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# Funeral Contingency Plan Introduction

A firefighter's death, in the line of duty or otherwise, will be an extraordinarily traumatic event for both the surviving family and your Department. When this happens, the tragedy will most likely be a sudden event without any warning. The time period from the death to the laying to rest of a comrade will be extremely short and will require your Department to move quickly and with great compassion and organization to provide a fitting memorial for the firefighter.

The purpose of this document is to provide a written contingency plan to assist your Department with the planning and coordination that will become necessary when this event occurs.

It will further provide the users with the basic guidance and assistance for managing various responsibilities and assignments with minimal familiarity in the event of a death incident. The stressful incident of the death of a department member brings about prevailing conditions that without a doubt require specific organization commitments. The plan is devised for maximum structural flexibility and not to overburden any one individual.

This manual will act as a guideline where options can be exercised. The manual is designed so that guidelines may be followed completely, or options may be selected, as appropriate. Whatever the choice, the tribute should encompass the wishes and needs of the family and the department.

It is important to emphasize that the fire department personnel involved understand their roles. This involves being a coordinator for and liaison with the fire department, the deceased member's family, and the funeral director. The fire department's responsibility does not include the duties of funeral director, but does include working with the funeral director in order to accomplish shared goals in the best interest of the deceased member's family.

The plan assigns responsibility to individuals and teams for the following:

- Notifications
- Planning
- Execution of Services
- Death Investigation
- After Care

Since this catastrophic event could take place at anytime, the Chief and Staff Officers (Deputy Chiefs and Assistant Chiefs) should carry the plan in their Department vehicles. A Deputy or Assistant Chief may need to initiate the plan if the Chief is unavailable.

As the plan is read you will see that the organizational system used is designed along the lines of the Incident Command System. A Planning Group Manager, or Incident Commander administrates the plan, and the workload is divided among specific Divisions.

Once the Planning Group Manager (Deputy Chief level) is designated by the Chief, that person should obtain the Funeral Contingency Plan container. The container houses various reference materials as well as the following notebooks, which comprise the detailed lists of responsibilities for each division within this structure.

1. Planning Group Manager
2. Logistics Division
3. Viewing/Vigil Division
4. Memorial Service Division
5. Interment Division
6. Reception Division
7. Family Liaison Officer
8. Public Information Division

The Planning Group Manager must immediately appoint Division leaders for each of the seven positions. A meeting of all Division leaders then needs to be called without delay. At this initial meeting the distribution of the assignment notebooks should be made. The notebooks are meant to be a starting point for each leader. Leaders should keep an open mind since no pre-plan can cover all possibilities.

When a death strikes your Department, it is imperative that you move quickly and efficiently. All of us desire that this plan will never be implemented, but preplanning for the event is prudent and it is hoped that this pre-designed structure will be an aid.

Employees are requested to complete the department's Employee Emergency Contact Form (Attachment A). The information that is provided will be used only in the event of a serious injury or death in the line of duty. It will remain confidential in a sealed envelope and placed in the employee's personnel file. It will be available to authorized personnel only.

A department Employee Confidential Form (Attachment B) will be provided to all personnel. This form is to be utilized by employees who wish to document details of their personal possessions and personal wishes during a serious injury or death in the line of duty. The document would provide designated family and/or friends with information and any instructions from the employee. Utilizing this form is optional and we suggest that the completed form be kept in a safe place known by the beneficiary, spouse, or close relative/friend.

# Chief's Responsibilities

## Line-of-Duty Death of a Member

Upon the death of a member in the line of duty, the Officer-in-Charge shall notify the Fire Chief or in his absence, the Acting Chief, Assistant Chiefs, Union President and Department Chaplain(s).

During notifications, it is imperative that accurate information is passed quickly and discretely. Radio traffic is monitored regularly by the media and private citizens. Names of the dead or injured firefighters shall NEVER be given over the radio. All communications of this sensitive nature shall be conducted by telephone.

### **Upon receipt of this tragic news the Chief or Acting Chief should coordinate the following:**

1. Assemble the Notification Team
  - a. Chief (if possible) or representative
  - b. Family Liaison Officer (appoint the individual)
  - c. A firefighter friend of the family (if available)
  - d. Union Official
  - e. Department Chaplain
2. Make surviving family notification (See "Notification of Next of Kin" information in next section.)
3. Fire Department Notifications
  - a. Command Staff
  - b. On duty personnel
  - c. Off duty personnel
4. Contact the City/County Administrators & Human Resource Department, and advise of all pertinent information and that the Department is implementing the "Funeral Contingency Plan".
5. If possible and the scene allows, the Officer in Charge should relieve the immediate coworkers (those in immediate proximity or those responsible for attempted rescue and or removal of the deceased) from the scene to return to station.
6. Defusing by the Chaplain or qualified person (CISM Team) is to be done as soon as possible on the same shift. This is to be followed by general information of how notification is being done, and what is to be expected in the next few hours.
7. Debriefing by the Chaplain or a qualified person (CISM Team) should be setup based on team guidelines and may require follow-up debriefings for the weeks following the incident. It is not sufficient to only support your firefighters; it is important to support the entire environment in which the firefighter operates. Family members and significant others who may have been emotionally affected by a serious injury or death of a firefighter will be

offered a family debriefing. This will also address what to expect and how to handle the survivors who are dealing with this loss.

8. The Public Information Officer should be notified or a person designated to handle any public news to insure that it is factual and disseminated promptly. This is covered further in the section titled Public Information Division.
9. Set up a Command Staff Meeting to commence upon completion of the notification process.
10. Command Staff Meeting
  - a. Appoint the Planning Group Manager to coordinate all ceremonial services and issue the Funeral Contingency Plan container that holds the notebooks comprising the detailed responsibilities and functions.
  - b. Appoint the Death Investigation Leader and issue the notebook comprising the detailed responsibilities of this position.
  - c. Verify that the necessary Critical Incident Stress Debriefing is in progress.
  - d. Discuss all pertinent issues; family memorial service requests.
11. Memorial Order templates should be prepared in advance to speed distribution.  
(Samples included at the end of this manual).

#### Death of a Member, other than in the Line of Duty

When any member of the department learns of the death of an active or retired member of the Fire Department, notification should be given to the Chief and the Chaplain.

As soon as possible, the Chief as well as the Chaplain, should make a personal visit to the immediate family offering any service the department can render.

The Funeral Contingency Plan will be implemented as indicated.

#### When a Scene Involves the Death of a Relative of a Member of the Department

When on a scene it is discovered that a death involves a relative of a department member, the Officer in Charge should designate a department member, Chaplain if available, to take another department member and make notification to the member and family.

The department should offer any help or services that may be applicable and the Funeral Contingency Plan implemented as indicated.

## Next of Kin Notification

This notification process is multifaceted and can be implemented in the event of a serious injury or death to a member of the department. Implementation of stand-alone sections of this manual without activating the plan completely is acceptable. As a general rule, this process should be used in the event that a member would require transportation to the hospital, or die in the line of duty. Severity of injuries will aid in the decision of whether to implement this plan partially or completely with the final decision and responsibility resting with the Fire Chief, or an appointed designee.

