



## Fire Service Wake and Funeral Protocols

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## 1. PURPOSE

It is the purpose of this section to specify certain protocols to be followed on the death of Active or Passive chief and/or firefighter, and a Line of Duty Death member.

This section is to be used as a guideline for the Chiefs and officers, and the procedures outlined should be followed as closely as possible. Changes in procedure may become necessary with the passage of time; however, the BCFCA Executive Committee must vote any permanent changes on.

## 2. PROCEDURES

- a. The Chief of the Fire Department **will notify the BCFCA President and the Secretary** of the death of a member of that respective Department.
  - The President will notify the BC Fire Coordinator of a death of a member and or Line of Duty Death.
  - The President will then notify all Chiefs, either by telephone or through the BC electronic network system.
- b. If the death is in the Line of Duty: there will be a compulsory turnout of the Chiefs, Officers and Firefighters. **Refer to Protocol for Line of Duty Death (Appendix).** This procedure will also be followed in the event of the death of a Past or Current President of the Association, or Active Chief of Department.
- c. The Family of the deceased will ONLY institute this procedure after the local Chief of Department has these procedures Sanctioned.
- d. Notification of the death of a Chief not in the above categories will also go to the President, who will notify all other members that: anyone wishing to attend the wake and funeral of this comrade will assemble at etc.
- e. This procedure will also be followed in the event of a "Death in the Line of Duty" from any surrounding area in Bergen or Hudson counties.
- f. The suggested formation procedure at the FUNERAL HOME is:

The Fire Department of the deceased will form and enter followed by:

- The BCFCA Officers and Executive Board
- The Officers of the Mutual Aid Executive Board
- The Chiefs of the Mutual Aid
- All other mutual aid Officers and Firefighters (town by town)
- Out-of-Mutual Aid Fire Departments

### 3..DEPARTMENT APPARATUS AND EQUIPMENT

- a. The procedure outlined in this section may be amended if the geographical area of the funeral or wake so indicate, such amendments will be at the discretion of the Chief.
- b. If a Department turnout is required, the Chief or his designee will contact the department Chaplain of the faith concerned, as soon as possible, and arrange a time schedule for departmental services. When such time is fixed, the Chief or his designee will notify the funeral director of same. This will enable the funeral director to arrange a time schedule for any other organization services.
- c. The Chief or his assistants will instruct an officer from each company to order a floral tribute (if appropriate). A floral tribute by the three chiefs is appropriate and should be ordered by them. The chief will also make notification to the President of the Exempt Associations, Relief Associations, and Town Officials.
- d. If only a company turnout is indicated, the Company Captain or his designee will make the arrangements as outlined above.
- e. In a "Line of Duty" death, the Chief will notify the proper authority to have the Town Hall draped. The Chief will order all firehouses to display suitable mourning for 30 days.
- f. If full department honors are indicated, i.e. Honor Guard, fire apparatus, etc., it should be remembered that this decision rests finally, with the next of kin. It would be prudent, therefore, to ask the funeral director to search out the feelings of the family before making arrangements for these honors.
- g. Order of Procession in Cortege:
  - Police escort
  - Flower car or fire truck used as same, if both are used, flower car will precede the fire truck.
  - Visiting Chiefs' cars or fire trucks
  - Town Chiefs' car or fire trucks.
  - Honorary or Active Casket Bearer cars
  - Hearse or fire truck used as same
  - Limousines
  - Private cars
  - Rear Police Escort

## 4..MEMBERS

### A. ACTIVE BCFCA MEMBER / PASSIVE EX-CHIEF

A Full Department funeral will be afforded to any active member or passive Ex-Chief. The Captain of the company to which the deceased member was assigned will take charge of the details and will coordinate with the Chiefs, Department Chaplain, Funeral Director and the Family. He will be responsible for all the arrangements.

