

POLICY 8

LINE OF DUTY DEATH (LODD) & SERIOUS INJURY PLANING

LODD Operations, Funeral, Bell Ceremony, Flag Presentations, Scripts, and more



WISCONSIN EMS HONOR GUARD ASSOCIATION, INC.

1. PURPOSE

This handbook provides standardized guidance for EMS agencies in Wisconsin managing a:

- Line of Duty Death (LODD)
- Serious line-of-duty injury or illness

Its purpose is to ensure all incidents are handled with:

- **Dignity**
 - **Consistency**
 - **Professional coordination**
 - **Family-centered decision-making**
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2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all EMS personnel, including:

- EMTs and Paramedics
 - Dispatchers
 - EMS pilots
 - EMS physicians
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3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- The **family's wishes take precedence** in all decisions
 - Maintain **confidentiality and professionalism** at all times
 - Follow **National EMS Memorial Service standards**
 - Utilize **Incident Command System (ICS)** structure
 - Coordinate early with the **Wisconsin EMS Honor Guard (WIEMSHG)**
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4. PRE-INCIDENT PLANNING (MANDATORY)

A. Personal Information File (Required)

Each member should have a confidential file including:

- Emergency contacts
 - Biographical information
 - Service history
 - Funeral and honors preferences
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B. Agency SOP Development

Agencies shall maintain written procedures for:

- Notifications
 - Media response
 - Funeral and memorial operations
 - Personnel assignments
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C. Resource Readiness

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Maintain access to:

- Flags, mourning bands, bunting
- Dress uniforms and equipment
- Contact lists for partner agencies and support services

5. INITIAL ACTIONS (FIRST 24 HOURS)

A. Scene & Operational Control

- Maintain incident command structure
- Preserve scene integrity
- Limit radio traffic and speculation

B. Communication Control

- Assign a **Public Information Officer (PIO)** immediately
- Restrict social media and unofficial communication
- Prepare controlled messaging

C. Notifications (Priority Order)

1. Next of kin (in person, with law enforcement when appropriate)
2. Agency leadership
3. Personnel (controlled internal message)
4. Government officials
5. Support agencies

D. Immediate Support Actions

- Activate **CISM (Critical Incident Stress Management)**
- Secure mutual aid coverage
- Contact WIEMSHG for deployment

6. FAMILY SUPPORT OPERATIONS

A. Family Liaison Officer (FLO)

- Single point of contact for the family
- Available **24/7 throughout process**
- Coordinates all communication and support

B. Immediate Support

- Provide transportation and presence
- Secure private space (hospital/home)
- Assist with communication and logistics

C. Ongoing Support

- Assist with funeral planning

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- Coordinate childcare, meals, and logistics
 - Support benefit applications
 - Maintain long-term contact
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7. INVESTIGATION PROTOCOLS

- Law enforcement leads investigation
 - Preserve all evidence and PPE
 - Maintain accurate documentation:
 - Reports
 - Radio logs
 - Statements
 - Obtain:
 - Autopsy report
 - Death certificate (multiple copies required)
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8. NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES (CRITICAL)

A. Notification Team

Should include:

- Senior agency representative
 - Chaplain
 - Family Liaison Officer
 - Law enforcement (as applicable)
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B. Notification Standards

- Conduct **in person whenever possible**
 - Use clear, direct language
 - Do NOT speculate
 - Remain with family after notification
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C. Prohibited Statements

Avoid phrases such as:

- "I know how you feel"
 - "It was meant to be"
 - "Be strong"
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9. COMMAND STRUCTURE (FUNERAL / LODD RESPONSE)

Utilize ICS-style structure:

Key Roles:

1. Funeral Coordinator (WIEMSHG Lead)

- Oversees all ceremonial operations

2. Family Liaison Officer (FLO)

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- Primary family contact

3. Public Information Officer (PIO)

- Manages all media

4. Service/Church Coordinator

- Coordinates venue and service

5. Procession Coordinator

- Manages procession logistics

6. Cemetery Coordinator

- Oversees graveside operations

10. FUNERAL CLASSIFICATIONS

Type I – LODD

Full honors (maximum ceremonial support)

Type II – Active Member (Non-LODD)

Modified honors

Type III – Retired Member

Limited honors based on service and availability

11. CEREMONIAL STANDARDS

A. Core Elements (LODD)

- Flag-draped casket
- Honor Guard and Color Guard
- Bell Ceremony / Last Call
- Procession
- Graveside honors
- Taps / Piper
- Flag presentation

B. Key Principle

All honors must be approved by the family.

12. PROCESSION AND GRAVESIDE OPERATIONS

- Establish staging and traffic control
- Define procession order in advance
- Coordinate with law enforcement
- Execute “Walk of Honor” when appropriate

Standard Sequence:

1. Arrival and staging
2. Casket movement with honors
3. Clergy service

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4. Honors (bell, Taps, volley if applicable)
5. Flag folding and presentation
6. Final dismissal

13. VIEWING / VIGIL (LODD)

- Honor Guard posted at casket
- Full uniform with gloves and cover
- CISM support available
- Controlled and respectful access

14. MEMORIAL SERVICE PLANNING

Include:

- Facility size and logistics
- Seating plan (family first)
- Program coordination
- Audio/visual needs
- Rehearsals for key personnel

15. DIGNITARY MANAGEMENT

- Assign a **Dignitary Coordinator**
- Pre-plan seating, speaking roles, and security
- Coordinate with federal/state officials
- Ensure **family remains priority focus**

16. SURVIVOR BENEFITS (CRITICAL FUNCTION)

A. Federal

- Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB)

B. State

- Workers' Compensation

C. Other

- Social Security
- Veterans benefits
- Local/agency benefits

Responsibility:

Agency and WIEMSHG shall assist the family through the entire process.

