express the way they feel by "acting out".
6. The child(ren) may feel a deep sense of insecurity about the surviving parent, and may be wondering whether the surviving parent is about to disappear.

FAMILY LIAISON PERSON

1. The selection of a FAMILY LIAISON is a critical assignment. An attempt should be made to assign someone who enjoyed a close relationship with the firefighter and his/her family, provided they are able.
2. This is not a decision-making position. This is a role of "facilitator" between the family and the Fire Division, as well as other departments and agencies.
3. Responsibilities of the FAMILY LIAISON:
 - A. **Ensure that the needs of the family come before the wishes of the Division or the Union.**
 - B. Should have a Division vehicle assigned to him for the entire funeral process. On call to the family 24 hours per day as logistical contact.
 - C. ASSIST the family with funeral arrangements and make them aware of what the Division can offer if they decide to have a fire service funeral. If they choose the latter, the FAMILY LIAISON will work with the FUNERAL LIAISON and brief the family on funeral procedures. Determine length of wake and establish tentative schedule of events, readings, music, and extent of church and cemetery services wanted. (i.e. honor guard at the funeral home, presenting the flag, playing of taps, last alarm tones over fire alarm, drive by fire station salute en-route to cemetery, bugler, bagpipers, active pallbearers, honorary pallbearers, color guard and fire division pumper used to transport the casket and flowers.)
 - D. Apprise the family of information concerning the death and continuing investigation. What is known and who will be conducting the investigation.
 - E. Provide as much assistance as possible, including overseeing travel and lodging arrangements for out-of-town family members, arranging for food for the family, meeting child care and transportation needs, etc.
 - F. Be constantly available to the family. Division cooperation is critical to this process.
 - G. Determine what public safety, church, fraternal and labor organizations will provide in terms of financial assistance for out-of-town family travel, food for funeral attendees following the burial, etc.
 - H. If criminal violations surround the death, the family WILL be informed of all new developments prior to any press release.
 - I. If there will NOT be any court proceedings surrounding the circumstances of the firefighter's death, at the earliest opportunity, the Division will relay ALL details of the incident to the family.
 - J. Carry a pager at all times.

- K. The Chief and other high-ranking officials should be highly visible during these days.

DIVISION LIAISON PERSON

1. this position will normally be assigned to a Fire Officer because of the need to effectively coordinate resources throughout the Division.
2. **DIVISION LIAISON PERSON** responsibilities:
 - A. Work closely with the FAMILY LIAISON PERSON to ensure that the needs of the family are fulfilled.
 - B. Make sure ALL Division personnel on the scene who witnessed the incident, or who have information about the incident, are identified and notified. They should also prepare a written account of their observations prior to, during and after the incident.
 - C. Handle the news media throughout the ordeal. If the family decides to accept an interview, a firefighter should attend to "screen" questions presented to the family so as not to jeopardize subsequent legal proceedings. If photographs or videotapes are taken at the funeral, acquire copies for the family.
 - D. Meet with the following persons to coordinate funeral activities and establish an itinerary:
 1. Fire Chief
 2. Funeral Liaison Person
 3. Funeral Director
 4. Police Liaison Officer (traffic control, funeral escort)
 5. Family Priest, Rabbi, or Division Chaplain
 6. Cemetery Director
 7. Honor Guard
 8. City Manager and Council
 - E. Issue a message to the region. Include the following:
 1. Name of the deceased
 2. Date and time of death
 3. Circumstances surrounding the death
 4. Funeral arrangements
 5. Uniform of the day to be worn
 6. Expressions of sympathy in lieu of flowers
 7. Contact person and phone number for visiting departments to indicate their desire to attend and to obtain further information
 8. Identify times and places for group gatherings in accordance with the ceremony
 9. If there is a static display of apparatus and the location
 - F. Notify the National Fire Academy (301-447-1000) Superintendents Office or the Security Office (flag to be placed at half staff)
 - G. Notify IAFF Vice-President (202-737-8484) and OAPFF President (614-488-9920).
 - H. Notify Public Safety Officers Benefit Program/Washington D.C. (888-744-6513) and National Fallen Firefighter Association (301-447-1365).
 - I. If the family desires a burial in a fire department uniform, select an officer to obtain a uniform and all accoutrements and deliver to the funeral home.
 - J. Obtain a current Division photograph for news release and Mass cards.
 - K. Arrange for the delivery of ALL the firefighter's personal belongings to the family. Have a special box(es) for the belongings. This would help to avoid an appearance of lack of respect for the deceased.
 - L. Assure that the surviving parents are afforded recognition and the proper placement is arranged for them during the funeral and procession.
 - M. Arrange for mutual aid, if necessary, to cover the community's fire and EMS responses during the funeral.

