Washington State Fire Service Line of Duty Death Guidelines and Procedures

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Washington State Fallen Firefighters Memorial Foundation

Never Forgotten

Washington State Council of Fire Fighters

WASHINGTON FIRE CHIEFS

WASHINGTON STATE FIRE FIGHTERS' ASSOCIATION

WASHINGTON FIRE COMMISSIONERS ASSOCIATION

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Purpose and Scope of the LODD Guidelines

The purpose of this policy is to provide a best practice guideline for Washington State Fire Departments, Fire Districts and EMS Agencies to follow in the event of a death or serious injury in the line-of-duty. This guideline describes the activities, roles and responsibilities for fire service funeral protocols including Levels of Honor, planning, roles and responsibilities of a planning team and best practice guidelines for funeral procedures as well as conducting notifications, assisting, and supporting family members, and interaction with the news media. In this way, Fire Service Agencies in the State of Washington can be uniform in their procedures in rendering the appropriate honors for a fallen member.

This model guideline is a collaborative effort of the following:
Washington Fire Chiefs (WFC)
Washington State Council of Firefighters (IAFF)
Washington State Fire Fighters' Association (WSFFA)
Washington Fire Commissioners Association (WFCA)
National Fallen Firefighters Foundation through the Taking Care of Our Own and Local Assistance State Team (LAST) Programs

Objectives

1. Provide a uniform procedure to handle the death or serious injury of a member, while on duty, off duty, or retired.
2. To assist the agency and families affected by the death of a member, ensuring that the proper level of honors is offered by the Fire Service or EMS Agency.
3. To provide clear instructions to key individuals in fulfilling their responsibilities during the LODD process.
4. To ensure a unified commitment to assist the Fire Service or EMS Agency and the family of the fallen member regardless of rank, volunteer or career status or affiliation.

This document is intended to be a model policy to show best practices that can be used by individual Fire Service and EMS Agencies to fit their particular circumstances. It is recognized that the varying sizes and configurations of Agencies precludes the guideline from being a *one size fits all* solution and will need to reflect local policy. Additionally, this is a voluntary guideline, and Agencies may choose to use some, none or all of this guideline at their sole discretion. For questions of concerns please contact Chris Gorman at cgorman@laceyfire.com 360-480-5447 (cell) or Pat Pawlak at ppawlak@pugetsoundfire.org 206-949-3039.

Definition of Line of Duty Death

Any Washington State Firefighter or Emergency Medical Services personnel whose death is deemed in the line of duty shall be honored at the Annual Washington State Fallen Firefighters Memorial Ceremony and their name added to the Memorial Wall.

*A LODD determination does not mean there are financial benefits.

Determination of Death in the Line of Duty

The death of any qualified uniformed member of a fire and/or emergency service agency that occurs during an authorized activity or action of duty as part of the fire and/or emergency service agency he or she serves. The death will be considered in the line of duty when the following criteria are meet:

- The firefighter's death is deemed in the line of duty by the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF), and their name is added to the IAFF Fallen Firefighter Memorial: or
- The death is deemed in the line of duty by Washington State Board of Volunteer Firefighters and Reserve Police Officers; or
- The firefighter's death is deemed in the line of duty by the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF), and their name is being added to the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial; or
- A Public Safety Officers Benefit (PSOB) claim has been approved by the Department of Justic PSOB Office; or
- Death occurs while deployed (including EMAC or out-of-state mobilizations) and meets the LODD criteria as defined

Board Discretionary Clause

In the event that a death is pending a final determination from a state or federal agency, the Memorial Board may grant Provisional Inclusion if, in the Board's opinion, the death was a direct result of duty. The Board reserves the right to review cases involving "invisible wounds" or emerging occupational hazards not yet codified by state law.

Implementation of the Line of Duty Death Procedures

The overriding philosophy of the fire service is that the first priority following a serious injury or line-of-duty death – after caring for the members – is the swift and compassionate notification of the injured or deceased member's family and the extension of assistance and support to them.

As soon as is possible, the Chief should appoint an Incident Commander (IC), and a meeting should be held to assign or affirm the assignments within the Incident Command System (ICS) structure. The Appendices provide detailed roles and responsibilities for further reference. If there is a question as to whether or not the death is to be considered an LODD, please refer to the LODD Quick Determination Sheet in this document.

A briefing/planning meeting should be scheduled at least once a week until the conclusion of the Memorial Service and should include all section chiefs and other appropriate personnel. A final meeting for discussion of lessons learned and debriefing should be held no later than 48 hours after the conclusion of the Memorial Service.

The IC is responsible for the overall management of the activities that take place after the death of a member. This function is completely separate from the activity and command structure involved in the actual incident that caused the death.

The family will be presented the options available based on the classification of service, and their desires override all others. If the family wishes the help of the Agency, the sections of this document will lead the Agency and the family through the steps to properly honor the fallen member's life. If the family does not want the assistance of the Agency, the Agency will then do whatever they can to support the family and take care of the needs of the personnel affected by the loss.

The Washington State LAST team is available to assist the agency and the family upon request. This resource is extremely valuable and brings LODD-specific knowledge and expertise to assist in planning and executing the service and ensuring that the family and the affected department are properly cared for. The team works for the Agency and acts in a support role. The Public Safety Officer Benefit (PSOB) is a key for survivors, and the LAST team can assist with this process. Planning these services is a very detail-orientated process, the services of the LAST Team is invaluable. Please contact Chris Gorman cgorman@laceyfire.com and/or Pat Pawlak ppawlak@pugetsoundfire.org.

If the Fire Chief would like to consult with other fire departments that has have had a recent experience with funeral planning, please contact Fire Chief Leonard Johnson at ljohnson@mclanefire.org or 360-581-9672. The National Fallen Firefighters Foundation offers the Chief-to-Chief Network, which pairs the Fire Chief who has just lost a member with a Chief who has experienced a loss in the past. The Foundation can be contacted at 301-447-1365 for more information.

Time Sensitive Notifications Procedures

If your department has suffered the death of a firefighter from a work-related incident the following, time sensitive notifications, must be made.

Career Firefighter

Within 8 hours of the death of a firefighter the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries must be notified at **1-800-423-7233** to be in compliance with WAC 296.305.01501 *[(c). Within eight hours after the fatality or probable fatality of any firefighter or employee from a work-related incident or the inpatient hospitalization of any employee as a result of a work-related incident, the employer of any employees so affected, shall orally report the fatality/hospitalization by telephone (**1-800-423-7233**) or in person, to the nearest office of the department.]*

*****If the death is a Fire Fatality*****
Within 2 business days of the death the Washington State Fire Marshal's Office must be notified through the Fire Fatality Report Form.

Washington State Council of Fire Fighters
www.wscff.org
1069 Adams Street Southeast
Olympia, WA. 98501
360-943-3030
360-943-2333 (fax)
800-572-5762

Washington Fire Chiefs
www.washingtonfirechiefs.com
605 11th Ave, SE, Suite 211
Olympia, WA. 98501
360-352-0161
360-586-5868 (fax)
wfc@Washingtonfirechiefs.org (e-mail)

Washington State Fire Marshal's Office
www.wsp.wa.gov/state-fire-marshals-office/
Washington State Patrol
Helen Sommers Building
106 11th Ave SW
Olympia, WA 98501
360-596-3900
firemarsh@wsp.wa.gov

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Law Enforcement Officers' and Fire Fighters' Retirement System
Department of Retirement Systems
P.O. Box 48380 (Mailing Address)
Olympia, WA. 98504-8380
360-664-7000
800-547-6657
https://www.drs.wa.gov/life/death/
DRS Point of Contact: (Current as of Dec 2016)
Tammy Sadler, LEOFF Plan 2 Ombudsman
306-586-2324
tammy.sadler@leoff.wa.gov

U.S. Fire Administration
https://apps.usfa.fema.gov/firefighter-fatalities/notify

Washington State Local Assistant State Team (LAST)
Pat Pawlak – 206-949-3039 or ppawlak@pugetsoundfire.org
Chris Gorman – 360-480-5447 or cgorman@laceyfire.com
https://www.firehero.org/resources/department-resources/programs/local-assistance-state-team/

National Fallen Firefighters Foundation
P.O. Drawer 498
Emmitsburg, MD 21727
LODD 24hr Hot Line 886-736-5868
301-447-1365
301-447-1645 fax
www.firehero.org

Volunteer Firefighter

If the death is a Fire Fatality*
Within 2 business days of the death the Washington State Fire Marshal's Office must be notified through the Fire Fatality Report Form.

Within 90 days of the death of a Volunteer Firefighter the Board of Volunteer Firefighters must have the Accident Report Card submitted https://bvff.Washington.gov/forms/accident-report-card

Washington State Fire Fighters' Association
www.wsffa.org
1910 E. 4th Ave. PMB 117
Olympia, WA. 98506-4632
Phone or Fax: 360-264-3473

Board of Volunteer Firefighters
www.bvff.wa.gov
PO Box 114, Olympia, WA. 98507
360-753-7318
877-753-7318
360-586-1987 (fax)
Accident Report Card submitted at https://bvff.wa.gov/forms/accident-report-card

Washington Fire Chiefs
www.washingtonfirechiefs.com
605 11th Ave, SE, Suite 211
Olympia, WA. 98501
360-352-0161
360-586-5868 (fax)
wfc@Washingtonfirechiefs.com

Washington State Fire Marshal's Office
www.wsp.wa.gov/state-fire-marshals-office/
Washington State Patrol
Helen Sommers Building
106 11th Ave SW
Olympia, WA 98501
360-596-3900
firemarsh@wsp.wa.gov

U.S. Fire Administration
https://apps.usfa.fema.gov/firefighter-fatalities/notify

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Chris Gorman – 360-480-5447 or cgorman@laceyfire.com
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301-447-1365
301-447-1645 fax
www.firehero.org

Chief's "Need to Do" Basic Check List

- ☐ Family Notification
- ☐ Department Notification
- ☐ Legal Notifications (Time Sensitive)
  - Career Firefighter
  - Volunteer Firefighter
- ☐ Assemble Command Staff (with IAFF Local Rep)
  - Agree to check egos and issues at the door
  - Craft a common message so everyone is giving out the same information
- ☐ Set up a meeting with LAST (and IAFF Local Rep)
  - Pat Pawlak 206-949-3039 or Chris Gorman 360-480-5447
  - Discus Needs and Resources
  - Assign a Funeral Incident Commander
  - Communicate this information to Department
- ☐ Assign Liaisons and Coordinators
  - Family Liaison
  - Department Liaison
  - Community Liaison
  - Investigation Liaison
  - Benefits Coordinator
    - Local/State/Federal
- ☐ Secure Personal Property
  - Not cleaning out the locker
- ☐ Set-up Debriefings
  - Crew/Incident
    - Intimate Personal Sharing (inward)
  - Department
    - Information Sharing (outward)
- ☐ Establish Planning Timetable
  - 1st Meeting Date, Time, and Location
- ☐ Communicate with appropriate personnel
  - Debriefing Times and Locations
  - That a planning team is being assembled
- ☐ Put Press Release Together

LODD Determination Quick Sheet

LODD Determination of Medical Related Deaths for IAFF Firefighters

Overview

When the Washington State Council of Firefighters has been given notification that a firefighter has received a terminal cancer diagnosis, there will be a meeting with the IAFF 7th District Representative, the President of the Local, a representative of the Department's Administration and a member of the Washington State LAST Team. The purpose of this meeting is to determine if the cancer diagnosis is presumptive under RCW 51.32.185 using the attached check sheet. If it is determined that the cancer is presumptive, the planning process for a Line of Duty Death Fire Service Funeral that is consistent with the State LODD Funeral Policy will begin. The department will be offered the services of the LAST Team, State Honor Guard and Massed Band resource for assistance in planning and performing the LODD Fire Service Funeral.