A Full Department funeral service will consist of any or all of the following:

- Lower all Town flags for 30 days
- Drape the respective firehouses for 30 days. All other firehouses will be draped until the day of the funeral
- Member may be laid out in uniform
- Honor Guard during the Fire Department Service
- F. D. personnel for Honor Guard and Pall Bearers
- Use of department vehicles for flower car for procession purposes
- Department service for wake
- Floral tribute
- Department personnel assigned as an escort for the family
- Passing in review of the firehouse during the funeral possession
- Bell to be tolled as company or department files into and out of funeral home
- Chief or his designee may make a presentation of the deceased helmet at the cemetery or crematory. This would be made to the next of kin following the religious portion of the ceremony. If carried out, the funeral director should be notified ahead of time.
- The American flag and department flag should be displayed during the wake. Flags would be delivered early enough so that they may be arranged prior to the first public visitation.
- Upon taking leave of the cemetery or crematory, all members will file past the grave, leaving his/her right glove and then salute.

### B. LINE OF DUTY DEATH CONSIDERATIONS

Any member killed in the line of duty will be afforded all of the considerations of the full fire department service, plus the following:

- Drape ALL firehouse for 30 days
- Color guard for funeral services
- Department honor guard on all nights of wake
- Fire truck may be used as hearse
- Deceased member(s) gear to be prominently displayed (if practical)
- American Flag for casket
- Bell to be tolled going to church and to cemetery
- Presentation of helmet (if practical) will be made from Company Captain or Lieutenant to the Chief of Department, then to the next of kin.
- Auxiliary firefighter, Line of Duty death, will be afforded the same consideration as a regular member

## LINE OF DUTY FUNERAL PROTOCOL

### **Final Farewell to A Fallen Firefighter (*Refer to Appendix*)**

It is recommended that the Chief of Department place his department out of service until an appropriate time after the funeral. Mutual Aid towns will provide coverage, except for the wake and funeral. This coverage can be coordinated with the Bergen County Fire Coordinator.

### **SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR CHIEFS**

- The Chief of the Department may name a member of the department to take charge of the funeral protocol. (*Refer to Appendix*)
- The Chief of Department will notify the Mutual aid groups, etc. and will arrange with the Police Department for traffic control and a front and rear escort for the funeral procession.
- The Chief of Department will insure that all members of the Department will report in full dress uniform. (White gloves and black band for uniform badge).

### **PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS' BENEFIT (PSOB) Benefits Program for Line of Duty Death**

- **FEDERAL LEVEL** - Refer to Public Safety Officer Benefit (PSOB) Benefits Program website at [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/psob](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/psob) for appropriate paperwork
- **STATE LEVEL** - NJ State Law S1432 (2002) – AN ACT concerning pensions for survivors of certain volunteer emergency services workers and amending P.L. 1957, c.168.
- **TIME SENSITIVE** -This must be processed within sixty (60) days of the incident.
- **LOCAL LEVEL** - Refer to State Firemen's Association, State Exempt Association, State Fire Chiefs Association (*where applicable*), local town ordinance, etc.

## C. PASSIVE MEMBERS AND OTHERS

- Turnout will be from the company that the deceased member was assigned too. Other companies or members may attend if they wish.
- Deceased may be laid out in uniform
- Honor Guard will be during company service only.
- Fire truck may be used as a flower car only.
- Casket bearers may be used.
- Bell to be tolled as company files into and out of the funeral home and as the deceased is carried into and out of the church.

**EX-CHIEFS - Active, Natural Causes** - Same honors, as a regular firefighter would receive with the exception that a fire truck might be used as a hearse and/or flower car. **Active, Line of Duty** - Same honors as an active firefighter in the line of duty.

**CHAPLAINS** (Line of Duty and Natural Causes) - Chaplains are given the same honors and considerations as are given regular members whether in Line of Duty or Natural Causes. Check with Church authorities for any exceptions.

**HONOR GUARD** - The Honor Guard will consist of two uniformed firefighters at a time, standing at parade rest at either end of the casket. The changing of the guard will be done in a military fashion under the direction of an honor guard captain. The captain of the guard will be a chief or a line officer. The honor guard and pallbearers will generally be from the company to which the deceased member was assigned.

**MISCELLANEOUS** - Fire Prevention inspectors, if available, may be utilized to assist on the day of the interment, if requested by the chief.

