



GENERAL ORDER

GENERAL ORDER 100.15

Funerals & Memorials Services

Office of the Fire/EMS Chief

Issue Date: Oct 18, 1994

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1 APPLICABILITY

2 All personnel

3 POLICY

4 To establish comprehensive departmental procedure to be utilized in the event of a line-of-duty death, and/or a request from
5 a family member for assistance with a departmental funeral. The content in this document is based upon concepts presented
6 in the National Fallen Fire Fighters Foundation "Taking Care of Our Own" program.

7 DEFINITIONS

- 8 ➤ **Active member:** A full-time member or volunteer member serving in an active capacity.
- 9 ➤ **Affiliate member:** An individual who has served in some capacity with the department such as civilian employee etc.
- 10 ➤ **Inactive member:** A retired or former member of the department.
- 11 ➤ **Job-related non-traumatic death:** A non-traumatic illness that is strongly believed or has been proven to be
12 attributable to the job. Examples are stress, heart attacks, strokes and diseases.
- 13 ➤ **Job-related traumatic death:** A blow to the body by an outside force, e.g., crushing injuries suffered in a building
14 collapse, apparatus accident or fall. Burns, smoke inhalation and such climatic injuries as heatstroke or frostbite are
15 considered traumatic injuries.
- 16 ➤ **Line-of-duty death:** A death of an active or retired member of the department from a non-traumatic or traumatic
17 injury that was sustained in the line of duty.
- 18 ➤ **Non-job-related death:** Deaths, natural and traumatic, that are not related to fire or emergency medical service duty.

19 PROCEDURES

20 The uncertainty that normally follows the death of a Department Member either killed in the line of duty, a retired or non
21 active member or civilian employee who passes away can be lessened by the use of a standard format to deal with these
22 occurrences.

23
24 When a member of the Fire, Emergency Medical or Rescue Services dies, several considerations are crucial for those dealing
25 with the tragedy. They include:

- 26 • Identifying and meeting the needs of the surviving family.
 - 27 • **Ensuring that the needs and wishes of the family always come before the needs and wishes of the department.**
 - 28 • **Providing ongoing emotional and spiritual support for the surviving family and department members.**
 - 29 • Using good organization, coordination and communication.
 - 30 • Maintaining flexibility.
 - 31 • Monitoring constantly not to overload any individuals.
- 32
33
34

35 The primary goal of the department should be to work with the family, the funeral director and others involved ensuring that
 36 the department member receives a fitting tribute. **At all times the department must carry out the wishes and desire of the**
 37 **surviving family regarding the funeral ceremonies.**

38
 39 The department’s responsibilities are not the same as those of the funeral director. The department personnel should work
 40 with the funeral director in the best interest of the firefighter’s family.

41
 42 PRE-PLANNING

43 Introduction – Pre-planning is essential to ensure the department meets the needs of the family and coworkers.

44
 45 Personnel Information – Emergency contact information must be maintained and be readily accessible in case of a LODD
 46 event. An emergency contact form will be completed by each department member. For HCDFRS members; this document will
 47 be maintained by the **Bureau of Administrative Services**, for Volunteer Members, the individual volunteer corporation will
 48 maintain this information. This document will be reviewed and updated by every member annually during the week of
 49 September 11th each year.

50
 51 Photographs – Individual photographs shall be maintained by the Department’s Audio Visual Services Section. The photos may
 52 be needed for immediate notification after an incident. In the event of a line-of-duty incident, there will be requests for
 53 photos from the media and other sources. These photos may also be utilized during funeral and memorial services.

54
 55 FUNERAL TYPES

56 Introduction - The death of a department member may occur under a variety of circumstances. Based on the circumstances,
 57 the department should provide appropriate services from the planning of the funeral through the survivor follow-up process.
 58 To ensure all members are honored in a consistent manner, the following types of services could be provided.

59
 60 Types of Services

- 61 • Level One: A line-of-duty or job-related death of an active member.
 62 • Level Two: A non-job-related death of an active member. This may include an inactive member whose death has
 63 stemmed from an injury or illness sustained during active duty.
 64 • Level Three: A non-job-related death of an inactive, retired, affiliate member or any other person as deemed necessary by
 65 the Fire Chief.

