

Development of a Line-of-Duty Death Standard Operating Guideline for Rural Metro Fire

Department

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CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

I hereby certify that this paper constitutes my own product, that where the language of others is set forth, quotation marks so indicate, and that appropriate credit is given where I have used the language, ideas, expressions, or writings of another.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

### Abstract

Given the frequency of line-of-duty deaths in the fire service, all fire departments should have a policy in place to address the critical time period following the death of a fallen firefighter. The recent line-of-duty deaths of the Granite Mountain Hotshots reinforced the need for a policy at Rural Metro Fire Department in Pima County, Arizona. Rural Metro Fire Department currently has no line-of-duty death policy should one occur. Research was conducted to determine if national standards exist concerning line-of-duty deaths and what procedures other Pima County, Arizona fire departments have in place to handle line-of-duty deaths. A review of current literature, personal interviews, and several existing line-of-duty death policies was performed to develop a proposed Rural Metro line-of-duty standard operating guideline for immediate implementation. The resulting line-of-duty death standard operating guideline was formulated by merging portions of several policies to ensure survivor and department needs are met during the emotional and difficult time following a line-of-duty death.

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## Development of a Line-of-Duty Death Standard Operating Guideline for Rural Metro Fire Department

Firefighting is an inherently dangerous occupation. Any fire department, regardless of the size, complexity, or paid versus volunteer status, is constantly exposed to the possibility of a line-of-duty death (LODD). Fire department leaders are responsible for having a plan in place if a LODD occurs in their department. Planning after the death occurs will not produce the outcome expected by the stakeholders involved.

The problem is that Rural Metro Fire Department (RMFD) does not have an existing LODD standard operating guideline (SOG). This dilutes the efficacy of RMFD's leadership team and consequently will place strain on other agencies assisting during the time of need. The purpose of this study is to formulate a line-of-duty death standard operating guideline for RMFD. The research questions are:

1. What are the national standards concerning line-of-duty-deaths?
2. What procedures do other Pima County, Arizona fire departments have in place to handle line-of-duty deaths?
3. What criteria and associated procedures should be included in RMFD's line-of-duty death standard operating guideline?

This applied research project utilizes the action research method to develop and implement a comprehensive LODD guideline for RMFD. The research approach consists of one-on-one interviews with local fire service leaders who have established guidelines in place, along with an interview of a RMFD human resources representative. Additionally, several existing protocols and guidelines from various agencies were examined in formulating the final RMFD policy.

## Background and Significance

Thankfully, Rural Metro Fire Department, Pima County, Arizona operations has not experienced a LODD in the last 40 years (T. Brandhuber, personal communication, December 10, 2013). This does not minimize the fact that firefighting is a dangerous occupation.

Approximately 100 firefighters die in the line-of-duty each year (Kunadharaju, 2011). The United States Fire Administration (USFA) (2013) has the current 2013 firefighter fatality number at 87 as of 11/1/2013. After the 19 Granite Mountain Hotshot's perished in Prescott, Arizona on June 30, 2013, local emphasis on assisting the Prescott Fire Department became an immediate concern (Arizona State Forestry Division, 2013). This tragic situation, although uncommon, reinforced RMFD's need for a current LODD policy.

This study is important to promote future organizational effectiveness in case of a tragic event, and serves as a template and a foundation for a long needed missing piece of RMFD's organizational foundation. An organization must practice due diligence prior to an event occurring, due to the intense emotional strain a LODD puts on all stakeholders associated with the incident. It also will assist in establishing pre-determined metrics and baseline benchmarks which hopefully will allow the framework to unfold successfully.

This ARP links with the USFA's goal of improving local planning and preparedness (United States Fire Administration, 2010). Without a plan in place, even the best organization will falter under the emotional strain a LODD places on its membership. In correlation with the USFA's goal, this ARP will demonstrate the ability of the Executive Fire Officer as a change agent, in the context of overcoming adaptive leadership challenges (United States Fire Administration, 2013b). Moreover, development of a LODD policy folds into the Executive Development course and USFA's operational goal to "improve the fire and emergency services'

capability for response to and recovery from all hazards” (United States Fire Administration, 2013b, p. 1).

### Literature Review

RMFD is not alone in its lack of a LODD policy. A random sample of 50 fire departments in Massachusetts determined that only 26% had a LODD policy in place (Antonellis, Jr., 2003). Presuming Massachusetts can be extrapolated and reflects the nation as a whole, many departments are facing the same lack of policy issue. A LODD is one of the hardest experiences fire service personnel will face (Antonellis, Jr., 2006b). As such, the literature collectively agrees a LODD policy is beneficial.

To appropriately address issues that arise during this sensitive time, several line-of-duty death policies exist among other fire departments in Pima County, Arizona and among state and national fire service organizations. These policies instruct that a LODD timeline is not a single moment, day, week or month, but instead a process that requires significant pre- and post planning.

The Arizona Fire Chiefs Association LODD Operational Procedure (2007) has been adopted by Golder Ranch Fire District in Pima County, Arizona. This policy delineates the process of handling a LODD into four operational phases—initial action, first 24 hours, day 2 through the funeral, and after the funeral (Golder Ranch Fire District, 2007). Golder Ranch Fire District repeatedly places the focus of the policy on meeting the needs of the surviving family and ensuring the needs of the family come before those of the department. This policy also is clear that in addition to supporting the family, it is critical that the fallen firefighter receive a “fitting tribute” (Golder Ranch Fire District, 2007, p. 3).

The Golder Ranch Fire District LODD policy (2007) also addresses important pre-incident planning that is ongoing at the department. For example, Golder's policy requires up to date emergency contact information and individual photographs be maintained by the department (2007). The policy also requires a current list of buglers, pipers, vocalists, and available ceremonial equipment such as badges, flags, and white gloves. Finally, the pre-planning includes appointment of individuals to roles such as a Survivor Action Officer, Notification Officer, Honor Guard Coordinator, Benefits Officer, Funeral Officer, and Family Liaison Officer (Golder Ranch Fire District, 2007).

During the initial action phase, the Golder Ranch Fire District LODD policy (2007) emphasizes preserving the scene of the LODD and proper notification of the chain of command, including the fire chief, public information officer, critical incident stress management (CISM) leader, and other various officers that were pre-assigned in the pre-planning phase. The policy also explains the roles of each officer and team member throughout the process.

Golder Ranch Fire District's policy (2007) also specifies that two senior level department officials and two additional people make the notification to the family in person, with certainty, as a team, in plain language, and with compassion. Once the family notification has been made, the department must be notified before hearing it from the media or through other channels.

The Golder Ranch Fire District's policy (2007) has a checklist for the first 24 hour responsibilities. These responsibilities include the public information officer distributing a press release, ordering flags be lowered to half-staff, and working with the individuals in pre-appointed roles to support execution of the LODD policy.

The next phase in the Golder Ranch Fire District's policy (2007) encompasses day 2 through the funeral. The purpose of this phase is to assist the family in planning the funeral and



supporting the family with assistance with different tasks. This part of the policy spends a significant amount of time describing the different options for the funeral, processional, and honor guard.

The final phase of Golder Ranch's LODD policy (2007) is comprised of family support and an analysis of the incident and policy implementation. This portion of the policy specifically requires follow-up with the family over time to ensure proper benefits are received (Golder Ranch Fire District, 2007).

Patrick Abel, an assistant chief at Golder Ranch Fire District, was interviewed related to its LODD policy (personal communication, October 29, 2013). Chief Abel emphasized that the pre-planning is crucial to proper implementation of any LODD policy (personal communication, October 29, 2013). He further explained that if the benefits are handled correctly, then they are received by the family quicker and easier, which lessens stress on the grieving family (P. Abel, personal communication, October 29, 2013). Chief Abel determined the most important part of Golder Ranch's LODD policy was bringing in the local assistance state team (LAST) to assist with objective decision making (personal communication, October 29, 2013). Finally, although Chief Abel has not used the entire Golder Ranch policy, having the baseline policy available helped when local assistance was provided to the Granite Mountain Hotshot team families earlier this year (personal communication, October 29, 2013).

Another neighboring fire district in Pima County, Northwest Fire District, provided its LODD for review, as well as an interview with Heath Evans, a battalion chief. Similar to Golder Ranch Fire District, Northwest's Line of Duty Death Manual (2012) is also adopted from the Arizona Fire Chiefs Association LODD Operational Procedure (2007) in its entirety. Chief Evans was the local incident commander for the local funeral of one of the Granite Mountain Hotshots

(personal communication, October 2, 2013). Northwest Fire District performed administrative drills to see how their LODD Manual worked in real time (H. Evans, personal communication, October 2, 2013). Based on those results, Chief Evans is of the opinion that Northwest Fire District's Manual needs to be updated and fine-tuned with more emphasis on including the needs of their wildland teams who travel across the country during wildland season (personal communication, October 2, 2013).

The National Fallen Firefighters Foundation also provides guidance when a line-of-duty death occurs in its *Resource Guide For Handling Firefighter Line-of-Duty Deaths* (nd). This guide delivers practical advice on LODDs that includes exemplar forms, financial benefits checklists, and referral to other resources (National Fallen Firefighters Foundation, nd). This policy echoes the Arizona Fire Chiefs Association LODD Operational Procedure (2007) in its focus on pre-planning. The National Fallen Firefighters Foundation also publishes a *Line-of-Duty Death Benefits Guide* (nd) specifically for survivors of a LODD that explains local, state, and federal government benefits, as well as benefits from private organizations.

The Bureau of Land Management Firefighter and Law Enforcement Line-of-Duty Death Response Guide (2012) seeks to ensure that each aspect of the LODD response is handled completely and professionally to ensure technical and emotional support for the family and co-workers of a Bureau of Land Management employee killed in the line of duty. This guide also assigns tasks to pre-determined officers and liaisons and is laid out in three phases—immediate response, within 24 hours, and next 24 hours and beyond (Bureau of Land Management, 2012). Additionally, the guide addresses post-traumatic stress disorder among other employees related to the LODD (Bureau of Land Management, 2012). Unlike other policies reviewed, this LODD

Response Guide (2012) in detail discusses how a LODD may affect co-workers and actions that can be taken to specifically address those issues.

The lengthiest policy reviewed was from the United States Air Force, titled *Casualty Services* (2010). At 220 pages, this directive seemed almost too overwhelming to follow, although much of the information was specific to the military and not would not necessarily translate to the fire service. The United States Air Force directive did not assign specific roles to personnel, instead relying on the established chain of command in place (2010). The guide did, however, address an issue common in today's mobile world not found in other policies reviewed—making emergency travel available to family members such as a daughter away at college who needs to return home to support her grieving family and attend a funeral (United States Air Force, 2010).

The policies referenced above confirm the importance of compassionate family support and follow through during this emotional time and the need for a LODD policy. Antonellis, Jr. pointed out that many in the fire service are unprepared to perform death notification, which can result in unnecessary stress and affect the survivors for years (2006a; 2006b). Antonellis, Jr. (2006a) also found that many departments lack pre-planning related to LODDs. Antonellis, Jr. (2006a) also determined that the fire chief sets the tone for the department because firefighters look to the chief for “direction, reassurance, and support” (p.114). Antonellis, Jr. (2006a) aptly stated that the fire department does not have the luxury of putting out a sign that says “Due to a death, we will be closed”.