If the cancer diagnosis is not determined to be line of duty, the department will be given a funeral service outline that is consistent with the State LODD Funeral Policy for a non-LODD funeral. The department will be offered the services of the LAST Team to provide assistance as needed as well as State Honor Guard and Massed Band resources as available.

If it is determined at a later date that the cancer diagnosis is presumptive a ceremony will be planned to render the proper LODD honors.

LODD Determination Process

Step 1: Notification received by the State Council
Step 2: State Council Representative will set up a meeting or conference call with the IAFF 7th District Representative, the President of the Local, a representative of the Department's Administration and a member of the Washington State LAST Team within 24 hours of notification.
Step 3: The LODD Determination Quick Sheet will be gone over and services offered in accordance with its recommendations.

If the answer is "Yes" to any of the Quick Sheet questions the death will most likely be considered LODD. The family and the department will need to work with WA State L&N for final determination.

LODD Determination Quick Sheet

- Did the firefighter die on scene of a working incident? _____
- Did the firefighter die as a result of a cancer or other medical related issue? _____

RCW Determination Check List

- Did the Firefighter die of a respiratory or heart problems within 72 hours of exposure to smoke, fumes, or toxic substances? _____

- Did the Firefighter die of respiratory or heart problems experienced within 24 hours of strenuous physical exertion due to firefighting activities? _____

- Is there any evidence of (may include, but is not limited to) the use of tobacco products, physical fitness and weight, lifestyle, hereditary factors, or exposure from other employment or non-employment activities? _____

- Did the Firefighter die after a diagnosis of the following infectious diseases?
    - Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
    - Hepatitis
    - Meningococcal Meningitis
    - Mycobacterium Tuberculosis

- Did the Firefighter die after a diagnosis of one of the following cancers?
    - Prostate Cancer diagnosed prior to the age of fifty
    - Primary Brain Cancer
    - Malignant Melanoma
    - Leukemia
    - Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma
    - Bladder Cancer
    - Ureter Cancer
    - Colorectal Cancer
    - Multiple Myeloma
    - Testicular Cancer
    - Kidney Cancer
    - Mesothelioma
    - Stomach Cancer
    - Nonmelanoma Skin Cancer
    - Breast Cancer in Women
    - Cervical Cancer

- Did this cancer develop or manifest itself after the firefighter had served at least ten years and was given a qualifying medical examination upon becoming a firefighter that showed no evidence of cancer? _____

- Retired Firefighter:
    - When did the firefighter retire? _____

- Is this date within 60 months of the cancer diagnosis? _____

- Did the Firefighter receive a diagnosis of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder that developed or manifested itself after the Firefighter has served for at least 10 years? _____

RCW 51.32.185

Occupational diseases—Presumption of occupational disease for firefighters and fire investigators—Limitations—Exception—Rules—Advisory committee on occupational disease presumptions.

(1)(a) In the case of firefighters as defined in RCW 41.26.030(17) (a), (b), (c), and (h) who are covered under this title and firefighters, including supervisors, employed on a full-time, fully compensated basis as a firefighter of a private sector employer's fire department that includes over fifty such firefighters, and public employee fire investigators, there shall exist a prima facie presumption that: (i) Respiratory disease; (ii) any heart problems, experienced within seventy-two hours of exposure to smoke, fumes, or toxic substances, or experienced within twenty-four hours of strenuous physical exertion due to firefighting activities; (iii) cancer; and (iv) infectious diseases are occupational diseases under RCW 51.08.140.
(b) In the case of firefighters as defined in RCW 41.26.030(17) (a), (b), (c), and (h) and firefighters, including supervisors, employed on a full-time, fully compensated basis as a firefighter of a private sector employer's fire department that includes over fifty such firefighters, and law enforcement officers as defined in RCW 41.26.030(19) (b), (c), and (e), who are covered under this title, there shall exist a prima facie presumption that posttraumatic stress disorder is an occupational disease under RCW 51.08.140.
(c) In the case of law enforcement officers as defined in RCW 41.26.030(19) (b), (c), and (e) who are covered under Title 51 RCW, there shall exist a prima facie presumption that: (i) Any heart problems, experienced within seventy-two hours of exposure to smoke, fumes, or toxic substances, or experienced within twenty-four hours of strenuous physical exertion in the line of duty; and (ii) infectious diseases are occupational diseases under RCW 51.08.140.
(d) This presumption of occupational disease established in (a), (b), and (c) of this subsection may be rebutted by a preponderance of the evidence. Such evidence may include, but is not limited to, use of tobacco products, physical fitness and weight, lifestyle, hereditary factors, and exposure from other employment or nonemployment activities.

(2) The presumptions established in subsection (1) of this section shall be extended to an applicable member following termination of service for a period of three calendar months for each year of requisite service but may not extend more than sixty months following the last date of employment.

(3)(a) The presumption established in subsection (1)(a)(iii) of this section shall only apply to any active or former firefighter or fire investigator who:
(i) Has cancer that develops or manifests itself after the firefighter or fire investigator has served at least ten years; and
(ii)(A) Was given a qualifying medical examination upon becoming a firefighter or fire investigator that showed no evidence of cancer; or

(B)(I) For a firefighter or fire investigator who became a firefighter or fire investigator on or after July 28, 2019, the employer did not provide a qualifying medical examination upon becoming a firefighter or fire investigator; or
(II) For a firefighter or fire investigator who became a firefighter or fire investigator before July 28, 2019, the employer did not provide a qualifying medical examination upon becoming a firefighter or fire investigator and the employer provides a qualifying medical examination on or before July 1, 2020. If a firefighter or fire investigator described in this subsection (3)(a)(ii)(B)(II) did not receive a qualifying medical examination before July 1, 2020 or is diagnosed with a cancer listed in (b) of this subsection at the time of the qualifying medical examination under this subsection (3)(a)(ii)(B)(II) and otherwise meets the requirements of this section, the presumption established in subsection (1)(a)(iii) of this section applies.
(b) The presumption established in subsection (1)(a)(iii) of this section shall only apply to the following cancers: Prostate cancer diagnosed prior to the age of fifty, primary brain cancer, malignant melanoma, leukemia, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, bladder cancer, ureter cancer, colorectal cancer, multiple myeloma, testicular cancer, kidney cancer, mesothelioma, stomach cancer, nonmelanoma skin cancer, breast cancer in women, and cervical cancer.

(4) The presumption established in subsection (1)(a)(iv) and (c)(ii) of this section shall be extended to any firefighter, fire investigator, or law enforcement officer who has contracted any of the following infectious diseases: Human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome, all strains of hepatitis, meningococcal meningitis, or mycobacterium tuberculosis.

(5) The presumption established in subsection (1)(b) of this section only applies to active or former firefighters as defined in RCW 41.26.030(17) (a), (b), (c), and (h) and firefighters, including supervisors, employed on a full-time, fully compensated basis as a firefighter of a private sector employer's fire department that includes over fifty such firefighters, and law enforcement officers as defined in RCW 41.26.030(19) (b), (c), and (e) who have posttraumatic stress disorder that develops or manifests itself after the individual has served at least ten years.

(6) If the employer does not provide the psychological exam as specified in RCW 51.08.142 and the employee otherwise meets the requirements for the presumption established in subsection (1)(b) of this section, the presumption applies.

(7) Beginning July 1, 2003, this section does not apply to a firefighter, fire investigator, or law enforcement officer who develops a heart or lung condition and who is a regular user of tobacco products or who has a history of tobacco use. The department, using existing medical research, shall define in rule the extent of tobacco use that shall exclude a firefighter, fire investigator, or law enforcement officer from the provisions of this section.

(8) For purposes of this section, "firefighting activities" means fire suppression, fire prevention, fire investigation, emergency medical services, rescue operations, hazardous materials response, aircraft rescue, and training and other assigned duties related to emergency response.

Levels of Honor Classifications Outline

Summary
There are three levels of honors that can be given to a fallen firefighter depending upon the type of death and the firefighter's active status at the time of death. Those three levels of honors are:

Level I: Line-of-Duty Death (LODD)
The death occurs while in the line-of-duty or from a job-related medical injury covered by RCW 51.32.185. The funeral service may include all honors and assistance.
.

Level II: Non-Line of Duty Death
Death occurs when an active member is off duty, and the death is not related to any emergency activities or is a duty related medical death that is not considered presumptive under RCW 51.32.185.

Level III: Non-job-related death of an inactive retired or affiliate uniformed member
This level of service shall be offered to the family of a retired fire or EMS member from the agency they served. This level of service can be offered to the family if they wish the assistance of the Agency. If the family requests pipers/drum corps, and/or an American Flag, they will be responsible for the cost.

Medical/Cancer Death: This can be Level I or Level II depending on the circumstances. Please reference the LODD Determination Quick Sheet to determine if this is a LODD.

Levels of Honor At-A-Glance

Level I

- Badge Shrouds/Flag Lowering – Badge Shrouding Protocol
- Honor Watch
- Station Bunting
- Fire Engine Caisson
- Multi-Agency Vehicle Procession to the ceremony
- Vehicle Bunting on all department vehicles
- Crossed Ladders with American Flag
- Home Agency and Honor Guard Cordon of Honor
- Massed Band/Bagpipers and Drum Corps
- Honor Detail Pallbearers
- Color Guard to post and retire the colors
- Honor Guard
- Washington State Flag presented by the Governor
- Walk of Honor Certificate by Washington State Association of Fire Chiefs
- IAFF Medal of Valor Presentation if IAFF member
- Washington State Firefighters' Association Presidents Coin if Volunteer
- American Flag Presentation – Presentation Protocol
- Honor Flags
- Bell Ceremony
- Bugler for Taps
- Last Alarm Radio Call
- Amazing Grace

Level II

- Badge Shrouds/Flag Lowering – Badge Shrouding Protocol
- Family Escort to Ceremony
- Home Agency Cordon of Honor
- Honor Detail Pallbearers
- Honor Guard
- American Flag Presentation – No Presentation Protocol
- Honor Flags
- Bell Ceremony
- Pipes and Drums for Amazing Grace

Level III

- Badge Shrouds/Firefighter Memorial Flag Flown – Badge Shrouding Protocol

- American Flag Presentation – No Presentation Protocol
- Color Guard to post and retire the colors
- Honor Guard
- Bell Ceremony
- Bag Piper for Amazing Grace

Level I: Line-of-Duty Death (LODD)

The death occurs while in the line-of-duty or from a job-related medical injury covered by RCW 51.32.185. The funeral service may include all honors and assistance which include the following.