**DEATH OF A MEMBER OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL** - The Chief of the Department will make arrangements for attendance at the wake and/or funeral.

## LODD Appendices

### Appendix A - Introduction:

A firefighter's death in the line of duty is very traumatic event for the member's relatives as well as the fire department "family". On these tragic and usually sudden occasions, there are many details to consider honoring the fallen comrade with a proper fire department burial.

Fortunately, most of us don't have to plan and coordinate these ceremonies with any regularity. However, it is because of this infrequency that we experience much confusion and uncertainty when we do have to plan a funeral.

The following basic outline was used in rapid succession for two LODD deaths that occurred within ten days of each other in two New Jersey communities. It consists primarily of two parts: (1) the preparations and considerations before the funeral and (2) the ceremonial portion of the services. This basic plan is flexible enough to be used in its present form, or it can be customized to suit the individual situation.

In larger metropolitan departments, protocol may differ because of the department's experience in planning this event and the greater number of personnel attending the funeral. The information provided here is primarily for the small or moderate size departments, which may not have personnel familiar with the process and fortunately may not have to deal with it very often.

I sincerely hope that the majority of you will never have to refer to this booklet, but knowing the fire service as I do, I am sure that it will be used. My goal in formulating this protocol is that in time of need, it will provide the basic information required to help guide the unfamiliar funeral planner through a very difficult process.

It is with deep respect that I dedicate this publication to Firefighter Carlos A. Negron of the Jersey City Fire Department and Firefighter Lewis L. Sheats of the Chatham Township Volunteer Fire Department, who made the supreme sacrifice in the line of duty in 1993.

Fraternally,

William C. Peters, Battalion Chief (Ret.)  
Jersey City Fire Department  
(Former Fairview Firefighter)

Permission to reprint: Final Farewell to a Fallen Firefighter, *Fire Engineering*, April 3, 1996

## Appendix B - THE FAMILY'S DESIRE

The first consideration in planning a fire department funeral is determining the families wishes. Depending on such variables as the family's religious beliefs, medical constraints, and general state of mind, the role of the fire department could vary from serving as a simple honor guard at the funeral parlor to providing a full department funeral.

A member of the fire department who is a relative or close friend of the family, a union officer, or an official of a fraternal organization can serve as a liaison between the family and the chief's office.

As soon as you have determined the family's wishes, conduct a planning meeting with an appointed committee or, in the case of a career department, all available staff personnel. There are so many details to address in a short period of time that you will need ample assistance. Name personnel to the following positions to coordinate each segment of the operation.

## Appendix C - THE PLANNING PROCESS

1. *Officer in charge of operations (OIC)*: This is a person in charge of the overall arrangements - the chief or another individual selected to perform these duties. Coordinating activities with the funeral director and the chaplain (or clergy member) is part of the OIC's duties, as this information will be necessary to complete the remainder of the planning process. The OIC also must address any problems that arise to ensure a smooth-running operation.

2. *Liaison to family*: Continuous coordination with and assistance for the family members are absolutely essential. This is a very delicate time for them; keep them informed of all phases of the funeral services and make sure you address their needs.

3. *Logistics*: The Logistics officer is charged with preparing apparatus, vehicles, equipment and facilities for the funeral ceremonies and the large number of anticipated visitors. Make provisions for handling various immediate expenses in advance.

4. *Public Information*: The media usually are quite interested in covering the funeral of a fallen firefighter. It is important to supply them with accurate information about the funeral arrangements as well as background information about the member's family, time on the job, previous awards, and so on. For continuity, all press releases and information should come from the same public information officer. *(Avoid going to great detail about the accident until a complete investigation has been conducted.)*

5. *Police Liaison*: A great deal of coordination with the local police department is required for escort service, traffic control, street closing and posting "No Parking" signs. If the funeral home, church, or cemetery is in another community, planning between fire department and that community's police are essential.

6. *Liaison to public officials and city agencies*: The community's governing officials naturally will want to be kept apprised of the arrangements and probably will want to participate in the service.