Rural Metro Fire Department human resource representative Kimberly Payeur was interviewed regarding RMFD's lack of LODD policy. Payeur confirmed that RMFD currently has only a human resource policy addressing the death of an employee instead of a standard

operating guideline (K. Payeur, personal communication, October 16, 2013). The policy, HR-06, is two pages and is not specific to LODDs. The policy is woefully inadequate to properly address the issues that arise when a LODD occurs. HR-06 states that the local human resource representative or the Division General Manager (DGM) will contact the employee's family and exit the employee from the computer systems (Rural/Metro Corporation, 2011). HR-06 notes that if the death occurs at work it should be handled "in accordance with the Workers' Compensation policy" (Rural/Metro Corporation, 2011, p. 1). The rest of the two-page human resource policy addresses payment of benefits from Rural Metro only and release of the personal property of the employee in very broad terms. Payeur confirmed that nothing else is in place should a LODD occur at RMFD (personal communication, October 16, 2013).

The policies reviewed are all intensely detailed and reflect the many issues that must be considered and addressed following a LODD. The policies reviewed and personal interviews done show not only that a LODD policy is necessary but that RMFD's HR-06 policy is inadequate to handle the myriad of issues that arise following a LODD.

#### Procedures

To answer research question one, a review was conducted of national fire service organizations to determine if any of the organizations provide national standards related to a LODD policy. To answer research question two, a review of LODD policies from other local fire departments and districts was done, as well as written policies and resources from NFFF, the United States Air Force, and the Bureau of Land Management. Personal interviews were conducted with chief level officers at Golder Ranch Fire District and Northwest Fire District who are tasked with implementing the LODD policy at their respective departments should it become necessary.

Specifically, Assistant Chief Patrick Abel of Golder Ranch Fire District was interviewed because of his involvement in adoption of the LODD policy for his department. Chief Abel is also a board member for the Arizona Fire Chief's Association (AFCA) and was on the committee that drafted the AFCA's LODD policy as a resource for fire departments and districts. This interview took place on October 29, 2013 at Golder Ranch Fire District's operational headquarters in Pinal County, Arizona. Battalion Chief Heath Evans of Northwest Fire District was interviewed on October 2, 2013, at a local restaurant in Pima County, Arizona. Chief Evans is also tasked with implementation and evaluation of his department's LODD policy.

To answer research question three, a review of the research and interviews done for questions one and two were reviewed to determine what elements should be in RMFD's LODD policy. A LODD policy for RMFD was drafted (Appendix D).

Background information was mined from Grand Canyon University's academic online library which produced a master's thesis on LODD policies and fire service magazine articles on LODD policies and death notification. Google Scholar results were reviewed for empirical data on whether national standards existed on required elements in a LODD policy. Finally, search results with relevant ARPs were reviewed and synchronized from the United States Fire Administration Library.

The research is limited by the fact that no empirical data was found on how many fire departments nationwide have a LODD policy or the reasoning for not having one. Further, the lack of national standards, despite the numerous national fire service organizations that exist, including The Center for Public Safety Excellence / Commission on Fire Accreditation International, prevented research question number one from being answered extensively.

Definitions used in the ARP are as follows:

Line-of-duty death (LODD): death of a firefighter from injuries sustained in the line of duty.

LAST team: Local assistance state team

IAFF: International Association of Fire Fighters

NFFF: National Fallen Firefighters Foundation

## Results

Research Question 1: What are the national standards concerning line-of-duty deaths?

The national fire service organizations evaluated—IAFF, NFFF, and National Fire Academy (NFA)—confirm that national standards do not exist that require a LODD policy for a fire department nor must specific requirements be included in a LODD policy if one exists. In fact, as Antonelli, Jr.'s study showed, many fire departments do not have a LODD policy (2003). Thus, there is no national consensus that a department must have a LODD policy, let alone what elements are required. Many national groups have LODD information and policies available for guidance, such as the NFFF and the IAFF, but the information is not presented as a national standard per se.

Research Question 2: What procedures do other Arizona fire departments have in place to handle line-of-duty deaths?

Northwest Fire District and Golder Ranch Fire District are two neighboring fire districts in Pima County, Tucson. Both districts have LODD policies adopted entirely from the Arizona Fire Chief's Association LODD Operational Procedure (2007). Mountain Vista Fire District is a fire district in Pima County, Arizona that is contiguous to RMFD's area. Mountain Vista Fire District does not have a LODD policy in place but is in the process of adopting one mirroring the

AFCA template (E. Wilkerson, personal communication, December 19, 2013). Thus, interviews were conducted with chiefs from Northwest Fire District and Golder Ranch Fire District.

Both chiefs were asked why having a LODD policy was important and how it benefits the department. They were also asked how they developed their LODD policy and how they determined what needed to be in the policy. Both chiefs were asked who implements their policies and what the most important elements are in the policy. Finally, they were asked if they had used the policy and if so, if it was helpful. Their responses can be found in Appendices A and B.

The crux of these interviews reflected the importance of pre-planning. Although not used in their entirety, having their policies available as guidelines helped both chiefs recently in times of need. Although LODDs happen in the fire service more than other professions, generally no single fire department in Pima County, Arizona has extensive experience in handling LODDs. Thus, it is even more crucial that a policy be in place so important tasks are not overlooked.

Both Golder Ranch Fire District and Northwest Fire District have implemented the Arizona Fire Chief's Association LODD Operational Procedure in its entirety. Thus, the elements in that policy is what other Pima County, Arizona fire departments have in place to address LODDs.

Research Question 3: What criteria and associated procedures should be included in RMFD's line-of-duty death standard operating guideline?

A review of the literature, other LODD policies, and interviews instruct that pre-planning is a crucial component to any effective LODD policy. Thus, pre-planning was heavily addressed in the proposed RMFD LODD policy (Appendix D). Communication and proper notification information was also stressed in all policies examined and ultimately added to the RMFD LODD

policy. The most important and needed portions of all policies were incorporated into the proposed RMFD's LODD policy in Appendix D.

Additionally, a review of RMFD's HR-06 policy reflects a complete lack of guidance on the funeral of the employee or survivor benefits outside of Rural/Metro. HR-06 fails to address the emotional needs of survivors or other RMFD employees following a LODD. HR-06 also lacks any survivor follow-up over any set period of time.

#### Discussion / Implications

Antonellis, Jr. (2006a) pointed out that overall the "fire service is significantly lacking in experience and preplanning for the moments immediately after a death/injury and the follow-up post-funeral and organization/family recovery period" (p. 111). If a LODD occurred at RMFD today, with no policy in place, it is unlikely the post-death period would run smoothly and very likely that important tasks would be overlooked. Handling a LODD poorly would cause further damage to survivors by not meeting their needs after their loss, create potentially negative media attention, and make a bad situation worse. Having a policy will significantly limit and lower the chances of negative performance following a LODD at RMFD.

Results indicate that national standards do not exist related to necessary elements in a LODD policy. Fire departments can be accredited. Requiring that a fire department have a LODD policy as part of an accreditation process is a prudent idea given the number of LODDs that occur annually in the fire service.

Other Pima County, Arizona fire departments and districts have implemented the Arizona Fire Chief's Association's LODD Operational Procedure (2007). Review of this policy reflects that it is a detailed policy but in some places is redundant. Redundant portions were removed. A sentence was added directing contact be made with state workers compensation representatives.



Also included in RMFD's proposed LODD policy was a portion of the United States Air Force Casualty Services directive (2010). Specifically content was added regarding creation and maintenance of a LODD file at the department where all pertinent information gathered after the death can be maintained for all team members. Expected communications to be kept include communications with the survivors, other agencies, the funeral director, etc. These documents should be readily available. This also alleviates the problem where only one person knows certain information by keeping all documents in one place.

Also borrowed from the United States Air Force Casualty Services policy (2010) is the section outlining making emergency travel available for immediate family members. For example, designated family members may be away or live out of town but need to be present for the family and the funeral. This clause in the proposed RMFD policy will allow travel costs to be covered by the department if the family cannot afford to do so.

Finally, a clause was added to the proposed RMFD policy directing human resources to maintain a file of current forms from various agencies for survivor and department use such as documents for reporting, benefits, etc. These forms will be reviewed and updated annually.

A written policy is not enough; personnel must be trained in the policy and the fire chief must ensure each individual understands their role when a LODD occurs. The fire chief must lead following a LODD and true leadership on the issue starts with preparedness long before a LODD occurs.

Implications to RMFD are that if the proposed LODD policy is adopted, more harm following a LODD can be avoided. The department must realize that a LODD will be followed by emotional issues by both the survivors and the department. Despite the emotion, tasks must be

done. The age old saying applies—failing to plan is planning to fail. A LODD is too important of an event to not have a LODD policy in place and fail during this time of crisis.

### Recommendations

It is recommended that RMFD adopt the proposed LODD policy in Appendix D. Adoption of this policy will streamline what needs to be done when a LODD occurs and ensure tasks are not overlooked during this emotional time which can negatively affect the survivors and department. Moreover, after the LODD policy is adopted, specific personnel should be assigned now to fill the roles delineated in the policy such as Liaison Officer, Notification Officer, Survivor Action Officer, and so forth. Once these positions have been filled, all personnel tasked to a specific role should undergo a one day, in-house training where the policy is reviewed in depth and duties and tasks are understood. The policy should then be disseminated to the field and the trained individuals available to answer questions. Finally, the LODD policy should be evaluated annually by the fire chief and training department and after any LODD death to determine what improvements are needed.

The department will benefit from having a clear algorithm in place if a LODD occurs as well as trained personnel to handle issues that arise. The survivors will ultimately benefit by having the guidance of the department to help them obtain the benefits they need and provide emotional support during this most trying time.

Future research is needed to determine the efficacy of LODD policies and whether, given the many departments without LODD policies, it should be required by an accrediting agency or the state fire board to have a LODD policy given the approximately 100 LODD that occur each year (Antonellis, Jr., 2006). Additionally, future research could address whether a national standard related to LODD policies is needed.

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## Appendix A

Interview with Assistant Chief Patrick Abel, Golder Ranch Fire District

October 29, 2013

1. Why is it important to have a LODD policy? How does it benefit the department?

It's a preplanning issue. You don't want to be planning after the fact to do the right thing. It's about honor. It's also about the federal benefits issue. If the stuff is done correctly then the benefits move smoother. A public safety autopsy procedure must be followed to ensure appropriate death benefits are received. Having the LODD policy reminds us what we need to do and when we need to do it.

2. How did you develop this policy? What sources did you review? How did you determine what needed to be in the policy?

We looked at the National Fallen Firefighter Foundation research, the Arizona Fire Chief's Association's LODD policy, and spoke with an Arizona Local Assistance State Team (LAST) member. The National Fallen Firefighter Foundation directed us to plan for all types of firefighter deaths.

3. Who is responsible for implementing aspects of your policy? Why? Are responsibilities spread among several or streamlined to one person? Why?

We would form an incident management team (IMT).

4. What are the most important elements of this policy?

Bringing in the LAST team is the most important because outside help for objective decision-making is needed during times of crisis.

5. Have you had to use the policy?

Not in its entirety. We used some of the policy in Prescott when the 19 wildland firefighters were killed.

6. Was it helpful? How? Did it make the LODD process easier, quicker, or more through?

Even though the whole policy was not followed, having the baseline policy there assisted the department in removing emotions and helping the actual family members.

## Appendix B

Interview with Battalion Chief Heath Evans, Northwest Fire District

October 2, 2013

1. Why is it important to have a LODD policy? How does it benefit the department?

By having a guideline and checklist, the department can make the best decisions at the time.

2. How did you develop this policy? What sources did you review? How did you determine what needed to be in the policy?

We adopted the Arizona Fire Chief's Association's policy in full.

3. Who is responsible for implementing aspects of your policy? Why? Are responsibilities spread among several or streamlined to one person? Why?

The responsibilities are spread among the chain of command. The more eyes on an issue, the better the result.

4. What are the most important elements of this policy?

It is all important. No element is more important than any other.