The importance of the NEXT OF KIN NOTIFICATION cannot be over-emphasized. This process will set the tone for many difficult days, weeks, months and years for the surviving family. Sensitivity and compassion are imperative.

Family notification should be made as quickly as possible to avoid the family receiving a notification from another outside party. The media will employ many efforts to seek out the name of the fallen firefighter. We must use all necessary measures to protect the next of kin from unwanted media exposure.

For this reason, the Notification Team will need to assemble rapidly. The team should be at least two to three individuals with separate vehicles. The team should be comprised of as many of the following:

1. The Chief, if possible, or highest ranking available Officer.
2. Family Liaison Officer
3. Firefighter friend of the family
4. Union Official
5. Department Chaplain

If the fallen firefighter's family resides far enough out of the area as to make your department's participation in the notification impractical, the local Fire Department in the area should be notified to make a timely notification.

Another distinct possibility is that your Department could experience a loss of more than one member. This would require multiple notification teams to be assembled and deployed.

Before the team arrives at the residence, verify latest information, and decide who will speak and what will be said.

A word of warning, the family may strike out and blame the department for their loss. For this reason, the initial notification and how it is handled is extremely important.

### **Steps to be taken at the residence:**

1. It may become necessary to have paramedics standby if the people receiving the news are medically vulnerable. If this is done, have the apparatus standby near the residence, but not in view.

2. At the door, identify yourself and ask to come in. (Notification should take place in a private setting.)
3. When inside, ensure you are notifying the right person.
4. Get people in a comfortable or relaxed setting; the most important function of the person making the notification is to put all of the known basic facts into one sentence and tell them.
5. Make sure your message is absolutely clear and direct.
6. Begin with, "I have very bad news" or "I'm very sorry to tell you".
7. Let them know how it happened, "Your husband died responding to a fire", or "Bob was killed in a building collapse".
8. Allow the family to express their emotions. Do not try to talk them out of their grief.
9. This is a very sad time. Do not mask your own grief.
10. Provide only the facts you know, never speculate. If you cannot answer a question, find out the correct answer.
11. Phrases or words to avoid:
  - a. "I know how you feel."
  - b. "It was God's will."
  - c. "Life will go on."
  - d. "He would have wanted to go this way."
  - e. "Be brave."
  - f. "Passed away."
12. Use the victim's first name when referring to the firefighter.
13. Ask if the department can assist by notifying immediate family members (parents, brothers and sisters).
14. With the permission of the next of kin, the department can help setup a support system of clergy, relatives and friends.
15. Never leave immediately after making a notification.
16. Do not leave people without a support system. Wait for others to arrive.
17. Do not take the victim's personal items with you. Personal items (especially lockers) may need to be looked over and censored prior to allowing the family access to them. A station officer can review personal belongings within the department before they are released.

18. Ask the survivor(s) if they wish to see the deceased firefighter, even if the body is badly disfigured. People often have a need to see, touch and hold the deceased; otherwise they may be in denial. This is often very helpful in the family's grief process and gives a sense of finality.
19. If family members wish to see the firefighter, arrangements need to be made rapidly for the viewing. Sensitivity to the family is very important. Provide the best possible environment and avoid delays that heighten the family's anxiety.
20. Offer to transport the family to the location of the firefighter, and help prepare them for what they will see. If the family arrives on the scene, it is advisable to provide them with some type of identification, such as an armband. This will assist the department in locating them on the scene as well as to alert emergency personnel to be sensitive of making comments or statements with the family nearby.
21. If the family wants to drive their own car, have a member of the department accompany them.
22. If you transport the family, turn off your radio and/or advise dispatch that you are transporting the relatives and, if possible, switch to an alternate channel, or communicate by cell phone.
23. If the Department's Family Liaison Officer is not present at the notification; the family should be given the name prior to the team departing. Write down his or her telephone and pager numbers. If possible, this person should already be known by the family.
24. Have one member of the Department stay with the family, unless the family declines.
25. Advise the family that the Family Liaison Officer will contact them to assist with the necessary arrangements.
26. Ask if the Department can pick up any children who may be away at this time.
27. Advise the family of possible media calls. Unwanted media exposure will only add to the difficulty of this tragedy. Suggest that a friend of the family screen their incoming calls.
28. Assure the family that their wishes are the Department's number one concern.
29. Advise the family that an autopsy is highly recommended in a line-of-duty death.
30. Ensure that the family understands that they do not have to make any immediate decisions regarding services, mortuary, wills, etc.
31. Before leaving the residence, try to set a time for a Family Planning Meeting. There are decisions that will need to be made by the family that will shape the planning process. This meeting should take place within the first 24 hours.

## Departmental Notification

Equally important is the notification of your departmental personnel. In the event of death or serious injury to a member of the department, it will be very important to quickly distribute as much information as possible.

Depending on the nature of the incident, a department liaison (possibly the PIO) will be assigned. If this is an additional person(s) to the PIO, they will be working closely together to insure an efficient and accurate report is circulated.

1. It will be the Chief, or his designee's, responsibility to notify the appropriate city officials.
2. The Command/Administrative Staff, to include District or Battalion Chiefs, which are not assigned to the "Next of Kin Notification Team" will assemble to prepare for departmental notifications. If this is an ongoing incident, manpower for notification may be limited. Prevention and Protection Staff as well as non-uniformed administrative staff can also be of assistance.
3. Once initial information is gathered, the team will split up to begin notifications. One staff member will go to each station (if possible), and serve as that station's liaison and Communications Officer. The Communications Officer (Comm. Officer) will inform the station of what has transpired and explain the remainder of the notification process.
4. On duty personnel should call their family, **without delay**, to insure them of their own safety. This is especially important with an ongoing incident. Be cautious of saying too much early on to allow for proper notification of next of kin.
5. It then becomes the responsibility of the on duty personnel, with the help of the Comm. Officer, to begin telephoning off duty personnel to inform them of the incident. This will take place by contacting the off duty personnel assigned to that particular station on their next duty day. For example, (with a 24/48 schedule) if A-shift was on duty, they would contact B-shift and C-shift personnel assigned to that station for their next duty day.
6. In addition to the assigned station personnel, it is important to make arrangements to notify personnel who may be off duty and not assigned to a station. This could include personnel on vacation, exchange of time, sick leave or alternate duty.
7. The only exception to the above process would be the station directly involved in the incident. (i.e. the station that the injured or deceased member(s) was assigned to at the time of the incident) Station notifications for on and off duty personnel at the affected station will be handled by the Comm. Officer with the help of additional personnel from the command and administrative staff.
8. It is vital to maintain continuous communication between the family liaison officer, hospital liaison, and department liaison with the department liaison keeping the Comm. Officers updated. This will help to keep information fresh and accurate.

9. Off duty personnel should contact the station they are assigned to on their next duty day for follow-up information and updates. This will help to disperse the incoming calls.
  
