

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

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**BULLETIN NO. 40**

**AUGUST 2006 (Reissued)**

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Bulletin No. 40 is a reissue of Old Bulletin No. 5 issued July 1999.

**FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS AND FAMILY SERVICES**

**Section 1. Departmental Services**

1. It shall be the policy of the department to officially and effectively participate in paying respects to deceased members.
2. It shall also be the policy of the department to offer whatever assistance is permissible to the families of deceased members.

**Section 2. Notification of the Public Information Officer**

1. Any member, upon learning of the death of an active or retired member, shall immediately notify the Public Information Officer (P.I.O.). **In the event this occurs during the off-duty hours of the P.I.O., the on-duty Watch Commander at the Office of Unified Communications will be notified to contact the P.I.O.**
2. In the case of an active member, the P.I.O. shall be responsible for assembling the Family Services Team, as designated by the Fire Chief, and shall assume all responsibilities of the team until the team has been assembled. Once the Family Services Team has been assembled, the senior ranking official of the team shall assume the responsibilities as passed on by the P.I.O.
3. Upon learning of the death of a retired member, the P.I.O., or his representative, shall be responsible for contacting the next of kin for the purpose of providing assistance to the family in connection with the funeral arrangements.
4. The P.I.O. shall be responsible for notifying the Office of Unified Communications and the Regulations Officer, to insure proper notification is given to the department.

**Section 3. Utilization of the Family Services Team**

The Family Services Team shall:

1. Be comprised of a fire chaplain of the appropriate faith, the Fire Chief or his representative, the commanding officer/supervisor of the deceased, or an officer of equal or higher rank, and a member of the exclusive bargaining unit.

2. Serve as the department's official representative for the purpose of assisting the families of deceased active members.
3. Coordinate all department activities concerning funeral arrangements with the family, church, funeral director, etc.
4. The Family Services Team and the services provided by the team shall not be made available for deceased retired personnel.

#### **Section 4. Members Detailed to the Family Services Team**

Members detailed to the Family Services Team shall be responsible for:

1. Accompanying the commanding officer/supervisor of the deceased member for the purpose of notifying or making contact with the family. Notification, in the case of a line of duty death, shall not be delayed due to the unavailability of a member of the team.
2. Ensuring that all procedures where the ceremonies will be held (funeral home, church, cemetery) will be consistent with the wishes of the family and the funeral director and conform with the religious services of the deceased. The liaison officer of the Family Services Team shall be responsible for ensuring members of the department attending are advised of the proper uniform and procedures.
3. Coordinating all departmental activities concerning the funeral, as well as making out-of-town arrangements for transportation, food, and lodging reservations. This shall include notifying the family of the availability of departmental services such as the use of apparatus for a hearse, honor guards, EMS units, etc., and advising the P.I.O. of the wishes of the member's family concerning utilization of the Ceremonial Honor Guards.
4. Assisting the family in making funeral arrangements, as well as any out-of-town arrangements such as burial services, lodging, reservations, and transportation. They will also assist the family by notifying agencies and/or organizations which provide assistance to families of deceased members. With respect to out-of-town burials; one member of the team may accompany the family, should the family request this service and the Fire Chief approves such request.
5. Being knowledgeable in the areas of pertinent departmental administrative procedures and benefits due a member's family.
6. Remaining in contact with the family in a spirit of fraternal charity, as well as assisting with the filing of necessary benefit documentation, forms, etc.

**Section 5. Commanding Officers/Supervisors**

Commanding Officers/Supervisors shall be responsible for:

1. Notifying or contacting the family of a deceased active member with the assistance of the Family Services Team, provided that the team can be assembled within a reasonable time.
2. Ensuring that the P.I.O. is immediately notified upon learning of the death of an active or retired member of his command.