5. Have you had to use the policy?

The only LODD that I was ever involved with was the deaths of the 19 Granite Mountain Hotshots this year. One of the firefighters was living in Marana, so we handled portions of his funeral; however, statewide logistics were already in place. I was the local incident commander for the funeral of the firefighter from Marana.

6. Was it helpful? How? Did it make the LODD process easier, quicker, or more thorough?

The policy was helpful. We did administrative drills to see how our plan would work in real time. I admit our plan needs updating to include logistics specifically directed at wildland firefighters who might be out of the area or state.

## Appendix C

## DEATH OF AN EMPLOYEE HR-06

Section: *HR (Human Resources)*Effective Date: *May 1, 2011*Policy Type: *Company Wide*

Revision Date(s):

POLICY: It is the policy of Rural/Metro to follow the following steps in the event of an employee death.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: Senior Vice President of Human Resources

## PROCEDURE:

I. The local Human Resources representative or Division General Manager (DGM) is responsible for contacting the family and exiting the employee from Workday. Deaths that occur during work will be handled in accordance with the Workers' Compensation policy.

## II. Payments

A. Wages – The deceased employee's wages will be paid through the date of death. Such payment will include applicable overtime.

B. Bonus/Incentive Payment – When an incentive or bonus is effective for the employee, a pro-rated payment of the bonus/incentive which the employee otherwise would have been entitled, based on the date when the employee ceased to act as a participant in the Plan.

## III. Payment of Benefits

Corporate Benefits should be notified immediately, as they will contact the family based on the beneficiary form on file. The person designated as the beneficiary will be the contact person for any benefits processing. Corporate Benefits will require a certified copy of the death certificate in order to process the claim.



I. Life Insurance – All employees who have been working at least 30 days on a full-time basis are eligible for Basic Life and AD&D insurance. The amount of the life insurance can vary;

Corporate Benefits will provide the information on expected life amounts.

II. 401(k) – When an employee has participated in the 401(k) and an account balance exists, the designated beneficiary will be given the required form for processing.

III. Vacation/PTO Pay – Payment will be made for the accrued unused vacation the employee was eligible as of date of death. Payments will be governed by the regulations of the state.

IV. Release of Personal Property in the Event of Death of an Employee

A. The release of personal possessions of deceased employees will be coordinated by the local human resources representative, or management representative designated by the DGM.

B. Once advised of the death of an employee, Human Resources or the DGM will collect and inventory the employee's personal possessions.

C. The collection and inventory process will be conducted with appropriate witnesses to assure proper accounting of all items and avoid allegations of missing items.

D. Human Resources and/or the DGM will take adequate measures to safeguard the personal possessions of deceased employee, including those in lockers and/or desks, pending the collection and inventory process.

E. Following the inventory process, the contents will be packed and sealed by Human Resources or the DGM and placed in temporary storage pending release or disposition.

F. The release of personal possessions of deceased employees to family members will be coordinated by Human Resources or the DGM:

1. To the surviving spouse/domestic partner or, if none

2. Children 18 years of age or older or, if none,
3. The parents of the deceased employee or if none,
4. Siblings of the deceased employee.

D. Recognition and Gifts due to the Death of an Employee

1. The Zone Human Resource Manager should immediately be made aware of all employee deaths. A recognition award may be ordered through Corporate Human Resources when requested by the Zone Human Resources Manager.
2. All fund raising must be coordinated through Human Resources and will result in an account being opened at a local bank in the name of the deceased employee where donations may be made. At no time shall Rural/Metro collect funds or allow payroll deductions to be made directly to the employee's family as this can result in a taxable event. Bank accounts in the name of Rural/Metro are strictly prohibited.

Approved by:

Date:

5/03/11

Appendix D



**Standard Operating Guideline**  
 Fire Operations  
 December 19, 2013

LINE OF DUTY DEATH (LODD) STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINE (SOG)

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## INTRODUCTION

### I. PURPOSE

I.A. A Firefighter Line of Duty Death (LODD) is the most difficult experience a fire department can face. Rural Metro Fire Department (RMFD) remains committed to the health and safety of our firefighters and hopes we will never be confronted with one. However, the fact remains that nationally fire fighter deaths occur on nearly a weekly basis. Advance planning is a critical requirement to effectively managing one of these incidents.

I.B. The purpose of this document is to provide a comprehensive Standard Operating Guideline (SOG) to be used as a guide in the event of a Line of Duty Death. It is based upon the concepts presented in the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation “Taking Care of Our Own” program and the Arizona Fire Chief’s Association LODD Operational Procedure.

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

II.A. Initial Actions - This phase describes the actions that must be taken immediately following a Line of Duty Death. Emphasis during this phase is placed upon initial notifications and securing possible evidence.

II.B. First 24 hours – During this phase, secondary notifications are made, a family support team is established, departmental support efforts begin, an analysis team is organized, and the needs of the media are addressed.

II.C. Day Two Through the Funeral – During this phase, designated personnel assist the family in planning the funeral as they choose, departmental personnel are kept informed about details, and the family support team assists the family with miscellaneous tasks as desired. Support is provided to fire department members as needed.

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

### III. GENERAL GUIDELINES

III.A. When a member of the Fire, Emergency Medical or Rescue Services dies in the line of duty, several considerations are crucial for those dealing with the tragedy. They include:

III.A.1. Identifying and meeting the needs of the surviving family.

III.A.2. Ensuring that the needs and wishes of the family always come before the needs and wishes of the department.

III.A.3. Providing ongoing emotional and spiritual support for the surviving family members.

III.A.4. Using good organization, coordination, and communication.

III.A.5. Maintaining flexibility.

III.A.6. Monitoring constantly not to overload any individuals.

III.B. The primary goal of the fire department should be to work with the family, the funeral director and others involved to ensure that the fallen firefighter receives a fitting tribute. At all times the fire department must carry out the wishes and desire of the surviving family regarding the funeral ceremonies.

III.C. The fire department responsibilities are not the same as those of the funeral director. Fire department personnel should work with the funeral director in the best interest of the firefighter's family.

#### IV. PRE-INCIDENT PLANNING

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

IV.B. Personnel Information – Emergency contact information must be maintained locally and be readily accessible in case of a LODD event.

IV.C. Photographs – Individual photographs shall be maintained by the department. The photos may be needed for immediate notification after an incident. After a line-of-duty incident, there will be requests for photos from the media and other sources.

IV.D. Support – As will be explained later, the Survivor Action Officer plays a major role in overseeing notifications, family support, and funeral arrangements. This individual obtains a current resource list of:

V.D.1. Buglers, Pipers

V.D.2. Vocal and instrumental performers

V.D.3. Discounted Hotels/Lodging

IV.E. Funeral Directors – The Survivor Action Officer should contact and provide local funeral directors a copy of the department’s funeral procedures. This will allow them to understand local protocols before a LODD occurs.

IV.F. Ceremonial Clothing and Equipment – The Survivor Action officer should ensure that the following items are available for use during fire department funerals:

IV.F.1. Badge and name tag presentation frame

IV.F.2. An extra badge for each rank in the department as well as the name of the source for obtaining a duplicate nametag on an emergency basis.

IV.F.3. American Flag

IV.F.4. White gloves in sufficient number for the Honor Guard and eight (8) pall bearers.

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

IV.G.1. Survivor Action Officer

IV.G.2. Notification Officer

IV.G.3. Family Liaison Officer

IV.G.4. Hospital Liaison Officer

IV.G.5. Funeral or Memorial Service Officer

IV.G.6. Procession Officer

IV.G.7. Service Officer

IV.G.8. Final Committal Officer

IV.G.9. Honor Guard and Color Guard Coordinator – This individual shall constantly have an updated list of available members.

Anyone who serves as a Survivor Action Officer, Family Liaison, Hospital Liaison, Notification Officer, or Benefits Officer should attend “Taking Care Of Our Own” training at the NFFF located on the NFA Campus. In addition, the Survivor Action Officer should ensure an annual review is periodically conducted to ensure all individuals are familiar with their duties.

## V. FUNERAL TYPES

V.A. Introduction - The death of a firefighter may occur under a variety of circumstances. Based on the circumstances, the department should provide appropriate services from the planning of the funeral through the survivor follow-up process. To ensure all fallen firefighters are honored in a consistent manner, the AFCA recommends the following policy regarding the types of services that could be provided.

V.B. Definitions



V.B.1. Line-of-duty death: A death of an active member of the department from a non-traumatic or traumatic injury in the line of duty.

VI.B.1.a. Job-related traumatic death: A blow to the body by an outside force, e.g., crushing injuries suffered in a building collapse, apparatus accident or fall. Burns, smoke inhalation and such climatic injuries as heatstroke or frostbite are considered traumatic injuries.

VI.B.1.b. Job-related non-traumatic death: A non-traumatic illness that is strongly believed or has been proven to be attributable to the job. Examples are stress, heart attacks, strokes, and diseases.

V.B.2. Active member: A full-time member or volunteer member serving in an active capacity.

V.B.3. Inactive member: A retired or former member of the department.

V.B.4. Affiliate member: An individual who has served in some capacity with the department such as dispatcher, etc.

V.B.5. Non-job-related death: Deaths, natural and traumatic, that are not related to fire or emergency medical service duty.

#### V.C. Types of Services

V.C.1. Level One: A line-of-duty or job-related death of an active member.

V.C.2. Level Two: A non-job-related death of an active member. This may include an inactive member whose death has stemmed from an injury or illness sustained during active duty.

V.C.3. Level Three: A non-job-related death of an inactive, retired, affiliate member or any other person as deemed necessary by the fire chief.

### VI. FUNERAL OR MEMORIAL SERVICE PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

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

VI.A.1. In cases where the family wishes to have no fire department involvement the department may choose to honor the department member in one of the following ways:

## VI.A.1.a. Fire Department Religious Service

## VI.A.1.b. Fire Department Memorial Service

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

Involvement	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
American Flag (* = if Veteran)	Yes	Yes*	Yes*
Badge Shrouding	Optional	No	No
Bag Pipes/Bugler	Optional	Optional	No
Bell Service (Last Alarm Service)	Optional	No	No
Burial in Uniform	Optional	Optional	Optional
Closed Casket	Optional	Optional	Optional
Color Guard	Optional	No	No
Crossed Aerial Ladders	Optional	No	No
Eulogy	Optional	Optional	No
Family Liaison Officer	Optional	Optional	Optional
Fire Department Chaplain	Optional	Optional	Optional
Flags at Half-Staff	Optional	No	No
Flag Presentation (** = Military if Veteran)	Yes	No**	No**
Formations	Optional	No	No
Honor Guard	Optional	Optional	Optional
Initial Family Support	Optional	Optional	Optional
Meals	Optional	No	No
Memorial Fund	Optional	Optional	Optional
Pallbearers (Departmental)	Optional	Optional	Optional
Pallbearers (Family/Friends)	Optional	Optional	Optional
Presentation of Fire Department Badge	Optional	No	No
Procession			
--Fire Engine Escort	Optional	Optional	Optional
--Fire Engine Caisson	Optional	No	No
--Hearse	Optional	Optional	Optional
--Flower Car	Optional	No	No
--Parade with Visiting Apparatus	Optional	No	No
Readings			
--Chaplains	Optional	Optional	Optional
--Specific Person	Optional	Optional	Optional
Static Equipment Display	Optional	Optional	No
Station Bunting (*Family will decide what station)	Optional	Optional	Optional*
Taps	Optional	Optional	Optional
Transportation	Optional	No	No
Vehicle Bunting (day of funeral for procession)	Optional	Optional	No
Walkthrough	Optional	Optional	Optional

## VII. ANALYSIS

VII.A. The analysis of a firefighter line-of-duty death is one of the most difficult, yet important activities that can be conducted by a fire department. It is an essential process intended to improve safety in the fire fighting profession.

