



# COMPREHENSIVE EMS FUNERAL PLANNING GUIDE

For Directors and Chiefs Managing Line-of-Duty  
Deaths and Serious Incidents

## Prepared for Emergency Medical Services Leadership

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*"The measure of our professionalism is not only in how we serve the living, but in how we honor the fallen and care for those they leave behind."*

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## IMPORTANT NOTICE

This guide addresses one of the most difficult responsibilities you will ever face as an EMS leader: managing the death or critical injury of one of your team members. While we hope you never need to use this manual, having it prepared and readily accessible is an essential part of your duty to your personnel and their families.

**This is not morbid preparation—this is professional responsibility.**

Every agency, regardless of size, should have a plan in place before tragedy strikes. In the chaos and grief that follows a line-of-duty death, this guide will provide the structure and guidance you need to honor your fallen responder with dignity while supporting their family and your grieving team.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

**SECTION 1: PRE-INCIDENT PLANNING & PREPARATION** *(Page 8)*

**SECTION 2: INITIAL INCIDENT RESPONSE** *(Page 15)*

**SECTION 3: FAMILY NOTIFICATION PROTOCOL** *(Page 24)*

**SECTION 4: AGENCY MEMBER NOTIFICATION** *(Page 35)*

**SECTION 5: MEDIA MANAGEMENT & PUBLIC INFORMATION** *(Page 42)*

**SECTION 6: INVESTIGATION & DOCUMENTATION** *(Page 51)*

**SECTION 7: TEAM STRUCTURE & ROLE ASSIGNMENTS** *(Page 59)*

**SECTION 8: IMMEDIATE FAMILY SUPPORT (Hospital to Home Phase)** *(Page 72)*

**SECTION 9: FUNERAL SERVICE PLANNING** *(Page 82)*

**SECTION 10: FUNERAL & MEMORIAL SERVICE EXECUTION** *(Page 95)*

**SECTION 11: PROCESSION & GRAVESIDE CEREMONIES** *(Page 108)*

**SECTION 12: POST-FUNERAL RECEPTION & GATHERING** *(Page 118)*

**SECTION 13: SURVIVOR BENEFITS & FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE** *(Page 124)*

**SECTION 14: LONG-TERM FAMILY SUPPORT & COMMEMORATION** *(Page 138)*

**SECTION 15: AGENCY SUPPORT FOR GRIEVING MEMBERS** *(Page 147)*

**APPENDICES** *(Page 156)*

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## INTRODUCTION: WHY THIS GUIDE EXISTS

### The Reality We Face

Emergency Medical Services personnel face danger every day. Vehicle collisions, violent patients, infectious diseases, cardiac events, and the cumulative stress of our profession all pose real threats to our people. While we work tirelessly to prevent line-of-duty deaths and injuries, we must also be prepared to respond with professionalism, compassion, and dignity when tragedy strikes.

This guide exists because **preparation is not pessimism—it is leadership.**

When you lose a member of your EMS family, you will be thrust into an overwhelming situation while dealing with your own grief. You will need to support a devastated family, manage a grieving agency, coordinate with multiple outside organizations, handle intense media attention, navigate complex benefit systems, and plan a funeral that honors your fallen responder—all while maintaining operational readiness for your community.

Without preparation, critical mistakes will be made. Families will feel abandoned. Important benefits may be missed. Your personnel will suffer without adequate support. The memory of your fallen colleague may not receive the honor it deserves.

**With preparation, you can transform tragedy into tribute.**

### What This Guide Provides

This comprehensive manual provides:

- **Step-by-step procedures** for every phase from initial incident through long-term family support
- **Specific language guidance** for the most difficult conversations you'll ever have
- **Role definitions and assignments** so everyone knows their responsibilities
- **Templates and samples** you can adapt to your agency's needs
- **Checklists** to ensure nothing is forgotten during chaos and grief
- **Resource directories** connecting you to expert assistance
- **Compassionate guidance** that honors both the fallen and the living

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## How to Use This Manual

### Before an incident:

1. Read this guide thoroughly
2. Adapt templates and procedures to your agency
3. Develop your Standard Operating Procedures
4. Collect personal information packets from all personnel
5. Identify and train key role holders
6. Establish relationships with support resources
7. Review and update annually

### During an incident:

1. Keep this guide immediately accessible
2. Follow the Quick Reference Timeline (next page)
3. Assign roles using the role cards in Section 7
4. Use checklists to track completion of critical tasks
5. Refer to specific sections as needed
6. Adapt procedures to family wishes and circumstances

### After an incident:

1. Conduct after-action review
2. Update procedures based on lessons learned
3. Continue long-term family support protocols
4. Provide ongoing support to agency members
5. Share knowledge with other agencies

## A Note on Family-Centered Approach

Throughout this guide, you will see repeated emphasis on **respecting family wishes above tradition or agency preference**. This is intentional and critical.

The funeral is not for the agency—it is for the family. While we hold traditions and protocols dear, the family's religious beliefs, cultural practices, and personal preferences must take precedence. Our role is to support, assist, and honor—not to dictate or impose.

A family that feels heard, respected, and supported will have a healthier grief journey and a lasting positive relationship with your agency. A family that feels pressured or overridden will carry resentment alongside their grief.

**Always ask. Always listen. Always respect.**

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## Acknowledgments

This guide draws upon the experience and expertise of:

- Wisconsin EMS Honor Guard Association
- National EMS Memorial Service (NEMSMS)
- Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program
- International Association of Fire Chiefs
- National Fallen Firefighters Foundation
- Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) professionals
- EMS agencies across the nation that have walked this difficult path

We honor their service and their willingness to share hard-won knowledge so that others may better serve grieving families and agencies.

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## HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

### Quick Navigation System

This manual is organized chronologically, following the typical sequence of events from pre-incident planning through long-term support. However, in a crisis, you may need to jump directly to specific information.

#### Use these navigation tools:

**Section Headers:** Each major section begins with:

- **Purpose:** Why this section matters
- **Key Personnel:** Who needs this information
- **Timeline:** When these actions typically occur
- **Critical Considerations:** What you cannot forget

**Checklists:** Look for ☐ checkbox symbols for actionable items

**Warning Boxes:** Critical information appears in bordered boxes like this:

 **CRITICAL:** This action must be completed before proceeding.

**Sample Language:** Italicized text in quotes provides exact wording you can use

**Cross-References:** Related information is noted as "See Section X.X"

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## Customization for Your Agency

This guide provides comprehensive procedures that should be adapted to your agency's:

- Size and structure
- Geographic location
- Available resources
- Community characteristics
- Religious and cultural demographics
- Existing mutual aid agreements
- State and local regulations

**Action Item:** As you read, highlight or note sections that need customization for your agency. Assign someone to create your agency-specific version.

## Digital vs. Printed Versions

**Maintain both:**

- **Digital version:** Easy to update, search, and share; accessible from multiple locations
- **Printed version:** Available when technology fails; can be grabbed quickly; works in any environment

**Storage locations:**

- Director/Chief's office (printed and digital)
- Command vehicle (printed)
- Station offices (digital access)
- Key personnel's personal devices (digital)
- Secure cloud storage (digital backup)

## Training and Familiarization

**Do not wait for a tragedy to read this guide.**

Conduct annual training that includes:

- Tabletop exercises walking through scenarios
- Role assignment and familiarization
- Review of updated contact information
- Practice with notification procedures
- Coordination with external partners

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Consider inviting Wisconsin EMS Honor Guard or experienced agencies to assist with training.

## Updates and Revisions

This guide should be reviewed and updated:

- **Annually** (minimum)
- After any line-of-duty death or near-miss
- When key personnel change
- When contact information changes
- When laws or benefit programs change
- When new resources become available

Assign a specific person the responsibility for maintaining this manual.

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# QUICK REFERENCE TIMELINE: FIRST 72 HOURS

This timeline provides a high-level overview of critical actions in the first three days following a line-of-duty death. Detailed procedures for each action are found in the corresponding sections.

## HOURL 0-1: IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

### **Incident Scene:**

- ☐ Establish radio discipline—limit transmissions
- ☐ Secure the scene for investigation
- ☐ Request law enforcement if not already present
- ☐ Preserve all evidence (equipment, vehicles, medications, records)
- ☐ Identify witnesses and separate statements
- ☐ Photograph/document the scene before disturbing
- ☐ Control access—family should not arrive at the active scene

### **Command Actions:**

- ☐ Agency Director/Chief notified immediately
- ☐ Establish a command post away from the scene
- ☐ Activate notification team
- ☐ Contact Wisconsin EMS Honor Guard
- ☐ Notify medical examiner/coroner
- ☐ Begin incident documentation

### **Communications:**

- ☐ Implement strict information control
- ☐ No names on radio or to media
- ☐ Notify dispatch of communication protocols
- ☐ Prepare holding statement for media

*See Section 2: Initial Incident Response*

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## HOURLS 1-4: NOTIFICATION PHASE

### **Family Notification:**

- ☐ Locate next of kin (use personal information packet)
- ☐ Assemble notification team (2-3 people minimum)
- ☐ Conduct in-person notification at a private location
- ☐ Never notify by phone unless absolutely unavoidable
- ☐ Assign Family Liaison Officer for 24/7 support
- ☐ Arrange family transportation to the hospital if needed

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- ☐ Provide private space at the hospital
- ☐ Facilitate viewing if family desires

**Agency Notification:**

- ☐ Notify all on-duty personnel in person
- ☐ Call all off-duty personnel individually
- ☐ Use prepared script to ensure consistency
- ☐ Emphasize no social media posting
- ☐ Announce station briefing time
- ☐ Activate the CISM team

**External Notifications:**

- ☐ Notify neighboring agencies (after family notification)
- ☐ Notify state EMS office
- ☐ Notify union/association representatives
- ☐ Notify insurance carriers
- ☐ Notify workers' compensation