- Badge Shrouds/Badge Shrouding Protocol
    - Worn from time of death until 30 days after the funeral/memorial ceremony
- American Flags lowered to half-staff in compliance with local flag lowering policies
    - Lowered at time of death until sunset day of the service
- Honor Watch (Recommended for a combat type death only)
    - Active-duty firefighter remains with the fallen firefighter from time of death until the service
- Station Bunting
    - From time of death until after the service
- Fire Engine Caisson
- Multi-Agency Vehicle Procession to the ceremony
- Vehicle Bunting on all department vehicles
- Crossed Ladders with American Flag
- Multi Agency Member Cordon of Honor upon arrival at service venue
- Home Agency Member and Honor Guard Cordon of Honor at the start of the service
- Massed Band/Bagpipers and Drum Corps
    - Mass Band will lead vehicle procession, lead the remains to the ceremony, play at the beginning of the ceremony, and play Amazing Grace at the end of the ceremony
- Honor Detail Pallbearers
    - Remains will be posted by Honor Guard until the start of the service
- Viewing of remains before the ceremony if in a casket
- Color Guard to post and retire the colors
- Honor Guard
- Fire Service Honors
    - Washington State Flag presented by the Governor
    - Walk of Honor Certificate by Washington State Association of Fire Chiefs
    - IAFF Medal of Valor Presentation if IAFF member
    - Washington State Firefighters' Association Presidents Coin if Volunteer
    - American Flag Presentation
        - Casket: Flag is draped over the casket and is folded and presented to the family

        - Urn: Flag is tri-folded, unfolded and refolded then presented to the family
    - Honor Flags
        - American Flags flown over the station the firefighter worked
    - Bell Ceremony
    - Bugler for Taps
    - Last Alarm Radio Call
    - Amazing Grace

Suggested Order of Service

Honors Considerations

Time of Death
As soon as it is possible and appropriate the fallen firefighter will be covered by an American Flag. This flag will always remain with the fallen firefighter until presented to the family during the funeral/memorial service or appropriate time. The flag should be a government spec. casket sized flag. If this size flag is not available any American Flag would be appropriate.

Movement of Fallen Firefighter
Anytime the fallen firefighter is moved, the movement will be done with honors and escorted by law enforcement and fire service apparatus. The fallen firefighter should be transported by a department aid car or appropriate vehicle. This movement will include from the location of death to the Coroner/Medical Examiner's Office and/or to the funeral home.

Honor Posting
For combat type deaths a uniformed firefighter will be stationed with or near the fallen firefighter from the time of death until the time of the funeral/memorial service. Honor Posting for a medical/cancer related death is not suggested.

Procession to the Service Location
The procession to the service location will be open to all Fire and Police agencies that wish to participate. The firefighter may be transported in a department vehicle/apparatus to the location of the service. Police Escort must be pre-arranged with the local law enforcement jurisdiction. This type of procession needs to be well coordinated, and considerations need to be made regarding adequate staging and parking locations.

Military
Military Honors include a presentation of the American Flag and Taps by a military honor guard and should be rendered graveside. If there is no graveside service, these honors can be rendered at the funeral/memorial. If the fallen firefighter is receiving a flag for their military service, they may also receive a flag for their fire service. It is suggested that the fire service flag be an Honor Flag or a tri-folded fallen firefighter memorial flag.

Medical LODD
A medical LODD can be given all the same honors as a combat LODD, but best practice suggests that these honors be scaled back to fit the situation and location of the service. Medical LODD services are not attended to the scale of a combat LODD service therefore the venue will

be smaller. Honor Guard Details and Massed Band attendance will be smaller and available as needed.

Badge Shrouding
Notification for Statewide Badge Shrouding will be sent out via the Washington State Council of Firefighters, Washington State Fire Chiefs Association, and the Washington State Fire Fighters' Association. Notification for regional badge shrouding will be sent out via the fallen firefighter's department and/or the Washington State Council of Firefighters, Washington State Fire Chiefs Association, and the Washington State Fire Fighters' Association.

- Combat Death
    - When a Firefighter dies in a fire at an emergency scene all fire service agencies in the state will authorize badge shrouds from the time of death to 1700hrs the day of the service.
        - The Home Department will shroud badges for a 30-day mourning period after the service.
- Medical Death
    - When a Firefighter dies from a medical incident all fire departments in the region will authorize badge shrouds from the time of death to 1700hrs the day of the service.
        - The fallen firefighter's agency may largely define the region such as the fire service response zone or county. It is recommended that home department reach out to their automatic and mutual aid partners, and any other regional partners as appropriate, such as training or policy consortiums that the agency may be involved with.
        - A department outside the region that has a connection with the firefighter may decide to shroud their badges.
- Medical Retiree Death
    - When a retired Firefighter dies of a LODD Cancer the home department will authorize badge shrouds from the day of death to 1700hrs the day of the service.

Level I LODD: Suggested Order of Service

Arrival at Service Location
The family should arrive at the service location at least one (1) hour prior to the start of the service. If the department has the resources, a large American Flag can be hung by a single ladder truck or by crossed ladders, two ladder trucks with ladders crossed. Department members and other uniformed personnel should be in formal ranks to receive the family and the urn/casket. All uniformed personnel will salute as family moves from the vehicles to the building.

- Family Vehicles enter under Crossed Ladders and are escorted by Honor Guard and Massed Band
- Family Escorted to Family Room
- For an Urn
    - Urn can be escorted to the Family Room, the front of service area, or can be left on apparatus until service start time. No matter where the Urn is placed, it needs to be posted by Honor Guard until the time of the service.
- For a Casket
    - Casket is left on apparatus until service start time or carried into the service area and placed in the front. This would be done for a walk through (Viewing). The casket will be posted by Honor Guard, whether it is left on the apparatus or placed in the front of the service area.

Start of Service
- Cordon of Honor formed 15 minutes prior to service start time
    - Cordon of Honor includes all Uniformed Personnel
- Service Announcements
    - Instructions to audience regarding saluting protocols
- Entrance of Family
    - Escorted and Seated by Honor Guard
    - Procession Order
        - Piper
        - Honor Guard
        - Chaplain
        - Flag and Urn/Casket (if not already in place)
        - Family
        - Honor Guard
    - Cordon of Honor Called to Attention and Salute as family passes through
- Cordon of Honor Dismissed to their seats
    - If there is an Urn/Casket Watch Detail in place, they will dismiss with the Color Guard. Urn/Casket Watch concludes at the start of the service
- Posting of the Colors – Color Guard
- Memorial Emblems Placed by Honor Guard
    - Firefighters Bunker Gear and Helmet

- Invocation/Welcome – Chaplain or Family Clergy
- Chief's Welcome
- Remembrances
    - Family/Friends Speakers/Music/Eulogy
- Slide Show
- Honors
    - Military (See Military Considerations)
        - Presentation of Flag and Taps
    - Washington State Flag presented by the Governor
    - Walk of Honor Certificate by Washington State Association of Fire Chiefs
    - IAFF Medal of Valor Presentation if IAFF member
    - Washington State Firefighters' Association Presidents Coin if Volunteer
    - Fire Department
        - Any departmental memorial tokens for the family such as a plaque or challenge coin
        - Presentation of American Flag (non-military)
            - For non-military, the flag is pre-folded and not unfolded during ceremony (More than 1 flag may be presented to family members)
    - Bugler for Taps
    - American Flag Presentation
        - Casket: Flag is draped over the casket and is folded and presented to the family
        - Urn: Flag is tri-folded, unfolded and refolded then presented to the family
    - Honor Flags
        - American Flags flown over the station the firefighter worked
    - Bell Ceremony
    - Amazing Grace
    - Last Alarm Radio Call
- Closing Comments
- Benediction
- Retiring of the Colors – Color Guard
- Family Dismissal by Honor Guard
- Fallen Firefighter's Fire Department Members Dismissal
- Audience Dismissal

This service should last no longer than 90 mins.

Level II: Non-Line-of-Duty Death

Death occurs when an active member is off duty and the death is not related to any emergency activities, or is a duty-related medical death that is not considered presumptive under RCW 51.32.185

A non-LODD death is considered a local area level death. Best practice suggests that the honors be scaled back to fit the situation and location of the service. Since non-LODD services are not attended to the scale of a LODD service, the venue will be smaller. Honor Guard Details and Massed Band attendance will be smaller and available as needed

- Badge Shrouds/Badge Shrouding Protocol
    - Worn by home department from time of death until 1700hrs the day of the funeral/memorial ceremony
- American Flags lowered to half-staff in compliance with local flag lowering policies
    - Lowered at 0800hrs until sunset day of the service
- Vehicle escort to ceremony to include family, remains and a fire apparatus.
    - Remains are transported in a funeral coach or with the family, depending upon disposition and family wishes
- Fire Service Cordon of Honor upon arrival at service venue
- Home Agency Member Cordon of Honor at the start of the service
- Honor Detail Pallbearers
    - Remains will be posted by Honor Guard until the start of the service
- Viewing of remains before the ceremony if in a casket
- Color Guard to post and retire the colors
- Honor Guard
- Fire Service Honors
    - American Flag Presentation
        - Flag is tri-folded prior to service and present to family
    - Honor Flags
        - American Flags flown over the station the firefighter worked
    - Bell Ceremony
    - Pipes and Drums for Amazing Grace

Suggested Order of Service

Honors Considerations

Military

Military Honors include a presentation of the American Flag and Taps by a military honor guard and should be rendered graveside. If there is no graveside service, these honors can be rendered at the funeral/memorial. If the fallen firefighter is receiving a flag for their military service, they may also receive a flag for their fire service. It is suggested that the fire service flag be an Honor Flag or a tri-folded fallen firefighter memorial flag.

Escort to the Service Location

For this type of service, there would be no multi-department procession. The family of the fallen firefighter may be escorted to the location of the service in a small procession consisting of a department apparatus, family vehicles and the funeral coach if casket service. The remaining department apparatus would be on static display at the service site, if possible. Police Escort must be pre-arranged with the local law enforcement jurisdiction.

After Service Reception

Depending on the service location, size, and time of day, the reception can be planned according to the wishes of the family and department.

Grave Side Service Considerations

Since the funeral is a formal event, it is suggested that the graveside service be a more intimate event for the family and close friends. It can be formal, with Honor Guard and Pipes and Drums, if the family desires. As there are many different was the graveside service can be handled, please contact one of the Washington LAST Team Coordinators for details and service outline.

Badge Shrouding

When a Firefighters or Civilian Member of the Fire Service's death is not LODD, the home department will authorize badge shrouds from the time of death to 1700hrs the day of the service.

Level II: Non-Line-of-Duty Death Suggested Order of Service

Arrival at Service Location
The family should arrive at the service location at least one (1) hour prior to the start of the service. Department members and other uniformed personnel should be in formal ranks to receive the family and the urn/casket. All uniformed personnel will salute as family moves from the vehicles to the building.

- Family Escorted to Family Room
- For an Urn
    - Urn can be escorted to the Family Room, the front of service area, or can be left on apparatus until service start time. No matter where the Urn is placed, it needs to be posted by Honor Guard until the time of the service.
- For a Casket
    - Casket is left on apparatus until service start time or carried into the service area and placed in the front. This would be done for a walk through (Viewing). The casket will be posted by Honor Guard, whether it is left on the apparatus or placed in the front of the service area.

Start of Service
- Cordon of Honor formed 15 minutes prior to service start time
    - Cordon of Honor includes only members of the firefighter's department
    - All other uniformed personal are pre-seated
- Service Announcements
    - Instructions to audience regarding saluting protocols
- Entrance of Family
    - Escorted and Seated by Honor Guard
    - Precession Order
        - Honor Guard
        - Chaplain
        - Flag and Urn/Casket (if not already in place)
        - Family
        - Honor Guard
    - Cordon of Honor Called to Attention and Salute as family passes through
- Cordon of Honor Dismissed to their seats
    - Urn/Casket Watch concludes at the start of the service
- Posting of the Colors – Honor Guard
- Memorial Emblems Placed
- Invocation/Welcome – Chaplain or Family Clergy
- Chief's Welcome
- Remembrances
    - Family/Friends Speakers/Music/Eulogy

- Slide Show
- Honors
    - Military (See Military Considerations)
    - Fire Department
        - Any departmental memorial tokens for the family such as a plaque or challenge coin
    - American Flag Presentation
        - Casket: Flag tri-folded and placed beside the casket and presented to the family
        - Urn: Flag is tri-folded and presented to the family
    - Honor Flags
        - American Flags flown over the station the firefighter worked
    - Bell Ceremony
    - Amazing Grace
- Closing Comments
- Benediction
- Retiring of the Colors – Honor Guard
- Family Dismissal by Honor Guard
- Fallen Firefighter's Fire Department Members Dismissal
- Audience Dismissal

This service should last no longer than 90 mins.