VII.B. The purpose of this phase is to ensure that the analysis is a methodical effort to collect, analyze, and report the facts in an accurate unbiased manner.

VII.C. It is important to understand that the goal of an analysis is not to blame, but rather identify deficiencies in policy, procedure and other actions and make corrective recommendations. Accusation of negligent acts and determinations of personal responsibility or liability are beyond the scope of this fact-finding report. Simply said, the goal of the analysis is to determine:

VII.C.1. What happened?

VII.C.2. Why did it happen?

VII.C.3. What, if anything, can be done to reduce the risk of a recurrence.

VII.D. However, it should be understood that the report would be made available to other parties in conjunction with the Arizona Public Records Law. Accusation of negligent acts or other personal responsibility may be subject to question from other sources.

## INITIAL ACTIONS PHASE

I. PURPOSE - This phase describes the actions to be taken immediately following a LODD. Emphasis during this phase is placed upon initial notifications and securing possible evidence.

II. ACTIVATION - Immediately following a LODD, the incident commander shall contact Fire Alarm. This should be done via phone whenever possible. In the case where the lack of phone service prohibits its use, a radio may be used to announce a "Departmental Injury" or "Departmental Death". Names shall not be announced on the radio. Next, Fire Alarm shall notify the Chief of the Department, and the appropriate notification group. Upon authorization of the Chief of the Department Fire Alarm shall activate the "Initial Actions Phase" of this policy.

## III. INITIAL ACTION PHASE REPONSIBILITIES

### INCIDENT COMMANDER

- Notify Fire Alarm via phone. In cases where the lack of phone service prohibits it use, a radio may be used to announce a "Departmental Injury or Death". Names shall not be announced on the radio.

- Preserve the Scene. Since it may be difficult to instantly recognize which factors will be

important, almost everything must be considered evidence. The incident commander should coordinate with Fire Investigation Personnel on the scene to preserve evidence. Rural Metro will notify and call in all off duty investigation division members to work with local law enforcement's fire investigations team in the event the fatality happens at a fire scene. Although members of the analysis team will collect and maintain evidence, the Incident Commander must ensure it is kept in place. If it cannot be kept in place, it is to be secured for the Analysis Team. Examples of physical evidence include:

- . Location and position of dead person(s)
  - . Position of hose lines
  - . Location and position of apparatus
  - . Location of command post
  - . Location of tools and equipment
  - . Location/position of pieces broken off from equipment or tools
  - . Location/position of windows, doors, and ventilation openings
  - . Area of debris (roof/floor collapse)
  - . Incident Management Structure at time of incident
  - . Incident Commander and location at time of incident
  - . Adverse environmental conditions (night, wind, rain, etc.)
  - . Protective Clothing and Equipment
- Ensure that all SCBA and PPE are tagged and secured (noting bottle pressure and ensuring that bottle is not turned on/off).
  - Obtain turnout gear bags
  - Request over pack drum(s)
- . Major features of rooms, including furniture
  - . Scratches, gouges, dents, or breakage related to fire fighter activity
  - . Any other items that appear significant
  - . Building Documents, including past inspections
  - . In case of injury, have Paramedics draw blood for future toxicology reports.
  - . Assign an individual to assist family members (until the On-scene Departmental Family Liaison arrives) that may come to the scene.

### FIRE ALARM

- . Dispatch an additional Chief Officer
- . Notify the Fire Chief and, upon authorization activate the "Initial Actions Phase."

. Activate “Initial Actions Phase” by notifying the following personnel. (Note, a page is not sufficient, individuals must be prompted to contact Fire Alarm so it can be confirmed that they have received their notification).

- All Deputy / Assistant Chiefs
- All Division Chiefs
- Public Information Officer
- Survivor Action Officer
- CISM Team Leader
- Notification Officer (As directed by the Survivor Action Officer)
- Duty Safety Officer (if not already on location)
- Off Duty Safety Officers to Maintain Coverage
- Duty Fire Marshal (Investigation)

#### FIRE CHIEF

- . Notify County, City or Town Executive
- . Notify County, City, Town or Fire Board Chairperson
- . Notify Chief Administrative Officer
- . Notify Union President
- . Appoint a Survivor Action Officer

#### PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

- . Gather Information
- . Organize Public Information Staff
- . Keep Other department members informed
- . Dispel Rumors
- . Refer to Appendix A (Notifications) for further information

#### CISM TEAM LEADER

. Begin assessment by gathering information from the Public Information Officer, appropriate Duty Chief, Fire Communications Supervisor and on scene Incident Commander.

. When appropriate request assistance from outside CISM resources.

. Apply the appropriate CISM Strategies and Services with primary focus on the following groups:

- On Scene Personnel
- On Scene Command Staff
- Fire Alarm Personnel
- Other on Scene Response Agencies

- Notification Team
- Survivor Action Officer
- Hospital Liaison
- Departmental PIO Personnel
- Appropriate Off Duty Personnel
- Family/Friends and support networks of injured or deceased
- Senior Command Staff

. Consult/assist as needed with notification team.

. Assist Department where appropriate with the mitigation of the incident, potential impact of loss or injury and the eminent moralization of a department member.

. Develop a CISM action plan for the following phases:

- First 24 hours
- Day 2 through the Funeral
- After the Funeral

#### LIAISON OFFICER

. Establish administrative support (Leave, clerical assistance, vehicles, phones, pagers, etc....).

. Serve as a Liaison for various county, city, town and/or outside agencies. Contacts should be made as necessary according to the situation. Examples of some agencies/organizations that may become involved include:

- Risk Management - Risk Management should be notified promptly after a LODD.
- Medical Examiner - To conduct autopsy as required by the USFA to ensure compliance with Public Safety Officer Benefits Program.
- OSHA (602-542-5795) - Must be notified (within 8 hours) in the event of a death. They may conduct an independent analysis.
- Contact the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation as needed for assistance. (301- 447-1365).
- NIOSH (800-356-4674) - The Department may request an Investigation and/or NIOSH may elect to investigate the incident.
- DPS- DPS may have interest in incidents where vehicle design or maintenance defects may have been a factor. The DPS has investigative authority and the analysis team shall cooperate with them.

- NTSB (202-314-6000) - Required by law to investigate aircraft incidents, highway accidents at railroad crossings, railroad accidents, pipeline accidents, major marine casualties. Any NTSB employee may do whatever is necessary for a proper investigation.
- USFA (800-561-3356) [daytime only]- If requested, the USFA has the ability to dispatch a contracted investigator to assist with the analysis.
- NFPA (617-770-3000) - Has no investigative or enforcement powers and participates in investigations only at the invitation or with the approval of the Chief of the Department.
- IAFF (202-737-8484) - Can help coordinate many agencies if necessary.
- Other - It will not be unusual for a LODD to become the focus or multiple official and unofficial investigations in addition to those mentioned above. Coordination of these individuals is essential.

#### SURVIVOR ACTION OFFICER

- . Secure Emergency Notification Information for individual.
- . Assign a Notification Officer to ensure prompt notification of the Family.
- . Appoint an on-scene Family Liaison Officer (if-needed).
- . Appoint a Hospital Liaison Officer.
- . Establish an action plan for the first 24 hours.

#### NOTIFICATION OFFICER

- . Ensure Prompt notification based upon guidance in Appendix A (Notifications).
- . Obtain accurate up to date information from the following sources:
  - Fire Alarm Supervisor
  - PIO
  - Duty Chief
  - Incident Commander
  - Deceased Member's Station Officer
  - Deceased Member's Shift Members
  - Other relevant departmental members
- . Operation Status

- Current Status
- Current Strategic Objectives
- Identified or foreseen Challenges
- Potential or unforeseen Challenges

. Individual(s)

- Accurate contact and Family Information
  - Deceased Members Personal Information Packet
  - Emergency Contact Form
  - If appropriate, identify any Religious and Cultural sensitivities
  - Time and Type of Incident
  - Tactical Assignment at time of death
  - Strategic Objective at time of death
  - Mechanism or Nature of death
  - Relevant action or situational factors at time of death
  - Current disposition of deceased

. Assemble Notification Team

- Share Information with Notification Team
- Establish Notification facts and theme
- Establish Notification Plan
- Establish Roles
- Establish/plan type of transportation
- Request EMS Standby if appropriate
- Coordinate with PIO and Survivor Action Officer on exact timing

. Make Notification or Official Condolences utilizing the model within Appendix A (Notifications)

- In Person
- In Time
- In Pairs
- In Plain Language
- And with Compassion

. Answer any appropriate questions

. Assist with contacting the appropriate Support Systems

- Family
- Friends
- Extended Family



- Clergy
  - Others
- . Assist in problem solving any timely issues or challenges
- . Advise Family of available Departmental Support
- . Assist in identifying Family Liaison
- . Leave relevant contact numbers
- Chief of Department
  - Survivor Action Officer
  - Family Liaison
  - Chaplains
  - Appropriate Employee Representative Organization
  - Others as appropriate
- . Establish appropriate time for further contacts
- . Secure permission for follow up contacts
- . Advise and brief the following when Notification is completed
- Chief of Department
  - Survivor Action Officer
  - Duty Chief
  - PIO
  - Incident Commander
  - Appropriate Battalion Chief
  - Appropriate Station Captain
  - Appropriate Shift Members
  - Appropriate Station / Bureau Off Duty Captains and Members
- . Contact CISM Team for Post Notification Intervention if needed
- . Follow up with all contacts as appropriate
- . Follow up with entire Notification Team within 24hrs.

#### ON-SCENE FAMILY LIAISON OFFICER

- . Immediately report to the scene and provide reassurance/support to the family. Ensure that the NEEDS OF THE FAMILY come before the wishes of the department or any other officials.

. Coordinate and assist the family in making any needed emergency travel arrangements for immediate family not located in Arizona. Rural Metro will pay for spouses, parents, or children of the deceased to travel to Pima County.

\* Whenever possible, avoid having multiple liaisons assigned to the family. Early in the incident, it may be unavoidable as conditions may require a separate notification team, on-scene family liaison, hospital liaison, and a permanent family liaison may be necessary. However, as soon as possible, it is important to assign a permanent family liaison who will serve as their sole contact throughout the event.

### HOSPITAL LIAISON OFFICER

. Have a member of the department drive the family to the hospital and stay for as long as possible.

. Work with the hospital staff to secure a private room where the family can gather. This should be separate from the general waiting area, if possible.

. Assist the family as a liaison in dealing with the hospital staff.

. Provide assistance to the family in making calls to relatives and close friends.

. Answer incoming calls or get messages to the family at the hospital.

. In cases of extended hospitalization, offer to assist with day to day tasks such as home maintenance, arranging child care, or bringing meals and other necessities to the family.

. If a firefighter is taken to a specialty hospital outside the local area, the department should consider asking the local department to assist in supporting the family while the Firefighter remains hospitalized.

. Encourage the family to spend time with the injured firefighter, regardless of the type of injury.

. If a firefighter is badly burned or disfigured, help prepare the family for what they will see. (Always allow the family to make the decision).

. Have someone available to drive the family home from the hospital. Offer to continue to help with continuing visits as much as resources allow.

. Keep Survivor Action Officer apprised of situation and needs until the assignment of a Family Liaison Officer.

### HEALTH/SAFETY DIVISION

. Respond to scene and assist with preserving evidence and scene documentation.

- . Establish Analysis Team per the Departmental LODD/Serious Injury Procedures

#### DUTY CHIEF

- . Establish location to take written statements if they cannot be done at the scene.
- . Coordinate location for CISM Services (if needed).
- . Coordinate Staffing Changes as may be necessary.