10. The importance of Departmental Notification can not be overemphasized. A death or serious injury is a true test of a department's grit and cohesion and open lines of communication will aid in everyone's ability to deal with this tragedy

## Hospital Liaison (if applicable)

In the instance of a member being transported to the hospital, one individual should be appointed as a hospital liaison and report directly to the hospital. It is possible that a department could have more than one employee injured or killed, and the victims could go to different facilities. This would require the assignment of a liaison for each facility.

When possible, the hospital liaison should be accompanied by a department honor guard member or uniformed member to assist and stand vigil.

The hospital liaison must maintain communication with the department liaison/PIO, family liaison officer and incident commander (if it is an ongoing incident). Other responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

1. Establish a press staging area and insure that no sensitive information is released to the media.
2. Collect all personal articles for safe keeping until the family arrives.
3. Shelter, comfort and help to inform the family with any and all resources. Arrange with hospital staff to provide an appropriate waiting area. A separate area may need to be designated for fellow firefighters and non-family members.
4. Offer the department's assistance in any capacity possible. This could include notifying friends and other family members, picking up other family members or just running necessary errands (pet care, food, convenience items).
5. **NEVER** leave the family alone. Should they request some quiet time or space, the liaison should comply. Then inform the family of where they will be (not far) and how to contact them. It may be necessary to remain at the hospital for several hours to keep the department informed so the liaison may need to be relieved by another member.
6. The honor guard, or uniformed member, standing vigil should remain at the facility for the duration of the stay, or until it is agreed on by the family that they are no longer need. As with all other interactions, the wishes of the family are paramount.
7. If death occurs, the liaison will request that blood gasses be drawn as soon as possible. The toxicological study must contain specific levels of carbon monoxide expressed in an exact percent (as opposed to "CO present" or "trace of CO"). If local labs are unable to get accurate carbon monoxide levels below 10%, contact the Department of Justice and they will run the tests.

**Note:** If a member is admitted to the hospital with injuries sustained on duty, the request for blood gases should be made immediately. This is critical whether or not coronary involvement is known at the time of admission. Results may be inconclusive if the individual has been hospitalized for several days and under heavy medication; thus negating eligibility for coverage under the Public Safety Officer Benefit Law.

# Death Investigation

In the event of a line-of-duty death or serious injury to one of your firefighters, your Department must take immediate steps to ensure that the incident is accurately documented and investigated. This action is conducted to protect the interests of the deceased, the surviving family, and your Department. It is also a mandate of State and Federal law.

**(Note: Local Law Enforcement should have a procedure.)**

## Objectives

1. The most important objective of any line-of-duty death is to prevent the same situation from occurring again, including;
  - \*Identifying inadequacies involving apparatus, equipment, protective clothing, standard operating procedures, supervision, training, or performance.
  - \*Identifying situations that involve unacceptable risk
  - \*Identifying previously unknown or unanticipated hazards
  - \*Identifying actions that must be taken to address problems or situations that are discovered.
2. Ensure lessons learned from the investigation are effectively communicated to prevent future occurrences of a similar nature.
3. To satisfy the requirement 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.

## Complicating factors

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 or near fatal incident. Conversely, there may also be a desire to absolve an individual of responsibility or to protect the reputation of your 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.

A report based on factual information will stand on its own merit. Facts, conclusions, and recommendations shall be well supported. Accusations of negligent acts and determinations of

personal responsibility of 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 will be 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.

A further complication may arise from any suggestions of criminal responsibility for the incident.

### Investigation Process

There will be an Incident Investigation Team pre-designated for use in these types of emergencies. The team shall be made up of:

1. A Deputy Chief (appointed by the Chief), Chairman
2. Deputy Chief of EMS
3. Deputy Chief of Training
4. Fire Investigator
5. Fire Inspector
6. Chair of Safety Committee
7. City or County Safety Officer
8. Representative of Union Executive Board

The activation of the team should be called by the Deputy Chief in charge. The team should then meet at the site, as soon as possible, and coordinate their activities with the appropriate law enforcement agency.

The initial collection of facts, preservation of evidence, and the appropriate agency notifications shall be the responsibility of the Incident Commander until the team can take over.

If an employee is killed as a result of a fire/explosion, the FIRE INVESTIGATION shall be conducted by the Fire/Police Department Arson Investigation Unit. The cause and origin determination shall rest with this unit and any additional investigation resources may be requested, such as the ATF, State Fire Marshal's Office, or Sheriff Department. Once this investigation is complete, the Arson Investigator will then turn the scene over to the Death Investigation Group.

The cause and determination investigation of how the fire/explosion started should not be discussed outside of the investigating body.

**The following is a list of items that should be addressed:**

1. Immediate Action
  - a. Secure the scene. No unnecessary disturbing of the scene should take place. Remove all non-essential personnel.
  - b. Impound and weigh all safety equipment that was used by the deceased. This should include SCBA, PASS device, radio, turnout gear, helmet, and gloves. These items may need to be sent for testing. It is important to document how and where all equipment is found, the condition of the equipment, and any damages. (Was the radio on?; Remaining pressure in SCBA?; Protective equipment worn?)
  - c. Have a video and still picture record made of the site.
  - d. A detailed drawing of the scene to include vehicle locations, equipment and hose line placement, and the position and location of the body.
  - e. Document the weather conditions at the time of the incident.
2. Secondary Action
  - a. Submit Reporting Package to IAFF; refer to template included for details.
  - b. Arrange for the required autopsy that meets Public Safety Officers Benefit (PSOB) Program requirements. It is important for the autopsy to be exact; Carbon Monoxide levels of greater than 15% dictate eligibility. Autopsy should avoid statements indicating “stress”, “strain”, or “exertion” as contributing factors.
  - c. Obtain audiotapes of the incident.
  - d. Request written transcripts with times of radio transmissions.
  - e. Impound all written forms (Fire Report, Casualty Report, and EMS Report) used in the incident.
  - f. Ensure all necessary agency notifications have been made. This could include but is not limited to: OSHA, FEMA, U.S. Fire Administration, NIOSH, ATF, State Fire Marshal, PSOB, Florida State Fire College, Worker’s Compensation Board, and NFIRS.
  - g. Obtain written statements from all directly involved individuals. It is preferred that these statements be completed prior to the release of members at the end of the shift. If this is impractical, the statements should be provided within twenty-four hours. These statements are confidential and are not to be reviewed by any individual, including Supervisors. These documents are to be sealed and turned over to the Incident Investigation Team.
  - h. Review all chronological reports.

- i. Review all written statements.
- j. Setup interview teams for all companies on the scene.
- k. Interview all individuals on the scene (audio and or video recording).
- l. Reconstruct the scene from statements.
- m. Have diagrams and designs of fire scene for interviews.
- n. Review autopsy report.
- o. Write the final report.

# Levels of Services and Honors

There are three levels of services and honors.

- Level One Service: Honors bestowed for the line-of-duty death of any active, uniformed member of the Department.
- Level Two Service: Honors bestowed for the non-line-of-duty death of an active, uniformed member of the Department.
- Level Three Service: Honors bestowed for the non-line-of-duty death of an active, non-uniformed member; retired member (whose death is not attributed to a line-of-duty injury or incident); honorary member; and a member's spouse or dependant children.