Other agencies such as public works and the recreation department (for buses and other vehicles might be involved as well.

7. *Officer in charge honor guard:* The OIC honor guard is responsible for selecting, setting up, and supervising all details of the pallbearers, color guard, and honor guard. This individual should have some military bearing and be able to issue strong verbal commands during the ceremonies.

### **FUNERAL HOME HONOR GUARD**

One of the first duties is to arrange for an honor guard during the viewing hours at the funeral home. The honor guard OIC should coordinate this with the funeral director and schedule the honor guard according to the director's wishes.

Observe the following basic rules:

1. Arrange to have an honor guard of two firefighters posted at the casket at all times during viewing hours.
2. Assign minimum of four members for each set of viewing hours.
3. Recruit honor guards from volunteers or on-duty personnel, if necessary. If using volunteers, formulate a schedule of personnel who commit to specific shifts.
4. Rotate honor guards at 15-minute intervals. Relief personnel should march up together. Posted guards will come to attention and smartly make relief. The relieved guards also should march off together.
5. Posted honor guards should *assume the position of parade rest*.
6. Post American and Department flags at the casket.
7. Have honor guard wear dress uniform with white gloves.
8. Have honor guards *cover their badges with black mourning bands*.

## FUNERAL PLANNING

When planning the funeral, obtaining the following information will help you properly organize the services:

1. The name, address, and phone number of the funeral home.
2. The church or other location where services are to be held.
3. The chaplain or clergy member's wishes for the services.
4. The route from the funeral home to the church.
5. The location of the cemetery
6. The route to the cemetery.
7. Whether apparatus will be used as a hearse.

It is possible that the funeral or church services will be held in a community other than the city in which the firefighter served. This certainly complicates the process, as all of the planning steps have to coordinate with officials and agencies of the involved jurisdiction. It is helpful to have representatives of both the fire and police departments of the involved community present at the planning meeting to give their input.

Depending on the location, the size of the fire department contingent, the distance involved, and possible time constraints, you must determine whether it would be practical for the members to march from the funeral home to the church (if services are to be held there).

A large contingent of visiting firefighters probably will want to attend the funeral. Getting your department members and visitors from the funeral home to church and assembling those for the arrival of the procession are difficult and time-consuming. If a church service is planned, instruct visitors to report directly to the church for assembly prior to the arrival of the funeral procession. If the procession is to march from the funeral home to the church, *only* department members should report to the funeral home.

If marching the entire distance to the church is impractical, department members can assemble several blocks from the church. Then, as the funeral procession approaches, the contingent can line up and march the remaining distance to the church.

If a church is not planned, instruct all members and visitors to report to the funeral for final assembly and salute.

## CONSIDERATIONS

Once you have established basic procedures, you must address individual considerations. Evaluate each of the following for its relevance to your situation, and make adjustments particular to your location where necessary.

1. Select the following personnel to command each sector of the funeral procession; name one as the overall coordinator: OIC honor guard, OIC fire department assembly point (if used), OIC church assembly point, and OIC funeral home assembly point.
2. Use portable radios for communication and information coordination with each sector.
3. Use bullhorns or vehicle loudspeakers to give directions at assembly areas.
4. Have flags and equipment ready for color guard to use.
5. If a piece of apparatus is to be used as a hearse, select which one and prepare it as follows
  - a. Clean and wax it
  - b. Remove hose and dividers
  - c. Add mourning flags
  - d. Have the chauffeur in dress uniform

*NOTE: In the event of inclement weather, use an enclosed hearse for the casket and the apparatus for a flower car.*

6. Hang mourning bunting at fire headquarters, at the deceased member's firehouse, and at any other firehouse on the funeral route.
7. Notify the police department that you'll need its help with the following:
  - a. Funeral escort
  - b. Traffic and street closing at the funeral home
  - c. Traffic and street closing at the church
  - d. Traffic at the assembly point (if used)
  - e. Posting "No Parking" signs around the church, the assembly point, and the funeral home, if necessary.
  - f. Removing cars from "No Parking" zones
  - g. Notifying out-of-town police, if needed
8. Notify the public works department that you'll need its help with the following:
  - a. Snow removal (if needed)
  - b. Street cleaning (if needed)
  - c. Barricades (if needed)
9. Make provisions for parking at the church or assembly point.
  - a. Arrange transportation (buses) if the parking is remote.
  - b. Post signs directing incoming visitors to parking and the assembly point.
  - c. Request that visiting fire departments not bring apparatus, as parking and security could become problems