Level III: Death of an Inactive, Retired or Affiliate Uniformed Member

This level of service shall be offered to the family of a retired fire or EMS member from the agency they served. This level of service can be offered to the family if they wish the assistance of the Agency. If the family requests pipers/drum corps, and/or an American Flag, they will be responsible for the occurring cost.

- Badge Shrouds/Badge Shrouding Protocol
  - Worn by home department day of service until 1700 hrs.
- Flag Protocol
  - Firefighter Memorial Flag flown from 0800hrs until sunset day of the service
- American Flag Presentation
  - Casket: Flag is tri-folded prior to service and presented to the family
  - Urn: Flag is tri-folded prior to service and presented to the family
- Honor Guard
- Pallbearers, Honorary
- Bell Ceremony
- Bag Piper for Amazing Grace

Suggested Order of Service

Honors Considerations

Military
Military Honors include a presentation of the American Flag and Taps by a military honor guard and should be rendered graveside. If there is no graveside service, these honors can be rendered at the funeral/memorial. If the fallen firefighter is receiving a flag for their military service they may also receive a flag for their fire service. It is suggested that the fire service flag be an Honor Flag or a tri-folded fallen firefighter memorial flag.

Family
It is important to communicate very clearly with the family which costs the agency will cover and which the family will be responsible for. Make sure to do this while in the planning stages so there will be no surprises. Additionally, ensure that the family's wishes are first and foremost as there will be requests from a variety of sources to do more.

Procession
It is suggested that there be no procession or escort for this level of service.

Level III: Death of an Inactive, Retired or Affiliate Uniformed Member Suggested Order of Service

Family is pre-seated prior to the start of the service

- Pre-Service Protocol Announcement
- Posting the Colors by Honor Guard
    - National Anthem or Pledge of Allegiance (Optional)
- Invocation
- Chiefs Welcome
- Funeral Service (Family Minister)
    - Eulogy
    - Homily/Message
    - Family/Friends Memories
    - Video Slide Show
- Fire Service Honors/Military Honors
    - Military Honors (See Military Considerations)
        - Presentation of Flag and Taps
    - Chief or designee talks about the Retiree's Fire Service Career
    - Flag and/or Fire Service Flag Presentation(s)
    - Bell Ceremony
    - Amazing Grace – Single Piper
- Closing Comments
- Benediction
- Retire the Colors
- Dismissal

Medical/Cancer LODD Outline

Content:

- Introduction/Suggested Honors
- Part 1: Preparing for the death of the firefighter
    - Key Roles and Assignments
    - The Pre-Planning Process
    - Department Response
    - Funeral Home Arrangements
    - Vigil
- Part 2: Time of Death
    - Transport to Funeral Home
- Part 3: Funeral/Memorial Service Planning
    - Procession to the Service Location
    - Arrival at Service Location
    - Start of Service
    - After Service Reception
    - Graveside Considerations
- Appendix
    - #1: Family Liaison
    - #2: Department Liaison
    - #3: Funeral Home Liaison

Planning the funeral/memorial service for a member of the fire service whose cancer is presumptive under RCW51.32.185 needs to be done with tremendous care and compassion for both the family and the fire department. Emotions can be very high, and the desire is to give the highest honors possible. The goal of any fire service-related service is to honor the fallen firefighter, the family, the department and the community; therefore, care must be taken to render the appropriate honors for the situation.

Pre-planning for this type of situation can lower the levels of stress for the family and the department members. It is important that plans be in place and the department be ready to respond as the death may be imminent. Pre-authorization to use department vehicles and/or apparatus for transporting the fallen firefighter, funeral home arrangements and planning will be vital.

This section is a short overview of the best practices, recommended procedures, and honors for a medical/cancer related LODD. It is broken down into three parts: preparation for the firefighter's death, actions taken at time of death, and planning the funeral/memorial service. For more resources and guidance, please contact the Washington State LAST Team Coordinators
Pat Pawlak at ppawlak@pugetsoundfire.org or 206-949-3039
Chris Gorman at cgorman@laceyfire.com or 360-480-5447

Part 1: Preparing for the Death of a Firefighter

Key Roles and Assignments:
These are the main assignments and considerations for the pre-planning processes. A detailed checklist for each position can be found in the appendix of this document

Family Liaison: This person works closely with the family and is the point of contact between the family and the department. They need to be someone with whom the family is very familiar and comfortable with.

Department Liaison: This person keeps the fire department members informed on the condition of the firefighter. They will make sure pre-authorizations are taken care of and arrangements for Honor Guard and department personnel at the time of death are attended to.

Funeral Home Liaison: The family needs to select a funeral home that will handle the fallen firefighter and the family's wishes. Having this conversation with the family can be difficult, timing is very important. Once the family has selected a funeral home, the Funeral Home Liaison should contact the funeral home and begin the prearrangement process.

The Pre-Planning Process:
The purpose of the pre-planning process is to make sure all the details and plans are in place for when the firefighter passes; it is not a predictor or indicator of the firefighter's death. The fire department should form a very small group to begin the planning process. This group should include the Family Liaison, the Department Liaison, the Funeral Home Liaison, and any key department members (such as the chaplain and possibly the firefighter's crew or close work friends) who will be involved in the care and transport of the firefighter. The following is a brief outline of these procedures. In the appendix is a checklist of responsibilities and actions for each of the coordinators.

Department Preparation:
Once the firefighter passes, the body should be transported from the place of death to the funeral home in a department Aid Unit. Since the time of death cannot be predicted, this Aid Unit will need to be ready to go at a moment's notice. The Department Liaison will make arrangements for this to happen and have a crew ready to be deployed for this duty. Any department members involved in transporting and receiving the firefighter at the funeral home should be notified of the plan so that they can be ready to respond. If the firefighter lives too far out of the department's response area, plans should be made with the local jurisdiction to assist with the transportation process.

Funeral Home:
As difficult as this conversation might be, if it is possible, have the family choose the funeral home prior to the firefighter's passing. This will relieve the family of the stress involved in making that decision after death occurs and will allow for the department to make arrangements with the funeral home regarding transportation. Cremation, burial, viewing and other disposition issues can be discussed after the time of death. It is important to not push the family and to go at their pace. Once this decision has been made, the Funeral Home Liaison will make contact with the funeral home to start that process.

Vigil:
Within a few days of the firefighter's passing, a 24-hour vigil can be set up, so the firefighter and their family are never alone. Since the time of death cannot be accurately predicted, having a firefighter present to help with comfort and care needs as well as immediate notifications is extremely helpful. The Department Liaison will put a schedule together and will notify the members of the department of the opportunity to fill the schedule.

Part 2: Time of Death:

It is important to note that when the death occurs, you need to allow the family time to mourn and be with their loved one. Slow down, go at the family's pace, and do not rush this process.

All legal death notification procedures must be followed. If the firefighter is in hospice care, notify hospice; if in the hospital, notify the charge nurse; if at home, call 911. After these notifications are made, contact the Family Liaison, the Department Liaison, and the Funeral Home Liaison. The firefighter should be covered with the American Flag. The Department Liaison will activate the transportation plan and notify the department members. The Funeral Home Liaison will contact the funeral home. The Family Liaison will remain with the family.

Transport to Funeral Home:
An Aid Unit will transport the firefighter to the funeral home, accompanied by crew or Honor Guard. The fallen firefighter should be wrapped in a white sheet and transferred to the gurney, secured and covered with the American Flag. All members of the department at the place of death will render honors in form of a salute as the body is moved from the house. Upon arrival at the funeral home, a cordon of honor should be formed and honors, in the form of a salute, shall be rendered as the firefighter is moved from the Aid Unit into the funeral home. Once inside, the funeral director will assist with transferring the firefighter from the department gurney to the funeral home gurney. The firefighter shall remain draped with the American Flag at all times. At this point the funeral director will take possession of the firefighter, and then everyone will be dismissed. For this level of death an honor watch is not recommended.

The family will need to work with the funeral home to make arrangements for the disposition of the firefighter. The Family and Department Liaisons should remain in those positions, while the Funeral Home Liaison might or might not be needed again.

Part 3: Funeral/Memorial Service Planning

Best Practice Service Procedures for a Cancer/Medical LODD:

A line of duty death from cancer or other medical issue is considered a local area level death. While it is recognized as an LODD and therefore allowed Full Fire Service Honors, best practice suggests that these honors be scaled back to fit the situation and location of the service. Since medical LODD services are not attended to the scale of a combat LODD service, the venue will be smaller. Honor Guard Details and Massed Band attendance will be smaller and available as needed.
Please note that if this death is not covered by the RCW that it would be considered a Level II, Non-Line of Duty Death and should be receive the appropriate honors. To determine if this is considered an LODD please reference the LODD Determination Quick Sheet.

The goal of this type of service is to honor the firefighter, honor the family, honor the department, and honor the community. For detailed service planning, please contact the Washington LAST Team.

LODD Medical Order of Service will be the same as a Level I: LODD Service
Suggested Order of Service

Non-LODD Medical Order of Service will be the same as a Level II: Non-LODD Service
Suggested Order of Service

Badge Shrouding

- Medical LODD
    - When a Firefighter dies from a medical incident all fire departments in the region will authorize badge shrouds from the time of death to 1700hrs the day of the service.
        - The fallen firefighter's agency may largely define the region such as the fire service response zone or county. It is recommended that home department reach out to their automatic and mutual aid partners, and any other regional partners as appropriate, such as training or policy consortiums that the agency may be involved with.
        - A department outside the region that has a connection with the firefighter may decide to shroud their badges.
- Medical Retiree LODD
    - When a retired Firefighter dies of a LODD Cancer the home department will authorize badge shrouds from the day of death to 1700hrs the day of the service.

Key Role Check Lists

Family Liaison

This person works closely with the family and is the point of contact between the family and the department. The Family Liaison needs to be someone with whom the family is very familiar and comfortable.

- ☐ Establish communication lines with the family
- ☐ Explain the process, the department's involvement, and who is involved
- ☐ Pass on the family's wishes to the Department Liaison
- ☐ Set up a meeting with the Funeral Home Liaison and the Family to discuss funeral home arrangements
- ☐ Keep the Department Liaison updated so the vigil can start when appropriate
- ☐ Identify the needs of the family that the department can meet, and pass that information on to the Department Liaison
- ☐ Secure a clean, white sheet for the time of death
- ☐ Secure an American Casket Flag for the time of death

Department Liaison

This person keeps the fire department members informed on the condition of the firefighter. They will make sure the pre-authorizations are taken care of as well as arrangements for Honor Guard or department personal at the time of death.

- ☐ Secure pre-authorization for a department Aid Unit to be used to transport the firefighter to the funeral home from the place of death
- ☐ Identify who will be the transportation crew and make arrangements for them to be ready at a moment's notice
- ☐ Set up a Vigil Schedule when the time of death is close
- ☐ Keep the department updated on the firefighter's condition in accordance with the family's wishes
- ☐ At time of death, notify the department members of the death and the arrival time at the funeral home

Funeral Home Liaison

The family needs to select a funeral home that will handle the deceased firefighter and the family's wishes. Having this conversation with the family can be difficult, and the timing is very important. Once the family has selected a funeral home, the Funeral Home Liaison should contact it and begin the prearrangement process.