Ultimate consideration should be given to the wishes of the family and all circumstances should be given the fullest consideration as to level of service and honors rendered. However, the absolute decision will be made by the Fire Chief, or appointed designee.

**The following lists the honors and entitlements rendered for the three levels of services:**

## Level One Honors

- All military standards observed
- Department Honor and Color Guard
- Department Chaplain
- Station and apparatus bunting
- Static display of apparatus (at appropriate location)
- Death Watch/Vigil
- Honorary Pallbearers
- Department apparatus used as caisson
- Department apparatus used as flower car/truck
- Family transportation (if requested)
- Department Casket Team
- Bunker gear, helmet and badge presentation
- IAFF medal presentation
- Bell Ceremony
- Final Tone-out
- Flag presentation
- Helicopter fly over
- Twenty-one Gun Salute (if veteran)

### Level Two Honors

- All military standards observed
- Department Honor and Color Guard
- Department Chaplain
- Death Watch/Vigil
- Honorary Pallbearers
- Department Casket Team
- Bunker gear, helmet and badge presentation
- Bell Ceremony
- Final Tone-out
- Flag presentation
- Twenty-one Gun Salute (if veteran)

### Level Three Honors

- All military standards observed
- Department Honor and Color Guard
- Death Watch/Vigil
- Department Casket Team
- Bell Ceremony (if requested)
- Final Tone-out (if requested)
- Flag presentation
- Twenty-one Gun Salute (if veteran)

# Planning Group Manager

It is very important to both the immediate family of the deceased, and to your firefighters, that the Department provides the best possible tribute to your fallen comrade(s). For this reason it is extremely important that an effective group of planners is gathered to manage all activities. The organizational structure that will become necessary to control and coordinate this effort is patterned after the ICS structure that is utilized to manage major emergency incidents.

A Deputy Chief will be designated by the Chief, or Acting Chief, and will lead the Planning Group as the Planning Group Manager. This Manager will be appointed as quickly as possible and have overall responsibility and control of coordinating all activities involving the planning and execution of the plans that provide an appropriate memorial service for the fallen firefighter.

## **The Planning Group Manager will supervise the following seven Divisions:**

1. Logistics Division
2. Viewing/Vigil Division
3. Memorial Service Division
4. Interment Division
5. Reception Division
6. Family Liaison Officer
7. Public Information Division

See the Planning Group Organizational Chart at the end of this section for a general breakdown of responsibilities. Detailed descriptions are included in both the Planning Group Manager's guide as well as the individual division notebooks.

Once the death occurs or is eminent, the Planning Group Manager should assign the Division Leaders to appropriate individuals and a staff meeting should be convened to distribute Division Notebooks. It is important that this meeting is called ASAP. The laying to rest of your firefighter will take rapid action. There may be religious reasons that dictate burial or cremation within three days of death.

The structure provided to the Planning Group Manager is meant to be a guide. It may be altered as the Manager sees fit. **Refer to the Department's Honor Guard Protocol for proper movement, commands and flag etiquette.**

As the overall event manager, the following are considerations that should be followed as the planning progresses:

1. The desires of the surviving family are paramount at all times, and should be given the fullest respect.
2. Planners should be aware that open and frequent communication between and within the Planning Group is key to successfully coordinating this effort.
3. Rehearsals of specific events are advisable, if possible, to reduce confusion.

4. It is advisable for the Planning Group to meet once or twice daily. This allows all Divisions Leaders to see the overall work in progress.
5. The earlier the team is activated the better. Lost time can never be made up when dealing with the workload in a three to five day window.
6. This is a complex event to manage. Bring the best talent to the Group that is available.
7. Give Division Leaders authority to select the best people to staff their organizations.
8. Be prepared for a large turnout. There is a potential for having thousands of individuals participating in a full honors funeral.
9. Remember there is planning support available from other agencies such as; Local and International Unions, local Law Enforcement, other local Fire Departments, and the National Fallen Firefighter Foundation.
10. **Appoint a Safety Officer.** Safety must be considered during every event. The Safety Officer should work in harmony with the Logistics Division to ensure that vehicles are marked for safe identification, procession routes are marked properly on maps, and law enforcement officers are available to block intersections from oncoming traffic. The Safety Officer will review parking plans for all events and approves the positioning of personnel on the outside of apparatus transporting the coffin in processions. The Safety Officer must be granted the authority to immediately stop any unsafe practice without having to first seek permission from a higher authority. The Safety Officer reports directly to the Planning Group Manager.
11. **Appoint a Finance Officer.** The Finance Officer develops program budgets, provides the funding mechanism to pay for the services and prepares the appropriate expenditure reports after the event has concluded. The Finance Officer must keep all division leaders aware of available funds and balances, based on the approved budget for the operation. The Finance Officer reports directly to the Planning Group Manager.

## Logistics Division

The Logistics Division is established to manage specific areas of responsibility as outlined in this document in response to the death of a member of your Department. The Logistics Division Leader shall report directly to the Planning Group Manager. The Logistics Division Leader will need to appoint competent staff members to assist with the Division's far reaching responsibilities.

### **The Leader is responsible for the following:**

1. Arrange for the deceased's transport from the coroner to a mortuary (possible FD ambulance).
2. Designate and coordinate the use of all Fire Department apparatus for events:
  - a. FD apparatus to be used as caisson.
  - b. FD apparatus to be used as flower car (if necessary).
  - c. FD units in processions (to include other departments).
  - d. Transport of family and any dignitaries.
  - e. Antique Fire Apparatus.
3. Designate apparatus order for all processions. If applicable, contact public transportation resources to utilize buses for members that may wish to attend but not drive themselves during the procession.
4. Designate route of procession. If practical, the procession should proceed past the deceased's station and as many other stations as possible. Station crews may post along the route near their station if passing directly by the station is not possible. Crews should stand at attention and render a hand salute as the caisson passes. Stationary apparatus should have lights flashing but no sirens. The procession should also be routed to allow for the public to be involved as much as possible. Vehicles in the procession should also have emergency lights flashing but NO SIRENS should be activated during the procession. If the route should cross railroad tracks, contact and coordinate with the rail authority to withhold train traffic.
5. Department apparatus static displays may be utilized at the Funeral Home or Memorial Site. This should be the assigned apparatus of the deceased, if practical. Ladder trucks can also provide a static display with a flag hanging from extended and crossed ladders.
6. Coordinate with the Planning Manager if mutual aid will be needed to fill your Department's stations during the services.
7. Liaison with Law Enforcement for motorcycle escorts, street closures along the route and a Rifle Team if a Twenty-one Gun Salute is needed.
8. Organize staging areas at the Funeral Home, Memorial Site and Cemetery. It is possible to have in excess of 100 vehicles participating.
9. Determine the need for restrooms, refreshments and food.