17. MEMORIALIZATION

Agencies are encouraged to:

- Establish memorials or scholarships
- Support National EMS Memorial participation
- Maintain annual remembrance activities

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18. UNIFORM AND CEREMONIAL STANDARDS

- Follow WIEMSHG Uniform Policy
 - Wear mourning bands per protocol
 - Maintain consistent appearance across agencies
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WI EMS HONOR GUARD – CEREMONIAL SCRIPTS & COMMANDS

1. BELL CEREMONY (STANDARD EMS VERSION)

Narration (Chaplain or Designee)

“For centuries, the lives of EMS providers have been closely associated with the ringing of a bell. As they began their tour of duty, the bell signaled the start of their watch. Through the day and night, each alarm was sounded by a bell, calling them to serve—often placing their lives in jeopardy for the sake of others.

And when the call was complete, the bell rang once more, signaling the end of that response. Today, we honor our brother/sister, [Name], whose duty has now come to an end.

Their service was given with courage, dedication, and compassion. And so, we mark the end of their watch.”

Commands + Actions

Officer in Charge (OIC):

- “Honor Guard, ATTENTION.”
- “Color Guard, PRESENT ARMS.”

(Bell rung 3 times – pause between each)

OIC:

- “Color Guard, ORDER ARMS.”
- “Honor Guard, PARADE REST.”

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2. LAST CALL (RADIO SCRIPT – EMS VERSION)

Dispatcher or Designee

“Attention all units, stand by for a final call.

[Unit/Call Sign], this is dispatch.”

(Pause)

“[Unit/Call Sign], you have completed your final assignment.

Your duties are done.

We thank you for your dedicated service, your compassion, and your sacrifice.

You will not be forgotten.

[Name], you are clear of all calls.

Rest easy. We have the watch from here.”

Optional Closing

“End of watch: [Date].”

3. FLAG PRESENTATION (CIVILIAN EMS VERSION)

Presenter (Chief / Commander / Designee)

(Kneel or present respectfully)

“On behalf of a grateful community, and the Wisconsin EMS Honor Guard Association, it is my honor to present this flag as a symbol of our appreciation for the dedicated service and sacrifice of your loved one, [Name].

Their commitment to serving others will never be forgotten.

Please accept this flag as a lasting tribute to their life, their service, and their legacy.”

Optional Personalization

Add:

- Years of service
- Agency name
- Personal note

4. HONOR GUARD COMMAND SEQUENCE (FUNERAL – STANDARD)

Casket Movement

OIC Commands:

- “Honor Guard, ATTENTION.”
- “Present, ARMS” *(as casket passes)*
- “Order, ARMS.”

Walk of Honor

- Personnel at attention
- Salute initiated as the casket approaches

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- Salute held until the casket passes
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5. GRAVESIDE COMMAND SEQUENCE

Upon Arrival

- “Honor Guard, ATTENTION.”
 - “Parade, REST” (during service)
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Before Honors

- “Honor Guard, ATTENTION.”
 - “Present, ARMS.”
-

Taps / Bell / Honors Conducted

After Honors

- “Order, ARMS.”
 - “Honor Guard, PARADE REST.”
-

Final Dismissal

- “Honor Guard, ATTENTION.”
 - “Honor Guard, DISMISSED.”
-

6. CHAPLAIN – GRAVESIDE PRAYER (NON-DENOMINATIONAL)

“Let us pray.

We gather today with heavy hearts, yet deep gratitude for the life of [Name].

We honor their service, their compassion, and their unwavering commitment to others.

In moments of emergency and need, they answered the call without hesitation.

In moments of fear, they brought calm.

In moments of crisis, they brought hope.

Grant comfort to their family, strength to their colleagues, and peace to all who mourn.

May we carry forward their legacy in how we serve, how we care, and how we remember.

Amen.”

7. COLOR GUARD COMMANDS (STANDARDIZED)

- “Color Guard, ATTENTION.”
- “Color Guard, FORWARD MARCH.”

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- “Color Guard, HALT.”
 - “Color Guard, PRESENT ARMS.”
 - “Color Guard, ORDER ARMS.”
-

8. MOURNING BAND PROTOCOL (COMMAND NOTE)

OIC Reminder (before ceremony):

- “Ensure mourning bands are properly placed on badges.”
 - “Uniform inspection complete.”
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9. PROCESSION COMMAND NOTES (FIELD USE)

Before Movement:

- Confirm route
- Confirm staging
- Confirm lead vehicle

Command:

- “Procession, PREPARE TO MOVE.”
 - “Procession, MOVE OUT.”
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10. DISMISSAL SCRIPT (OPTIONAL CLOSING)

OIC or Chaplain:

“This concludes the honors for [Name].

On behalf of the Wisconsin EMS Honor Guard, we thank all who attended and supported this service.

We ask that you continue to keep the family, friends, and colleagues in your thoughts.

Honor Guard—dismissed.”

11. KEY PRINCIPLES (IMPORTANT FOR YOUR TEAM)

- Commands must be clear, slow, and deliberate
- Timing is more important than speed
- Always defer to:
 - Family wishes
 - Religious considerations
 - Agency preferences