66
 67 FUNERAL OR MEMORIAL SERVICE PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

68 Introduction - There are many ways to offer help for the funeral or memorial service. Some families will welcome all offers for
 69 help, while others may choose to have no fire department involvement. **The family must always be allowed to make that**
 70 **choice.** In cases where the family wishes to have no fire department involvement the department may choose to honor
 71 the department member in one of the following ways:

- 72 • Fire Department Religious Service
 73 • Fire Department Memorial Service

74
 75 Listed below is a listing of funeral or memorial service options and the level for which they are appropriate.
 76

Involvement	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
American Flag (* = if a Veteran)	Yes	Yes*	Yes*
Badge Shrouding	Yes	No	No
Bag Pipes/Bugler	Optional	Optional	No
Bell Service (Last Alarm Service)	Optional	No	No
Burial in Uniform	Optional	Optional	Optional
Closed Casket	Optional	Optional	Optional
Color Guard	Optional	No	No
Crossed Aerial Ladders	Optional	No	No
Eulogy	Optional	Optional	No
Family Liaison Officer	Optional	Optional	Optional
Fire Department Chaplain	Optional	Optional	Optional
Flags at Half-Staff	Optional	No	No
Flag Presentation (**= Military if Veteran)	Yes	No **	No **
Formations	Optional	No	No

Involvement	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Honor Guard	Optional	Optional	Optional
Initial Family Support	Optional	Optional	Optional
Meals	Optional	No	No
Memorial Fund	Optional	Optional	Optional
Pallbearers (Departmental)	Optional	Optional	Optional
Pallbearers (Family/Friends)	Optional	Optional	Optional
Presentation of Fire Department Badge	Optional	No	No
Procession			
- Fire Engine Escort	Optional	Optional	Optional
- Fire Engine Caisson	Optional	No	No
- Hearse	Optional	Optional	Optional
- Flower Car	Optional	No	No
- Parade with Visiting Apparatus	Optional	No	No
Readings			
- Chaplains	Optional	Optional	Optional
- Specific Person	Optional	Optional	Optional
Static Equipment Display	Optional	Optional	No
Station Bunting (*Family will decide what Station)	Optional	Optional	Optional *
Taps	Optional	Optional	Optional
Transportation (immediate family)	Optional	No	No
Vehicle Bunting (day of funeral for procession)	Optional	Optional	No
Walkthrough	Optional	Optional	Optional

*Members who have served in the military may have a military service.

Phases

This Order is divided into four (4) phases. Although they are listed sequentially, it is possible some may occur concurrently. Each is briefly described below. Further discussion on each follows.

- Initial Actions - This phase describes the actions that must be taken immediately following a Death of a member. Emphasis during this phase is placed upon initial notifications and securing possible evidence.
- First 24 hours – During this phase, secondary notifications are made, a family support team is established, departmental support efforts begin, an analysis team is organized if needed, and the needs of the media are addressed.
- Day Two Through the Funeral – During this phase, designated personnel assist the family in planning the funeral as they choose, departmental personnel are kept informed about details, and the family support team assists the family with miscellaneous tasks as desired. Support is provided to fire department members as needed.
- After the Funeral – Family support continues, especially with regard to assisting the family in accessing all of the benefits for which they are eligible. Departmental support continues, this plan is updated as necessary, and the analysis of the incident is completed and presented to appropriate personnel.

KEY POSITIONS

The Fire Chief shall appoint a departmental member (and an alternate to serve in his/her absence) as a Survivor Action Officer. Once appointed, the Survivor Action Officer shall maintain an updated list of personnel selected to serve, as well as, ensure that these individuals receive the appropriate training necessary to function in the following key positions:

- Survivor Action Officer
- Notification Officer
- Family Liaison Officer
- Hospital Liaison Officer
- Funeral or Memorial Service Officer
- Procession Officer

- 109 • Service Officer
 - 110 • Final Committal Officer
 - 111 • Honor Guard and Color Guard Coordinator – This individual shall constantly have an updated list of available members.
- 112
- 113 Tactical Operation Guide’s have been developed for each position to assist with tracking key functions for each position.
- 114

115 INITIAL ACTIONS

116 Purpose - This phase describes the actions to be taken immediately following the death of a current or retire/ non active
117 department member. Emphasis during this phase is placed upon initial notifications of family and department and securing
118 possible evidence in the event of a Line of Duty Death.