10. Serve coffee or other refreshments at the church or assembly point
  - a. Arrange for canteen services (Salvation Army, Red Cross, etc.)
  - b. Utilize a church hall or nearby school
11. Provide rest room facilities, especially at assembly points. Consider portable units, if necessary. Also, local businesses might be cooperative and offer the use of their facilities.
12. If funeral procession passes the member's firehouse, assembled members should toll a muffled bell.
13. Have vehicles available at the church to transport the color guard and pallbearers to the cemetery. Make sure vehicles are cleaned and waxed and brought to the church in advance.
14. Determine the uniform of the day.
15. Arrange for a hall and refreshments for participants after services. Plan for a large attendance.
16. Arrange for a bagpipe band or drummer, if available
17. Locate a bugler for taps (sometimes the funeral director can be helpful in this endeavor)
18. Select 8 pallbearers and 5 members for the color guard
  - a. Pallbearers should be of uniform height. Be sure of their ability to lift and carry the casket.
  - b. The color guard should consist of four firefighters and one captain in charge.
19. Recruit staff members or volunteers from neighboring departments to assist with giving directions, coordinating personnel, and serving refreshments.
20. Arrange for mutual aid, if necessary, to cover the community fire response during the funeral.
21. Have the information officer provide the assembly time and location to police and fire dispatchers so that they can properly direct incoming calls. Have handouts containing this information, *as well as a map*, if necessary, available at the funeral home to give to the visitors.
22. Have emergency medical services available during the funeral to handle medical emergencies.

## **Appendix D - CEREMONIES**

The following personnel are needed to conduct the ceremonial portion of the funeral: a chief in charge, 8 pallbearers, a color guard of 4 firefighters and 1 captain, and a bugler or piper.

Due to the serious nature of pallbearer and color guard duties, hold a practice session the day before the funeral, if possible. If not, it is imperative that these personnel report to the funeral home several hours before the beginning of the service for a protocol briefing and practice. Have the funeral director 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.

### **LEAVING THE FUNERAL HOME**

1. The apparatus is stationed in front of the funeral home with roller (from the funeral home) installed in the hose bed.
2. The color guard lines up to one side.
3. Fire Department officials and dignitaries line up opposite the color guard.
4. If marching from the funeral home to the church or going directly to the cemetery, fire department personnel line up on the opposite side of the street, facing center. Visiting firefighters line up on the near side.
5. Eight pallbearers prepare to carry the coffin from the funeral home to the rear of the of the apparatus.
6. The OIC gives the following commands: "*Detail, Attention*" followed by "*Present arms*" and hands salute.
7. Pallbearers march to the rear of the apparatus/hearse to load the casket. The first two enter the hose bed to assist loading.
8. When the casket is in place, the pallbearers stand facing each other, and the OIC commands "*Detail, present arms*" for a short hand salute by the pallbearers.
9. The OIC calls "*Order Arms.*"
10. The OIC calls, "*Detail, dismissed*". The color guard and pallbearers assume the next position, depending on the method of transportation (marching/riding) to the church.
11. If proceeding directly to the cemetery, the OIC again commands, "*Present, Arms*" as the procession departs.
12. If it is impractical to use the street in front of the funeral home for loading the casket, the color guard and pallbearers are present for the loading ceremony while the remainder of the contingent waits out front.