When the firefighter passes, the funeral home will need to be contacted. The funeral director will meet the Aid Unit transporting the firefighter at the funeral home. Upon arrival at the funeral home, the firefighter will be taken into a viewing room or another part of the funeral home, **not the preparation room**, for the gurney transfer.

- ☐ Make contact with funeral home
- ☐ Explain the situation and the department's involvement with the family
- ☐ Set up a plan with the funeral director for when the firefighter passes
- ☐ Look at the area and determine the best route to the funeral home and where the Aid Unit will park when it arrives.
- ☐ Draw up plans and have them ready in the Aid Unit for the driver
- ☐ Know where the firefighter will be taken upon arrival
- ☐ Contact the funeral home at time of death to set the plan in to motion

Considerations for Department Coverage Day of Service

Following the notification of a firefighter death, or as departments prepare for the expected loss of a member to a presumptive disease, agencies are inundated with offers of support and assistance. Ensuring that this support is in alignment with the department's policies and procedures and is in alignment with standards of response within a jurisdiction reduces that opportunity for misinterpretation by the community or State agencies.

The goal of this document is to provide a framework that Departments and Labor Groups can reference at these times of great loss and high emotions to ensure that those most impacted by the loss of a brother or sister may attend services as a tribute to their life of service.

All of these policies are to serve as "recommendations" that may be expanded on or contracted based on the specific nature of the death. Multiple fatalities at a single scene will create greater logistical and support challenges but those charged with coordination shall be able to utilize this document as a reference to initiate planning.

- Agencies that have suffered a LODD will establish an Agency Coverage Coordinator as a part of the planning team that will serve as a liaison between the department and supporting agencies.
- Once the date, time and location of the service has been defined, a specific request for support or coverage will be made through the Zone/Regional Coordinators.
- Coverage shall be provided to the department for: (in order of priority)
    - On duty crews at station of the fallen member from start of shift through 3 hours following service. Coverage will be from 8 to 12 hours
    - Additional Companies may be requested for additional coverage for only hours of service
- Crew members seeking additional time off (beyond defined hours of provided coverage) are encouraged to seek the use of vacation, shift trades or other contractual language related to time off.
- Agencies in direct contact (common border or service areas) are encouraged to provide a like for like apparatus with equal or better personnel staffing levels.
- If additional units are requested by the department, these will be supported with oversight by Zone/Regional Coordinators.

- All units are to return to their home agencies as efficiently as possible to reduce fiscal and response impacts.
- Units participating in processions or actual memorial services will not be considered as "supporting agency" resources for response planning.
- Zone/Regional "Move Ups" may be considered by Zone/Regional Coordinator if/when large events (multiple LODD) are underway to ensure regional coverage
- No agency shall be mandated to provide coverage

Protocols

Badge Shrouding

This best practice document outlines when and who will shroud their badges after the death of a career or volunteer firefighter. Individual fire agencies may use their own discretion when authorizing badge shrouds.

Notification for Statewide Badge Shrouding will be sent out via the Washington State Council of Firefighters, Washington State Fire Chiefs Association, and the Washington State Fire Fighters' Association. Notification for regional badge shrouding will be sent out via the fallen firefighter's department and/or the Washington State Council of Firefighters, Washington State Fire Chiefs Association, and the Washington State Fire Fighters' Association.

LODD

- Combat Death
    - When a Firefighter dies in a fire at an emergency scene all fire service agencies in the state will authorize badge shrouds from the time of death to 1700hrs the day of the service.
        - The Home Department will shroud badges for a 30-day mourning period after the service.
- Medical Death
    - When a Firefighter dies from a medical incident all fire departments in the region will authorize badge shrouds from the time of death to 1700hrs the day of the service.
        - The fallen firefighter's agency may largely define the region such as the fire service response zone or county. It is recommended that home department reach out to their automatic and mutual aid partners, and any other regional partners as appropriate, such as training or policy consortiums that the agency may be involved with.
        - A department outside the region that has a connection with the firefighter may decide to shroud their badges.
- Medical Retiree Death
    - When a retired Firefighter dies of a LODD Cancer the home department will authorize badge shrouds from the day of death to 1700hrs the day of the service.

Non-LODD and Civilian

- When a Firefighters or Civilian Member of the Fire Service's death is not LODD, the home department will authorize badge shrouds from the time of death to 1700hrs the day of the service.

Retiree Non-LODD

- When a retired firefighter dies, badge shrouds will be worn by the home agency on the day of the funeral 0800 to 1700 hours.

Extended Service Date

- When the service for a fallen firefighter is scheduled for a later date, the following guidelines will be followed
    - Combat LODD – Badge shrouds will be worn for a period of 30 days after the death. Badges shrouds will be worn by those attending the service.
    - Medical Death – Badge shrouds will be worn for a period of 2 Weeks after the death. Badges shrouds will be worn by those attending the service.

Flag Display and Lowering

According to US Flag Code, the American Flag can be ordered to half-staff by the President and/or the State Governor. The Governor's office has indicated that flag display is a local policy issue and will only order flags to be lowered across the State for a combat type line of duty death.

Flags are often lowered for longer duration in the locality where the LODD occurred and are lowered across the state only on the day of the services if directed by the Governor's Office. Memorial flags can be flown in place of lowering the American Flag at the local authority's direction.

The following shall guide display of flags:

LODD:
American Flags at all City/Department facilities in compliance with local flag lowering policies may be lowered to half-staff from time of announcement until 24 hours after conclusion of the services.

Non-LODD:
American Flags at all City/Department facilities may be lowered to half-staff on the day of the services from 0800 until conclusion of the services. (Mayor/Manager approval may be necessary.)

Retiree or Civilian Member:
Memorial Flags may be flown from 0800 until conclusion of the services.
Badges will be shrouded the day of the funeral/memorial ceremony until 1700hrs.

Dress Code:

All uniformed members, including off duty attendees, are to wear Class "A" uniforms. Hats shall be worn while outdoors (except during prayers) and removed indoors. If a Class "A" uniform has not been issued the highest level of issued uniform shall be worn.
Exceptions: Honor Guard and Pallbearers/Body Bearers shall remain covered at all times.

Hand Salute Protocol:

In order to be consistent and uniformed, hand salutes will be rendered by uniformed personnel regardless of cover. Those in civilian attire will render a salute in the same manner by placing their hand over their heart.
The hand salute is a three-count movement. The command is "Present, Arms." On the command of execution ("Arms"), raise the right hand to the head dress. With the tip of the forefinger, touch the rim of the visor slightly to the right of the right eye. The fingers and thumb are extended and joined, palm down. The outer edge of the hand is barely canted downward so that neither the palm nor the back of the hand is visible from the front. The upper arm is horizontal, with the elbow inclined slightly forward and the hand and wrist straight.
Order arms from this salute in a three-count movement. The command is "Order, Arms." On the command of execution "Arms," return the hand to the side, resuming the position of attention.

When uncovered or when wearing a head dress without a visor, the hand salute is executed in the same manner as previously described, except the tip of the forefinger touches the forehead near the eyebrow and slightly to the right of the right eye.

Crossed Ladders:

Crossed Ladders should be set up in such a way that the only vehicles that pass under the flag are those of the Family Escort and/or Apparatus Procession. All other vehicles are not to pass under the flag.

Suggested Bell Ceremonies

The Bell Ceremony is often referred to as the Last Alarm. The number of times the Fire Bell should be rung can vary from Department to Department depending on the type of service or death or department tradition. Commonly used for LODD is a 21 Bell Salute which comprises of 7 sets of 3 rings or a 16 Bell Salute which comprises of 4 sets of 4 rings. The 9 Bell Salute, 3 sets of 3 rings are commonly used for non-LODD services.

Once the number of rings has been decided, insert that into the reading.

Bell Ceremony

The fire service of today is ever changing yet is steeped in traditions 200 years old. One such tradition is the sounding of the bell.

In the past, as firefighters began their tour of duty, it was the bell that signaled the beginning of that day's shift. Through the day and night, each alarm was sounded by a bell, it summoned these brave souls to fight fires and save lives often times placing their own lives in jeopardy for the good of their fellow man. When the fire was out and the alarm had come to an end, it was the bell that signaled to all, the completion of that call.

When a firefighter died, it was the mournful toll of the bell that solemnly announced that passing.

We utilize these traditions as symbols which reflect honor and respect on 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 ___ bells, ___ rings, ___ times each, represents the end of our fellow firefighter's duties, and that they would be returning to quarters, out of service.

And so, to (Rank and Name), who has selflessly devoted their life for the good of their fellow man.

His/Her task completed; his/her duties well done. To our brother/sister, his/her last alarm, he's/she is going home.

Suggested Wording for Key Portions of the Service

The following is suggested wording for different parts of the service. This wording can and should be modified to fit the service location and audience.

Pre-Service Protocol Instructions

Thank you for coming today to help us honor the life of (Rank and Name). In today's service there will be a time of memories and stories about (Name) and there will be a time when we will be honoring (Name) service to the (Department) and to the citizens of not only the (Name of City or Area) community, but so many other agencies and lives that (Name) had his fingerprints on.

There will be times today when we will ask you to stand and you will hear the honor guard give the command for "All uniformed personnel to Present Arms." If you are in uniform, we ask that you give a 3 second up salute and hold it until you hear the command to "Order Arms".

If you hear the command for the "Honor Guard to Present Arms", only the honor guard will be rendering a salute at that time.

For those of you here today not in uniform we would like to ask you to join us in rendering honors to (Name) by placing your hand over your heart when you hear the command for "All Uniformed Personnel, Present Arms."

Again, thank you for joining with us today as we honor (Name) life. Will you please stand for the (Presentation of the Colors) or (The entrance of the Family)?

Flag Presentation

(Name of person receiving Flag), on behalf of the _____ Fire Department and the citizens of the _____ community I present you this flag in honor of your (relationship) ____ years of service as firefighter. I want you to know that we miss (name) and that he/she will forever be in our hearts and that we will not forget the bravery and the courage he showed through his/her

entire career. Please accept this flag and know that it represents the selfless devotion in which (name) served.

Presenter will stand and Salute Flag

Honors Introduction

To be used to introduce the Honors portion of the service.

It's been said that the fire service is a family, and it's true in so many ways. We stand together through thick and thin, always ready to help each other and it doesn't matter who you work for. A firefighter can go into any fire house across the country and is immediately accepted, not as a friend or a guest, but as a brother or a sister.
Today we mourn the loss of a brother. (Rank and Name) served his department with distinction, he took pride in his profession, and he worked hard.

Today is a time for the brotherhood of firefighters to come together to honor and remember, and to stand together.

As firefighters, every day we face dangers on many fronts, we are strong, brave, some would say even fearless. Rarely, if ever, will anyone see our tears.

But today is different, today we share an emptiness because of (Name's) death. Today many of us don't feel strong or brave. And today is a day that it's ok to grieve the loss of a brother and we let others see our tears.

As firefighters experience death in our communities, on the 911 calls that we respond to and we have learned to cope with what we see. But dealing with (Name) death is different, its personal, death has come to one of us and so today we have put on our finest, we have polished and shined our apparatus, we have formed a Cordon of Honor and placed emblems of memorial on the stage. You see, this is how we cope with losing a loved one, a brother we fought fires with, answer aid calls at all hours of the night day with. A brother we laughed with and cried with.

And so today we honor (Department Name) (Rank and Name).

These honors today will include a presentation of the American Flag that has been carefully folded. It is given to (Name) family in honor of his service to the fire service.
The bell will sound the Last Alarm and Amazing Grace will be played and with that we will have rendered the honors that (Rank and Name) deserves for his life of service.