- N. Arrange for medical personnel at the cemetery for the family should they need immediate medical assistance.
- O. Assign a firefighter or a friend to remain at the family home during the viewing and funeral for security.
- P. Arrange for routine residence checks of the family's home for 6-8 weeks following the funeral by assigned personnel. This service is necessary since large amounts of money are passing through the residence and the family will be spending much time away from the home dealing with legal matters.

FUNERAL LIAISON

1. Together the emotional trauma of bereavement, the lack of information, and the time pressures place the family at an enormous disadvantage in making funeral arrangements.
3. The **FUNERAL LIAISON** will direct the funeral activities of the Division and visiting fire departments according to the wishes of the **FAMILY**. Under **NO** circumstances should assumptions be made. **THE FAMILY HAS THE FINAL SAY.**
4. It is important financially, as well as for peace of mind, that the family knows exactly the costs, thereby ensuring that they are not charged for items not selected or used. The family should ask for a written price list. They should **NOT** be embarrassed about requesting price information; they need it to make a wise decision.
5. Arrange to have Station flags, City flags placed at half-staff until seven (7) days after the funeral. Death other than in the line-of-duty, flags will be lowered to half-staff until the day following the funeral. Arrange for black mourning bands for Division badges. The bands should be a ½" to ¾" piece of black material placed horizontally at the badge's midpoint entirely around the badge. The band should be placed on badges at the time of notification of the death and may remain on the badge for a (30) thirty-day mourning period.
6. Establish an honor guard schedule at the funeral home for the deceased. Class A uniforms. Positions should be taken up at the head and foot of the casket. The time interval for each detail may vary; however, 30-minute assignments before relief are advisable.
7. Coordinate any formal walkthrough of uniformed personnel, and uniformed personnel's significant others during the period of viewing with the agencies and the funeral director.
8. Appoint members for usher duty at the church. Ushers to escort dignitaries to seats/pews reserved for dignitaries. Ushers should direct visiting firefighters to their pews. The members of the deceased department will enter the church immediately before the casket. The family will enter the church immediately after the casket, followed by department members wives, husbands or significant others.
9. If the family wishes a flag presentation by the Division, obtain an American Flag. At the grave, two of the pallbearers should remove the flag from the casket and, in a ceremonial manner, fold it in the proper triangle style. The flag may then be passed to whomever is selected to present it to the family. The point of the folded flag shall be in an upright position, and make the appropriate remarks:

"On behalf of a grateful Community for his/her service in the Westerville Division of Fire, I am honored to present you with this flag."

or

"On behalf of a grateful Nation for his/her service in the Armed Forces, and a grateful Community for his/her service in the Westerville Division of Fire, I am honored to present you with this flag."

Then step back one step, salute smartly, and return to your place.

10. In the event the family requests specific pallbearers, or members volunteer for the detail, details should be comprised of FIVE firefighters and ONE officer. The Officer shall be a lieutenant for all deceased who were below the grade of Battalion Chief. In cases where the deceased was above the grade of Lieutenant, an Officer of comparable grade will be detailed. Instructions on the handling, removal, and transport of the casket should be given by the Funeral Director. The pallbearers WILL perform as requested by the Funeral Director.
11. If the firefighter was a veteran, arrangements could be made with the local VFW or American Legion to have a firing squad fire volleys at the gravesite. The position of the firing squad is 50 to 75 feet from the gravesite.

CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR THE FAMILY

A line-of-duty death or injury becomes a part of the Department history and tradition, and an even more important part of the personal history of each co-worker close to the incident or the colleague lost. The Department MUST remain sensitive to the importance of honoring the memory of those lost at appropriate moments in the Department future. Keeping the memory alive is important not just to the immediate survivors, but to all those who will carry on their traditions in the years to come -families as well as employees.

1. Plaques/memorabilia given to the spouse will also be given to the parents and/or adult child(ren).
2. Members of the Department must remain sensitive to the needs of the survivors long after the firefighter's death. The grief process has no timetable and survivors may develop a complicated grief process. More than half of the surviving spouses can be expected to develop a post-traumatic stress reaction to the tragedy.
3. Survivors should continue to feel a part of the "fire service family". They should be invited and encouraged to attend the Department's activities to ensure continued contact.
4. Members of the Department are encouraged to keep in touch with the family. Close friends, co-workers and officials should arrange with the family to visit the home from time to time so long as the family expresses a desire to have these contacts continue (don't be afraid to mention the dead firefighter's name in visits).
5. The Chief of Department should observe the firefighter's death date with a short note to the family and/or flowers on the grave (1 year anniversary, etc.). The first year following the firefighter's death will be filled with significant dates and points of reference -graduation from the academy, the couple's wedding anniversary, the firefighter's birthday and other dates. Each and every time the death anniversary occurs, the family's sense of loss surfaces. The point is that grief lasts for a lifetime. When you see the family, mention their loss and inquire as to how they are coping. The only thing worse than speaking ill of the dead is NOT speaking of the dead at all.
6. Holidays may be especially difficult for the family, particularly if small children are involved. Increased contact with the survivors and additional support is important at these times.
7. The FAMILY LIAISON acts as a long-term liaison with the surviving family who ensures that close contact is maintained between the Department and the survivors, and that their needs are met

for as long as they feel the need for support. Follow-up phone calls the first few weeks and then again in a couple of months.

8. Although condolence calls are a dreaded duty for many, they are made out of love and concern. Even the most awkward expressions of sympathy can be accepted with that in mind.
 9. Remembering the children and the parents on mother's and father's day, being on hand at a school graduation for one of the firefighter's children, and other thoughtful gestures are extremely important and greatly appreciated.
 10. The Department may want to compile a scrapbook about the firefighter that includes pictures taken on the job, humorous or other stories about the firefighter submitted by his colleagues, testimonial statements, news clippings, letters of commendation and related items.
 - j. The family choosing music and speakers brings a sense of control, and makes the service more meaningful. You might also consider having a talented friend or relative provide the music. It is better to have an old friend speak with eloquence. You may have more than one speaker:
 1. Readers of scripture
 2. What scripture will be read?
 3. Music at church
 4. Who will deliver the sermon?
 - k. The Chief may designate a Fire Department pumper(s) and ladder(s). The pumper(s) will be appropriately prepared with flowers and black bunting and stripped of hose for use to transport the casket (caisson) and/or flowers. The ladder may be used as a flower car. Emergency lights ON while procession is moving.
 - l. Will personnel walk along side the caisson or drive in procession?
 - M, Will crossed aerial equipment be used over the cemetery entrance so the procession will drive under it?
 - n. Coordinate local florists with special floral arrangements, they may include, but are not limited to:
 1. **Maltese cross**
 2. **Fire Department badge**
 3. **Broken rung ladder**
 4. **Fire Department patch**
 5. **Fire Department bell**
 6. **Helmet**
- NOTE: Often times the above designs may show a cracked or broken article to signify the firefighter's loss.
- o. Arrange for disposition of flowers after the funeral.