119

120 Activation - Immediately following a Line of Duty Death, the incident commander shall notify communications. This should be
121 done via phone whenever possible. In the case where the lack of phone service prohibits its use, a radio may be used to
122 announce a “Departmental Injury” or “Departmental Death”. Names shall not be announced on the radio. Communications
123 shall notify the Chief and the Chief of the appropriate Volunteer Department, and the appropriate HC 1 paging notification
124 group. Upon authorization of the Chief of the Fire Department, the on-call Assistant Chief may be instructed to activate the
125 Fire Department Operations Center to initiate the “Initial Actions Phase” of this Order.

126

127 Upon the notification of the non-line-of-duty death of a department member, timely notification through the department
128 chain of command must be initiated. Depending on the type of member and the circumstances surrounding the death, The
129 Fire Chief or Volunteer Department Chief will make the determination of what Phase of the Action Plan to start at.

130

131 NOTIFICATIONS

132 Death notification is acknowledged to be one of the most difficult tasks faced by Fire Department Officials, because learning of
133 the death of a loved one often is the most traumatic event in a person’s life. Notification is an exceedingly important duty.
134 Besides being sensitive, notifiers have to be prepared in case a survivor goes into shock and requires emergency medical
135 treatment. Notifiers also can provide very important information to survivors, including details about how the deaths
136 occurred. They can volunteer to notify others and provide other invaluable support. Notification should be done in person, in
137 time, in teams whenever possible, in plain language, and with compassion before the release of any public information. This
138 will be accomplished in accordance to the wishes of the member as indicated on the emergency contact information form. If
139 members live out of the area, the department shall make every attempt to make this notification in person. If unable to make
140 notification in person, the department may contact the fire or police department nearest the family, and arrange for a
141 uniformed officer, preferably from the fire department, and accompanying local chaplain, to contact the family in person.
142 No less than two members of the department should make the notification. It is important to note that a team of three (3) or
143 four (4) personnel should be established to make these types of notifications. In addition to two Senior Level Department
144 Officials, other personnel such as: clergy/chaplain, a co-worker, an individual from the member’s representative organization
145 or an individual(s) listed on the employee’s/member’s emergency notification form should be considered in the make-up of
146 this notification team. However, notification should not be delayed if designated department members or team members are
147 not readily available. It is essential that notification of the family be done correctly. The five (5) principles of notification are
148 as follows:

- 149 • **In Person**
 - 150 • **In Time and with Certainty**
 - 151 • **As a Team**
 - 152 • **In Plain Language**
 - 153 • **With Compassion**
- 154

155 Follow Up

156 Always leave a name and phone number with survivors. Advise family that a press release will announce the death. They may
157 want to notify other members of their family to avoid them hearing it from the news; the notification team must be prepared
158 to assist family members with notifying other family members. Plan to make a follow-up contact with the survivor the next
159 day. If the death occurred in another county or state, leave the name and phone number of a contact person at that location.
160 Most survivors are confused and some might feel abandoned after the initial notification. Many will want clarifications or may
161 need more direction on arrangements that are available. Following up can be the last step in completing a “person-centered”
162 and sensitive death notification that is truly helpful to survivors. Do not leave the location of the notification until the
163 department appointed Family Liaison or members of the family support team have arrived and been properly briefed and
164 introduced to the survivors present. The notification team should be sure they are clear on any follow-up assignments they
165 need to carry out.

166

167 NOTIFICATION OF DEPARTMENT MEMBERS

168 Once the family has been notified, members of the department should learn of the incident from the department before they
169 hear it through the media. The Public Information Officer shall perform this portion of the notification process. It should be
170 done as follows:

- 171 • A summary of all known facts about the incident and the deceased and critically injured should be prepared.
- 172 • Confirm the correct spelling of the name, age, and next of kin.
- 173 • Prepare a memo to all members of the department that includes confirmed information.
- 174 • When possible, information should be passed to the individual's shift first. They should notify the individual's close
175 friends within the department.
- 176 • A Special Broadcast should be initiated via Communications announcing the Death and refer all personnel to their email,
177 CAD printers, pagers or other means of predetermined communication for more information regarding the
178 announcement.
- 179 • This memo should also direct all Station Officers to contact all off-duty personnel and inform them of the incident.
- 180 • The Public Information Officer shall also send out additional memos as necessary to keep all members informed of funeral
181 arrangements and memorial services.