**Section 6. Department Policy on Funeral Representation**

1. The department will provide the following for line of duty deaths:
  - a. Burial in uniform.
  - b. The units assigned to the member's station will be placed out of service each day involved to attend associated services.
  - c. Two ladder trucks to form an arch.
  - d. One vehicle with a chauffeur to transport the family.
  - e. One engine to serve as a hearse (or ambulance for non-uniform.)
  - f. One engine to serve as a flower transport.
  - g. Bunting for firehouse and apparatus.
  - h. The services of the Ceremonial Honor Guard, or arrange for sufficient members of other recognized fire service organizations who provide honor guard services to attend, upon request of the family.
  - i. Department members to serve as pallbearers.
2. The department will provide the following, upon request of the family, for active members whose death is not in the line of duty:
  - a. Burial in uniform.
  - b. The units assigned to the member's station will be placed out of service each day involved to attend associated services.
  - c. Two ladder trucks to form an arch.
  - d. Bunting for firehouse and apparatus.
  - e. The services of the Ceremonial Honor Guard, or arrange for sufficient members of other recognized fire service organizations who provide honor guard services to attend, upon request of the family.

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3. The department will provide the following, upon request of the family for deceased retired members:
  - a. Burial in uniform.
  - b. The services of the Ceremonial Honor Guard, or arrange for sufficient members of other recognized fire service organizations who provide honor guard services to attend, upon request of the family.

All of the above services shall be made available and supplied to the family upon their request.

Companies requesting to attend services shall be permitted to go out of service on a rotating basis, if the proximity of the service permits.

Companies along the procession route shall line up in front of quarters as described in the "General Instructions Section" of this Bulletin.

The request for apparatus, as provided for above, may be rejected by the Fire Chief, if sufficient apparatus is not available to meet the needs of the Department.

The Department shall grant administrative leave, if necessary, to meet the requests of the family for specific members to serve as pallbearers, honor guards or chauffeur.

### **Section 7. General Instructions**

1. Members attending funeral in uniform shall wear the uniform of the day unless otherwise ordered.
2. Members in uniform shall stand at "Attention" and salute when the casket is being moved by the pallbearers. (During services at the grave site, the head shall remain uncovered.)
3. When requested by the family of the deceased, the Deputy Fire Chief of the Fire Fighting Division shall be notified so companies along the procession route can be advised to have their apparatus and personnel in front of quarters on the apron. Members will line up in front of apparatus in full dress uniform in accordance with the procedures outlined in "Line-up for Receiving Official Visitors." Upon approach of the procession, the on duty platoon commander will bring the members to "Attention," execute the hand salute and remain at this position until the hearse has passed. Members will remain at a position of "Attention" until the procession has passed. The apparatus bell, if so equipped, will be tolled slowly while the procession is passing.

## Section 8. Funeral Arrangements and Preparation

### Considerations:

1. Coordinate personnel and apparatus regarding assembly at the church, funeral home, procession, and cemetery.
2. Bunting for F.D. Headquarters, assigned station, stations along procession route, and apparatus.
3. Assistance of M.P.D. for escorts, street closings. "No Parking" signs.
4. Assistance of Public Works for street cleaning, snow removal, barricades, etc.
5. Determine the uniform of the day for services.
6. Pallbearers (6 to 8.) There will be a need for 14 personnel to load and unload the casket to and from the apparatus.
7. EMS standby units.
8. Reception hall (food, refreshments.)

### Staff Positions:

The staff positions listed below are suggested to assist in the planning process by establishing liaisons with various aspects of the funeral that may or may not need to be addressed, depending on the size and scope of the funeral concerned.

#### Line of Duty

Funeral Detail Commander  
 Family/Funeral Officer  
 Logistics Officer  
 Public Information Officer  
 Family Liaison  
 Funeral Liaison  
 Apparatus/Vehicle Coordinator  
 DCFD Personnel Coordinator  
 Police Liaison  
 Reception Coordinator

#### Active

Funeral Detail Commander  
 Family/Funeral Officer  
 Logistics Officer  
 Apparatus/Vehicle Coordinator  
 Personnel Coordinator  
 Reception Coordinator  
 Police Liaison  
 Family Liaison  
 Funeral Liaison

#### Line of Duty

Media Liaison  
 Public Official Liaison  
 Outside Firefighter Liaison

#### Retired

Family Liaison

Funeral Detail Commander- member is responsible for the overall planning, coordination and delegation of tasks to meet the needs and requests of the family, church, department, funeral director, etc.