#### DUTY SAFETY OFFICER

- . Respond to scene, assist w/stabilization
- . Assist with preserving evidence and scene documentation

#### OFF DUTY SAFETY OFFICERS

- . Maintain coverage

#### FIRE MARSHAL - FIRE INVESTIGATION

- . Supervise Photography and Initial Documentation by Deputy Fire Marshal (Investigation) Personnel.
- . Liaison with appropriate Law Enforcement Agencies

#### DUTY FIRE INVESTIGATOR

- . Photography and Documentation
- . Evidence collection
- . Law Enforcement (Crime Lab)

#### FIRE ALARM SUPERVISOR

- . Place Tapes On-Hold

#### FIRE ALARM – (Chief Officer Responsibility)

- . Make recording of call receipt and all radio transmissions.
- . Make Transcription of all radio transmissions, including times.

## Appendix A

### I. NOTIFICATION OF SURVIVORS

I.A. Death notification is acknowledged to be one of the most difficult tasks faced by Fire Department and Law Enforcement Officials, because learning of the death of a loved one often is the most traumatic event in a person's life.

I.B. Notification is an exceedingly important duty. Besides being sensitive, notifiers have to be prepared in case a survivor goes into shock and requires emergency medical treatment. Place a Fire Department ALS Rescue nearby if possible, to care for family in case of a medical emergency.

I.C. Notifiers also can provide very important information to survivors, including details about how the deaths occurred. They can volunteer to notify others and provide other invaluable support.

I.D. Notification should be done in person, in time, in teams whenever possible, in plain language, and with compassion.

I.E. Notify immediate family members in person before the release of any information. If members live out of the area, the department shall make every attempt to make this notification in person. If unable to make notification in person, contact the fire or police department nearest the family, and arrange for a uniformed officer, preferably from the fire department, and accompanying local chaplain, to contact the family in person.

I.F. No less than two members of the department should make the notification. It is important to note that a team of three (3) or four (4) personnel should be established to make these types of notifications. In addition to two Senior Level Department Officials, other personnel such as: clergy/chaplain, a co-worker, an individual from IAFF Local 4944 or an individual(s) listed on the employee's/member's emergency notification form should be considered in the make-up of this notification team. However, notification should not be delayed if designated department members or team members are not readily available.

I.G. It is essential that notification of the family be done correctly. The five (5) principles of notification are as follows:

#### I.G.1. In Person

I.G.1.a. Immediately find the firefighter's emergency contact information to know who needs to be notified in person. Usually, the spouse (or unmarried partner) and the parents of the firefighter should be the first priority.

I.G.1.b. Always do the notification in person, never by phone.

### I.G.2. In Time and with Certainty

I.G.2.a. Before making notification, have positive identification of the deceased firefighter. Obviously, errors in identity can cause extreme trauma.

I.G.2.b. Never discuss a fatality over the radio. This may result in a family member receiving the news before you can notify them in person.

I.G.2.c. Quickly gather as much information about the incident as possible before making the notification. Survivors will likely have questions.

I.G.2.d. Get to the survivors quickly. Don't let the media notify them first.

I.G.2.e. Notify the Survivor Action Officer when family notification is complete.

### I.G.3. As a Team

I.G.3.a. Have two people present to make the notification. Survivors may experience severe emotional or physical reactions when they learn of the death.

I.G.3.b. Use the employee's emergency contact information to identify any individual or another member of the department to accompany the department's representative. It is helpful to have the department chaplain or a friend of the firefighter's family, too.

I.G.3.c. Take two vehicles, if possible. This will allow one of you to take the survivor to the hospital, if necessary, while the second person stays with the survivors.

I.G.3.d. Before you arrive, decide who will speak and what that person will say.

### I.G.4. In Plain Language

I.G.4.a. Clearly identify yourself and present identification and ask to come in.

I.G.4.b. Notification should take place in a private setting.

I.G.4.c. If you don't know the family member, make sure you are talking to the right person.

I.G.4.d. Begin with "I have very bad news," or "I'm so sorry to have to tell you this."

I.G.4.e. Use the words "died" and "dead" rather than terms such as "passed away" so the message is absolutely clear. Speak slowly. Get to the point quickly.

I.G.4.f. Calmly answer the survivor's questions. It is fine to say, "I don't know" if you don't.

I.G.4.g. Use his or her name when referring to the firefighter, rather than saying "the body."

#### I.G.5. With Compassion

I.G.5.a. Allow survivors to express emotions. Do not try to talk them out of their grief.

I.G.5.b. Accept your own emotions. Its ok if you cry during notification, but stay calm.

I.G.5.c. Never leave immediately after making a notification. Offer to help the survivor call friends or family members. Do not leave before someone else arrives.

I.G.5.d. Tell the family they will receive the deceased's personal items later. Most survivors need some time before they feel able to deal with these items.

I.G.5.e. Provide the survivor with the opportunity to see the deceased firefighter, even if the body is badly disfigured. Offer to transport the family to where the firefighter is, and prepare them for what they will see.

I.G.5.f. Before leaving, write down important information, including the name and phone numbers of the department personnel who will work with the family.

I.G.5.g. Have one member of the department stay with the family, unless the family declines.

I.G.5.h. If needed, drive family members to the hospital in a department vehicle and get them to the proper area. If the family wants to drive their own car, have a member of the department accompany them, driving them if that is desired.

I.G.5.i. If the notification is to be made at an individual's place of employment the following should be accomplished prior to your arrival:

- (1) Call ahead and let the manager or business owner know that you are enroute to pick-up one of their employees and deliver some bad news regarding the employee's family member.

- (2) Ask them to prepare a quiet/private space where you can speak with the injured/deceased member's: parent, spouse, sibling, or significant other.
- (3) Ask them not to communicate your arrival to the employee, and inform them that the employee may not be returning to work for a few days.
- (4) Allow the employee time to react
- (5) Allow the survivor to determine what he/she wishes to tell the manager or supervisor regarding the death.
- (6) Offer to inform the manager/supervisor of the death if the survivor so desires.
- (7) Transport the survivor to an appropriate location: home, hospital, or morgue.

I.G.5.j. If notification is to be made in the Hospital Setting:

- (1) Utilize same procedure for notification as above (workplace).
- (2) Have doctor available to answer any medical questions the survivor may have.
- (3) Do not leave survivors alone.
- (4) Allow the survivor to view or spend time with the body.

I.G.6. Follow Up

I.G.6.a. Always leave a name and phone number with survivors.

I.G.6.b. Advise family that a press release will announce the death. They may want to notify other members of their family to avoid them hearing it from the news.

I.G.6.c. Plan to make a follow-up contact with the survivor the next day.

- (1) If the death occurred in another county or state, leave the name and phone number of a contact person at that location.
- (2) Most survivors are confused and some might feel abandoned after the initial notification. Many will want clarifications or may need more direction on arrangements that are available.

(3) Following up can be the last step in completing a “person-centered” and sensitive death notification that is truly helpful to survivors.

I.G.6.d. The notification team should be sure they are clear on any follow-up assignments they need to carry out.

II. NOTIFYING MEMBERS OF THE DEPARTMENT - Once the family has been notified, members of the department should learn of the incident from the department before they hear it through the media. The Public Information Officer shall perform this portion of the notification process. It should be done as follows:

II.A. A summary of all known facts about the incident and the deceased and critically injured should be prepared.

II.B. Confirm the correct spelling of the name, age, and next of kin.

II.C. Prepare a memo to all members of the department that includes confirmed information.

II.D. When possible, information should be passed to the individual’s shift first. They should notify the individual’s close friends within the fire department.

II.E. A Special Informational Broadcast should be initiated via Fire Communications announcing the Death and refer all personnel to their work email for more information regarding the announcement.

II.F. This memo should also direct all Station Officers to contact all off-duty personnel and inform them of the incident.

II.G. The Public Information Officer shall also send out additional memos as necessary to keep all members informed of funeral arrangements and memorial services.

III. NOTIFYING OTHERS - Other members of the community need to be notified after the family and members of the department. Specific contacts are included on the attached assignment check sheets.

IV. WORKING WITH THE MEDIA - The Public Information Officer shall coordinate with the Notification Officer to ensure notification of the family before giving any information to the media. Other procedures to follow include:

IV.A. Do not give/release personal information to the media until confirmation that the family notification has occurred. Even if the media is on the scene.

IV.A.1. Inform other officials/members on the scene not to provide information.



IV.B. Only release basic information gathered on the incident scene regarding the deceased and/or critically injured.

IV.C. Prepare and clear a written statement for the Chief of the Department to release.

IV.D. Set up a media briefing, either at the hospital or other location.

IV.D.1. The Chief of the Department should deliver this message if possible.

V. Designate a department backup to handle coverage of the incident if it is still ongoing so the primary PIO can concentrate on handling information on the fatality.

## FIRST 24 HOURS

I. PURPOSE – During this phase, secondary notifications are made, a family support team is established, departmental support efforts begin, an analysis team is assembled and the needs of the media are met.

### I. FIRST 24 HOURS RESPONSIBILITIES

#### FIRE CHIEF

- . Oversee the organization of the entire effort
- . Notify personnel via on duty officer
- . Continue to monitor overall activities

#### PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

. Formulate an official press release and distribute to the following:

- o All Media Outlets
- o County, City, Town and/or Fire Board Executive's Office
- o Departmental Web Site
- o Officials from other local government offices
- o Other fire and police departments
- o Other Fire Service information networks such as:
  - o Departmental Voicemail System
  - o IAFC
  - o IAFF
  - o AFCA
  - o Firefighterclosecalls.com
  - o Firehouse.com

- Fe.pennet.com (Fire Engineering)

. Flags at Rural Metro Pima County fire stations will be lowered to half-staff. For rules see <http://www.senate.gov/reference/resources/pdf/RL30243.pdf>

### CISM

- . Continue CISM Assessment and update CISM Action Plan as appropriate.
- . Follow-up on previous days contacts as appropriate.
- . Continue Departmental support with appropriate CISM Services.
- . Referral of impacted individual(s)/group(s) that may request/need professional assistance.
- . Contact/meet with the leaders of the Departmental representative groups.
- . Advise and consult with Departmental Wellness resources concerning Departmental Line of Duty Deaths/Serious injuries and its potential impact on departmental members and the organization:
  - Employee Assistance Program
  - Local Mental Health Resources
  - Surrounding CISM Resources
  - Departmental Chaplains
  - Local Clergy
  - Other identified resources
- . If requested by the Survivor Action Officer, Family Liaison, or a Family Member, assist in the request of finding appropriate resources for the family and or their Support Networks that specialize in Grief Loss and its impact. (The National Fallen Firefighters Foundation can assist with this.)

### SURVIVOR ACTION OFFICER

- . Establish Liaison as follows:
  - Chaplin/Clergy
  - President, IAFF Local 4944
- . Appoint a Family Liaison
- . In conjunction with the Department's Notification Officer, assure that next-of-kin notification has been properly accomplished.

- . Serve as a key contact person for outside agencies, news media, and other fire departments in relation to the death and subsequent ceremonies. A department Public Information Officer may handle this duty.
- . Ensure accessibility to the family for the duration of the funeral process.
- . Prepare the family for the decision making process that will be occurring over the next day or so regarding the funeral arrangements.
- . Badge Shrouding – The shroud should appear on badges at the time of notification and the death and should remain on the badge until after the funeral and final committal. For line-of-duty deaths, the badge shrouds will remain in place for a 30-day mourning period. To shroud a badge, place a piece of black material horizontally around the badge at its midpoint. If the chaplain's badge contains a cross, a crescent, tablets, or the Star of David, and the chaplain's badge remains uncovered.
- . Establish an action plan for day 2 through the funeral.