*See Section 3: Family Notification Protocol*

*See Section 4: Agency Member Notification*

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## HOURS 4-12: INITIAL SUPPORT & COORDINATION

**Family Support:**

- ☐ Family Liaison Officer remains with the family
- ☐ Arrange lodging if family is from out of town
- ☐ Coordinate meals for family
- ☐ Arrange childcare if needed
- ☐ Secure family home from media/visitors
- ☐ Begin discussing funeral preferences
- ☐ Provide initial information about benefits

**Media Management:**

- ☐ Release initial statement (name only after family approval)
- ☐ Schedule news conference if appropriate
- ☐ Establish media liaison
- ☐ Monitor social media
- ☐ Prepare press kit with approved information

**Investigation:**

- ☐ Law enforcement conducting interviews
- ☐ Medical examiner/coroner examination
- ☐ Collect all relevant records and documentation

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- ☐ Photograph equipment and vehicles
- ☐ Secure chain of custody for evidence

**Team Assembly:**

- ☐ Assign Funeral Coordinator
- ☐ Assign Public Information Officer
- ☐ Assign Procession Coordinator
- ☐ Assign Church/Ceremony, Coordinator
- ☐ Hold initial coordination meeting
- ☐ Establish communication protocols

*See Section 5: Media Management*

*See Section 7: Team Structure & Role Assignments*

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## HOURS 12-24: PLANNING BEGINS

**Funeral Planning:**

- ☐ Meet with family about funeral preferences
- ☐ Determine service type (I, II, or III)
- ☐ Contact the funeral home
- ☐ Discuss religious/cultural requirements
- ☐ Begin guest list development
- ☐ Identify potential speakers/eulogists
- ☐ Discuss honor guard participation
- ☐ Coordinate with Wisconsin EMS Honor Guard

**Agency Operations:**

- ☐ Station briefing for all personnel
- ☐ CISM debriefing available
- ☐ Adjust staffing to allow funeral attendance
- ☐ Begin collecting donations if appropriate
- ☐ Establish a memorial fund if desired
- ☐ Prepare station for visitors/media

**Benefits Initiation:**

- ☐ Contact PSOB program
- ☐ Initiate workers' compensation claim
- ☐ Contact pension system
- ☐ Gather required documentation
- ☐ Obtain multiple certified death certificates (order 15-20)

*See Section 9: Funeral Service Planning*

*See Section 13: Survivor Benefits*

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## DAYS 2-3: DETAILED COORDINATION

### **Funeral Coordination:**

- ☐ Finalize service date, time, location
- ☐ Coordinate with clergy/officiant
- ☐ Select music and musicians
- ☐ Confirm speakers and prepare remarks
- ☐ Design service program
- ☐ Arrange for printing of programs
- ☐ Coordinate pallbearers
- ☐ Plan procession route
- ☐ Coordinate law enforcement traffic control
- ☐ Arrange reception venue and catering
- ☐ Prepare flag for presentation
- ☐ Arrange for bagpiper if desired
- ☐ Coordinate rifle volley if appropriate

### **Logistics:**

- ☐ Reserve church/ceremony venue
- ☐ Arrange seating for dignitaries
- ☐ Coordinate parking
- ☐ Arrange audio/visual equipment
- ☐ Plan for overflow crowd if expected
- ☐ Coordinate with the cemetery
- ☐ Arrange for tent/chairs at graveside
- ☐ Plan reception setup

### **Communications:**

- ☐ Prepare funeral announcement
- ☐ Notify neighboring agencies of funeral details
- ☐ Coordinate dignitary attendance
- ☐ Prepare media advisory
- ☐ Update agency website and social media
- ☐ Prepare talking points for personnel

### **Personnel Support:**

- ☐ Ongoing CISM availability
- ☐ Chaplain visits to stations
- ☐ Peer support check-ins
- ☐ Uniform preparation assistance
- ☐ Transportation arrangements for the funeral

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See Section 10: Funeral & Memorial Service Execution  
See Section 11: Procession & Graveside Ceremonies

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## DAYS 4-7: FUNERAL WEEK

### **Final Preparations:**

- ☐ Conduct a walk-through at the ceremony venue
- ☐ Conduct a walk-through at the cemetery
- ☐ Brief all participants on roles
- ☐ Confirm all vendors and services
- ☐ Print programs
- ☐ Prepare badge/flag for presentation
- ☐ Final coordination meeting 24 hours before service

### **Viewing/Visitation:**

- ☐ Honor guard posted if appropriate
- ☐ Guest book available
- ☐ Agency representatives present
- ☐ Family supported and protected
- ☐ Media managed appropriately

### **Funeral Service:**

- ☐ Execute according to plan
- ☐ Support family throughout
- ☐ Manage dignitaries and guests
- ☐ Coordinate uniformed personnel
- ☐ Perform special ceremonies
- ☐ Photograph/video for family

### **Procession & Graveside:**

- ☐ Coordinate vehicle lineup
- ☐ Execute procession with traffic control
- ☐ Conduct a graveside ceremony
- ☐ Present flag and badge to family
- ☐ Final salute and dismissal

### **Reception:**

- ☐ Host a meal for family and guests
- ☐ Provide space for informal support
- ☐ Allow family to rest

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*See Section 10: Funeral & Memorial Service Execution*  
*See Section 11: Procession & Graveside Ceremonies*  
*See Section 12: Post-Funeral Reception*

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## BEYOND 72 HOURS: ONGOING SUPPORT

The funeral is not the end of your responsibility. Long-term family support and agency healing continue for months and years.

### **Week 2-4:**

- ☐ Continue regular family contact
- ☐ Assist with benefit applications
- ☐ Help with household tasks
- ☐ Provide grief resources
- ☐ Support agency members
- ☐ Plan memorial tributes

### **Months 2-12:**

- ☐ Holiday and anniversary support
- ☐ Scholarship establishment
- ☐ Memorial dedication
- ☐ National EMS Memorial Service participation
- ☐ Ongoing grief support

*See Section 14: Long-Term Family Support*  
*See Section 15: Agency Support for Grieving Members*

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# CRITICAL FIRST ACTIONS CHECKLIST

**Print this page and keep it immediately accessible.**

When you receive notification of a line-of-duty death or critical injury, take these actions immediately:

## WITHIN FIRST 15 MINUTES:

- ☐ **Establish radio discipline** - Limit all radio traffic; no names transmitted
- ☐ **Secure the scene** - Preserve evidence; control access; document everything
- ☐ **Notify law enforcement** - Request investigation assistance if not already present
- ☐ **Notify Agency Director/Chief** - The highest-ranking official must be informed immediately
- ☐ **Activate notification team** - Assemble team to notify family (DO NOT notify family yet)
- ☐ **Control information** - No information to media or public until family is notified
- ☐ **Establish command post** - Away from the scene; begin documentation

## WITHIN FIRST HOUR:

- ☐ **Locate next of kin** - Use personal information packet; verify current address
- ☐ **Conduct family notification** - In person, with the notification team, at a private location
- ☐ **Assign Family Liaison Officer** - Dedicated person for 24/7 family support
- ☐ **Contact Wisconsin EMS Honor Guard** - (715) 781-0763 or [info@wiemshonorguard.org](mailto:info@wiemshonorguard.org)
- ☐ **Notify medical examiner/coroner** - Required for investigation
- ☐ **Begin agency notifications** - After the family is notified, use the prepared script
- ☐ **Activate CISM team** - Arrange support for agency members
- ☐ **Prepare initial media statement** - Hold until after family notification

## WITHIN FIRST 4 HOURS:

- ☐ **Assign key roles** - Funeral Coordinator, PIO, Procession Coordinator, etc.
- ☐ **Hold initial coordination meeting** - All key personnel; establish communication plan
- ☐ **Release initial public statement** - Only after family approval of name release

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- ☐ **Begin investigation documentation** - Preserve all evidence and records
- ☐ **Initiate benefit processes** - Contact PSOB, workers' comp, pension
- ☐ **Provide family support** - Meals, lodging, childcare, privacy protection
- ☐ **Station briefing** - Gather all personnel; provide information and support

### **WITHIN FIRST 24 HOURS:**

- ☐ **Meet with family about funeral** - Discuss preferences, service type, timing
  - ☐ **Contact funeral home** - Begin coordination
  - ☐ **Order death certificates** - Request 15-20 certified copies
  - ☐ **Coordinate with Honor Guard** - Discuss level of involvement
  - ☐ **Establish memorial fund** - If appropriate and desired
  - ☐ **Plan ongoing family support** - Assign personnel for continued assistance
- 

### **REMEMBER:**

- Family notification BEFORE any public information
- Preserve ALL evidence and documentation
- Respect family wishes above all else
- Support your people—they are grieving too
- You don't have to do this alone—ask for help

### **EMERGENCY CONTACTS:**

- Wisconsin EMS Honor Guard: (715) 781-0763
  - PSOB Program: 1-888-744-6513
  - National EMS Memorial Service: (703) 321-2500
  - [Add your state EMS office]
  - [Add your CISM team contact]
  - [Add your chaplain contact]
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# SECTION 1: PRE-INCIDENT PLANNING & PREPARATION

**Purpose:** To establish procedures, gather information, and train personnel BEFORE a tragedy occurs, ensuring your agency can respond with professionalism and compassion when faced with a line-of-duty death.

**Key Personnel:** Agency Director/Chief, Administrative Staff, All Personnel

**Timeline:** Ongoing; annual review required

**Critical Considerations:** Pre-planning is not morbid—it is essential leadership. The time to prepare is now, not during a crisis.