182
183 NOTIFYING OTHERS

184 Other members of the community need to be notified after the family and members of the department. ***Under no***
185 ***circumstances should members of the department post Line-of-Duty Death information on social media.*** Specific contacts are
186 included on the attached assignment check sheets.

187
188 WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

189 The Public Information Officer shall coordinate with the Notification Officer to ensure notification of the family before giving
190 any information to the media. Other procedures to follow include:

- 191 • **Do not give/release personal information to the media until confirmation that the family notification has occurred.**
192 Even if the media is on the scene. Inform other officials/members on the scene not to provide information.
- 193 • **Only release basic information** gathered on the incident scene regarding the deceased and/or critically injured.

194
195 Prepare and clear a written statement for the Fire Chief to release. The Chief of the Department should deliver this message if
196 possible. A media briefing should be established at the scene, hospital or other appropriate location. Designate a department
197 backup to handle coverage of the incident if it is still ongoing so the primary PIO can concentrate on handling information on
198 the fatality.

199
200 In the unfortunate event that a member's body must remain on location due to entrapment or condition, "**The Honor**
201 **Company Detail**" may be established to assist with the dignified removal of the body or remains from the site by members of
202 the effected company.

203
204 Only after the initial investigation by Law Enforcement and the State Medical examiner is completed, and the body of the
205 deceased member is properly packaged for transport will members of the deceased members company be escorted in and
206 allowed to remove the packaged body to the waiting transport vehicle. Department members assigned to this detail should be
207 evaluated for psychological impact before being allowed to participate. As this type of detail can be a highly emotional event,
208 all "Honor Company" members should be evaluated for the psychological impact after the detail is completed.

209
210 FIRST 24 HOURS

211 During this phase, secondary notifications are made, a family support team is established, departmental support efforts begin,
212 an analysis team is organized, and the needs of the media are addressed.

213
214 The Hospital Liaison Officer will be responsible for dealing with the Hospital. Should a critically injured firefighter be
215 transported to the hospital, the department should provide transportation for the family to the hospital. The Family Liaison,
216 Chaplain or other designated department member should remain with the family to provide support. The Hospital Liaison
217 Officer should arrange for a private area within the hospital for family and department members

218
219 INVESTIGATIONS

220 Any serious injury and death of a department member will require an investigation to determine the cause of injury or death
221 with an emphasis on preventing this type of incident from occurring again. All injuries are investigated by the Operations
222 Section and the Safety Office. The initial investigation of a Line of Duty Death will be investigated by the Howard County Police
223 Department's Criminal Investigation Bureau – either the Violent Crimes or Traffic section depending on the type of incident. A

224 member of the Department's Fire Marshal Section, Fire Investigation Bureau will serve as liaison to the investigation team.

225

226 ANALYSIS INVESTIGATION

227 The Fire Chief may elect to establish a team of department personal and/or outside resources to perform a comprehensive
228 after action analysis to meticulously review every aspect of the incident. The findings of this investigation should be utilized by
229 the department to create recommendations that will improve service delivery and lower the risk to department members in
230 the future. The analysis of a firefighter line-of-duty death is one of the most difficult, yet important activities that can be
231 conducted by a fire department. It is an essential process intended to improve safety in the fire fighting profession. The
232 purpose of this phase is to ensure that the analysis is a methodical effort to collect, analyze, and report the facts in an accurate
233 unbiased manner. It is important to understand that the goal of an analysis is not to blame, but rather identify deficiencies in
234 policy, procedure and other actions and make corrective recommendations. Accusation of negligent acts and determinations
235 of personal responsibility or liability are beyond the scope of this fact-finding report. Simply said, the goal of the analysis is to
236 determine:

- 237 • What happened?
- 238 • Why did it happen?
- 239 • What, if anything, can be done to reduce the risk of a recurrence.