- p. Many fire departments have attached the turnout coat, the boots and the helmet of the deceased firefighter to the back or front of the apparatus. This symbolizes the member's last alarm response.
- q. Coordinate traffic management with local police department, and State police department (assembly point and determine a route).
- r. Coordinate the vehicle staging at the church and cemetery with the appropriate key people.
- s. Arrange for refreshments at the assembly point.
- t. Arrange for restroom facilities at the assembly point (portable units).
- u. Maintain a roster of all Departments sending personnel to the funeral, including:
 - 1. Name and address of responding agency;
 - 2. Name of the Chief of Department;
 - 3. Number of firefighters responding;
 - 4. Number of firefighters attending the reception after the funeral; and
 - 5. Number of vehicles

Assist in making the necessary accommodations (food, lodging, etc.
- v. Acknowledge visiting and assisting departments
- w. Death notices/obituaries. In some areas, newspapers will accept notices only from Funeral Directors. The family may want the death notice to appear both in local and in out-of-town papers. Most papers charge for this service. The family may prepare the information that will be used in the notice:
 - 1. Date and place of birth
 - 2. Employment history
 - 3. Civic and Religious activities
 - 4. Preference for memorial gift to charity
 - 5. Names of survivors
- X. Advise the Chief and staff concerning all funeral arrangements.
- y. Arrange for food service areas after the funeral,
- Z. If there is a firefighters' memorial located in the cemetery, or in the city/town, you may consider placing flowers at the memorial.
- aa. Assure overhead protection for immediate family at the burial site.
- bb. Obtain a public address system to be used where appropriate.
- cc. Contact the Road Maintenance department. You may need its help with the following:
 - 1. Snow removal (if needed)

2. Street cleaning
 3. Barricades
- dd. Have portable radios available for funeral communication and information. The Funeral Director may also provide information on death benefits.
- ee. Massachusetts has an explicit casket requirement for cremation.

BENEFITS COORDINATOR

1. The **BENEFITS COORDINATOR** will gather information on **ALL** benefits/funeral payments available to the family. The **BENEFITS COORDINATOR** has the Department's full support to fulfill this responsibility to the survivors and is completely responsible for filing the appropriate benefit paperwork and following through with the family to ensure that these benefits are being received. **CAUTION:** Private consultants/attorneys are more than willing to work on the benefits, the bill for service is sure to follow. This should be the responsibility of the Department.
2. The **BENEFITS COORDINATOR** is responsible for:
 - a. Contacting the City to ensure the firefighter's survivor receives death benefits, the firefighter's remaining paychecks, and payment for remaining:
 1. Vacation
 2. Educational benefits
 3. Sick time
 4. Longevity
 5. Other contractual items
 - b. Gathering information on all benefit/funeral payments that are available to the family.
 - c. Setting up any special trust funds or educational funds.
 - d. Notifying the Firefighters Relief Association for death benefits.
 - e. Preparing a printout of the various benefits/funeral payments that are due to the family, listing named beneficiaries, contacts at various benefits offices, and when they can expect to receive payment.
 - f. Social Security -Survivors benefits (if eligible). The Funeral Director can file for payment, or can do it directly.
 - g. VA widow and children benefits and burial benefits (if eligible). The Funeral Director can file for payment, or can do it directly.
 - h. Meeting with the surviving family a few days after the funeral to discuss the benefits they will receive. A copy of the prepared printout and any other related paperwork should be given to the family at this time.

1. If there are surviving children from a former marriage, the guardian of those children should also receive a printout of what benefits the child(ren) may be receiving.
2. Attention should be given to the revocation of health benefits. The majority of health benefit providers allow a 30-day grace period before canceling or imposing monthly payments upon survivors.

- i. Meeting again with the family in approximately three, six and twelve months to make sure that they are receiving benefits.
- j. The following forms will be needed for various benefit applications:

1. Marriage license;
2. Certified copy of death certificate;
3. Certified copy of minor child/children birth certificate;
4. Physician's statement;
5. All current year W -2 earning forms;
6. Birth certificate;
7. VA or Military records

k. Check on any possible third party lawsuits with an attorney.

l. Check on loans outstanding that may be insured.

m. Transfer of ownership of property and vehicles to survivors.

n. Change title of ALL bank accounts

o. Review ALL bills BEFORE payment by survivors checking for legality, honesty and accuracy, including last illness, previous debts, and funeral expenses. Some bills may be covered by medical insurance or otherwise not be legally due.

p. Investigate possibilities of scholarships available for college or survivor and dependents.

q. Advise survivors NOT to loan money to any person -especially relatives and friends (put it in the bank). There will be ample time to invest wisely AFTER the turmoil subsides.