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## 1.1 WHY PRE-PLANNING MATTERS

### The Reality of Unpreparedness

Agencies that have not prepared for a line-of-duty death face:

- **Chaos during crisis:** No one knows their role or responsibilities
- **Critical mistakes:** Important notifications missed; evidence lost; family alienated
- **Missed benefits:** Failure to properly document or file claims costs families thousands
- **Poor family support:** The grieving family feels abandoned or pressured
- **Media disasters:** Inappropriate information released; family privacy violated
- **Agency trauma:** Personnel suffer without adequate support systems
- **Dishonored memory:** Funeral lacks dignity and professionalism

### The Power of Preparation

Agencies that have prepared can:

- **Respond immediately** with clear roles and procedures
- **Support the family** with compassion and competence
- **Preserve evidence** for investigation and benefits
- **Manage media** professionally while protecting privacy
- **Coordinate resources** efficiently across multiple agencies
- **Honor the fallen** with dignity and respect
- **Support personnel** through grief and trauma
- **Navigate benefits** successfully, securing financial support for survivors

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**The difference between prepared and unprepared is the difference between honoring your fallen colleague and failing them in their final service.**

## Leadership Responsibility

As an EMS leader, you have a duty to:

1. **Prepare your agency** with plans, procedures, and training
2. **Gather information** needed for rapid response
3. **Establish relationships** with support resources
4. **Train key personnel** in their roles and responsibilities
5. **Review and update** plans annually
6. **Lead by example** in taking this preparation seriously

This is not optional. This is fundamental leadership.

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## 1.2 PERSONAL INFORMATION PACKETS

### Purpose and Importance

Personal information packets contain critical information needed to:

- Locate and notify next of kin quickly
- Understand family structure and relationships
- Respect religious and cultural preferences
- Contact emergency resources
- Process benefits and claims
- Plan appropriate funeral services

**Without this information, you will waste precious hours searching for basic facts while a family waits in agony for notification.**

### What to Include

Each personnel member should complete a confidential packet containing:

#### **SECTION A: PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION**

- Full legal name (including middle name)
- Date of birth
- Social Security Number
- Driver's license number and state

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- Home address (current)
- Personal cell phone
- Personal email
- Emergency contact phone (non-family)

## **SECTION B: FAMILY INFORMATION**

- Marital status
- Spouse/partner name and contact information
- Children's names, ages, and locations
- Parents' names and contact information
- Siblings' names and contact information
- Other significant family members
- Estranged family members (important to know)
- Custody arrangements, if applicable

## **SECTION C: NEXT OF KIN NOTIFICATION**

- Primary next of kin (name, relationship, phone, address)
- Secondary next of kin (if primary unavailable)
- Who should NOT be notified or involved
- Special considerations (health issues, language barriers, etc.)

## **SECTION D: RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL PREFERENCES**

- Religious affiliation
- Preferred clergy or spiritual leader (name and contact)
- Church/temple/mosque affiliation
- Cultural traditions to be honored
- Funeral preferences (burial vs. cremation)
- Cemetery preferences or pre-arrangements
- Specific wishes for service

## **SECTION E: MEDICAL INFORMATION**

- Blood type
- Allergies
- Current medications
- Medical conditions
- Physician name and contact
- Health insurance information

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- Organ donation wishes

## **SECTION F: FINANCIAL AND LEGAL**

- Life insurance policies (company, policy number, beneficiary)
- Pension information
- Bank accounts (for benefit deposits)
- Attorney name and contact
- Will or trust location
- Power of attorney
- Pre-paid funeral arrangements

## **SECTION G: EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION**

- Hire date
- Position/rank
- Certifications and licenses
- Union/association membership
- Previous EMS/public safety employment
- Military service (branch, dates, discharge type)
- Awards and commendations

## **SECTION H: FUNERAL PREFERENCES**

- Desired service type (religious, secular, military honors)
- Burial or cremation preference
- Cemetery preference
- Uniform preferences for burial
- Music preferences
- Specific readings or prayers
- Who should speak at the service
- Charitable donations in place of flowers

## **SECTION I: PERSONAL WISHES**

- Any specific requests for the funeral or memorial
- Messages to family or colleagues
- Special items to be included (photos, mementos)
- Social media wishes (memorial pages, etc.)

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## Collection and Storage

### Collection Process:

1. Provide a blank packet to all personnel (new hires and existing)
2. Explain purpose and importance
3. Allow completion at home for privacy
4. Set deadline for return (30 days for new hires)
5. Collect in a sealed envelope marked "CONFIDENTIAL."
6. Store securely with restricted access

### Storage Requirements:

- Locked file cabinet or safe
- Access limited to Director/Chief and designated backup
- Digital backup stored securely (encrypted)
- Updated annually or when personnel report changes
- Separate from general personnel files
- Clearly labeled for emergency access

### Annual Update Process:

- Distribute update forms each January
- Request return within 30 days
- Follow up with personnel who don't respond
- Update digital and physical copies
- Destroy outdated versions securely

## Template

A complete Personal Information Packet template is provided in **Appendix B**. Customize for your agency and distribute to all personnel.

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## 1.3 STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE DEVELOPMENT

### Why You Need an SOP

A Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for line-of-duty deaths:

- Provides clear guidance during chaos and grief
- Ensures consistency across incidents
- Defines roles and responsibilities

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- Establishes a chain of command
- Documents your agency's commitment to fallen members
- Protects against liability
- Demonstrates professionalism to accrediting bodies

**Your SOP should be based on this guide but customized for your agency's specific circumstances, resources, and community.**

## SOP Development Process

### **Step 1: Assign Responsibility**

Designate a person or committee to develop the SOP. Include:

- Agency leadership
- Operations personnel
- Administrative staff
- Chaplain or CISM representative
- Union/association representative

### **Step 2: Review This Guide**

Read this entire manual and identify sections applicable to your agency.

### **Step 3: Customize Procedures**

Adapt procedures to your:

- Agency size and structure
- Available resources
- Geographic location
- Community characteristics
- Existing mutual aid agreements
- State and local regulations

### **Step 4: Identify Resources**

Document specific contacts and resources:

- Wisconsin EMS Honor Guard
- Local law enforcement agencies
- Medical examiner/coroner
- CISM team
- Chaplains
- Funeral homes
- Neighboring EMS agencies

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- State EMS office
- Union/association representatives
- Media contacts

### **Step 5: Define Roles**

Clearly specify who fills each role:

- Agency Manager/Director
- Funeral Coordinator
- Family Liaison Officer
- Public Information Officer
- Procession Coordinator
- Church/Ceremony Coordinator
- Backup personnel for each role

### **Step 6: Draft Document**

Create a comprehensive SOP including:

- Purpose and scope
- Definitions
- Roles and responsibilities
- Notification procedures
- Investigation protocols
- Family support procedures
- Funeral planning guidelines
- Media management
- Benefits assistance
- Long-term support
- Appendices with templates and checklists

### **Step 7: Review and Approval**

- Circulate draft for review
- Incorporate feedback
- Legal review if appropriate
- Final approval by the Agency Director/Chief
- Board or commission approval if required

### **Step 8: Distribution and Training**

- Distribute to all personnel

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- Conduct training sessions
- Include in new hire orientation
- Post on agency intranet
- Provide printed copies at key locations

#### **Step 9: Annual Review**

- Review and update annually
- Update after any line-of-duty death
- Update when personnel or resources change
- Document all revisions

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## SOP Essential Elements Checklist

Your SOP must include:

- ☐ Clear statement of purpose and scope
  - ☐ Definitions of key terms
  - ☐ Activation criteria and authority
  - ☐ Chain of command and decision-making
  - ☐ Role definitions with specific responsibilities
  - ☐ Family notification procedures
  - ☐ Agency notification procedures
  - ☐ Media management protocols
  - ☐ Investigation coordination
  - ☐ Evidence preservation requirements
  - ☐ Family support procedures
  - ☐ Funeral planning guidelines
  - ☐ Service type options
  - ☐ Honor guard coordination
  - ☐ Procession procedures
  - ☐ Benefits assistance protocols
  - ☐ Long-term family support
  - ☐ Agency member support (CISM, counseling)
  - ☐ Memorial and commemoration guidelines
  - ☐ Contact information for all resources
  - ☐ Templates and checklists
  - ☐ References to this guide and other resources
- 

## 1.4 TEAM TRAINING AND ROLE ASSIGNMENTS

### Identifying Key Personnel

**Before a tragedy occurs, identify and train personnel for these critical roles:**

#### **Agency Manager/Director**

- Overall incident commander
- Final decision-making authority
- Approves all public communications
- Coordinates with external agencies
- *Primary: [Name] Backup: [Name]*

#### **Funeral Coordinator**

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- Overall funeral logistics management
- Coordinates all teams and resources
- Liaison with Wisconsin EMS Honor Guard
- *Primary: [Name] Backup: [Name]*

#### **Family Liaison Officer**

- 24/7 family support and communication
- Attends all family meetings
- Coordinates family needs and preferences
- *Primary: [Name] Backup: [Name]*

#### **Public Information Officer**

- All media relations and communications
- Press releases and news conferences
- Social media management
- *Primary: [Name] Backup: [Name]*

#### **Procession Coordinator**

- Procession planning and execution
- Law enforcement coordination
- Vehicle staging and route management
- *Primary: [Name] Backup: [Name]*

#### **Church/Ceremony Coordinator**

- Venue coordination and setup
- Ceremony logistics and timing
- Dignitary seating and management
- *Primary: [Name] Backup: [Name]*

#### **Notification Team Members**

- Trained in death notification procedures
- Available for immediate response
- *Members: [Names]*

#### **CISM Team Coordinator**

- Activates critical incident stress support
- Coordinates counseling services

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- Monitors agency member wellbeing
- *Primary: [Name] Backup: [Name]*

### **Benefits Coordinator**

- Assists family with benefit applications
- Gathers required documentation
- Tracks deadlines and requirements
- *Primary: [Name] Backup: [Name]*

## **Training Requirements**

### **All Personnel Training (Annual):**

- Overview of line-of-duty death procedures
- Personal information packet completion
- Social media and information control
- Grief support resources available
- How to support grieving colleagues

### **Key Role Holders Training (Annual):**

- Detailed role responsibilities
- Tabletop exercise scenarios
- Coordination and communication protocols
- Resource familiarization
- Notification procedures practice

### **Notification Team Training (Semi-Annual):**

- Death notification best practices
- What to say and what not to say
- Role-playing scenarios
- Cultural sensitivity
- Trauma response

### **Leadership Training (Annual):**

- Overall incident management
- Decision-making under stress
- Media relations
- Family support principles

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- Benefits navigation
- Long-term support planning

## Training Methods

### **Tabletop Exercises:**

Present realistic scenarios and walk through response:

- "A paramedic is killed in an ambulance collision. Walk through the first 24 hours."
- "A responder dies of cardiac arrest at home. How do we determine if it's line-of-duty?"
- "Family wants a private funeral with no agency involvement. How do we respect this while still honoring our colleague?"