## **MARCHING FROM THE FUNERAL HOME TO THE CHURCH**

1. If marching from the funeral home to the church, members line up in the following order:
  - a. Color guard
  - b. Pipe band/drummer
  - c. City officials
  - d. Fire department members by rank
  - e. Apparatus/hearse (pallbearers march as explained below)
  - f. Family's cars

## **DRIVING TO THE CHURCH**

1. Determine an assembly point several blocks from the church for fire department personnel and the pipe band.
2. The assembly point for visiting fire departments will be at the church (church side of the street).
3. Immediately after loading the casket at the funeral home, the color guard goes by van to the fire department meeting location.
4. The pallbearers board the apparatus, and two of them remain on the rear step.
5. The apparatus, with a police escort, proceeds slowly to the meeting point with the fire department contingent.
6. At that point, the procession lines up in the same order as above.
7. The pallbearers dismount and march as follows:
  - a. The OIC is in front of the apparatus
  - b. Three pallbearers are on each side of the apparatus
  - c. Two pallbearers ride the rear step

## **AT THE CHURCH**

1. As the procession nears the church, the color guard moves to the side and allows the pipe band, city officials, and fire department members to pass.
2. At the church, the pipe band assembles near the entrance.
3. City officials line up near the entrance (leaving room for the color guard)
4. 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 Face*" is given.
5. When the street is lined on both sides and all personnel are facing the center, the color guard begins to march toward the church, followed by the apparatus/hearse. Leaving a space between the color guard and the hearse. The church assembly OIC commands, "*Present Arms*" (hand salute).
6. As the color guard arrives, it assembles near the front of the church.
7. The apparatus moves to the front of the church and stops. (Stop the engine).
  - a. As the apparatus passes assembled members, a staff member follows, giving the "*Order Arms*" command segments.
8. Pallbearers assemble at the rear of the apparatus, with two in the hose bed, and prepare to remove the casket.
9. The honor guard OIC commands, "*Present Arms*" (hand salute)
10. The pipe band plays as the casket is carried to the church door. (If the chaplain performs a blessing at the rear of the apparatus, the pipe band waits until the pallbearers begin to move before playing).
11. In the church, the pallbearers escort the casket to the front of the church, and the OIC follows.
12. Prior to dismissing personnel assembled outside advise them of the approximate time of reassemble for departure. Then the command is given, "*Detail, dismissed*".

## **MASS OR OTHER SERVICES ARE CONDUCTED**

**Note:** *The fire chief, the company commander, a friend, a union official, or a public official usually offers an appropriate eulogy. Coordinate this with the chaplain or other clergy member conducting the services.*

## **LEAVING THE CHURCH**

1. Fire personnel, the color guard, and the pipe band assemble outside the church prior to the end of the services.
2. At the end of the services and at the funeral director's signal, the pallbearers, followed by the OIC, move to the front of the church and escort the coffin to the rear.
3. The assembly OIC commands, "*Detail, Attention.*"
4. When the casket arrives at the rear of the church, the OIC commands, "*Present Arms.*"
5. The pipe band plays
6. The pallbearers, led by the OIC, move slowly to the rear of the hearse/apparatus to load the casket.
7. After loading, the pallbearer line up facing each other, the OIC commands, "*Detail, present arms*"; and the pallbearers give a hand salute.
8. The OIC commands, "*Order Arms*" (for all personnel)
9. The color guard captain commands, "*Color Guard Dismissed*"
10. The OIC commands, "*Detail, dismissed*" (to all pallbearers)
11. The pallbearers, color guard, bugler, and OIC enter waiting fire department vehicles for transportation to the cemetery
12. Fire personnel and city officials attending the cemetery services prepare to leave. Cemetery services are a private time for the family, so restrict attendance to only those personnel involved in the services and close friends.
13. As the funeral procession leaves, the assembly OIC orders, "*Present Arms*" for a hand salute.
14. After the procession leaves, the OIC commands "*Order Arms*" and "*Detail dismissed*" for a hand salute.