Will the Honor Detail please come forward?

Last Alarm Radio Call

Suggested Wording for the Last Alarm Radio Call

*This radio call can be adapted and changed any way the department deems necessary to fit the situation.
**It is highly recommended that the dispatch center pre-records the radio transition to be played at the service and that it is not dispatched live over the air. There are a lot of opportunities for error when being transmitted live.

Suggested Word without Tones

"(Rank and Last Name)…"

"(Rank and First and Last Name)…"

"(Department, Rank, First and Last Name)…"

"(Department, Rank, First and Last Name), no response…"

"(Rank and Last Name) started his/her fire service career with the ____ Fire Department in _____. (Rank and Last Name) started with the _____ Fire Department on _____ and was appointed to the position of _____ on ____. On (Date of Death) (Rank and Last Name) died (while on duty – or – in the line of duty). The _____ Fire Department would like to thank (Rank and Last Name) for ___ year's faithful service to the citizens of _____ and to the _____ Fire Department. (Rank and Last Name) you will be missed and will forever be in our hearts.

(Department, Rank, First and Last Name) is now Out of Service, never forgotten,"

Suggested Word with Tones

Tones Played
"It is with heavy hearts that the _____ Fire Department says a final goodbye to (Rank, First and Last Name). (Rank and Last Name) served the _____ Fire Department with pride and dedication for ___ years. His/Her commitment to the citizens of _____ will never be forgotten. It has been said that a firefighter never dies, they just burn in the hearts of those they saved. (Rank and Name) will live forever in our hearts and will always be a part of who we are.

(Department, Rank, First and Last Name) is now out of service, never forgotten."

Firefighter's Prayer

- Author Unknown

When I am called to duty, God,
wherever flames may rage,
give me strength to save a life,
whatever be its age.
Help me embrace a little child
before it is too late,
or save an older person from
the horror of that fate.
Enable me to be alert,
and hear the weakest shout,
quickly and efficiently
to put the fire out.
I want to fill my calling,
to give the best in me,
to guard my friend and neighbor,
and protect his property.
And if according to Your will
I must answer death's call,
bless with your protecting hand,
my family one and all.

Washington State Fire Service Death Benefits and Survivors Guide



WASHINGTON STATE
FALLEN FIREFIGHTERS FOUNDATION

Washington State
Council of Fire Fighters

WASHINGTON
FIRE CHIEFS

WASHINGTON STATE
FIRE FIGHTERS'
ASSOCIATION

WFCA

Honoring Their Sacrifice/Upholding Our Tradition

March 2026

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this Benefits and Survivors Guide is to assist the surviving family and the fire department through the process of a Line of Duty Death (LODD). This guide will outline the benefits and resources available to the surviving family members of a Washington State Fallen Firefighter.

The sudden and traumatic death of a loved one in any circumstance is overwhelming. When that loved one is a firefighter, the stress on the family is exponentially greater as it is not a private

event. Depending upon the circumstances, the situation could draw national attention. It is imperative that the family of the firefighter be kept informed throughout the entire process and that their wishes for how their loved one is handled are met appropriately in every possible way.

The death of a firefighter is traumatic and extremely emotional. Great care is taken to honor the firefighter from the moment they die up to and beyond the funeral/memorial service. As firefighters fill a public, visible role in society, there can be multiple levels of organizations involved depending upon the circumstances. The family, department, surrounding fire departments, community, IAFF or volunteer association, state, and national/federal organizations may all have a connection to and part in honoring the deceased.

There are three main goals set at the very beginning of this process.

1) Honor the Family
2) Honor the Department
3) Honor the Community

Honoring the Family: The priority immediately after the death of a firefighter is the notification to the next of kin and assignment of a family liaison officer. Every effort will be made to ensure the notification is done in person. The family liaison officer will be the single point of contact for the family to eliminate confusion about what is happening and ensure the wishes of the family are prioritized throughout the process.

Honoring the Department: The grief experienced by fellow firefighters is deep and devastating. Ensuring care for the family and that their fellow firefighter is honored in the highest possible way becomes their focus of attention. It is critical this is done right and that the honors given are appropriate and in accordance with the type of death.

Honoring the Community: There are many factors that determine the level of involvement of the community. These include the circumstances of the death, the type of community - such as rural or metropolitan, level of support of the fire department and many more. The fire department is a public service agency, and great care must be taken to navigate how it handles the situation in accordance with the law.

If these three goals are met, the family, department, and community can mourn the loss of a true hero together. They will be able to lean on each other for comfort and strength through the incredibly difficult time.

Funeral/Memorial Planning

Funeral Home

Within two or three days after the death of the firefighter, a funeral home will have to be chosen by the family. The funeral home will work with the family to determine cremation or burial. A funeral home liaison should be appointed by the department to coordinate transportation of the firefighter from the coroner/medical examiner's office.

The circumstances and wishes of the family will determine the involvement of the funeral home. The family liaison officer and funeral home liaison will need to work together with the family, funeral planning team, and the funeral home throughout this process.

Cremation: Once the cremation is completed, the urn can be released to the family or a department representative.

Burial: The firefighter will remain at the funeral home until the day of the service and burial. The funeral home will work with the family to arrange the cemetery plot.

Funeral Home Selection

The family is responsible for choosing the funeral home. The family liaison officer can assist with researching which funeral home will best suit the family's needs. If needed, the fire department chaplain will be familiar with the different funeral homes and the services provided.

Resources:

Dignity Memorial Public Servants Program
Dignity provides these services, at no cost, for career and volunteer firefighters who are killed in the line of duty.

Wilbert Funeral Services
Wilbert provides complimentary burial vaults (including urn vaults) for fallen firefighters through 193 licensed locations. 1.800.323.7188 for information.

Fire Service Funeral

A fire service funeral is a very dynamic and complex event involving a large planning team, honor guard, bag pipers, other fire departments, and local and state officials. Depending upon the circumstances of the firefighter's death, the funeral could be attended by a several hundred to several thousand people. Once the family has determined they would like a firefighter funeral, the planning team will be assigned to plan the ceremony.

The Washington State Local Assistant State Team (WA LAST), a program of the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF), can assist the department in the planning process. WA LAST is comprised of subject matter experts in all areas of the firefighter funeral. If the fire department requests assistance, WA LAST will work alongside the department and family to plan and provide an appropriate funeral to honor the life and service of the fallen firefighter.

The family liaison officer plays a critical role in this planning process and will work directly with the family and planning team to assure that the family's wishes and needs are being met. Prior to the service, the family will receive a briefing covering all aspects of the service and what to expect. The planning team will do everything possible to meet any need the family may have for that day.

Fire Service Honors

The honors given at the service can vary according to the type of death, family's wishes, and resources available. Here is a list of the possible honors that may be given:

- Fire engine caisson
- Multi-agency vehicle procession to the ceremony
- Crossed ladders with American Flag
- Home agency and honor guard cordon of honor
- Massed band/bagpipers and drum corps
- Honor detail pallbearers
- Color guard to post and retire the colors
- Honor guard for various details and presentations
- Bell ceremony
- Bugler for Taps
- Last alarm radio call
- Amazing Grace by the pipe and drum band

Several presentations will be made to the family during the service. These presentations can include:

- Washington State Flag presented by the Governor
- Washington Fire Chiefs Walk of Honor Certificate by Washington Fire Chiefs member
- IAFF Medal of Valor if IAFF member
- Washington State Firefighters' Association President's Coin if volunteer
- American Flag Presentation – presentation protocol

- Honor flags

Benefits and Honors

Benefits

Career Firefighters:
Career firefighters are covered under Washington State Labor and Industries for work related deaths and presumptive diseases by RCW 51.32.185 and are eligible for financial benefits through the Washington State Department of Labor & Industries.

Volunteer Firefighters:
Covered under the Washington State Board of Volunteer Firefighters and Reserve Police Officers (BVFF) for work-related deaths and are eligible for financial benefits through the BVFF. Volunteer firefighters are not covered by RCW 51.32.185.

Public Safety Officers Benefit (PSOB):
This is a federal financial and educational death benefit for both career and volunteer firefighters that covers firefighting activity/duty related deaths including heart attacks. Cancer is not covered by PSOB.

Honors

A career or volunteer firefighter whose death is determined to be in the line of duty will be afforded full honors as outlined in this document. A volunteer firefighter whose death would have been considered presumptive if they had been a career firefighter will be considered a LODD. A LODD determination does not mean there are financial benefits.

Career Firefighter:
- LODD funeral service
- Name on the IAFF Memorial Wall
- Name on the National Fallen Fire Fighters Memorial Wall
- Survivor's programs (if awarded PSOB or presumptive cancer)
- Name on the Washington State Fallen Firefighters Memorial

Volunteer Firefighter:
- LODD Funeral Service
- Name on the National Fallen Fire Fighters Memorial Wall
- Survivors Programs (if awarded PSOB)
- Name on the Washington State Fallen Firefighters Memorial

Benefits

The benefits listed in this guide are not all inclusive. There will be other benefits available depending upon the fire department, life insurance policies and other organizations. The benefits coordinator will work with the family to make sure every possible benefit is applied for.

Financial Benefits

The department will assign a benefits coordinator to work with the family to complete the forms for the financial benefits. The benefits listed here are current as of December 2020.

Career Firefighter

- Washington State Department of Labor and Industries (LNI) Workers Compensation
- Department of Retirement Systems
- Washington State Council of Fire Fighters
- International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF)
- Public Safety Officer Benefit (PSOB)

Volunteer Firefighter

- Board for Volunteer Firefighters and Reserve Officers
- Washington Fire Fighters Association
- Public Safety Officer Benefit (PSOB)

Career Firefighter

Worker Compensation: The following explanation of benefits is from the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries document Pension and Fatalities.

Fatalities

Fatal claims constitute an umbrella of claims where a worker either dies while on the job or dies later from a condition contended as related to an industrial injury or occupational disease. Whether eventually allowed or not, deaths under those circumstances are adjudicated as fatal claims.

Notification of Fatality

WAC 296-27-031

Employers must report any incident that causes a fatality to the nearest L&I office or call the Department of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH) at 1-800-423-7233, within eight hours. A fatality memo will be completed by the Department of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH).

Application for Benefits

RCW 51.32.040

A surviving spouse/registered domestic partner and/or dependent(s) must apply for benefits within one year from the date of the worker's death due to injury, or within two years of receiving written notice from a physician that death was due to an occupational disease and that a claim may be filed.

Contacting Survivors

If there is a surviving spouse/registered domestic partner and/or dependent(s), contact is made to explain details of the benefits available through workers' compensation and obtain a completed Beneficiary Application for Claim Benefits. The following documents must be provided along with the claim:

- ☐ Copy of the marriage certificate/declaration of registered domestic partnership.
- ☐ Copy of the death certificate.
- ☐ Birth certificate(s) for the dependent child(ren).
- ☐ Letters of guardianship or custody order.
- ☐ Proof of full-time enrollment in accredited school of child(ren) ages 18 through 22.

Death Benefits RCW 51.32.050

Immediate Payment for Death Related to Industrial Injury

- A one-time immediate payment is payable when a death is related to an industrial injury or occupational disease if there is a spouse/registered domestic partner, child, or dependent. The amount of the immediate payment is 100 percent of the average monthly wage in the state.

Burial Benefits for Death Related to Industrial Injury

- A burial benefit is payable when a death is related to the industrial injury or occupational disease. The amount paid is up to 200 percent of the average monthly wage in the state. (See Death and Burial Rates Chart for amounts, and Policy 15.70 for burial expense reimbursements.)