### **Role-Playing:**

Practice difficult conversations:

- Death notification to spouse
- Media interview requests
- Explaining benefits to the grieving family
- Supporting angry or confused family members

### **Guest Speakers:**

Invite experienced personnel:

- Wisconsin EMS Honor Guard members
- Agencies that have experienced LODD
- PSOB program representatives
- Grief counselors
- Funeral directors

### **Resource Familiarization:**

Visit and establish relationships:

- Local funeral homes
- Cemetery facilities
- Church venues
- Law enforcement agencies
- CISM team members

## Documentation

Maintain training records:

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- Attendance rosters
  - Training materials used
  - Scenarios practiced
  - Evaluations and feedback
  - Lessons learned
  - Updates needed to procedures
- 

## 1.5 RESOURCE IDENTIFICATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

### Essential External Resources

**Establish relationships with these resources BEFORE you need them:**

#### Wisconsin EMS Honor Guard

- Website: [www.wiemshonorguard.org](http://www.wiemshonorguard.org)
- Phone: (715) 781-0763
- Email: [info@wiemshonorguard.org](mailto:info@wiemshonorguard.org)
- Services: Funeral coordination, honor guard, ceremonial support, expertise
- **Action: Contact them now; introduce your agency; discuss their services**

#### National EMS Memorial Service (NEMSMS)

- Website: [www.nemsms.org](http://www.nemsms.org)
- Phone: (703) 321-2500
- Services: National memorial service, family support, fallen provider recognition
- **Action: Familiarize yourself with their programs and annual memorial service**

#### Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program

- Website: [www.psob.gov](http://www.psob.gov)
- Phone: 1-888-744-6513
- Services: Death benefits, disability benefits, education assistance
- **Action: Review eligibility criteria and application procedures**

#### State EMS Office

- [Your state office contact information]
- Services: Regulatory support, resource coordination, state-level assistance
- **Action: Notify them of your planning efforts; ask about state resources**

#### Local Law Enforcement

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- [Your local agencies]
- Services: Investigation, traffic control, procession escort, honor guard
- **Action: Meet with command staff; discuss mutual aid for LODD**

#### **Medical Examiner/Coroner**

- [Your jurisdiction contact]
- Services: Death investigation, autopsy, death certificates
- **Action: Understand their procedures and requirements**

#### **Funeral Homes**

- [Local funeral homes]
- Services: Body care, funeral planning, ceremony coordination
- **Action: Visit facilities; discuss their experience with public safety funerals**

#### **CISM Team**

- [Your regional team contact]
- Services: Critical incident stress debriefing, counseling, peer support
- **Action: Establish activation procedures; meet team members**

#### **Chaplains**

- [Your agency or community chaplains]
- Services: Spiritual support, grief counseling, ceremonial participation
- **Action: Identify available chaplains; discuss their role in LODD**

#### **Neighboring EMS Agencies**

- [List mutual aid partners]
- Services: Operational coverage, funeral attendance, honor guard participation
- **Action: Discuss mutual aid for LODD situations**

#### **Union/Association Representatives**

- [Your organization contacts]
- Services: Member support, benefits assistance, funeral coordination
- **Action: Clarify their role and involvement in LODD**

#### **Bagpipers and Musicians**

- [Local resources]
- Services: Ceremonial music for funeral and graveside

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- **Action: Identify available musicians; discuss their experience and fees**

### **Catering Services**

- [Local caterers]
- Services: Reception meals, family meal delivery
- **Action: Discuss their capacity for large events on short notice**

### **Hotels/Lodging**

- [Local accommodations]
- Services: Family and visiting responder lodging
- **Action: Discuss group rates and emergency availability**

## **Resource Directory**

Create a comprehensive resource directory including:

### **For each resource:**

- Organization/business name
- Primary contact person
- Phone (office, cell, after-hours)
- Email
- Physical address
- Website
- Services provided
- Availability (24/7, business hours, etc.)
- Special considerations or requirements
- Cost information if applicable
- Notes from your initial contact

### **Store this directory:**

- With your SOP
- In your personal information packet files
- On agency shared drive
- In the command vehicle
- With key personnel

### **Update this directory:**

- Annually (minimum)

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- When contact information changes
- After any use of resources
- When new resources are identified

A template for creating your resource directory is provided in **Appendix L**.

## Mutual Aid Agreements

**Establish formal or informal agreements with:**

**Neighboring EMS Agencies:**

- Operational coverage during the funeral
- Honor guard participation
- Personnel to fill support roles
- Equipment or resource sharing

**Law Enforcement:**

- Traffic control for procession
- Investigation support
- Honor guard participation
- Security at the funeral, if needed

**Fire Departments:**

- Honor guard participation
- Ceremonial support (ladder truck flag display)
- Operational coverage
- Reception venue, if applicable

**Document agreements:**

- What assistance will be provided
  - How to activate the agreement
  - Contact procedures
  - Any costs or reimbursement
  - Review and update schedule
- 

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## 1.6 ANNUAL REVIEW AND UPDATES

### Why Annual Review Matters

Your line-of-duty death plan must be current to be effective. Annual review ensures:

- Contact information is accurate
- Personnel assignments are current
- Procedures reflect best practices
- Resources are still available
- Training is up to date
- Lessons learned are incorporated

### Annual Review Checklist

**Schedule annual review for the same time each year** (suggest January):

#### ☐ **Review and update SOP**

- Are procedures still accurate?
- Have regulations or laws changed?
- Are there new best practices to incorporate?
- Do templates and checklists need updating?

#### ☐ **Update personal information packets**

- Distribute update forms to all personnel
- Collect and file updated information
- Verify next of kin contact information
- Destroy outdated packets securely

#### ☐ **Review role assignments**

- Are the assigned personnel still appropriate?
- Have any key personnel left the agency?
- Do backups need to be designated?
- Update contact information for all role holders

#### ☐ **Update resource directory**

- Verify all contact information
- Confirm resources are still available
- Add new resources identified

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- Remove resources no longer available
- Update costs or service information

☐ **Review mutual aid agreements**

- Confirm agreements are still in effect
- Update contact information
- Discuss any changes needed
- Document any new agreements

☐ **Conduct training**

- Schedule annual training for all personnel
- Conduct a tabletop exercise
- Train new personnel in key roles
- Refresh notification team training

☐ **Review benefits information**

- Check for changes to the PSOB program
- Update pension information
- Review workers' compensation procedures
- Update insurance information

☐ **Evaluate and improve**

- Review any incidents or near-misses
- Incorporate lessons learned
- Solicit feedback from personnel
- Identify gaps or weaknesses
- Make improvements to procedures

☐ **Document review**

- Record date of review
- Note all updates made
- Distribute updated materials
- File documentation

## After-Action Review

**If your agency experiences a line-of-duty death, conduct a comprehensive after-action review:**

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**Timing:** 30-90 days after funeral (allow time for initial grief)

**Participants:**

- Agency leadership
- All key role holders
- Family Liaison Officer
- Personnel who participated
- External partners (Honor Guard, law enforcement, etc.)

**Review:**

- What went well?
- What could be improved?
- Were procedures followed?
- Were resources adequate?
- How was family support?
- How was agency member support?
- What would we do differently?
- What should be added to procedures?

**Document:**

- Lessons learned
- Recommended changes
- Action items for improvement
- Timeline for implementation

**Update:**

- Revise SOP based on lessons learned
- Update training materials
- Share lessons with other agencies
- Implement improvements

## Continuous Improvement

Line-of-duty death planning is not a one-time project. It requires ongoing attention and improvement:

- Stay current with best practices
- Learn from other agencies' experiences
- Attend training and conferences

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- Maintain relationships with resources
- Keep information updated
- Train new personnel
- Refine procedures based on experience

**Your commitment to continuous improvement honors the memory of fallen responders and demonstrates your dedication to supporting their families and your agency.**

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## SECTION 2: INITIAL INCIDENT RESPONSE

**Purpose:** To establish immediate control, preserve evidence, initiate investigation, and begin notification procedures in the critical first hours following a line-of-duty death or critical injury.

**Key Personnel:** Incident Commander, Agency Director/Chief, Notification Team, Public Information Officer

**Timeline:** First 30 minutes to 4 hours

**Critical Considerations:** Actions taken in the first hour will impact the investigation, family notification, media response, and benefits eligibility. Speed and precision are essential.