#### FAMILY LIAISON OFFICER

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

- o Be readily available with a fire department vehicle, pager, and portable radio for the entire funeral process.
- o Coordinate with On-scene Family Liaison if one was established.
- o Appoint assistants as necessary.
- o Immediately report to the deceased residence or that of the next of kin, or to the medical facility or morgue, and provide reassurance and support to the family. Ensure that the NEEDS OF THE FAMILY come before the wishes of the department or any other officials.
- o Be available to the family on a 24-hour basis to provide assistance during the funeral and funeral-related activities.
- o Be constantly alert for ways to help the family of a fallen firefighter to cope with the tragedy. Immediately relay any special needs to the Survivor Action Officer to obtain the resources to meet those needs.

#### HOSPITAL LIAISON OFFICER

- . Continue to support family at the Hospital

#### LIAISON OFFICER

- . Contact the National Fallen Firefighters foundation's Chief-to-Chief Network as needed for assistance. (301- 447-1365) or [www.firehero.org](http://www.firehero.org)
- . Coordinate with PIO as various agencies arrive to provide appropriate briefings.

### BENEFITS OFFICER

. Direct Human Resources to create and maintain a case file for the deceased firefighter for all information received or sent related to the LODD available for all team members. Documents to be maintained included, but are not limited to, communications with survivors and other agencies.

. Direct Human Resources to provide its file of current forms from various agencies for survivors and department use such as reporting forms, benefit forms, etc. These forms will be reviewed annually by the fire chief and Benefits Officer.

. Notify Arizona State Worker's Compensation Fund.

. Notify the Public Safety Officer's Benefit Program Office (1-800-744-6513).

. Provide accurate, up to date information including these items:

- . Fire Department name and address
- . Benefit Officer's name
- . Phone numbers for the department and the Benefit Officer
- . A fax number or mailing address for PSOB can send the Death Benefits Questionnaire
- . Deceased firefighter's name
- . Date of the incident and death
- . A brief description of the incident.

. Note – relay the information very carefully and relay only what you know. Do not speculate on the cause of death!

. Note – If you need to notify PSOB on an evening or a weekend, leave a message. Be sure to include all of the above information.

. Follow up additional responsibilities regarding the PSOB claims in Day 2 through the Funeral.

. Notify the 100 Club (602-485-0100)

### ANALYSIS TEAM LEADER

. Continues to oversee the completion of an Analysis process.

### DAY 2 THROUGH THE FUNERAL

I. PURPOSE – During this phase, designated personnel assist the family in planning the funeral as they choose, departmental personnel is kept informed about details, and family support team assists the family with miscellaneous tasks as desired. Support is provided to fire department members as needed.

## II. RESPONSIBILITIES

### FIRE CHIEF

. Continue to monitor overall activities.

### PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

. Communicate to Department members funeral arrangements via other agency PIO's, department web site, CAD memo's, and voice mail system.

. Provide information to media outlets (if requested) regarding arrangements of Fallen Firefighter(s), Processions, etc., as well as, inform/advise fill in companies from other departments.

. Provide access to media for funeral/internment services.

. Flags to remain at half-staff (level 1 only) thru sunset the day of the final committal.

### CISM

. Continue CISM Assessment and update CISM Action Plan as appropriate.

. Continue Follow-up contacts as appropriate.

. Referral of impacted individuals/groups that may request/need professional assistance.

. Continue contact with Departmental Wellness resources.

. Continue appropriate CISM Strategies and Services with focus on the mitigation of the Incident, potential impact of Loss or injury and the eminent memorializing of a Departmental Member.

. Development of an Action Plan for the "After Funeral Phase"

### SURVIVOR ACTION OFFICER

. As a direct representative of the Fire Chief, the Survivor Action Officer should receive the full cooperation of the entire fire department. The Survivor Action Officer will appoint assistants and delegate responsibilities as required to successfully complete all assigned duties.

- . Make appropriate follow-up contacts when the funeral arrangements and schedules have been determined.
- . Work with the Family Liaison Officer to determine the desired method of collecting the deceased firefighter's personal items from the fire station.
- . Conduct a coordination meeting with the key personnel as soon as possible so that everyone understands the family's wishes regarding options chosen for the funeral ceremony. Once the funeral procedures are established, instruct all key personnel to make the appropriate contacts and setting a time and date for a final coordination meeting.
- . Conduct a final coordination meeting with key personnel to:
  - o Establish schedule and timetables
  - o Identify times and places for group gatherings as required by the ceremonies.
  - o Contact all appropriate individuals and agencies with the schedule, meeting places, and special instruction.
- . After obtaining family approval coordinate/facilitate through the Survivor Action Officer and Liaison Officer to make arrangements for a post-funeral reception and a facility to handle a large group of people. ( IAFF Local 4944 can be contacted to sponsor this event).
- . Contact neighboring fire departments and arrange for mutual aid stand-in fire companies during the funeral.
- . Badge Shrouding – The shroud should appear on badges at the time of notification and the death and should remain on the badge until after the funeral and final committal. For line-of-duty deaths, the badge shrouds will remain in place for a 30-day mourning period. To shroud a badge, place a piece of black material horizontally around the badge at its midpoint. If the chaplain's badge contains a cross, a crescent, tablets, or the Star of David the chaplain's badge remains uncovered.
- . Establish Action Plan for "After the Funeral."

#### FAMILY LIAISON OFFICER

- . Be readily available with a fire department vehicle, pager, and portable radio for the entire funeral process.
- . Be prepared under direction of or accompanied by Survivor Action Officer to discuss all aspects of the funeral a process and relay to the Fire Chief the family's wishes on the level of the department's involvement in the funeral process (dependent upon the type of death). The worksheets in Appendix E should be utilized to help explain the options that are available for the particular type (level) of funeral. These considerations include:

- What the department can offer in a way of assistance based on the type of death.
- Churches with seating capacities large enough to accommodate projected attendance at the funeral. Any alternative churches will need to agree that the family minister or fire department chaplain may officiate at the service.
- Fire department funeral ceremonial options (i.e. presenting the flag, playing of Taps, Last Alarm, the Ladder Archway, etc)
- Proper recognition for the family and friends during the funeral and funeral procession.
- Ask the family to select six or eight primary pallbearers and the optional honorary pallbearers. Make suggestions only if the family asks for some.
- Assist the family in determining:
  - The type of final committal
  - The funeral home to use
  - The clergy to use
  - The place of final committal

-Whether to bury the deceased in a fire department uniform and, if so, how to obtain one.

-Alternate clothes from the family for burial and delivering them to the funeral director

-A photograph of the deceased and delivering it to the funeral director

-Length of the wake and a tentative schedule

. The length of the funeral service to include (dependent on type of death)

. Any other special considerations

. Be available to the family on a 24-hour basis to assist in any way necessary.

- Advise them that a Benefits Officer will be appointed to assist with the many different benefits that they may be eligible for, including:
  - Fire department benefits due to surviving beneficiaries
  - Veterans Administration spouse and children's benefits and burial benefits
  - Social Security Benefits
  - Federal Public Safety Officer's Benefits for spouse and other survivors
  - Hometown Heroes Benefits for spouse and other survivors.
  - State benefits for survivors of fallen firefighters
  - Educational assistance and scholarship programs for spouses and children
  - Life and health insurance plans (personal and department) including funeral benefits.
  - Final paycheck, including sick leave, vacation payoff, and W-2 forms.
  - Deferred compensation account

. Be constantly alert for ways to help the family of a fallen firefighter to cope with the tragedy. Immediately relay any special needs to the Survivor Action Officer to obtain the resources to meet those needs.

. If the family chooses to bury the deceased firefighter in the departmental uniform, deliver the uniform to the Funeral Officer. If the family selects non-departmental clothing, the Funeral Officer should offer to deliver this as well.

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

### FUNERAL OFFICER

. Coordinate with the Family Liaison Officer and the funeral director to insure that the funeral wishes of the deceased firefighter's family are carried out.

. Attend all meetings called by the Survivor Action Officer to determine the following:

- The schedule of events and the length of the funeral service
- Whether fire department vehicles will serve as a caisson or flower carrier. If they are not used, make alternative arrangements with the funeral director.
- Ensure that Class "A" uniforms are mandated for all Departmental Personnel

. Coordinate with the Family Liaison Officer and secure an ambulance for stand-by.

. Coordinate with Honor Guard members to establish an Honor Guard schedule at the funeral home and church.

. Coordinate with the Family Liaison Officer to determine if there will be fire department pallbearers.

. Obtain white gloves for all fire department pallbearers.

. Coordinate with the departments involved and with the funeral director a formal walk through of uniformed personnel. This includes seating arrangements.

. Work with the fire department chaplain or clergy member designated by the family to coordinate any prayer services to be conducted at the funeral home and forward this information to the Survival Action Officer.

. Coordinate with the Family Liaison Officer on special readings or eulogies. If Fire Department is to provide a eulogy, refer to Appendix B (Other Service Protocols).

. Develop a schedule for uniformed personnel to follow the day of the funeral at the funeral site. This includes:

- Arrival time for uniformed personnel and specific instructions where to gather
- Briefing and practice of formations that will be present when the casket is removed.



- Briefing on proper protocols for entering and leaving the funeral site.

. Coordinate vehicle staging with the procession officer, including arrangements for fire department vehicles. Ensure the availability of sufficient personnel to properly direct and stage incoming apparatus and vehicles.

. Obtain from the Family Liaison Officer the uniform or other clothing that the deceased will wear during viewing and deliver it to the funeral director.

### FUNERAL SERVICE OFFICER

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

- Attend coordination meetings and obtain the following information from the Survivor Action Officer and Family Liaison Officer:
  - Schedule of events
  - Location of the service
  - Clergy involved, including the fire department chaplain
  - Readings and readers
  - Type and length of service
  - Requested ceremonial items: .
  - Badge presentation
  - Special readings
  - Special eulogies
  - Music and musicians
  - Information on the deceased firefighter, both professional and personal. (Give this information to the person delivering the tribute or eulogy).

. The following personnel are normally needed to conduct the ceremonial portion of the funeral:

- A Chief or Officer in Charge
- Eight pallbearers (single death)
- A Color Guard of four firefighters and one team leader
- A bugler and piper, pipe band or drummer.

. Due to the serious nature of pallbearer and color/honor guard duties, a practice session should be held the day before the funeral. If this is not possible, it is imperative that these individuals report to the funeral home several hours before beginning of the service for a protocol briefing and practice. The funeral director will give instructions on how to handle the casket. The participants must know what is expected of them, and they must be able to perform their tasks with minimal supervision.

. Contact the Procession Officer and coordinate vehicle staging at the service location.

. Make seating arrangements for those attending the service. In addition to family members, provide dedicated seating for:

- Pallbearers
- Honor Guard
- Uniformed personnel
- Dignitaries

. Determine the formations to be used and coordinate them during the arrival and removal of the casket from the location of the service. Review military commands for the formations and issue them when appropriate:

- Honor Guard:
  - Two Honor Guard members should be posted at the casket. During viewing hours, they should be posted at the head and at the foot.
  - There should be a minimum of five (5) Honor Guard members for each set of viewing hours.
  - Honor Guard members should rotate at twenty (20) minute intervals. Relief guards should march up together. Posted guards should come to attention and smartly make the transfer and then march off together.
  - Posted Honor Guard should assume the position of parade rest.
  - American and state flags should be posted at the casket.
  - Honor Guard members should wear the appropriate Honor Guard Uniform.

. Coordinate/determine from the Family Liaison Officer if there will be fire department pallbearers.