240

241 However, it should be understood that the report would be made available to other parties in conjunction with the Maryland
242 Public Information Act. Accusations of negligent acts or other personal responsibility may be subject to question from other
243 sources.

244

245 DAY TWO THROUGH FUNERAL

246 Assisting the family before the Funeral

247 **When planning the funeral service: it is imperative that the family's wishes come before those of the department.** The
248 department's appointed Family Liaison or Chaplain may offer recommendations to the family for the department's
249 participation in the service. The Family Liaison and department Chaplain should accompany the family to assist in the funeral
250 service planning, if the family so desires. The department will need to plan on such possible needs as transporting the
251 survivors to and from the mortuary and cemetery, child, dependent and pet care needs for the family, meals and management
252 of household chores for the family, transporting out-of-town family members and guest. The department may also need to
253 assist the family with errands, or answering the telephone at the family's home.

254

255 Encourage the family to see the injured or deceased firefighter. If the firefighter is disfigured, prepare the family. Always
256 allow the family to make the final decision on hospital/morgue visitation. Offer to accompany the family, should they wish to
257 view the critically injured/deceased firefighter.

258

259 Prepare the family for the possibility of an autopsy. Explain that an autopsy is a mandated portion of the investigation as to
260 the death of the firefighter. However the family has the ability to deny one.

261

262 If the family wishes a fire service funeral, secure a Class A uniform for the deceased. Consider a department member rotation
263 schedule to accommodate this request. If donations are collected, set up a bank account to deposit these funds. Coordinate
264 with law enforcement to make routine checks of the family's residence. Assign a member of the department's PIO staff to
265 help the family set guidelines for dialog with the media.

266

267 PROVIDING FOR DEPARTMENT MEMBERS

268 Provide for critical incident stress debriefing and grief counseling for department members. Request assistance
269 from the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation to provide psychological support and counseling as needed. Members should
270 be provided updated information on funeral arrangements and other pertinent information from the department on a
271 scheduled daily bases, before information is released to the public. Start developing the Action Plan for the "After Funeral
272 Phase". The department will make every effort through Mutual-Aid Agreements to provide for stand by coverage for any and
273 all members wishing to attend funeral services for a Line of Duty Death service.

274

275 AFTER THE FUNERAL

276 Family support continues, especially with regard to assisting the family in accessing all of the benefits for which they are
277 eligible. Departmental support continues, this plan is updated as necessary, and the analysis of the incident is completed and
278 presented to appropriate personnel

279

280

281

282 Family Support
283 Continue to invite the family to department events and activities. Provide assistance with routine tasks, i.e., home
284 maintenance, snow removal, etc. The assigned Benefit Coordinator should continue to assist the family in accessing all
285 benefits for which they are eligible. Offer to be with the family during special and difficult times and events, holidays,
286 anniversaries, etc.

287
288 DEPARTMENT SUPPORT

289 Assist department members in accessing additional support needs.

290
291 Memorials and Tributes

292 Inform and include family members in local, state and national tributes to their fallen firefighter. Make the family aware of the
293 National Fallen Firefighters Foundation and its support programs for fire service survivors. Plan to attend the National Fallen
294 Firefighters Foundation’s Memorial Weekend and to send an escort or Honor Guard unit for the family.

295
296 DEPARTMENT ISSUES AND PLANNING

297 Update our Emergency Contact information for all department members. Revise GO 100.15 Funerals and Memorial Services.
298 as needed

299 **REFERENCES**

300 Resource Guide - Taking Care of our Own

301 Resource Guide - Before Tragedy Strikes

302 **SUMMARY OF DOCUMENT CHANGES**

- 303 • Placed in the New GO format
- 304 • Changed the Personal Information Form
- 305 • Added Reference material from National Fallen Firefighters Foundation
- 306 • Defines Funeral Types
- 307 • Standardizes Memorial or Funeral Service options
- 308 • Better Guidelines for personnel to follow
- 309 • Added the Resource Guides to separate section and available on-line

310 **FORMS/ATTACHMENTS**

311 Appendix A – Personal Information Packet

312 **APPROVED**

313

Approved:



William F. Goddard, III
Fire/EMS Chief

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