---

### 2.1 FIRST 30 MINUTES: CRITICAL ACTIONS CHECKLIST

**The first 30 minutes are critical. Follow this checklist precisely:**

#### IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (Minutes 0-5)

##### ☐ Establish radio discipline

- Announce: *"All units, limit radio traffic to emergency only."*
- No names transmitted on the radio
- No details of the incident on the radio
- Switch to tactical channel if available
- Notify dispatch of communication restrictions

##### ☐ Request law enforcement

- If not already on scene, request immediately
- Specify: *"Line-of-duty death investigation"*

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- Request supervisor/investigator response
- Establish law enforcement as the investigation lead

☐ **Secure the scene**

- Stop all non-essential activity
- Establish perimeter
- Control access—document everyone who enters
- Do NOT allow family members to arrive at the active scene
- Preserve the scene exactly as it is

☐ **Provide patient care if applicable**

- If the responder is critically injured but alive, continue care
- Transport to the appropriate facility
- Notify the receiving hospital of the situation
- Assign personnel to remain with the patient and family

## SCENE MANAGEMENT (Minutes 5-15)

☐ **Preserve ALL evidence**

- Do not move equipment unless necessary
- Do not clean or organize anything
- Photograph the scene before any changes
- Secure all medications, supplies, and equipment
- Impound vehicles involved
- Preserve electronic data (GPS, CAD, monitors, phones)
- Secure all documentation (PCRs, run sheets, logs)

☐ **Identify and separate witnesses**

- List all personnel on scene
- List all civilians who witnessed the incident
- Separate witnesses—no discussion of the incident
- Assign personnel to stay with witnesses
- Collect contact information
- Advise witnesses not to discuss the incident

☐ **Document everything**

- Photograph the scene from multiple angles

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- Video scene, if possible
- Note the exact time of all events
- Document weather, lighting, and road conditions
- Document equipment positions and settings
- Preserve all electronic records

#### ☐ **Control scene access**

- Establish a sign-in log for all who enter the scene
- Limit access to essential personnel only
- Keep media away from the scene
- Prevent the family from arriving at the scene
- Assign personnel to scene security

### COMMAND ACTIONS (Minutes 15-30)

#### ☐ **Notify Agency Director/Chief**

- Immediate phone call (do not text or email)
- Provide brief, factual information
- Do not speculate on the cause
- Advice on actions taken
- Request direction on next steps

#### ☐ **Establish command post**

- Away from the scene (separate location)
- Private space for coordination
- Communications capability
- Begin incident documentation log

#### ☐ **Activate notification team**

- Assemble team to notify family
- Do NOT notify family yet
- Locate next of kin using personal information packet
- Verify current address and contact information
- Plan notification approach

#### ☐ **Contact Wisconsin EMS Honor Guard**

- **WEBSITE:** [www.wiemshonorguard.org](http://www.wiemshonorguard.org) **REPORT A FATALITY** tab report all the information you have available so our duty officer can start the process.

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- Provide basic information
- Request guidance and assistance
- Discuss their level of involvement

☐ **Notify medical examiner/coroner**

- Required for all line-of-duty deaths
- Provide scene location
- Coordinate body removal
- Discuss autopsy requirements
- Request multiple death certificates (15-20)

☐ **Implement information control**

- No information to the media yet
- No names on the radio or to the public
- Instruct all personnel: no social media posts
- Prepare holding statement for media
- Designate Public Information Officer

☐ **Begin investigation coordination**

- Law enforcement leads the investigation
- Agency cooperates fully
- Assign liaison to investigation
- Preserve all records and evidence
- Do not discuss incident details

---

## 2.2 RADIO DISCIPLINE AND COMMUNICATIONS CONTROL

### Why Radio Discipline Matters

**Uncontrolled radio traffic can:**

- Compromise investigation
- Release victim name before family notification
- Provide inaccurate information to media monitoring scanners
- Create confusion and rumors
- Violate family privacy
- Jeopardize benefits claims

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**Strict radio discipline protects the investigation, the family, and your agency.**

## Immediate Radio Procedures

**As soon as line-of-duty death is confirmed:**

**1. Announce radio discipline:**

- *"All units, this is [Command]. Effective immediately, limit all radio traffic to emergency traffic only. No names or details of the incident will be transmitted. Switch to tactical channel [X] for incident-related communications. Acknowledge."*

**2. Switch to tactical or encrypted channel:**

- Move all incident-related communications off the primary channel
- Use an encrypted channel if available
- Limit access to essential personnel only

**3. Notify dispatch:**

- Brief the dispatch supervisor on the situation
- Instruct dispatch on communication restrictions
- Provide alternate contact method (cell phone)
- Request dispatch monitor for media inquiries

**4. Control mobile data terminals (MDTs):**

- No incident details in CAD notes
- Use generic codes or phone contact
- Assume all electronic communications may be public record

## What NOT to Transmit

**Never transmit on the radio:**

- Victim's name
- Specific details of the incident
- Cause of death or injury
- Speculation about what happened
- Family information
- Hospital or morgue location
- Funeral or memorial plans
- Emotional reactions or commentary

## Approved Radio Communications

**Only transmit:**

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- Essential operational information
- Resource requests
- Safety information
- Generic status updates
- *"Contact command by phone for details."*

## Cell Phone and Electronic Communications

### **Remember:**

- Cell phone calls may be recorded
- Text messages are discoverable
- Emails are public records
- Social media is public
- Assume everything may become public

### **Use secure, private communications for:**

- Sensitive information
- Family details
- Investigation information
- Benefit discussions
- Internal coordination

## Media Monitoring

### **Assume media is monitoring:**

- All radio frequencies
- Social media
- Scanner apps and websites
- Public records requests

### **Protect information accordingly.**

---

## 2.3 NOTIFICATION TEAM ASSEMBLY

### Purpose of the Notification Team

The notification team conducts the most critical and difficult task: informing the family of their loved one's death. This team must be:

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- Compassionate and professional
- Trained in death notification
- Able to provide accurate information
- Prepared to support immediate family needs
- Available to remain with family

## Team Composition

**An ideal notification team includes 2-3 people:**

### **Team Leader (Required):**

- Agency Director/Chief, or
- High-ranking officer with authority
- Knows the deceased personally, if possible
- Can answer questions about the incident and benefits

### **Chaplain or Counselor (Strongly Recommended):**

- Agency chaplain
- CISM team member
- Clergy member
- Trained in grief support

### **Peer or Close Colleague (Recommended):**

- Someone who worked closely with the deceased
- Known to family if possible
- Can provide personal support
- May assist with immediate needs

### **Family Liaison Officer (Required):**

- May be part of the initial notification team, or
- Joins the family immediately after notification
- Will remain with family for duration

## Team Assembly Process

### **Immediate actions:**

1. **Identify team members:**
  - Use pre-assigned roles from your SOP
  - Contact team members by phone

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- Brief them on the situation (no details on the radio)
- Establish meeting location
- 2. Gather at command post:**
  - Away from the scene
  - Private location
  - Bring a personal information packet
  - Bring notification checklist
- 3. Brief the team:**
  - Factual information about the incident
  - What is known and unknown
  - Family structure and considerations
  - Notification location and approach
  - Roles during notification
  - What to say and not say
- 4. Prepare materials:**
  - Personal information packet
  - Contact information for resources
  - Information about benefits
  - Agency business cards
  - Tissues, water
- 5. Plan the notification:**
  - Verify next of kin location
  - Plan route and timing
  - Identify backup if family is not home
  - Assign roles during notification
  - Establish communication with command

## Team Member Responsibilities

### Team Leader:

- Delivers the notification
- Provides factual information
- Answers questions
- Coordinates immediate support

### Chaplain/Counselor:

- Provides spiritual/emotional support
- Assists with immediate grief response

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- Offers prayers if appropriate
- Connects family to grief resources

**Peer/Colleague:**

- Provides personal connection
- Shares positive memories if appropriate
- Assists with practical needs
- May stay with family

**Family Liaison Officer:**

- Explains their ongoing role
- Provides contact information
- Begins assessing family needs
- Coordinates immediate support

## Special Considerations

**If the deceased has no immediate family:**

- Notify parents or siblings
- Follow personal information packet guidance
- Consider notifying close friends
- Respect the deceased's wishes if documented

**If family is estranged:**

- Still required to notify legal next of kin
- May need law enforcement assistance
- Be prepared for difficult reactions
- Protect agency personnel

**If family is out of state:**

- Coordinate with local law enforcement in their jurisdiction
- Request they conduct a notification with your team on the phone
- Arrange immediate travel to family if possible
- Provide extensive phone support

**If children are involved:**

- Notify parent/guardian first
- Assist the parent in telling the children

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- Provide age-appropriate resources
  - Consider a child grief counselor
- 

## 2.4 SCENE SECURITY AND EVIDENCE PRESERVATION

### Why Evidence Preservation Matters

**Proper evidence preservation is essential for:**

- **Investigation:** Determining cause and circumstances
- **PSOB Benefits:** Required for federal death benefit eligibility
- **Workers' Compensation:** Proving work-relatedness
- **Liability Protection:** Defending against potential claims
- **Family Closure:** Providing answers about what happened
- **Preventing Future Deaths:** Learning from the incident

**Failure to preserve evidence can cost the family hundreds of thousands of dollars in benefits and leave critical questions unanswered.**

### Scene Security Procedures

**Establish perimeter:**

- Use barrier tape, cones, or vehicles
- Create inner perimeter (immediate scene)
- Create outer perimeter (larger area)
- Post personnel at access points
- Document everyone who enters

**Control access:**

- Essential personnel only inside perimeter
- Sign-in log for all entries
- Escort all visitors
- No media access to the scene
- No family access to the scene (protect them from trauma)

**Maintain scene integrity:**

- Do not move anything unless necessary
- Do not clean or organize
- Do not remove equipment

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- Do not discuss the incident at the scene
- Protect from the weather if possible

## Evidence to Preserve

### Physical Evidence:

- ☐ All medical equipment used
- ☐ Medications and medication packaging
- ☐ Oxygen tanks and regulators
- ☐ Defibrillator/monitor (preserve data)
- ☐ Airway equipment
- ☐ IV supplies and fluids
- ☐ Bandages and dressings
- ☐ Personal protective equipment
- ☐ Uniforms and clothing
- ☐ Personal effects
- ☐ Any weapons or restraints used