- Pallbearers:
  - Pallbearers should wear Class A uniforms with white gloves.
  - The funeral officer, assisted by the funeral director will give instructions for removing, handling, and transporting the casket.
  - If a fire engine serves as a caisson, pallbearers should hold a practice session the day before the funeral. If this is not possible, pallbearers should report to the funeral home several hours before the beginning of the service for a protocol briefing and practice.
  - If the casket is draped with a flag to present to the next of kin, the Honor Guard will be instructed on the proper method of removing, folding, and presenting the flag (for level 2 and 3 funerals a military honor guard will complete this if the employee/member is a veteran and the family request it). The pallbearers will do a six (6) person fold and present it to the Chief of the Department; who, in turn will present it to the next of kin.
  - If the casket is not draped with a flag, the department can present a pre-folded flag to the next of kin.

- If the department engine serves as a caisson and flower vehicle, pallbearers should ride them. If engines are not used, the department will provide the pallbearers and another department vehicle for the procession.

### PROCESSIONAL OFFICER

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

. Attend all coordinating meetings to determine the following:

- Name of the funeral home
- Name of the church or other service location
- Name of the place of final committal
- Use of an engine as a caisson or a conventional hearse
- Use of an engine as a flower carrier
- Schedule of events the day of the funeral
- The logistics of the procession:
  - Honor Guard
  - Band or Pipers
  - Pallbearers

. Determine the type or procession (Fire Engine Escort, Caisson, Flower Car, Hearse)

- Fire Engine Escort – A fire department engine escorting the hearse. Note –vehicle may be bunted for level 1 and level 2 funerals.
- Caisson – A fire department engine may be appropriate to carry the casket.

. If fire department apparatus serve as a caisson and/or flower vehicle, contact the Survivor Action Officer and determine which apparatus will be used. Ensure the following preparations have been made:

- Apparatus is thoroughly cleaned and hose beds stripped.
- Hose dividers are removed from the apparatus serving as a caisson.
- The hose bed on the engine is adapted to easily facilitate casket placement and removal. This needs to be coordinated with the funeral director.
- Apparatus operators will wear full dress uniforms while driving.
- Deceased firefighter's bunker gear is placed in a riding position on the caisson with bunker boots turned backwards.

. Establish a system for staging and coordinating vehicles at all locations where funeral activities will occur.

. Coordinate the vehicle staging with appropriate key personnel (service officials, officials at the site of final committal).

. Ensure that sufficient personnel are available at all staging locations to efficiently direct and stage apparatus and vehicles. (Make sure appropriate PPE [traffic vest] are utilized).

. Coordinate with the Family Liaison Officer to determine any special circumstances affecting the procession (dependent of type of funeral). These may include:

- Passing the firefighters home, fire station or other special location.
- Special static displays of equipment and personnel at locations on the procession route.
- The use of crossed aerial ladders (Level -1 service only) at the entrance to the site of the final committal or other location. If used, contact the Survival Action Officer to obtain the necessary apparatus.
- Contact the local law enforcement authorities for assistance in working with the funeral director to:
  - Establish routes for the procession.
  - Coordinate with Police to determine traffic control needs:
    - Traffic rerouting and street closings at the funeral home and funeral site. Contact the appropriate governmental agency or department to obtain barricades if needed.
    - Traffic control at any special assembly points.
    - If necessary, post “No Parking” signs around the funeral home, funeral site and any other assembly points.
    - Direct staged vehicles as they line up for the procession(s).
    - Arrange for procession escorts

. Develop maps showing the procession route and other needed information. Maps will be handed out at the briefing at the funeral site prior to the beginning of the service and sent to attendees from out of town. Post them on the department’s web site along with times and required dress.

. Align vehicles in the procession in coordination with the funeral director (see Appendix B – (Other Service Protocols):

- Lead Escort
- Hearse or engine used as caisson
- Family vehicles
- Pallbearers (if not riding on caisson)
- Honorary pallbearers
- Honor Guard/Color Guard
- Fire Chief’s Vehicle
- Other fire department vehicles

- Local law enforcement vehicles
- Local officials vehicles
- Vehicles from other fire departments
- Vehicles from other police departments
- Vehicles of family friends and other private vehicles
- Rear escort

. If any part of the procession will involve the marching of firefighters from one point to another, the Procession Officer must coordinate with the Funeral Officer, Church Officer, or Cemetery Officer as appropriate to establish an assembly point, order of alignment, and route for the march. If marching will be done, it is desirable to at least have a drummer in the parade contingent to provide a steady cadence. Cadence should not be called verbally.

. Determine an appropriate assembly point for personnel participating in the march. Visiting fire personnel will assemble at the end point of the march (funeral home, church, cemetery, etc.).

. Basic alignment for the elements of a march are as follows:

- Apparatus caisson/hearse
- Pipe band/drummer
- Color Guard
- Fire Department members
  - Three pallbearers will march on either side of the caissons/hearse.
  - Two pallbearers will walk immediately behind the hearse. (If only six pallbearers are used, two Honor Guard members will assume this position).
  - Company Members
  - Other Department Members

. If the casket is being driven from the funeral home to the church, the following actions must be taken (refer to Appendix B – Other Service Protocols):

- Determine an assembly point several blocks from the church for department personnel and the pipe band/drummer.
- The assembly point for visiting fire departments will be at the church.
- The pallbearers board the apparatus (and other fire department vehicles).
- The apparatus, with a police escort, proceeds slowly to the meeting point with the fire department contingent.
- At that point, the procession lines up the same order as listed above.
- The pallbearers dismount and march as follows (see Appendix B – Other Service Protocols):
  - Two or three pallbearers on each side of the apparatus
  - Two pallbearers walk behind the apparatus

. When the procession arrives, the following actions should be taken (see Appendix B – Other Service Protocols):

- At the church, the pipe band, if used, assembles near the entrance.
- When marching fire department members arrive at the church they move to the side of the street opposite the church. When in place, the command “Right or Left face” is given.
- When the street is lined on both sides and all personnel are facing the center, the Color Guard begins to march towards the church, followed by the apparatus/hearse. Leave a space between the Color Guard and hearse. The honor guard OIC command, “Present arms” (hand salute).
- As the Color Guard arrives, it assembles near the front of the church.
- The apparatus moves to the front of the church and stops (shut off the engine).
- Pallbearers assemble at the rear of the apparatus, ([4] in the hosebed, [2] on tailboard, and [2] on the platform) and prepare to remove the casket.
- If used, the pipe band plays as the casket is carried to the church door. (If the chaplain or other clergy person performs a blessing at the rear of the apparatus, the pipe band waits until the pallbearers begin to move before playing.)
- In the church, the pallbearers escort the casket to the front of the church.
- Assembled fire department personnel file into the church and take positions in designated seating areas (see Appendix B – Other Service Protocols).

. Leaving the church. Following the close of the funeral service, the following ceremonies take place:

. An announcement will be made by the clergy or funeral services officer advising personnel to exit the church and or overflow areas from the rear. This is usually accomplished in the following order:

- Visiting fire service personnel
- Host fire department personnel
- City officials/dignitaries
- Civilian Personnel (friends, neighbors, acquaintances, etc.)

. Dismissing the church.

- At the funeral director’s signal, the pallbearers move to the front of the church and escort the casket to the rear.
- The church assembly OIC commands, “Detail, attention.”
- When the casket arrives at the rear of the church, the OIC commands “Present arms.”
- If used, the piper/pipe band plays.
- The pallbearers move slowly to the rear of the hearse/apparatus to load the casket.
- After loading, the pallbearer’s line up facing each other, the OIC commands “Detail, present arms,” and pallbearers give a hand salute.
- The OIC commands, “Order arms” for all personnel.
- The Color Guard captain commands, “Color Guard, dismissed.”

- The OIC commands, “Detail, dismissed” to the pallbearers.
- The Color Guard, bugler/piper, and OIC enter waiting fire department vehicles for transportation to the cemetery. (The pallbearers will ride inside on the caisson or other apparatus directly behind the caisson).
- Fire personnel and county, city and town officials attending the cemetery prepare to leave.
- The Procession Officer and assistants direct vehicles taking part in the procession to the cemetery (proper PPE). If used, bunting and or funeral flags are affixed to the apparatus.

### FINAL COMMITTAL OFFICER

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

. Schedule and coordinate the sequence of events that will take place at the final committal site. This includes coordinating any special requests received from the Survivor Action Officer or Family liaison Officer.

- Coordinate the arrangement of crossed aerial ladders and apparatus placement if appropriate for this level. Make certain this has been approved by the Survivor Action Officer.
- Develop the type of information for the uniformed personnel and their location. (Issue appropriate orders consistent with military standards).
- Ensure that the officials at the final committal site take care of all necessary items, such as:
  - Weather protection for immediate family
  - Seating for the immediate family
  - A public address system if needed

. Ensure that Honor Guard members are thoroughly familiar with folding of the flag and the Chief of the Department’s presentation of the flag to the next of kin. (Coordinate the folding/presentation with military honor guard when appropriate).

. Coordinate with the Survivor Action Officer to ensure placement of a stand-by medical unit, regardless whether anyone has a history of medical problems.

. Upon arrival at the cemetery, the following ceremonies will be conducted.

. Upon arrival, fire department personnel and Color Guard will take up positions in formation as determined by the Cemetery Officer.

. If space permits, the Color Guard will assemble at the foot of the grave.

- . The bugler will position himself away from the grave and await the command from the OIC.
- . When the caisson or hearse is in position, the pallbearers will take up positions to the rear and remove the casket.
- . The pallbearers will carry the casket, followed by the family and other guests, and place it on the grave stand.
- . As the casket begins to move, the Honor Guard OIC commands, "Detail, attention" and all fire department personnel will come to the position of attention. When the casket is placed on the grave stand, the OIC will command "Parade rest."
- . The chaplain and/or other clergy person conduct the graveside service and leads in the final prayer. NOTE: If not done as part of the funeral service, the "Last Alarm" ceremony may be conducted at this point in the graveside service. If used, the OIC will order "Present arms" prior to the ringing of the bell. The hand salute will then be held during the playing of Taps.
- . The bugler/bagpiper plays Taps.
- . At the conclusion of Taps, the salute is held while the pallbearers fold the American flag. A pallbearer will present the folded flag to the fire chief who, in turn, presents it to the family.
- . The OIC commands, "Order arms."
- . The funeral director gives words of thanks from the family and indicates the conclusion of the services.
- . Upon dismissal of the formation, announce the location of the post-funeral reception, if any. (Coordinate this with the funeral director).
- . The OIC commands, "Detail, dismissed."

#### BENEFITS OFFICER

- . Coordinate with the appropriate local officer to arrange for a final paycheck (if an employee) and the completion of any required paperwork.
- . Following your initial notification of the PSOB (See Immediate Actions), these additional responsibilities are to be completed:
  - . PSOB will fax or mail its Death Benefits Questionnaire to the department's Benefit Officer as soon as possible after receiving the call. Make certain you follow up on this.
  - . This package includes three items:



- A guidance letter explaining claim documentation requirements.
- A form, Report of Public Safety Officer's Death, that the department must complete and the head of agency must sign.
- A form, Claim for Death Benefit, which the surviving spouse, children or parents must complete and sign.

. The Benefits Officer must complete the form: Report of Public Safety Officer's Death. (In describing the incident, the Benefits Officer needs to provide as much detail as possible but not speculate if the cause of death is not known).

. Make sure the family gets the other form: Claim for Death Benefit.

. Offer assistance to the family in completing the form. Explain that PSOB will not return all the required original documents (birth certificate, marriage licenses, divorce decrees, etc.), unless they specifically request them back.

. Assure that the family provides a certified death notice, not a copy.

. Submit both completed forms and all supporting documents to PSOB as soon as possible.