10. Obtain services of a bagpiper and drummer if desired. It is advisable to have several resources identified ahead of time. Contact other area departments for possible leads.
11. Obtain services of one or two buglers. They may need to be amplified. As with the bagpiper, it is advisable to have possible resources identified ahead of time.
12. Obtain adequate white gloves for Command Staff and pallbearers. Honor and Color Guard members should already be outfitted.
13. Obtain black bands for badges.
14. Design all necessary maps (service locations, staging areas, procession routes, lodging).
15. Obtain helmet and turnout gear that will accompany casket.
16. Arrange lodging options for visiting departments.
17. Coordinate the Honor Guards of all agencies. This can be delegated down through the Department's Honor Guard Commander. If your Department does not have an Honor Guard, delegate this responsibility to a neighboring Department that does.
18. Request local law enforcement to make routine checks on the family's residence during services and for several weeks afterward.
19. Arrange for helicopter fly over if desired (Medical Transport Companies and Law Enforcement).
20. If there are injured firefighters who wish to attend any service, provide for their transportation.
21. Provide handicap assistance for guests that may require it, with special attention to family members.
22. Maintain a roster of all departments sending personnel to the funeral. The roster should include department name, address, and Chief, as well as, number of personnel and apparatus attending. Forward a copy of this to the family after the service.

## Viewing/Vigil Division

The Viewing/Vigil Division (calling hours) will be established if so desired by the family(s). The Viewing/Vigil Division Leader will report to the Planning Group Manager.

### **Necessary information the Division needs is:**

1. Service date (usually one to two days prior to Memorial or Burial): \_\_\_\_\_
2. Location: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Time(s): \_\_\_\_\_

### **The duties and responsibilities of this Division are as follows:**

1. Liaison with mortuary.
2. Liaison with clergy.
3. Coordinate with service facility.
4. Coordinate with Logistics Division if the body is moved to a site away from the mortuary.
5. Make arrangements for the funeral director to receive the deceased's uniform in the event of a departmental funeral or if requested by the family.
6. Service content and order (if any).
7. If this form of event is held it is the responsibility of this Division to provide Honor Guards for posting at or near the casket. Five guards (minimum) will be needed. One at each end of the casket. Rotate guards every 15 minutes. Posting and changing of the guard is detailed in the Department's Honor Guard Protocol. Teams will not be present during the family's final viewing, unless requested by the family; this is the family's time to be alone.
8. Other considerations:
  - a. Immediate family members should be escorted by department personnel to and from the viewing.
  - b. Catholic protocols may include a rosary service in conjunction with the viewing. This may or may not require the participation of an Honor Guard. The American flag cannot cover the casket while in some churches, verify with clergy.
  - c. It is generally proper protocol for Honor Guard members to wear their uniform hat inside the church or mortuary including the time spent posted alongside of the casket. Gloves should also be worn.
  - d. The event is usually held one or two days prior to the Memorial or burial.
  - e. The casket may be open or closed.
  - f. CISM members should be on site for counseling, if necessary.
  - g. Pictures of our fallen firefighter should be present. It is the responsibility of the Public Information Division to gather and provide these photos.
  - h. Placement of flowers.
  - i. A Guest Registrar will make sure all visitors sign the Memory Book and receive service announcements or commemoratives. The funeral home staff may handle this.

## Memorial Service Division

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

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

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

- a. Date: \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Time: \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Location: \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Level of honors due to the member: \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Level of honors and involvement requested by family:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- f. Open or closed service to the public and outside agencies? \_\_\_\_\_
- g. Open or closed casket? \_\_\_\_\_
- h. Preferred music: \_\_\_\_\_
- i. Preferred speakers: \_\_\_\_\_
- j. Will a bagpiper be used? \_\_\_\_\_
- k. Will last alarm ceremonies be used? \_\_\_\_\_
- l. Pallbearers: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Memorial Service Division responsibilities are as follows:**

1. Ensure the facility is large enough to handle anticipated large numbers. Prearrange possible locations and plan for overflow.
2. Coordinate with Logistics for arrival and departure from the service.
3. Coordinate alignment of personnel for arrival and departure of casket at the memorial facility. Honor Guards flanked to left of entrance. Chiefs, staff officers and dignitaries

flanked to right of entrance. The family should enter and be seated prior to the casket being taken in. If seating is limited, some personnel may need to remain outside in ranks. If a bagpiper is used, the piper leads the casket in and out of the facility. At the conclusion of the service, the casket is taken out followed by the family.

4. Coordinate with clergy for program content.
5. Design the order of the program. The service should last no more than one hour and forty minutes. Coordinate with the Planning Group Manager on the starting time of the service.
6. Design a seating plan – If indoors, determine capacity and obtain a floor plan. Include placement of family members, Department Staff Officers, city or county management, politicians, Chief Officers' visitors, Union Representatives (local, state and national), Department personnel, civilian friends, visiting departments, retired FD officers, and general public.
7. Coordinate the family's musical choices. How will they be performed choir, soloists, recording, orchestra or small instrumental group?
8. Secure an adequate public address system (if one is not already in place).
9. Should the service take place outside, several other considerations must be made. Points for discussion are the need for a tent, seating, restrooms, water/refreshments, power supply and shade for rehab.
10. Coordination with pallbearers. The designation of individual pallbearers will be the responsibility of the Family liaison Officer in conjunction with the Honor Guard Commander.
11. Conduct any rehearsals deemed necessary.
12. There should be ALS ambulances standing by.
13. Coordinate the overall program. Advise the Family Liaison Officer who will keep the family informed. Items for consideration are the number of speakers, content of the program, order of events, and the need or desire for a Death Watch during the service.
14. Who is going to present the Eulogy? Should be strong and well prepared.
15. Assemble a photo display of the deceased(s) career. Coordinate with the Family Liaison Officer as well as the Public Information Division.
16. Assemble a shadow box for presentation. This may include any or all of the following: badge, patches, hat hardware, and department picture.
17. Select the ushers to be used and tasks for them to carry out.
18. Coordinate with Department's Chaplain(s).

19. Set aside a quiet room for the family. This will be used before the service.
20. Last Alarm ceremony and helicopter flyovers may be done at the Memorial Service, but preferably at the Interment.
21. Parking requirements.
22. Coordinate with the Public Information Division on the printed program for service.
23. Determine the desire for a video presentation during the service. This could include interviews with friends, pre-existing video clips of the deceased, or department video clips.
24. The flag that was flying at the member's last place of assignment is retired from duty and along with a memorial resolution from the Office of your City or County Administrator, is presented to the member's appropriate survivor by the Fire Chief or appointed designee.
25. Distribution of the Memorial program.

## Suggested Order for Memorial Service

1. Invocation
2. Prayer
3. Opening remarks and greetings
4. Special music
5. Scripture reading and minister's remarks
6. Speakers: City or County Administrator (Council/Commission), State or Federal politicians, family representative, Union representative, Department representative
7. Eulogy – Chief or designee
8. Special music
9. Presentations (may be done at Service or Interment)
10. Closing remarks/prayer
11. Last Alarm Ceremony (if desired, but preferably at Interment)
12. Bagpipes
13. Dismissal instructions

## **Suggested “Last Alarm” Ceremony**

Chaplain or Department member reads or recites:

THE MEN AND WOMEN OF TODAY’S FIRE SERVICE ARE CONFRONTED WITH A MORE DANGEROUS WORK ENVIRONMENT THAN EVER BEFORE. WE ARE FORCED TO CONTINUALLY CHANGE OUR STRATEGIES AND TACTICS TO ACCOMPLISH OUR TASKS.