## **AT THE CEMETERY**

1. Prior to the family's assembling, the pallbearers assemble either in a straight line parallel to the grave or four on each side, facing each other, with the chief of department at the front end.
2. The color guard assembles at the foot of the grave.
3. The bugler positions himself away from the grave and awaits the command from the OIC.
4. The funeral director drapes an American flag (if provided) over the casket or folds it in a triangular shape and places it on the coffin.
5. As the family arrives, the OIC commands, "*Detail, Attention.*"
6. The chaplain conducts the services or leads in the final prayer.
7. When finished, the OIC commands, "*Present, Arms.*" A hand salute is rendered, and the color guard presents arms and *dips* the department flag.
8. The bugler plays taps.
9. At the conclusion of taps, the salute is held while the pallbearers, on signal from the OIC, fold the American flag into a triangular shape with only the blue field showing. The honor guard OIC retrieves the flag and presents it to the chief of department ( or ranking officer) who in turn presents it to the family (with the fire department condolences).
10. The honor guard OIC commands, "*Order Arms*"
11. The funeral director gives words of thanks from the family and indicates the conclusion of the services.
12. The honor guard OIC commands, "*Detail, dismissed.*"

## **Appendix-E CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS DEBRIEFING**

The line of duty death of a firefighter is a traumatic experience for all members of a fire department. If you haven't contacted a critical incident stress debriefing team before the funeral, request its services immediately after. After the funeral, many members may be left with an empty or helpless feeling that they subconsciously suppressed during the funeral preparations. Seek professional help to get your department through this difficult time.

## Appendix-F FIRE SERVICE HOMILY AND PRAYERS

### The Last Alarm

Memory is the priceless heritage of the ages. It is the echoing voice of happy days; experiences, sad emotions, fond recollections, beautiful traditions, friendships and the comradeship of those hearts were true.

Today, we are standing in memory of our brave departed brother/sister,

---

who has responded to his last alarm? Tradition tells us that he is not dead; reason tells us that he will only be absent for a little while; memory tells us he will be with us all the days of our lives; and faith tells us we shall someday meet again.

The souls of our departed brothers past are on the wings of angels, in that far distant shore of eternal bliss where the almighty ruler of perfect peace will hand to them that priceless gift of immortality, and each wind that sweeps back to us from eternal shores will bear the admonishing voices of our departed brothers, who seek to tell us that life is short and time is fleeting. Their voices, tinged with affection and clarified with the wisdom of their new adventure, whisper, that it is best for earthly joy --- that we honor our parents; hold sacred the veneration of the Supreme Being; practice faithfulness in all things; develop a fine spirit and high courage; engender generosity to our friends, our neighbors, and the stranger within our gates; help the unfortunate and fill their hearts with the melodious music of tolerance and mercy; be true to our God, our homes and our country; and all the days of our lives let our hearts be softened with the beautiful dictates of justice.

And thus, when we too respond to our "LAST ALARM", we shall find our departed brothers waiting with the light of love in their eyes --- to lead us to the Eternal Father, who rewards those who love truth, practice charity, honor chastity, and stand with justice.

With deepest reverence, let us bow our heads and say a silent prayer for the repose of the souls of our departed comrades **PAUSE: 30 SECONDS BEFORE SAYING AMEN.**

## **A FIREMAN'S PRAYER**

When I am called to duty, God, whenever flames may rage;  
Give me strength to save some life, whatever be its age.

Help me embrace a little child before it is too late  
Or save an older person from the horror of that fate.

Enable me to be alert and hear the weakest shout,  
And quickly and efficiently to put the fire out.

I want to fill my calling and to give the best in me,  
To guard my every neighbor and protect his property.

And if, according to my fate, I am to lose my life,  
Please bless with your protecting hand my children and my wife.

## **THE FIREMAN'S LAST CALL**

When I receive my final call  
That great summons from on high,  
The alarm that comes to one and all  
From the Lord of Earth and Sky.

Would you respond as I have done  
To neighbors along the way  
Comfort my wife, daughter or son?  
Please find some kind words to say.

Give my boots, coat, helmet and gloves  
To a fine young man with pride.  
Help him stand tall with those he loves  
And my spirit by his side.

Maybe I'm just reminiscing  
As I try to look ahead  
Where fire alarms will never ring  
This is true so Jesus said.

May God sustain and strengthen all,  
My family and friends so dear  
When I respond to my last call  
And my Lord says come up here.