### Vehicles:

- ☐ Ambulance or response vehicle
- ☐ Position and condition
- ☐ Damage assessment
- ☐ Mechanical condition
- ☐ Lights and sirens operational status
- ☐ Tire condition
- ☐ Brake condition
- ☐ Seat belts and restraints
- ☐ GPS data
- ☐ Event data recorder (black box)
- ☐ Dash camera footage
- ☐ Do not move the vehicle until the investigation is complete

### Electronic Evidence:

- ☐ CAD records and timestamps
- ☐ GPS tracking data
- ☐ Radio recordings
- ☐ Phone records and calls
- ☐ Text messages
- ☐ Emails
- ☐ Monitor data and printouts
- ☐ Defibrillator event logs
- ☐ Body camera footage
- ☐ Dash camera footage

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- ☐ Security camera footage
- ☐ Social media posts
- ☐ Electronic health records

**Documentation:**

- ☐ Patient care reports (PCRs)
- ☐ Run sheets and logs
- ☐ Dispatch records
- ☐ Training records
- ☐ Certification records
- ☐ Personnel files
- ☐ Maintenance records
- ☐ Inspection records
- ☐ Policy and procedure manuals
- ☐ Previous incident reports
- ☐ Scheduling records
- ☐ Time cards

**Scene Documentation:**

- ☐ Photographs from multiple angles
- ☐ Video of the scene
- ☐ Measurements and diagrams
- ☐ Weather conditions
- ☐ Lighting conditions
- ☐ Road conditions
- ☐ Witness statements
- ☐ Timeline of events

## Photography and Video

**Photograph before moving anything:**

- Overall scene from multiple angles
- Close-ups of all equipment
- Vehicle positions and damage
- Environmental conditions
- Anything unusual or significant

**Video documentation:**

- Walk-through of entire scene
- Narrate what is being shown
- Document conditions and positions

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- Preserve for investigation

**Chain of custody:**

- Document who took photos/video
- Date and time stamp
- Secure storage
- Limit access
- Provide copies to investigators

## Equipment Impoundment

**Secure all equipment:**

1. Photograph in place
2. Tag with identification
3. Document condition
4. Secure in locked storage
5. Maintain chain of custody
6. Do not use or clean
7. Release only to investigators

**Vehicles:**

1. Photograph thoroughly
2. Impound at a secure location
3. Do not drive or move unnecessarily
4. Preserve all data
5. Do not repair or clean
6. Allow investigator inspection

## Electronic Data Preservation

**Immediately secure:**

- Download and back up all electronic data
- Preserve original devices
- Do not delete or modify anything
- Secure passwords and access
- Provide copies to investigators
- Maintain originals securely

**Critical electronic evidence:****Version 2.0 revised 4/2/2026**

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- CAD records (request immediate backup)
- GPS tracking (download before overwrite)
- Monitor data (download immediately)
- Radio recordings (request preservation)
- Phone records (request from carrier)
- Video footage (download before overwrite)

## Working with Investigators

### **Law enforcement leads investigation:**

- Cooperate fully
- Provide all requested information
- Do not interfere with the investigation
- Assign agency liaison
- Maintain communication
- Respect the investigation timeline

### **Your role:**

- Preserve evidence
- Provide documentation
- Explain EMS procedures and equipment
- Identify witnesses
- Facilitate access
- Support investigation

### **Do not:**

- Conduct your own investigation
- Remove or alter evidence
- Discuss findings publicly
- Speculate on the cause
- Interfere with investigators

---

## 2.5 INVESTIGATION INITIATION

### Types of Investigations

#### **Multiple investigations may occur simultaneously:**

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**Law Enforcement Investigation:**

- Criminal investigation if applicable
- Traffic crash investigation
- Death investigation
- Evidence collection
- Witness interviews

**Medical Examiner/Coroner Investigation:**

- Cause and manner of death determination
- Autopsy if required
- Toxicology testing
- Death certificate issuance

**OSHA Investigation (if applicable):**

- Workplace safety investigation
- Regulatory compliance review
- Citation potential

**Agency Internal Investigation:**

- Policy compliance review
- Training adequacy assessment
- Equipment function review
- Procedure evaluation

**PSOB Investigation:**

- Line-of-duty death determination
- Benefit eligibility assessment
- Federal review process

**Workers' Compensation Investigation:**

- Work-relatedness determination
- Benefit eligibility
- Claims processing

**Immediate Investigation Actions****Within the first hour:****Version 2.0 revised 4/2/2026**

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☐ **Contact law enforcement**

- Request investigation
- Provide scene access
- Assign agency liaison
- Cooperate fully

☐ **Contact medical examiner/coroner**

- Report death
- Coordinate body removal
- Discuss autopsy
- Request multiple death certificates

☐ **Preserve all evidence**

- Secure scene
- Impound equipment
- Download electronic data
- Photograph everything

☐ **Identify witnesses**

- List all personnel present
- List all civilians present
- Separate witnesses
- Collect contact information

☐ **Begin documentation**

- Timeline of events
- Personnel involved
- Actions taken
- Evidence collected

**Within the first 24 hours:**

☐ **Conduct witness interviews**

- Law enforcement leads
- Agency may participate
- Document statements
- Preserve recordings

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☐ **Collect all records**

- Personnel files
- Training records
- Certification records
- Maintenance records
- Previous incident reports
- Policies and procedures

☐ **Secure electronic evidence**

- CAD records
- GPS data
- Radio recordings
- Video footage
- Monitor data
- Phone records

☐ **Photograph and document**

- Scene documentation
- Equipment documentation
- Vehicle documentation
- Environmental conditions

## Documentation Requirements

**Create comprehensive incident documentation:**

**Incident Log:**

- Chronological timeline of all events
- All personnel involved and their roles
- All notifications made (time, person, method)
- All decisions made and by whom
- All resources requested and deployed
- All communications (internal and external)

**Evidence Log:**

- All evidence collected
- Chain of custody documentation
- Storage location and security

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- Access log for evidence
- Copies provided to investigators

**Witness List:**

- Name and contact information
- Role/position at time of incident
- Statement taken (date, time, by whom)
- Follow-up needed

**Maintain documentation security:**

- Store in a secure location
- Limit access to authorized personnel
- Make copies for investigators
- Preserve originals
- Prepare for potential litigation

---

## 2.6 SUPPORT AGENCY COORDINATION

### Immediate Mutual Aid Activation

**Within the first 2 hours, coordinate with support agencies:**

**Neighboring EMS Agencies:**

- ☐ Request operational coverage for your service area
- ☐ Notify of potential funeral participation needs
- ☐ Request honor guard members if available
- ☐ Discuss timeline and expected duration of support

**Law Enforcement:**

- ☐ Confirm investigation lead agency
- ☐ Request traffic control for the funeral procession
- ☐ Discuss honor guard participation
- ☐ Coordinate security if needed for a high-profile incident

**Fire Departments:**

- ☐ Notify of incident
- ☐ Request operational coverage if needed
- ☐ Discuss ceremonial support (flag display, honor guard)
- ☐ Coordinate mutual aid for the funeral day

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**Wisconsin EMS Honor Guard:**

- ☐ Provide incident details
- ☐ Request level of involvement desired
- ☐ Discuss family preferences
- ☐ Coordinate arrival and lodging if needed

**Coordination Meeting****Within 24 hours, conduct a coordination meeting with:**

- Agency leadership
- Wisconsin EMS Honor Guard representative
- Law enforcement liaison
- Mutual aid agency representatives
- Funeral Coordinator
- Family Liaison Officer

**Meeting agenda:**

1. Incident overview and current status
  2. Family notification status
  3. Investigation timeline
  4. Operational coverage plan
  5. Funeral planning timeline
  6. Resource needs and commitments
  7. Communication protocols
  8. Next meeting schedule
- 

## 2.7 COMMAND POST ESTABLISHMENT

**Purpose of Command Post**

A dedicated command post provides:

- Central coordination location
- Private space for sensitive discussions
- Communications hub
- Documentation center
- Meeting space for coordination

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## Location Selection

### **Choose a location that is:**

- Away from the incident scene
- Private and secure
- Has communications capability
- Has adequate space for meetings
- Accessible to key personnel
- Can be staffed 24/7 if needed

### **Possible locations:**

- Agency headquarters conference room
- Fire station meeting room
- Emergency operations center
- Municipal building conference room

## Command Post Setup

### **Essential equipment and supplies:**

- ☐ Phones (landline and cell)
- ☐ Computers with internet access
- ☐ Printer/copier
- ☐ Secure document storage
- ☐ Whiteboard or flip charts
- ☐ This funeral planning guide
- ☐ Personal information packet for deceased
- ☐ Contact lists and resource directory
- ☐ Incident documentation logs
- ☐ Office supplies
- ☐ Coffee/water/snacks for staff

### **Staffing:**

- Assign personnel to the staff command post
- Establish shift schedule for 24/7 coverage
- Designate command post coordinator
- Ensure communications capability at all times

### **Security:**

- Control access to the command post

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- Sign-in log for all visitors
- Secure sensitive documents
- No media access
- No unauthorized personnel

## Command Post Functions

### Coordination:

- Central point for all incident management
- Meeting location for key personnel
- Coordination with external agencies
- Resource tracking and deployment

### Communications:

- Incoming calls from family, media, agencies
- Outgoing notifications and updates
- Message center for key personnel
- Information clearinghouse

### Documentation:

- Incident log maintenance
- Decision documentation
- Resource tracking
- File storage and organization

### Planning:

- Funeral planning coordination
- Timeline development
- Resource allocation
- Problem-solving

---

## SECTION 3: FAMILY NOTIFICATION PROTOCOL

**Purpose:** To deliver the death notification with compassion, dignity, and clarity while providing immediate support and beginning the family support process.