Monthly Survivor Benefits

- The amount of a monthly survivor benefit varies depending upon whether there is a surviving spouse/registered domestic partner, children, or other dependents. The variations are:
    - **Surviving Spouse/Registered Domestic Partner:**
        - For recent injuries, a surviving spouse/registered domestic partner receives 60 percent of the wages at the time of injury up to the maximum level allowed by law. If the worker had minor children, an additional two percent per child is paid, up to an additional maximum of 10 percent.
    - **Children's Benefits (where there is no eligible spouse/registered domestic partner)**:
        - A monthly benefit of 35 percent of the worker's wage is paid to the guardian of a minor dependent. Another 15 percent of the wage is paid for each additional child up to a maximum benefit equal to 65 percent of the wage at the time of injury. If there is more than one child, benefits are divided equally among them.
    - **Other Dependents:**
        - Qualified dependents can receive payments if they were dependent on the worker's earnings. Dependents can include such relatives as a father, mother, grandparents, grandchildren, brothers, sisters, nieces, and nephews. The benefit is equal to half of the average monthly support received by the dependent during the year preceding the injury. The benefit limit is 65 percent of the worker's wage or maximum benefit level, whichever is less, for all dependents. The payments end when the necessity that created the dependency would have ended had the death not occurred. Benefits also end for minor dependents when they reach age 18 (up to 23 if they are full-time students in an accredited school).
    - **Remarriage**
        - If a surviving spouse or registered domestic partner remarries or enters into another registered domestic partnership, their monthly pension does not continue. The spouse is given the option of:
            - A lump sum settlement of 24 times the monthly compensation, or 50% of the remaining annuity value of the pension, whichever is less; or
            - Declining the settlement and maintaining their right to reinstate pension benefits if the marriage or registered domestic partnership ends because of death, divorce, or termination of the domestic partnership.

Workers Compensation Claim Information

Washington State Department of Labor & Industries
Claims Administration
7273 Linderson Way SW
Tumwater, WA 98501-5414
Phone: (360) 902-5800
Benefit Information
Explanation of Benefits

Immediate Cash Payment
A one-time immediate payment will be made when a death is related to an industrial injury or occupational disease if there is a spouse/registered domestic partner, child, or dependent. The amount of the immediate payment is 100 percent of the average monthly wage in the state. (See Death and Burial Rates Chart)

Funeral Benefit
A burial benefit and funeral expenses are payable when a death is related to the industrial injury or occupational disease. The maximum amount paid is up to 200 percent of the average monthly wage in the state. (See Death and Burial Rates Chart)

Claim & Account Center
Get the most up-to-date, complete information about your claim by using the online Claim & Account Center.
To speak with someone in English or Spanish and get current, general information about your claim, call L&I's Office of Information and Assistance (OIA) at 1-800-547-8367.

Department of Retirement Systems Claim Information

A one-time payment of over $260,000.00 shall be paid to the dependent spouse, children, or parents of a deceased career firefighter. This amount changes with COLA, please contact DRS for current amount.

Law Enforcement Officers' and Fire Fighters' Retirement System
Department of Retirement Systems
P.O. Box 48380 (Mailing Address)
Olympia, WA. 98504-8380
360-664-7000
800-547-6657
File a Claim

Point of Contact:
Tammy Sadler, LEOFF Plan 2 Ombudsman, LEOFF Plan 2 Retirement Board
306-586-2324

tammy.sadler@leoff.Washington.gov

PSOB

Public Safety Officers Benefit (PSOB)

www.psob.gov

The Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) is a program of the U.S. Department of Justice and provides death and education benefits to survivors of fallen law enforcement officers, firefighters, and other first responders, and disability benefits to officers catastrophically injured in the line of duty.

The amount of the PSOB benefit is over $477,336.00 for eligible deaths and disabilities. The amount of the PSOB educational assistance benefit for one month of full-time attendance is over $1,621.00. See the PSOB website here for current year claim amount

***All claims are processed on-line, please ask Chris Gorman, Washington State LAST, for assistance with filing the claim* cgorman@laceyfire.com 360-480-5447**

Volunteer Firefighter

BVFF

Board for Volunteer Firefighters and Reserve Officers
James R. Larson Forum Building
605 E 11th Avenue #112
Olympia, WA 98507
Phone: (360) 753-7318
Fax: (360) 586-1987
www.bvff.wa.gov/
Benefits Available
These amounts change from year to year. Please contact the BVFF for the current amount

- One-time payment
- Funeral Benefit
- Survivor Benefits
    - Dollar Amount + COLA per month to surviving spouse.
    - Dollar Amount per month for each child under 18.

PSOB

Public Safety Officers Benefit (PSOB) www.psob.gov
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WSFFA

Washington State Fire Fighters' Association
www.wsffa.org
1910 E. 4th Ave. PMB 117
Olympia, WA. 98506-4632
Phone or Fax: 360-264-3473

- LODD Financial Benefit available, contact the WSFFA for current amount.

- LODD Benefit Reimbursement to attend State Memorial Service, contact the WSFFA for current amount.

***_The firefighter must be a member of the association to qualify for these benefits._

Considerations for the Family after the Death Occurs

The following is a list of items for the surviving family members to consider. Since every family situation is different some of these items might not apply and there will be other items that are not listed here, so go slowly and make right decisions. Start by making a list of all the questions and business items that need to be taken care of. This list can be added to and subtracted from.

Secure Certified Copies of Death Certificate

- Get 10 copies. You are going to need death certificates to close bank and brokerage accounts, to file insurance claims and to register the death with government agencies, among other things. The funeral home you are working with can get copies on your behalf, or you can order them from the vital statistics office in the state in which the person died.

Locate the Will and the Executor

- Your loved one's survivors need to know where any money, property or belongings will go. Ideally, you talked with your relative before they passed and told you where they kept their will. The executor needs to be involved in most of the steps going forward. If there is not a will, the probate court judge will name an administrator in place of an executor.

Meet with a Trusts and Estates Attorney and/or take the Will to Probate

- While you do not need an attorney to settle an estate, having one makes things easier.
- Probate is the legal process of executing a will. You will need to do this at a county or city probate court office. Probate court makes sure that the person's debts and liabilities are paid and that the remaining assets are transferred to the beneficiaries.

Contact a CPA

- If your loved one has a CPA, contact them; if not, hire one. The estate may have to file a tax return, and a final tax return will need to be filed on the deceased's behalf.

Inventory of all Assets

- Laws vary by state, but the probate process usually starts with an inventory of all assets (personal property, bank accounts, house, car, brokerage account, personal property, furniture, jewelry, etc.), which will need to be filed in the court.
- For the physical items in the household, you may consider hiring an appraiser.
- To find these assets, comb through your family member's tax returns, mail, email, brokerage and bank accounts, deeds and titles to find assets. Don't leave any safety deposit box or filing cabinet unopened. There are also search firms that will help you track down assets in exchange for a cut.

Make a List of Liabilities

- Share the list with the executor so that important expenses like the mortgage, taxes and utilities are taken care of while the estate is settled.

Cancel Services no Longer Needed

- These include cellular service, cable and internet to name a few.

Cancel Driver's License

- This removes the deceased's name from the records of the Department of Licensing and prevents identity theft.

Close Bank, Credit and other Financial Accounts

- You are looking for checking, savings, CDs, mortgages, credit and more.

Terminate Insurance Policies

- Contact providers to end coverage for the deceased on home, auto and health insurance policies, and ask that any unused premium be returned.

Delete or Memorialize Social Media and Email Accounts

- You can delete Facebook or Instagram accounts, but some survivors choose to turn them into a memorial for their loved one instead.
- To prevent identity theft and fraud, it's a good idea to shut down the deceased's email account once you are certain you have all the information required.

Washington State Fire Service PIO Best Practice Guide

Honoring Their Sacrifice/Upholding Our Tradition





WASHINGTON STATE
FALLEN FIREFIGHTERS FOUNDATION





WASHINGTON STATE
FIRE FIGHTERS'
ASSOCIATION



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Purpose Statement

The Public Information Officer (PIO) plays an integral role in the planning and execution of a line of duty death (LODD) memorial service. The purpose of this PIO Guide is to provide PIOs with best practices and examples they can reference, should they ever assist with a LODD memorial service.

When it comes to a LODD memorial service, the most important goal of the planning committee and the department is to meet the family's wishes. The role of the PIO is to coordinate the release information about the procession, memorial service and fallen firefighter that the family and fire department would like to share. During the memorial/funeral service the PIO will be responsible for the media and the media's access to the family.

For assistance with PIO functions please contact Pat Pawlak at ppawlak@pugetsoundfire.org 206-949-3039

Communications

- If a LODD memorial service is open to the public then the PIO will want to begin promoting the service as soon as the time, date and location are selected.
- Be sure to share your promotional plan with the family liaison and members of the planning committee so there is not a duplication of efforts.
- The PIO should be in constant communication with the department's union or volunteer association so consistent and appropriate information goes out.
- All decisions concerning PIOs must be approved by the Chief and the family.
- All PIOs must be flexible and willing to take on any tasks that need to be done, especially the day of the service.
- It is highly recommended that outside PIOs are brought in for support, to provide information, and to be ready to shoulder the load the day of the service in case the internal PIO is unable to do so.

Connect with the Family through the Family Liaison

The first step you should take is contacting the family liaison to request some time to talk with the family or pass along questions for the liaison to share with the family. Answers to these questions will tell you what the family's wishes are and will guide you in what information you will communicate to the public. The following are samples of questions to consider asking the family.

- Can the service be livestreamed so those who cannot attend can watch online?
- Is anyone from the family interested in being a spokesperson and/or having interviews with the media?
- If the service is open to the public are media permitted to attend?
- If media cannot attend, is it okay if they stage in the parking lot?
- Does the family have a preference as to who the department spokesperson is?
- Is the family ok with photography during the procession and service?
- Is there a donation page set up for the family that people can contribute to?
- Is there any information the family does not want shared?

Family Statement

Ask the family to prepare a statement about their loved one. The statement can be of any length but should include biographical information about the fallen responder as well as quotes from family members. You can also request photos. The statement will give you valuable information about the responder that you can share with the media and public. Make it clear to the family that whatever information is provided in the statement will be released to the public.

Department Statement

Work closely with your chiefs to develop talking points on behalf of the department (approved by the family of course). Statement may include thanking the community for support, sharing

what the member has done or meant to the organization, and how the organization is transitioning moving forward.

Media Releases

A media release needs to be sent out directly following the death, especially if the fatality was combat related and a medical examiner's report is necessary to determine the cause of death. The release should include basic information about the fallen responder and can end with "more to follow."

A second release that focuses specifically on service and procession details will need to go out 5-10 days prior to the service. The release should include time, date and location, whether or not the service will be livestreamed, ways to help the family, and information about the fallen firefighter.

In the body of the email you send to media, clearly state whether or not media are permitted to attend the service - lay the ground rules early. Media will likely want to film the procession so include a procession route map, and areas where media vans can pull over to film.

Donations

Community members will want to know how they can help. When pushing out information about the fallen responder or service, include links to any donation pages that may be set up for the family.

Procession Details

Processions can cause a major disruption in traffic. Push out information that highlights potential traffic impacts across your communication channels. Contact jurisdictions and organizations whose areas will be impacted and provide them with language that they can share across their channels.

Advertise the procession route and map as well as invite community members to line up along the route. Messaging should include a thank you to the public for their patience and understanding.

Media Alert

The day before the service, push out a media alert to your distribution list that includes a map of the media staging areas and when and where media briefings will be held. The alert can also reiterate procession details and can include the procession map. You can share the family statement with the media as well, either with the alert or the next day during media interviews.