OUR METHODS MAY CHANGE, BUT OUR GOALS REMAIN THE SAME AS THEY WERE IN THE PAST; TO SAVE LIVES AND PROTECT PROPERTY, SOMETIMES AT A TERRIBLE COST. THIS IS WHAT WE DO, THIS IS OUR CHOSEN PROFESSION, AND THIS IS THE TRADITION OF THE FIREFIGHTER.

THE FIRE SERVICE OF TODAY IS EVER CHANGING, BUT IT IS STEEPED IN TRADITIONS OVER 200 YEARS OLD. ONE SUCH TRADITION IS THE RINGING OF A BELL.

IN THE PAST, AS FIREFIGHTERS BEGAN THEIR TOUR OF DUTY, IT WAS THE BELL THAT SIGNALLED THE BEGINNING OF THAT DAY’S SHIFT. THROUGHOUT THE DAY AND NIGHT, EACH ALARM WAS SOUNDED BY A BELL, WHICH SUMMONED THESE BRAVE SOULS TO FIGHT FIRES AND TO PLACE THEIR LIVES IN JEOPARDY FOR THE GOOD OF THEIR FELLOW CITIZENS. AND WHEN THE FIRE WAS OUT AND THE ALARM HAD COME TO AN END, IT WAS A BELL THAT SIGNALLED TO ALL, THE COMPLETION OF THE CALL. WHEN A FIREFIGHTER DIED, PAYING THE SUPREME SACRIFICE, IT WAS THE MOURNFUL TOLL OF THE BELL THAT SOLEMNLY ANNOUNCED A COMRADES PASSING.

WE UTILIZE THESE TRADITIONS AS SYMBOLS, WHICH REFLECT HONOR AND RESPECT FOR THOSE WHO HAVE GIVEN SO MUCH AND WHO HAVE SERVED SO WELL. TO SYMBOLIZE THE DEVOTION THAT THESE BRAVE SOULS HAD FOR THEIR DUTY, A SPECIAL SIGNAL OF THREE RINGS WAS ADOPTED FROM ROMAN TIMES. THESE THREE TOLLS REPRESENT THE END OF OUR COMRADES’ DUTY, THEIR TOUR COMPLETE AND THEY WILL BE RETURNING TO QUARTERS. AND SO, TO THOSE WHO HAVE SELFLESSLY DEDICATED THEIR LIVES TO SERVING OTHERS; THEIR TASKS COMPLETED, THEIR DUTIES DONE, WE SOUND THE BELL.

TO OUR COMRADE \_\_\_\_\_; HIS/HER LAST ALARM, HE/SHE IS GOING HOME.

# Interment Division

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

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

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

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

## **Critical information for the Interment Division:**

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

## **This Division is responsible for:**

1. Organizing program with coordination through Family Liaison Officer
2. Setting formation
3. Providing seating for at least the family and VIP's
4. Providing restrooms if deemed necessary
5. Distribution of maps to the reception location
6. Medical personnel on stand by. Coordinate with the Memorial Service Division.
7. Shade or rehab area
8. Rehab/canteen trucks (Red Cross, Salvation Army)

9. Liaison with cemetery
10. Liaison with clergy
11. Coordinate, with the Honor Guard Commander, the flag presentation to family
12. Coordinate the presentation of Shadow Box or badge to the family
13. Create a parking plan
14. Provide a sound system and public address system
15. Coordinate fly over (if necessary)
16. Coordinate Bell Ceremony
17. Provide electrical power
18. Coordinate the Final Tone-out
19. Provide and coordinate a bugler for playing of Taps
20. Coordinate bagpiper
21. Relocation of flowers
22. Coordination of Twenty-one Gun Salute (if veteran)

## **Suggested Program for Interment**

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

## **Suggested “Last Alarm” Ceremony**

Chaplain or Department member reads or recites:

THE MEN AND WOMEN OF TODAY’S FIRE SERVICE ARE CONFRONTED WITH A MORE DANGEROUS WORK ENVIRONMENT THAN EVER BEFORE. WE ARE FORCED TO CONTINUALLY CHANGE OUR STRATEGIES AND TACTICS TO ACCOMPLISH OUR TASKS.

OUR METHODS MAY CHANGE, BUT OUR GOALS REMAIN THE SAME AS THEY WERE IN THE PAST; TO SAVE LIVES AND PROTECT PROPERTY, SOMETIMES AT A TERRIBLE COST. THIS IS WHAT WE DO, THIS IS OUR CHOSEN PROFESSION, AND THIS IS THE TRADITION OF THE FIREFIGHTER.

THE FIRE SERVICE OF TODAY IS EVER CHANGING, BUT IT IS STEEPED IN TRADITIONS OVER 200 YEARS OLD. ONE SUCH TRADITION IS THE RINGING OF A BELL.

IN THE PAST, AS FIREFIGHTERS BEGAN THEIR TOUR OF DUTY, IT WAS THE BELL THAT SIGNALLED THE BEGINNING OF THAT DAY’S SHIFT. THROUGHOUT THE DAY AND NIGHT, EACH ALARM WAS SOUNDED BY A BELL, WHICH SUMMONED THESE BRAVE SOULS TO FIGHT FIRES AND TO PLACE THEIR LIVES IN JEOPARDY FOR THE GOOD OF THEIR FELLOW CITIZENS. AND WHEN THE FIRE WAS OUT AND THE ALARM HAD COME TO AN END, IT WAS A BELL THAT SIGNALLED TO ALL, THE COMPLETION OF THE CALL. WHEN A FIREFIGHTER DIED, PAYING THE SUPREME SACRIFICE, IT WAS THE MOURNFUL TOLL OF THE BELL THAT SOLEMNLY ANNOUNCED A COMRADES PASSING.

WE UTILIZE THESE TRADITIONS AS SYMBOLS, WHICH REFLECT HONOR AND RESPECT FOR THOSE WHO HAVE GIVEN SO MUCH AND WHO HAVE SERVED SO WELL. TO SYMBOLIZE THE DEVOTION THAT THESE BRAVE SOULS HAD FOR THEIR DUTY, A SPECIAL SIGNAL OF THREE RINGS WAS ADOPTED FROM ROMAN TIMES. THESE THREE TOLLS REPRESENT THE END OF OUR COMRADES’ DUTY, THEIR TOUR COMPLETE AND THEY WILL BE RETURNING TO QUARTERS. AND SO, TO THOSE WHO HAVE SELFLESSLY DEDICATED THEIR LIVES TO SERVING OTHERS; THEIR TASKS COMPLETED, THEIR DUTIES DONE, WE SOUND THE BELL.

TO OUR COMRADE \_\_\_\_\_; HIS/HER LAST ALARM, HE/SHE IS GOING HOME.

## Reception Division

The family may choose to have a small private gathering at home, in which case, Department involvement may be minimal to non-existent. If the Funeral/Memorial has been a large formal affair then a reception is appropriate. The family may or may not attend but the event should be relaxed and allow people to visit and unwind after what has certainly been a tension filled few days.