Family/Funeral Officer- member responsible for the continuous consultation and coordination with the family and funeral director to meet their needs and requests and to ensure no conflicts exist between the family, funeral director, and the department.

Logistics Officer- member responsible for the overall preparation and coordination of apparatus, personnel, and facilities required to meet the needs and requests of involved parties.

Public Information Officer- member responsible for the release of information to the media, coordination of public officials from other government agencies and officials and firefighters from other jurisdictions.

Family Liaison- member responsible for maintaining continuous consultation with and assisting the family of the deceased in order to ensure their needs and requests are met.

Funeral Liaison- member responsible for the consultation and coordination with the funeral director concerning their plans and needs.

Apparatus/Vehicle Coordinator- member responsible for the acquisition, preparation, coordination, and assignment of all apparatus and vehicles needed for the funeral.

DCF&EMS Personnel Coordinator- member responsible for the acquisition and coordination of DCF&EMS involved with and/or attending funeral activities.

Police Liaison- member responsible for coordinating all operations with all police agencies involved. This would include escorts, street closings, "No Parking" signs, etc.

Reception Coordinator- member responsible for the preparation and coordination of personnel, facilities, food and refreshments to meet the needs of the family and department.

Media Liaison- member responsible for the release of accurate and up to date information to the media relating to pertinent background information, facts of the incident, and the funeral arrangements.

Public Official Liaison- member responsible for coordinating the assignment of other city government agency resources to the appropriate sector of the funeral detail and addressing the requests/concerns of officials from other city agencies.

Outside Firefighter Liaison- member responsible for providing information to and coordinating the activities of fire service personnel attending from other jurisdictions.

## **Section 9. Ceremonies**

The following personnel are used in conducting the ceremonial portion of the funeral services if desired by the family. An Officer-in-Charge, 6 to 8 pallbearers, honorary pallbearers (usually

retired or active members of the deceased's company), honor guard, and a piper and/or bugler.

Due to the serious nature of the pallbearer and color/honor guard duties, it is suggested that a practice session be held the day before and/or several hours prior to the services. The funeral director should be consulted to provide input and assistance regarding protocol and procedures.

If a large number of firefighters will be attending and the services are to be held at a church or location other than the funeral home, it is often difficult and time consuming to transport personnel from the funeral home to the church and have them assemble prior to the arrival of the procession. It is therefore suggested that personnel be instructed to report directly to the church for assembly prior to the arrival of the procession.

The DCF&EMS Honor Guard will follow procedures as outlined in the "Ceremonial Honor Guard Handbook" or follow the wishes of the funeral director and / or family.

### **Section 10. Protocol**

#### **Honorary Pallbearers:**

1. Members designated as such will sit on the designated side of the church during services.
2. Retirees will wear civilian clothes.
3. Active members will wear dress uniforms.

#### **Pallbearers:**

1. Shall consist of 6 or 8 personnel, plus an officer in charge.
2. The officer in charge shall consult with the funeral director for detailed instructions.
3. The heads of the pallbearers will remain covered at all times while in that capacity and will wear white gloves.
4. The pallbearers will not salute while acting in that capacity.
5. If the casket arrives at the church from the funeral home, the pallbearer detail shall position themselves to receive the casket in front of the church.
6. During the church service, the pallbearer detail will sit on the designated side of the church with the funeral detail.

#### **Funeral Detail (Department Members in Attendance):**

1. Members will wear the uniform of the day as specified.
2. Members will assemble for the applicable part of the service prior to the arrival of the hearse.
3. Members of the department will form two opposing ranks (files), with senior ranking officers positioned closest to the church.
4. When the active pallbearers move the casket, members will be called to the position of attention by the OIC and as the casket passes, a salute will be ordered using the command, "Present Arms!" After the casket passes, the salute will be ended using the

command, "Order Arms!" and members will be placed at rest using the command, "At Ease." If appropriate, members will then file into the church and will sit in the designated area. (Hats will be removed upon entering.)

5. After services, members will file out in order and assume the formation for "Casket Leaving the Building."
6. Members will be brought to the position of attention and will salute as the casket passes, prompted by the commands specified by #4 above.
7. At the grave site, members will assemble and will be brought to attention and will execute the hand salute as specified in #4 above.