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**Key Personnel:** Notification Team (Agency Director/Chief, Chaplain, Peer/Colleague, Family Liaison Officer)

**Timeline:** Within 2-4 hours of the incident (as soon as possible after confirmation)

**Critical Considerations:** This is the most important interaction you will have with the family. How you deliver this notification will affect the family's grief process and their relationship with your agency forever.

---

## 3.1 THE CRITICAL IMPORTANCE OF PROPER NOTIFICATION

### Why Notification Matters

The death notification is a moment the family will remember for the rest of their lives. They will remember:

- Who told them
- How they were told
- What was said
- How they were treated
- Whether they felt supported

#### A proper notification:

- Honors the deceased and their service
- Demonstrates respect for the family
- Establishes trust between family and agency
- Provides foundation for ongoing support
- Begins the healing process with dignity

#### An improper notification:

- Traumatizes the family further
- Damages family-agency relationship
- Creates anger and resentment
- Complicates the grief process
- May result in the family refusing agency involvement

### Common Notification Mistakes to Avoid

#### Never:

- Notify by phone, text, email, or social media

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- Allow family to learn from media or rumors
- Send junior personnel or strangers
- Notify in public places
- Use euphemisms ("passed away," "lost," "gone")
- Provide excessive details about injuries
- Speculate about cause or blame
- Rush the notification or leave quickly
- Notify without support resources present

**Always:**

- Notify in person
- Use a trained notification team
- Notify in a private location
- Use clear, direct language
- Provide immediate support
- Stay with family
- Answer questions honestly
- Provide ongoing assistance

---

## 3.2 NOTIFICATION TEAM ASSEMBLY AND TRAINING

### Team Selection Criteria

**Team Leader (Agency Director/Chief or designee):**

- Has the authority to answer questions
- Knew the deceased, if possible
- Trained in death notification
- Can remain calm and compassionate
- Available to stay with family

**Chaplain or Counselor:**

- Trained in grief support
- Comfortable with death and grief
- Can provide spiritual support if desired
- Has resources for ongoing counseling

**Peer or Close Colleague:**

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- Worked closely with the deceased
- Known to family if possible
- Can provide personal connection
- Emotionally stable enough to support family

#### **Family Liaison Officer:**

- Will provide ongoing support
- Available 24/7 for duration
- Organized and compassionate
- Can coordinate resources and assistance

### **Pre-Notification Team Briefing**

#### **Before approaching the family, the team must:**

1. **Confirm death:** Certain of identity
2. **Gather information:**
  - Deceased's full name
  - Family members' names
  - Address and directions
  - Family structure and relationships
  - Any special considerations (health issues, language barriers)
3. **Review notification protocol:**
  - Who will speak
  - What will be said
  - How to respond to reactions
  - Support resources available
4. **Assign roles:**
  - Team leader delivers notification
  - Chaplain provides spiritual support
  - Peer provides personal connection
  - FLO explains ongoing support role
5. **Prepare emotionally:**
  - This will be difficult
  - Family may react with anger, denial, or collapse
  - Stay calm and compassionate
  - Support each other

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## Training Requirements

**All notification team members must complete training in:**

- Death notification best practices
- Grief response and support
- Cultural and religious sensitivity
- Crisis intervention
- Self-care and stress management

**Annual refresher training should include:**

- Role-playing notification scenarios
  - Reviewing difficult cases
  - Updating protocols
  - Practicing with different family reactions
- 

## 3.3 LOCATION AND PRIVACY

### Locating Next of Kin

**Use the personal information packet to identify:**

- Primary next of kin (spouse, partner, parents)
- Current address and phone number
- Alternate contacts if primary unavailable
- Any special considerations

**If the family cannot be located immediately:**

- Check emergency contact information
- Contact extended family members
- Check with the employer or friends
- Use law enforcement assistance if needed
- **Do not release information publicly until the family is notified**

### Notification Location

**Preferred location: Family's home**

- Private and familiar environment
- Family can react freely

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- Support system may be nearby
- Family doesn't have to travel while in shock

**If the family is not home:**

- Wait for them to return if possible
- Contact them to request they come home (without revealing reason)
- If urgent, locate them at work or another location
- Ensure private space wherever notification occurs

**Never notify:**

- In public places (restaurants, stores, workplaces)
- In front of strangers or crowds
- At the incident scene
- At the hospital (unless family is already there for another reason)
- Over the phone (except in extreme circumstances)

## Creating Private Space

**At family home:**

- Request to come inside
- Ask to sit down in the living room or a private area
- Ensure children are in another room initially (notify parent first)
- Turn off the TV or the radio
- Request privacy from visitors if present

**At other locations:**

- Request a private room or office
- Ensure the door can be closed
- Remove other people from the area
- Minimize distractions and interruptions

---

## 3.4 NOTIFICATION DELIVERY AND LANGUAGE

### The Notification Process

**Step 1: Introduction (30 seconds)**

- Identify yourselves and your roles

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- Confirm you are speaking to the correct person
- Request to sit down
- Establish a serious tone

*"Mrs. Johnson, I'm Chief Smith from County EMS. This is Chaplain Brown and Paramedic Davis, who worked with your husband. May we come in and sit down? We have some very difficult news to share with you."*

### **Step 2: Deliver the Notification (30 seconds)**

- Use clear, direct language
- Say the person is dead (not "passed away" or "lost")
- Use the person's name
- Be brief and clear

*"Mrs. Johnson, I'm very sorry to tell you that your husband, Michael, was killed today in an ambulance accident. He died at the scene. I'm so very sorry."*

### **Step 3: Pause and Allow Reaction (1-2 minutes)**

- Stop talking
- Allow family to react
- Provide physical support if needed (tissues, water, steadying)
- Do not rush or try to "fix" their grief
- Be present and compassionate

### **Step 4: Provide Basic Information (2-3 minutes)**

- Answer immediate questions
- Provide brief, factual information
- Do not speculate or provide excessive detail
- Be honest if you don't know something

*"The accident occurred this morning at approximately 10:30 AM on Highway 41. Michael was responding to an emergency call when another vehicle struck the ambulance. He died immediately and did not suffer. The other crew members were injured but are expected to recover."*

### **Step 5: Explain Immediate Next Steps (2-3 minutes)**

- Explain what will happen next
- Introduce the Family Liaison Officer role
- Provide contact information
- Explain that you will stay with them

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*"We are going to stay with you for as long as you need us today. This is Officer Martinez, your Family Liaison Officer. She will be available to you 24 hours a day to help you with anything you need. We will help you through every step of what comes next."*

## Language Guidelines

### Use clear, direct language:

- "Michael is dead" or "Michael was killed."
- Not: "passed away," "lost," "gone to a better place," "expired."

### Be specific about the cause:

- "Killed in an ambulance accident."
- "Died of a heart attack."
- "Killed in the line of duty."

### Avoid euphemisms and clichés:

- Don't say: "He's in a better place."
- Don't say: "God needed another angel."
- Don't say: "I know how you feel."
- Don't say: "At least he didn't suffer" (even if true)
- Don't say: "You'll get through this."

### Do say:

- "I'm so sorry."
- "This is terrible."
- "We are here to support you."
- "Take all the time you need."
- "What can we do to help you right now?"

---

## 3.5 ANSWERING FAMILY QUESTIONS

### Common Questions and How to Answer

#### "Are you sure it's him?"

- *"Yes, we are certain. We have confirmed his identity."*
- Explain how identification was made if appropriate
- Do not provide graphic details

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### **"Did he suffer?"**

- Be honest but compassionate
- *"He died very quickly" or "He was unconscious and did not feel pain."*
- If he did suffer: *"The medical team did everything possible to help him."*
- Do not provide graphic medical details

### **"Can I see him?"**

- *"Yes, we will arrange for you to see him when you're ready."*
- Explain the process (medical examiner, funeral home)
- Prepare them if there are visible injuries
- Offer to have someone accompany them

### **"What happened?"**

- Provide factual information you know
- Do not speculate about the cause
- *"The investigation is ongoing, and we will share information as we learn it."*
- Be honest if you don't know the details

### **"Who was driving?" or "Whose fault was it?"**

- *"The investigation will determine what happened."*
- Do not assign blame or speculate
- *"Our focus right now is supporting you and honoring Michael."*

### **"What do I do now?"**

- *"We are going to help you with everything."*
- Explain the Family Liaison Officer role
- Outline immediate next steps
- Reassure them they don't have to make decisions right now

### **"How will I tell the children?"**

- *"We can help you with that."*
- Offer resources for talking to children about death
- Suggest age-appropriate language
- Offer to have a counselor present if desired

## **What Not to Say**

### **Never:**

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- Speculate about cause or blame
- Provide graphic details of injuries
- Discuss investigation details
- Make promises you can't keep
- Minimize their grief
- Compare to other losses
- Rush them to make decisions
- Leave questions unanswered

**If you don't know the answer:**

*"I don't know the answer to that right now, but I will find out and get back to you as soon as possible."*

---

## 3.6 IMMEDIATE SUPPORT AND GRIEF RESPONSE

### Understanding Grief Reactions

**Family members may react with:**

- Shock and disbelief
- Denial ("No, that can't be true")
- Anger ("Why didn't you save him?")
- Bargaining ("Are you sure? Could there be a mistake?")
- Collapse or physical symptoms
- Numbness or no visible reaction
- Hysteria or uncontrolled crying

**All reactions are normal. Your role is to:**

- Remain calm and present
- Validate their feelings
- Provide physical and emotional support
- Not judge or try to "fix" their grief
- Allow them to react however they need to

### Immediate Support Actions

**Physical support:**

- ☐ Provide tissues, water, blankets
- ☐ Help them to a chair or couch if they collapse

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- ☐ Call 911 if a medical emergency (chest pain, difficulty breathing)
- ☐ Stay physically present and available

**Emotional support:**

- ☐ Listen without interrupting
- ☐ Validate their feelings: *"This is terrible. I'm so sorry."*
- ☐ Allow silence—don't fill every moment with words
- ☐ Offer physical comfort if appropriate (hand on shoulder)
- ☐ Reassure them: *"We are here with you."*

**Practical support:**

- ☐ Ask: *"Is there someone we can call for you?"*
- ☐ Help them contact other family members
- ☐ Assist with notifying children if present
- ☐ Arrange for someone to stay with them
- ☐ Help with immediate needs (pets, medications, etc.)