The Reception Division Leader shall report directly to the Planning Group Manager.

It is the responsibility of this division to organize and provide food and refreshments at a reception at the conclusion of the Memorial Service or Interment (whichever ends our involvement). This will probably take place at a location away from the cemetery. Should the family decide to have a private gathering, this division should offer any assistance in planning and preparation through the Family Liaison Officer.

### **The responsibilities of this division include:**

1. Location selection (Ensure adequate parking and reception space for the anticipated group)
2. Number of anticipated attendees
3. Anticipated starting and ending times
4. Menu and refreshments (catered?)
5. Provide maps to be distributed at the Interment
6. If the reception is to be outside, establish the need for tents, restrooms, and seating
7. Will there be any introductions or program
8. Relocation of flowers (if desired)

## Family Liaison Officer

The Family Liaison Officer is one of the most critical positions in this plan. The Officer will be designated by the Chief or Acting Chief immediately after the death.

### **The Family Liaison Officer (FLO) shall:**

- Accompany the notification team during the initial family notification
- Conduct the Family Planning Meeting within 24 hours
- Act as Department's single point of contact to the family
- Manage the After Care Program

If possible, this individual should have knowledge of CISM. Should personnel be pre-designated for this position, they should be able to be reached at any time.

Once assigned, the FLO will be available to the family 24 hours a day until after the burial. The FLO should be assigned a departmental vehicle and communication equipment (cell phone, pager, portable radio) for the duration of the funeral process.

The FLO should also designate an assistant to help with this very important function. In the event of multiple fatalities it will be necessary to have one liaison for each victim.

**Initial Notification** – It is critical that the FLO is designated as quickly as possible after the death. If possible, this person should attend the initial notification of death visit, which will allow the FLO to start building a relationship with the family. It is not possible, the name, telephone numbers and pager numbers should be given to the family prior to leaving the initial notification visit. It's important for the FLO to contact the PIO to approve release of information.

**Family Planning Meeting** – As soon as it is practical after the notifications (12-24 hours), it is important that the FLO schedule a Family Planning Meeting. The decisions made at this meeting will provide important information to the planning and logistics effort as you prepare for an honorable service(s) for your fallen comrade(s).

The meeting will be difficult for both the family and the Department team, but it will be an important step in the eventual recovery of the family.

For this meeting, our Department should be represented by the following:

- Family Liaison Officer
- Assistant Family Liaison Officer (friend of the family)
- Family's religious representative and/or Department Chaplain

At this meeting, the family should decide how many people will represent them. A word of caution, this will most likely be an emotional meeting, the fewer members present the more constructive the meeting. A large group could make the painful process more difficult to manage.

*Always keep in mind that we are there to facilitate the wishes of the family.*

It is important that you first explain all options to the family regarding service types and Department involvement before any decisions are made. The FLO must be prepared to discuss all aspects of the funeral process and counsel the family in its decisions.

One of the most important decisions that will need to be reached is the site of the Memorial Service. Explain to the family that a traditional Fire Department funeral service could bring 4,000 to 5,000 mourners, thus requiring a large venue.

Explain that your Department is ready to organize such a large service. Let the family know that if a decision is made to proceed with a traditional funeral that the family will be consulted on every detail, if desired.

The FLO should explain what a traditional Fire Department funeral includes:

- Flag draped casket
- Casket carried on Department apparatus
- Department Honor Guard
- Procession including our Department and other agencies
- Honor Guard at the viewing
- Bagpipers
- Motorcycle escort
- Last Alarm Ceremony
- Ladder Arch
- Bugler playing Taps
- Eulogy and speeches
- Twenty-one Gun Salute (if veteran)

It is hoped that the family will allow the service to be conducted in your response area; however, some personnel may live elsewhere and the family may want to have it in a different area.

Be prepared for the potential of being blamed for the loss of the loved one. It is very natural for people to find scapegoats in a time of extreme grief. There is always a possibility that the family will refuse all Department assistance. If this happens calmly state, “we respect your wish.” Also advise them that it is the Department’s intent to memorialize your firefighter with a service and that they are welcome to attend. Explain that this service is not meant to bypass the family’s wishes, but that it is extremely important to your grieving firefighters and the fire service to properly pay tribute to one of our own.

Remember that some religions require that the deceased is buried or cremated within a three-day period of time. If these restraints are present, it becomes even more important that the process moves rapidly.

It is important to advise the family that thousands of firefighters will come to pay their respects.

The following pages will give you a work sheet to follow as you proceed through this process.

## Family Planning Checklist

1. Mortuary to be used after coroner's autopsy (have suggestions if no preference):

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

2. Would the family like a formal Fire Department service? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Explain what this entails: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Burial Preference? Burial \_\_\_\_\_ Cremation \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

4. Has a cemetery plot already been purchased? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, location: \_\_\_\_\_

If no, preferred location: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Vigil/Viewing (calling hours)? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

(Usually one to two days prior to Memorial Service)

6. Memorial Service? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Open to Public? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Religious Preference, if any: \_\_\_\_\_

Location (large area if open service; Church, Theatre, Arena, Stadium):

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Open or closed casket? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Is there a religious requirement for burial time frame? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, when will burial or cremation need to be completed by: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Interment (graveside) service? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Open to public? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Department involved? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

9. Can our Department assist with any out-of-town family arrangements such as, transportation or lodging? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, in what way: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Determine if there will be a need to assist the family with childcare needs during any of the services: \_\_\_\_\_

11. Does the family have a preference of pallbearers? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, eight will be needed in total. If no preference is made, assure the family that the Department will select the necessary and appropriate individuals.

Preferred Names: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

12. Family Contacts:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Relationship</u>	<u>Telephone</u>
_____		
_____		

13. Preferred scriptures? \_\_\_\_\_

14. Preferred music? \_\_\_\_\_

15. Preference on presenters or speakers? \_\_\_\_\_

16. Obtain all articles of clothing to be worn by the member for burial. The family should decide on burial in uniform or civilian clothes.

17. Obtain recent photographs of the member for the Memorial Officer and Public Information Officer.

18. Would the family like donations in lieu of flowers? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, to whom \_\_\_\_\_

## After Care

It is the responsibility of your Department to assist the surviving family(s) during their recovery from the devastating event of a death. There will be many details, paper work, and steps that your Department can assist the family with. This assistance may extend over a length of time.

The Family Liaison Officer is charged with providing the necessary assistance. The Officer may need to select individuals with special expertise to assist in this function.

After care may require a generous time commitment, but as details are handled the workload will diminish.

The surviving family should always be considered one of our own. This is what we would like the Department to do for our families if we were the fallen firefighter.