Media Briefing and "Day Of" Interviews

Have PIOs present at your staging locations so that when media arrive, they can be briefed. It is important for a PIO to reiterate what the ground rules are, and to share when and where

interviews will take place. It is ideal for interviews to happen before the memorial service as media are unlikely to stick around.

Talking Points and Spokesperson

When a line of duty death occurs, it is important to identify who your department spokesperson will be, and to draft talking points. Media are typically respectful during these times – nevertheless, be prepared to answer the hard questions and be ready to respond to inquiries throughout the entire process. As always, vet the department talking points and statement through the appropriate chain of command and make sure you are only sharing information the family would approve of.

Line of duty deaths can be just as emotionally taxing on a PIO as it can be on crews. If you and other department spokes members are impacted by the line of duty death, it is perfectly appropriate, and common, to have an outside PIO speak on the department's behalf and serve as the lead.

Additional Recommendations

Twitter has arguably replaced the traditional press release. All updates about the service and procession should be published on your department's Twitter feed, in addition to your website and other social media platforms like Facebook. Most media outlets will likely be following your Twitter feed already and will retweet your messaging to help spread the word.

Note: Most detailed information still goes out on your website and Facebook page due to no space constraints. Condense information on Twitter and include webpage links so people can learn more. All of your social media posts in general, should link to your website for additional information. Make sure your contact information is listed on the website in case media or community members have questions.

PIO Considerations for the Memorial/Funeral

PIO Support

You will want PIO support the day of the service and you can have as many PIOs present as you need. Consideration for PIO's to be located during the service: one PIO can be located at the procession staging site, two PIO's could manage the venue parking lot (to make sure media does not enter the church unless instructed otherwise) and the department PIO can serve as the

spokesperson for media interviews. Make sure all of the PIO's have one another's contact information.
The planning committee, more specifically the venue coordinator, needs to have the contact information and the location each PIO is assigned to. BCC your PIO's on any communications that go out to the media and share your talking points as well as the family statement with them. Communication is always key when managing an incident.

Media Staging Area

During the planning process, it is important to tour the venue where the service will be held to scout out media staging areas. The evening before or morning of the memorial service, you will likely need to arrange for someone to cordon off the media staging area with cones or signs. It is ideal to reserve 3-4 parking spots for media vans.

Service Livestreaming

If the service is going to be livestreamed, work with service venue staff to learn what equipment and information will be needed to ensure things go smoothly. Many venues are able to livestream to a Facebook page with their own software programs and video equipment.

Program Creation

It is common for the department PIO to assist in the creation of the memorial service program. Memorial service programs do not typically include speakers or a timeline due to potential last-minute changes. You may also be responsible for arranging the printing, pickup and distribution of the programs.

Photographer and Videographer

It is important to capture the day. Make sure to use someone with discretion and experience, not just a family friend. Use venue video equipment whenever possible. Photographers and videographers need to coordinate with the venue and service coordinators before the start of the service.

Create a Communications Plan

As you can see, there is an abundance of information that will need to be created and released. It is wise to create a communications plan early on in the planning process to keep track of all the moving pieces.
Lastly, do not forget about internal communications. Whatever information you publish should also be shared internally with agency staff.

Family Statement Sample

This sample Family Statement has been provided by the Bothell Fire Department and the Kirk Robinson Family

Kirk Dean Robinson was born June 29, 1977 to Gary and Lori Robinson. From an early age, community service was a central focus of Kirk's life. Throughout high school and well into adulthood, Kirk and his older brother Clay were deeply involved with the Mercer Island

Presbyterian Church. Kirk frequently went on missions to Mexico and built hundreds of houses for families in need.
In 1995, Kirk graduated from Mercer Island High School and headed off to Westmont College in Santa Barbara, CA to study kinesiology and sports medicine. He made many lifelong friends while away at school where he was a dorm counselor and first fell in love with surfing.
When Kirk returned to Seattle he knew he wanted to help people and live an active lifestyle and decided to pursue a career in firefighting. In 1999, Kirk joined the Mercer Island Auxiliary Fire Department. Then, at age 21, he accepted an offer to join the Bothell Fire Department.
Kirk's infectious personality, tireless work ethic, and classic good looks quickly made him a favorite among his peers. Before long, Kirk was a member of the Technical and Water Rescue Teams, was on the Honor Guard and became a CBT instructor. In 2001, Kirk assisted with the 9/11 response effort at ground zero and in 2005, deployed to Hurricane Katrina to provide aid to those whose lives were devastated by the disaster. Each year, Kirk participated in the Columbia Stair Climb to raise funds for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.
Kirk was always among the first to help with Bothell Fire Department events. Getting to drive the department's historic Model A Fire Engine in the 4th of July Parade each year was a particular favorite of Kirk's, and a role perfectly suited for him and his contagious smile. In October of 2017, Kirk was promoted to Lieutenant, a testament to his dedication to the community and department.
Kirk touched countless lives over his lifetime. He was omnipresent in every community he was part of and will forever be remembered for his compassion and relentless drive to make a difference in peoples' lives.
Note: the statement may need to be edited prior to publication. If you choose to make edits, share the revised version with the family to make sure they approve.
The statement can be used in any and all of your language such as press releases, program copy, social media posts, website content and so forth.

Media Release Sample

This sample Media Release has been provided by the Bothell Fire Department and the Kirk Robinson Family

Media partner,

Below are the details for the Line of Duty Death Memorial Service honoring fallen Bothell Firefighter, Lt. Kirk Robinson. The Robinson family has requested that media do not attend the service. We ask that you please respect the family's wishes. That said, media are welcome to stage in the parking lot. A map of the staging areas is attached.

MEDIA RELEASE
KING COUNTY, WA – On Thursday, October 24, friends, family and loved ones will come together to honor the life of Lt. Kirk Robinson. Lt. Robinson passed away on Friday, October 4, after a heroic two-year-long battle with cancer. Lt. Robinson was a member of the Bothell Fire Department for over 18 years.
Memorial Service Details
Date: Thursday, October 24
Time: 1- 4 p.m.
Location: Overlake Christian Church
9900 Willows Rd. NE, Redmond, WA
The memorial service will be livestreamed on the Bothell Fire Department Facebook page.
At 11:05 a.m., a memorial procession will begin. 29 fire department apparatus and 50 police motor vehicles will escort the casket from Pop Keeney Stadium located at 9809 NE 188th St in Bothell to Overlake Christian Church in Redmond. Units will leave the stadium and head east onto 185th past Station 42, and proceed onto I405 S. The motorcade will exit off 124th to Willows Rd and will arrive at Overlake Christian Church at approximately 11:55 a.m.
Lt. Robinson began his career with the Bothell Fire Department (BFD) in April of 2001. Kirk was deeply passionate about helping others and during his tenure, he served on the Technical and Water Rescue Teams, Honor Guard, and was a CBT Instructor. In 2001, he assisted with the 9/11 response effort at ground zero, and in 2005, deployed to Hurricane Katrina to provide aid to those impacted by the disaster.
Each year, Lt. Robinson participated in the Columbia Stair Climb to raise funds for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, and he was always among the first to help with department activities like holiday parties and the annual 4th of July Pancake Breakfast. In October of 2017, firefighter Robinson was promoted to Lieutenant, a testament to his devotion to the community and department. Lt. Robinson touched every life he came across. He was a beloved member of Bothell Fire Department and will be forever be remembered for his compassion and drive to make a difference.
If you are interested in helping the Robinson family during this difficult time, donations can be made through the Kirk Robinson Cancer Battle Go Fund Me Page: https://bit.ly/2OmFfiO.
###
Media Contact: Nicole Strachila, Bothell Fire PIO
xxx-xxx-xxxx
nicole.strachila@bothellwa.gov
Send

Acronyms and Definitions

Agency: This term is intended to include Fire and Emergency Medical Service (EMS) personnel from a Fire Department, Fire District or EMS Agencies, active and retired, who may be or were involved in emergency and/or medical operations.

Bell Ceremony: Sometimes called the Last Alarm Ceremony, a bell is rung for the sake of tradition signifying the end of a shift. See Appendix I for bell service.

Chief of Operations: In many departments this is also the Deputy Chief or Assistant Chief. For the purpose of this document, "Chief of Operations" or "Operations Chief" is used.

Color Guard: A detail of the honor guard that delivers the department, state, U.S or another flag.

Firefighters Memorial Flag: Is a special flag designed to be flown in honor of a line of duty death and is also called a "Fire Service Flag".

Fire and/or EMS Agency: This term is intended to include Fire and Emergency Medical Service (EMS) personnel from a Fire Department, Fire District or EMS Agencies, active and retired, who may be or were involved in emergency and/or medical operations.

Honor Guard: A detail of Agency/and or regional members in dress uniform with white gloves that are normally positioned at the head and foot of the casket. They may escort the casket to the funeral and cemetery. They can also act as pallbearers. If an Agency does not have its own honor guard, one can be requested via the LAST Team or statewide resources. The Honor Guard Team will follow proper procedures for their role in the funeral/memorial service. The Funeral Coordinator and the Cemetery Coordinator will work closely with the Honor Guard Commander for service planning.

IC: Incident Commander

ICS: Incident Command System

LAST Team: A multi-jurisdictional statewide team trained specifically to provide assistance to Agencies within the state following a LODD. The team consists of representatives from across different regions and represents the WFC, WSCFF, and WSFFA. The team responds only upon request of the Agency, with any or all of the following: Team Leader, Assistant Team Leader, Chaplain, PIO and Honor Guard Commander. For more information go to: http://firehero.fusionapps.net/resources/departments/last/index.html.

LODD: Line of Duty Death

Line of Duty Death: The death of any uniformed member of a fire service agency that occurs during an authorized activity or action of duty as part of the fire service agency he or she serves and the action is legally recognized.

Career Firefighter: As defined by RCW 41.26.030 and includes occupational diseases covered by RCW 51.32.185

Volunteer Firefighter: As defined by RCW 41.24.010

Pallbearers/Body Bearers: Pallbearers/Body Bearers are chosen by the family (usually 6-8 individuals) to "bear the body of the deceased." Their duties may include passing the casket from the Chapel to the funeral coach or apparatus and then from the vehicle to graveside. If the Department apparatus is used as a caisson to carry the casket, the Pallbearers from the Department may be assigned to drive and/or ride on the apparatus from the beginning to the end of the funeral procession.

Personal Information Packet: This document is the suggested form for Agency personnel to fill out in the event of their death or serious injury so that the family may be properly notified. The form can be modified to fit the individual agency.

Serious Injury: Any injury sustained in the line-of-duty which is or may become life threatening or will disable the employee for a substantial period.

Changes and Revision Notes:

- January 25, 2017
  - Adopted as Written
- October 1st, 2017
  - Added Suggested wording for Last Alarm Radio Call
- March 26, 2019
  - Fixed email addresses
- August 17, 2020
  - Hyper Linked Table of Content
  - Up-dated RCW for Presumption
  - Up-Dated Points of Contact
  - Added Consideration for Day of Service Coverage
  - Edits by WA State Firefighters' Association
- December 30, 2020
  - Reformatted the entire document
  - Added hyper-links
  - Up-date contact and reporting instructions for the State Fire Marshal
  - Added Survivors Guide
- January 2021
  - Finished up-dates
  - Added PIO Guide
- January 2022
  - Up-dates
- January 2023
  - Added Badge Shrouding Policy
  - Updated Formatting
- March 2023
  - Corrected phone numbers and websites
- July 2024
  - Updated Badge Shourd Wording
- March 2026
  - Update hyper links
  - Changed Contact information