. The PSOB Specialist receives the claim package and reviews and prepares a recommendation:

- They contact the Benefits Officer if further information is needed.
- They submit unresolved medical questions to the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology.
- They submit written recommendations to the Department of Justice's Office of General Counsel for review.
- If the General Counsel requests more information, the PSOB specialists will contact the department for more information.
- They will meet the general counsel staff to review any new information provided and reach a decision.
- If the General Counsel approves the claim, the PSOB specialists will send a letter to the next-of-kin notifying them of the approval of the claim and send a check to the eligible next-of-kin.
- If the General Counsel denies the claim, the PSOB specialist will send a letter to the next-of-kin notifying them of the denial of the claim and provide more information on the appeals process.

. If you have any questions at any time, please call PSOB at 888-744-6513.

## Appendix B

### OTHER SERVICE PROTOCOLS

#### Guidelines for Delivering a Eulogy

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

#### Research

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

#### Organize

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

#### Draft

- Begin by expressing your condolences and the department’s sense of loss.
- Acknowledge family members, including spouse or significant other, children, parents, siblings and close friends.
- Focus on the person’s life, not the circumstances that lead to the death.

- Include funny stories. Even in the midst of deep grief, it is important to smile. And remember to mention the source of the story, if appropriate.
- Include a statement of support for the department. Acknowledge the department member who is acting as a liaison for the family. The department must follow through on any promised support, so only promise what you can ensure will be delivered.
- Have a printed copy of the final eulogy ready for the family and others who may want a copy.

### Practice

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

## AFTER THE FUNERAL

I. PURPOSE – During this phase, family support continues, especially with regard to assisting the family in accessing all benefits for which they are eligible. Departmental support continues, this plan is updated as necessary, and the analysis of the incident is completed and presented to appropriate personnel.

## II. RESPONSIBILITIES

### FIRE CHIEF

- . Continue to monitor overall activities.
- . Ensure completion of Incident Analysis
- . Authorize the release of the Incident Analysis
- . Oversee implementation of appropriate recommendations within the Incident Analysis

### PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

. Contact/notify the family prior to the release of any information (reports, stories, analysis, etc.) regarding the LODD.

### CISM

. Continue CISM Assessment and update CISM Action Plan as appropriate.

. Continue Follow-up contacts as appropriate

. Referral of impacted individuals/groups that may request/need professional assistance.

. Request appropriate outside Peer and Mental Health CISM resources for assistance if needed.

. Application of appropriate CISM Strategies and Services with focus on the mitigation of the Incident, potential impact of Loss or serious injury and having recently memorialized a Departmental Member.

. Continuing Outreach and Follow up of following but, not limited to:

. Survivor Action Officer

. Notification Team

. Departmental Members Home Station/Bureau/Division

. On scene Incident Commander

. Family Liaison

. Honor/Color Guard

. Fire Investigation Team

. Incident Analysis Team

. Senior Command Staff

. PIO Office

. Arrange for appropriate CISM Services or Mental Health Referrals to be offered to all of those providing CISM Services.

### SURVIVOR ACTION OFFICER

. Develop/update action plan as necessary.

. Continue to monitor the needs of the family via the Family Liaison Officer.

. Badge Shrouding – The shroud should appear on badges at the time of notification and of the death and should remain on the badge until after the funeral and final committal. For line-of-duty

deaths, the badge shrouds will remain in place for a 30-day mourning period. To shroud a badge, place a ½” to ¾” piece of black material horizontally around the badge at its midpoint. If the chaplain’s badge contains a cross, a crescent, tablets, or the Star of David the chaplain’s badge remains uncovered.

### FAMILY LIAISON OFFICER

- . Continue to monitor the needs of the family.
- . Coordinate with Family to return personnel possessions/belongings
- . Coordinate efforts between Benefits Officer and the family.
- . Suggest that family contact their attorney, accountant and/or financial advisor to assist with legal/financial issues:
  - Transfer ownership of property and vehicles to survivors
  - Review all outstanding bills before payment by survivors for legality and accuracy. This should include last illness, previous debts, and funeral expenses. Some bills may be covered by insurance.
  - Change name on all bank accounts
- . Check on mortgage insurance.
- . Explore damages resulting from the circumstances of the death

### LIAISON OFFICER

- . Coordinates department’s responsibilities in the completion of analyses completed by other governmental agencies (OSHA, NIOSH, etc.).
- . Maintains liaisons with departmental employee groups.

### BENEFITS OFFICER

- . Identifies available federal, state, local and private benefits and coordinates the administration of same for the deceased’s family.
- . Coordinate efforts with family via the Family Liaison Officer.
- . If assigned, oversees the activities of the federal, state and local benefit officers.

### COUNTY, CITY and/or TOWN BENEFITS OFFICER

. Identifies available benefits and coordinates the administration of same with the department's Benefits Officer. (See Appendix D – Benefits Guide)

#### STATE BENEFITS OFFICER

. Identifies available State benefits and coordinates the administration of same with the Benefits Officer. (See Appendix D - Benefits Guide)

#### FEDERAL BENEFITS OFFICER

- . Check with Benefits Officer regarding progress with PSOB.
- . Receive Claims Package from PSOB or Benefits Officer. This package includes three items:
  - . A guidance letter explaining claim documentation requirements.
  - . A form, Report of Public Safety Officer's Death, that the department must complete and the head of agency must sign.
  - . A form, Claim for Death Benefit, which the surviving spouse, children or parents must complete and sign.
- . The Benefits Officer must complete the form, Report of Public Safety Officer's Death.
- . Make sure the family gets the other form, Claim for Death Benefit.
- . Offer assistance to the family in completing the form. Explain that PSOB will not return all the required original documents (birth certificate, marriage licenses, divorce decrees, etc), unless they specifically request them back.
- . Assure that the family provides a certified death notice, not a copy.
- . Submit both completed forms and all supporting documents to PSOB as soon as possible.
- . The PSOB specialist receives the claim package and reviews and prepares a recommendation.
- . They contact the Benefits Officer if further information is needed.
- . They submit unresolved medical questions to the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology.
- . They submit written recommendations to the Department of Justice's Office of General Counsel for review.
- . If the General Counsel requests more information, the PSOB specialists will contact the department for more information.

- . They will meet the general counsel staff to review any new information provided and reach a decision.
- . If the General Counsel approves the claim, the PSOB specialists will send a letter to the next-of-kin notifying them of the approval of the claim and send a check to the eligible next-of-kin.
- . If the General Counsel denies the claim, the PSOB specialist will send a letter to the next-of-kin notifying them of the denial of the claim and provide more information on the appeal process.
- . If you have any questions at any time, please call PSOB at 888-744-6513.
- . Identifies available Federal benefits and coordinates the administration of it with the Benefits Officer. (See Appendix D - Benefits Guide)

#### PRIVATE BENEFITS OFFICER

- . Identifies available private/non-profit benefits and coordinates the administration of same with the Benefits Officer. (See Appendix D - Benefits Guide)

#### ANALYSIS TEAM

- . Completes the Incident Analysis.
- . Ensures review of analysis by the Office of Law.
- . After approval, coordinate with Family Liaison Officer to present findings to family.
- . Prepare for departmental distribution.

#### Appendix C

#### BENEFITS GUIDE:

##### LOCAL

Local Benefits  
Date contacted  
Status  
Telephone #  
Contact Name  
Health Insurance  
Death Benefit  
Life Insurance

100 Club of Arizona  
Education Benefits for Children  
Education Benefits for Spouses  
Employee Assistance Programs  
Victims Assistance Program  
Pension Plan  
Final Paycheck  
Deferred Compensation

STATE

State Benefits  
Date contacted  
Status  
Telephone #  
Contact Name  
Burial Allowance  
Death Benefit  
State Insurance  
Education Benefits for Children  
Education Benefits for Spouses  
State Tax Benefits  
Victims Assistance Programs  
Workers Compensation

FEDERAL

Federal Benefits  
Date contacted  
Status  
Telephone #  
Contact Name  
Public Safety Officers Benefits  
Scholarships for surviving  
Spouses/Children Social Security Death Benefit  
Victims Assistance Program  
Veterans Benefits

PRIVATE

Private Benefits  
Date contacted  
Status  
Telephone #



Contact Name  
Life Insurance  
Mortgage Insurance  
Disability Insurance  
Accident Insurance  
Stocks/Bonds  
IRA's  
IAFF/IAFC

## GLOSSARY

**American Flag** – flag of the United States of America. (All departmental members who die in the line of duty or who are veterans will get an American Flag).

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

**Bag Pipes** – musical instrument that is used during the funeral ceremony.

**Bell Service (Last Alarm Service)** – a traditional bell-ringing ceremony at the end of the church service or committal service usually signified the firefighters last alarm. A short reading accompanies the ringing of the bell.

**Burial In Uniform** – If the family chooses to bury the deceased firefighter in the departmental uniform, the Family Liaison Officer will deliver the uniform to the Funeral Officer or the funeral director.

**Caisson** – A fire department engine that is used to carry the casket of a member killed in the line of duty.

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

**Color Guard** – Fire Department ceremonial unit that consists of four to six people that carry the American, State, and County flags, as well as, a rifle and the department colors.

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

**Eulogy** – A eulogy may be appropriate at any point in the funeral ceremonies. The family should

decide who will deliver the eulogy and when it is fitting. The Fire Chief, a clergy member, the departmental chaplain, or close family friend from the fire department may be asked to perform this task. The Family Liaison Officer will make the necessary contacts and advise the Funeral Officer. See Appendix B (Other Service Protocols) for information on fire service eulogy.

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

**Fire Department Chaplain** – The amount of involvement of the chaplain will be determined by the family. One option is a shared responsibility between the family's clergy and the department chaplain.

**Fire Engine Escort** – A fire department engine escorting the hearse.

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

**Flag Presentation** – When the casket is draped with a flag, an appropriate flag presentation ceremony should take place immediately before the conclusion of the committal service. Note (Level 2 and Level 3 Funerals - if the deceased was a member of the military and a flag presentation is desired by the family, every effort should be made to have military personnel perform this service.

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

**Formations** – special marches or processions that are used at fire department funerals.

**Honor Guard** – Departmental ceremonial unit that participates in the funeral ceremony. This unit usually performs as ceremonial guards and pallbearers.

**Initial Family Support** – The department will determine the level of support based on the family requests as relayed by the Family Liaison Officer. The department should assign appropriate personnel as the need arises. The department should not act on assumptions without contacting and getting the consent of the immediate family.

**Meals** – The department should plan to help coordinate meals for the deceased firefighter's family at least until after the funeral. Friends of the family and members of the department and

auxiliaries may help provide these meals. The Survivor Action Officer, in conjunction with the Family Liaison Officer will determine the need and coordinate providing the meals.

Memorial Fund – a fund established where donations could be sent to assist the immediate family of the deceased.

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

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

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

Presentation of Departmental Badge – As part of the funeral service at the funeral home or church, the Fire Chief may present the badge and name tag worn by the deceased firefighter to the next of kin. The items should be in a framed display containing a departmental patch.

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

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

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

Station Bunting – Fire Department Stations/Facilities where the deceased worked or was affiliated will bunt their station and equipment. These facilities shall remain bunted until 1700 hours on the day of internment.

Taps – hymn that is played during the final commitment portion of the funeral ceremony. Taps may be sounded by one or more buglers at the place of final committal. The location of the bugler should be approximately 75 feet from the final committal site.

Transportation - The department should offer a fire department vehicle and driver to the immediate family during the viewing and funeral period. The Family Liaison Officer normally arranges for this service. The department should ensure that the next of kin have limousine service available on the day of the funeral (Level 1 Service).

Vehicle Bunting - Fire Department vehicles where the deceased worked or was affiliated will bunt their apparatus. This apparatus shall remain bunted until 1700 hours on the day of internment.

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