After care responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

1. Assisting the family(s) with the completion of all forms for benefits such as: department, state, federal, insurance, Deferred Compensation, or tax forms.
2. Review of all bills before payment by survivors for legality, honesty and accuracy. This should include last illness, previous debts, and funeral expenses. Some bills may be covered by insurance, or otherwise not legally due.
3. Change of titles, deeds, and bank accounts.
4. Grief counseling.
5. Referral to the Fallen Firefighters Foundation for support groups and information on memorial events.
6. Invitations to Department functions. It is important to ensure the family that they are still included in our family. Do not forget special times and events, i.e. holidays and graduations.
7. At some point the deceased's locker will need to be cleaned out and the contents returned to the family. It is the Family Liaison Officer's responsibility to do this. The family may want to be included in this process but it may be advisable to screen the contents for inappropriate material prior to family exposure.
8. Children present several needs. Assistance can be provided with mentoring, special events, and scholarships.
9. Any other needs that may arise; i.e. routine tasks and home maintenance.

# Public Information Division

The Public Information Division is established to coordinate and disseminate all information regarding a Department death. The Division leader will report directly to the Planning Group Manager during the service preparation phase.

NAMES OF INJURED OR DECEASED FIREFIGHTERS WILL NOT BE RELEASED PRIOR TO THE NOTIFICATION OF THE NEXT OF KIN.

**\*PIO will be notified by the FLO when release of information is authorized.**

## **The responsibilities of this Division include but are not limited to:**

1. The coordination and/or presentation concerning all media contacts. This could include interviews, news conferences or written press releases.
2. Notification of the death and pertinent information to :
  - a. City/County Safety Officer
  - b. Local and International Union
  - c. Neighboring Fire Departments
  - d. Major State Fire Departments
  - e. IAFC
  - f. FFCA
  - g. National Fallen Firefighters Foundation Ph: (301) 447-1365 Fax: (301) 447-1645
  - h. Public Safety Officers Benefit Program Ph: (888) 744-6513 Fax: (202) 307-3373
  - i. President of the United States
  - j. Governor of Florida
  - k. Senators – State and Federal
  - l. Representatives – State and Federal
3. Rapid notification to important State and Federal politicians is very important if you desire their participation. They need as much lead time as possible to adjust their schedules.
4. Establish information telephones numbers for both recorded information and a live contact person.
5. Develop a complete biography of member(s) and recent pictures to be used for the services and by the press.
6. Preparation of a press kit to include a biography, pictures, service information and maps.
7. Organization of all media coverage at any/all services. Pool coverage may be utilized to provide a less obtrusive presence. A media viewing area should be established in order to position the media in an area that will not detract from the services in any way. Work with the media, not against them. Good and positive coverage will help in the tribute to your fallen comrade. Remember that any media presence at the services is at the wishes of the family.

8. Preparation of printed service programs for Vigil/Viewing and Memorial.
9. Coordinate the video taping of services, by the Department, for family and Department use.
10. Manage any VIP arrangements such as; airport pick-up, transportation, and lodging.
11. Coordinate with the Family Liaison Officer if the family would like to set up scholarships, trust funds, or donation accounts.

## **Post-Incident Debrief and Recovery**

As much as we hope to never utilize this plan, the thought of having to use it more than once must be addressed. For this reason, it is important to sit down shortly after completion of all events for a review/critique.

This is the time to air concerns and suggestions in hopes of making any improvements necessary. It is not considered a personal attack but merely an opportunity to improve for the future.

Follow-up is another important aspect of Post-Incident Recovery. It is not unusual to receive an enormous outpouring of support from many different sources. Therefore, thank you letters should be drafted and sent to all of the people and agencies that assisted in the planning and provided services. This could include suppliers of flowers, equipment, emergency apparatus used for coverage, and personnel.

## SAMPLE

### CLEARWATER FIRE & RESCUE

#### Intra-Department Memorandum

It is with deepest sympathy and regret that we announce the death of Firefighter David Henry.

Firefighter Henry was killed early Sunday morning, February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2002, when he became trapped under debris while fighting a fire in a carpet warehouse.

Firefighter Henry, a firefighter for 23 years, was respected by all who knew him. He had worked at Station 48 for the last 7 years. All of us are deeply saddened by his untimely death. Our condolences go out to his family, friends and coworkers.

Effective immediately, U.S. Flags at all City buildings will be flown at half-mast. Flags are to remain at half-mast until sundown on the day of interment.

Also effective immediately, badge covers are authorized to be worn for the next thirty calendar days.

Class "A" uniforms are to be worn by all sworn personnel attending any related services. (Black ties and hats as applicable)

The Departmental Funeral Contingency Plan has been implemented and all planning shall proceed through proper channels.

# SAMPLE

## CLEARWATER FIRE & RESCUE

### Department Death Notice

It is with deepest sympathy and regret that we announce the death of Firefighter David Henry.

Firefighter Henry was killed early Sunday morning, February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2002, when he became trapped under debris while fighting a fire in a carpet warehouse.

Firefighter Henry, a firefighter for 23 years, was respected by all who knew him. He had worked at Station 48 for the last 7 years. All of us are deeply saddened by his untimely death. Our condolences go out to his family, friends and coworkers.

Arrangements are as follows:

Viewing  
Tuesday, February 19, 2002; 5:00 – 7:00pm  
Wednesday, February 20, 2002; 6:00 – 8:00pm  
Blunt, Curry, and Roel Funeral Home  
11111 U.S. Hwy 19, Clearwater, FL

Rosary  
Wednesday, February 20, 2002; 7:30pm

Service  
Thursday, February 21, 2002; 10:00am  
Clearwater High School Auditorium  
9999 Gulf to Bay Blvd, Clearwater, FL

Interment  
Thursday, February 21, 2002; 12:00pm  
Greenlawn Cemetery  
2222 Drew Street, Clearwater, FL

Funeral dress for uniformed personnel will be Class “A” uniforms – full dress, including ties and hats as applicable.

Those departments that wish to attend and/or participate in the service must contact Clearwater Fire & Rescue to confirm your intentions. Point of contact is Lt. John Smith, 727/562-4334 or fax 727/562-4328.

Please provide the following information to Lt. Smith at your earliest convenience:

- Does your Honor Guard wish to participate?
- Will your department be sending an apparatus?  
If so, what type?
- Will any staff or personnel be attending?  
If so, how many and whom?
- Will staff or personnel require lodging?

**SAMPLE**

Department Final Tone Out

IT IS WITH DEEP REGRET THAT CLEARWATER FIRE RESCUE ANNOUNCES THE PASSING OF \_\_\_\_\_ . ROLL CALL HAS BEEN TAKEN AND \_\_\_\_\_ HAS FAILED TO ANSWER. THE BELL HAS BEEN STRUCK FOR HIS/HER LAST ALARM. MAY THE SUN SHINE UPON HIS/HER PATH, MAY THE WIND ALWAYS BE AT HIS/HER BACK AND MAY THE LORD HOLD HIM/HER IN THE PALM OF HIS HAND UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN.

## Acknowledgments

- *Taking Care of Our Own: A Resource Guide* by National Fallen Firefighters Foundation
- *Long Beach Fire Department Line-of-Duty Death Protocol*
- *IAFF Recommended Protocol for Line-of-Duty Deaths*
- *Clearwater Fire Rescue Funeral Contingency Plan*
- *Connecticut Statewide Honor Guard Standing Operating Procedures*
- *For Those Who Gave So Much: Planning, Preparation and Officiation of Funerals and Memorial Services for Public Safety Officers* by Dwaine Booth, 1993