## Staying with the Family

**Do not leave the family alone immediately after notification.**

**Stay with them until:**

- They have support from family or friends
- They are emotionally stable
- Immediate needs are addressed
- They understand next steps
- Family Liaison Officer is established

**Minimum time: 1-2 hours**

**Often needed: 4-6 hours or longer**

## Calling Additional Family Members

**Assist the family in notifying:**

- Children (help the parent tell them)
- Parents or siblings of the deceased
- Extended family members
- Close friends

**For each notification:**

- Ask family how they want to handle it
- Offer to make calls with them or for them

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- Provide the same compassionate approach
  - Ensure each person has support
- 

## 3.7 VIEWING ARRANGEMENTS AND BODY RELEASE

### Explaining the Process

#### **Family will want to know about seeing their loved one. Explain:**

*"Michael's body is currently with the medical examiner, which is required by law for any unexpected death. The medical examiner will examine to determine the official cause of death. After that, his body will be released to the funeral home of your choice. We will help you arrange to see him at the funeral home when you're ready."*

### Medical Examiner Process

#### **Explain to family:**

- Medical examiner custody is required by law
- Examination (autopsy) may be necessary
- Process typically takes 24-48 hours
- Body will be treated with respect
- Personal effects will be returned
- Death certificates will be issued

#### **Timeline:**

- Body to medical examiner: Immediately
- Examination: Within 24 hours
- Release to funeral home: 24-48 hours
- Viewing possible: 2-3 days after the incident

### Preparing Family for Viewing

#### **If there are visible injuries, prepare the family:**

*"I want you to know that Michael has some visible injuries from the accident. The funeral home will do its best to prepare him, but you may see some bruising or bandaging. We can have someone with you when you see him if that would help."*

#### **Offer:**

- To accompany them to the viewing
- To have a chaplain present

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- To arrange a private viewing time
- To prepare them for what they will see

**If injuries are severe:**

- Discuss with the medical examiner and the funeral home
- Consider closed casket
- Offer alternative ways to say goodbye (hand holding, letter writing)
- Respect the family's wishes while protecting them from trauma

## Personal Effects

**Explain what will happen to personal belongings:**

- Items on the body go to the medical examiner
- Items from vehicle/scene secured by agency
- Items will be returned to the family
- May be needed for investigation temporarily

**Handle with extreme care:**

- Clean if soiled (blood, etc.)
- Return in a dignified manner
- Include everything (wallet, rings, watch, etc.)
- Document what is returned

---

## 3.8 DOCUMENTATION OF NOTIFICATION

### Required Documentation

**Immediately after notification, document:**

**Notification Details:**

- Date and time of notification
- Location of notification
- Family members present
- Notification team members present
- How the notification was received
- Questions asked and answers provided
- Support provided
- Resources offered

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- Next steps explained

**Family Information:**

- Names and relationships of all family members
- Contact information
- Immediate needs identified
- Support system available
- Special considerations or concerns
- Cultural or religious preferences noted

**Follow-up Plan:**

- Family Liaison Officer assigned
- Next contact scheduled
- Resources provided
- Referrals made
- Ongoing support plan

## Confidentiality

**All notification documentation is confidential:**

- Store securely
- Limit access to need-to-know personnel
- Do not share with the media
- Protect family privacy
- May be subject to legal discovery

---

## 3.9 SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

### Notifying Children

**If children are present during parent notification:**

1. **Notify the parent first** in private
2. **Help the parent tell the children** at an age-appropriate level
3. **Provide resources** for talking to children about death
4. **Offer a counselor** to assist if desired

**Age-appropriate language:****Version 2.0 revised 4/2/2026**

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**Young children (3-7):**

*"Daddy died. That means his body stopped working, and he can't come back. It's not your fault. We will take care of you."*

**School-age (8-12):**

*"Dad was in a very serious accident today, and he died. The doctors tried to help him, but his injuries were too severe. This is very sad, and it's okay to cry. We're here for you."*

**Teenagers (13+):**

*"I have terrible news. Dad was killed in an accident today while he was working. He died at the scene. I know this is devastating. We're going to get through this together."*

**Key points for children:**

- Use clear language (died, not "lost" or "passed away")
- Reassure it's not their fault
- Explain they will be cared for
- Allow them to ask questions
- Provide ongoing support

## Estranged or Divorced Family

**Challenges:**

- Multiple next of kin with different relationships
- Potential conflict over funeral decisions
- Complicated family dynamics
- Legal custody issues if children are involved

**Approach:**

- Notify legal next of kin first (current spouse or ex-spouse with custody)
- Notify other family members separately
- Remain neutral in family conflicts
- Focus on the deceased's wishes if documented
- Involve legal counsel if necessary
- Protect children from conflict

**If conflict arises:**

- *"Our goal is to honor [name] and support all of you during this difficult time. Let's focus on what [name] would have wanted."*
- Facilitate communication, but don't take sides
- Document all interactions

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- Seek legal guidance if needed

## Language Barriers

### **If the family does not speak English:**

- Use a professional interpreter (not family members)
- Speak slowly and clearly
- Use simple language
- Confirm understanding
- Provide written materials in their language
- Ensure ongoing interpretation for all interactions

### **Interpreter guidelines:**

- Brief interpreter before notification
- The interpreter translates exactly what you say
- Speak directly to family, not interpreter
- Allow time for translation
- Confirm family understands

## Cultural and Religious Considerations

### **Be sensitive to:**

- Religious beliefs about death and the afterlife
- Cultural mourning practices
- Gender roles in notification and support
- Modesty and physical contact preferences
- Funeral and burial customs
- Dietary restrictions

### **Ask family:**

*"Are there any cultural or religious practices that are important to you that we should know about? We want to be respectful of your traditions."*

### **Common considerations:**

- Some cultures prefer same-gender notification team
- Some religions have specific burial timelines
- Some cultures have specific mourning rituals
- Some families prefer large community involvement
- Some prefer private, family-only mourning

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**Adapt your approach while maintaining:**

- Respectful notification
- Immediate support
- Ongoing assistance
- Dignity and compassion

**Family with Special Needs****If a family member has:**

- Cognitive disabilities
- Mental health conditions
- Physical disabilities
- Hearing or vision impairment

**Adaptations:**

- Use appropriate communication methods
- Provide extra support and patience
- Involve caregivers or support persons
- Ensure accessibility of all services
- Provide written information in accessible formats
- Connect with specialized support resources

**Notification in Unusual Circumstances****If the deceased has no family:**

- Notify closest friend or emergency contact
- Involve the agency as "family" for funeral planning
- Honor the deceased's documented wishes
- Provide full agency support and honors

**If family is hostile to the agency:**

- Remain professional and compassionate
- Acknowledge their anger
- Focus on supporting them despite conflict
- Offer resources even if refused
- Document all interactions
- Protect agency personnel from abuse

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**If the incident involves multiple casualties:**

- Notify each family separately
  - Use separate notification teams
  - Coordinate timing if possible
  - Provide individual support to each family
  - Avoid comparing losses
- 

## SECTION 4: AGENCY MEMBER NOTIFICATION

**Purpose:** To inform all agency personnel of the death in a timely, respectful, and controlled manner while preventing misinformation and providing immediate support.

**Key Personnel:** Agency Director/Chief, Shift Supervisors, CISM Team Coordinator

**Timeline:** Immediately after family notification (within 4-6 hours of incident)

**Critical Considerations:** Personnel must learn of the death from agency leadership, not from the media or rumors. Notification must be personal, direct, and accompanied by support resources.

---

### 4.1 INTERNAL COMMUNICATION PROTOCOLS

#### Timing of Agency Notification

 **CRITICAL:** Do not notify agency personnel until AFTER family has been notified.

**Notification sequence:**

1. Family notification (priority)
2. Agency personnel notification (immediately after)
3. Public/media notification (after agency notification)

**Typical timeline:**

- Incident occurs: Hour 0
- Family notified: Hours 2-4
- Agency notified: Hours 4-6
- Public notified: Hours 6-8

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## Communication Methods

**Use multiple methods to ensure all personnel are reached:**

**Primary method: Direct phone calls**

- Personal phone call to each member
- Use prepared script
- Allow for questions and reactions
- Provide support resources

**Secondary methods:**

- Text message (after phone call)
- Email (after phone call)
- In-person notification at stations
- Emergency recall system

**Never use as primary notification:**

- Social media
- Group text
- Email blast
- Radio announcement
- Voicemail

## Information Control

**Before agency notification:**

- Implement strict information control
- No social media posts by anyone
- No discussing incident details
- No speculation about cause
- Monitor for leaks or rumors

**After agency notification:**

- Provide approved information only
- Direct all questions to PIO
- Continue social media restrictions
- Report any misinformation immediately

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## 4.2 NOTIFICATION SEQUENCE AND CALLING ORDER

### Priority Notification Order

#### **Tier 1: Immediate notification (within 30 minutes of family notification)**

- ☐ On-duty personnel at all stations
- ☐ Shift supervisors and officers
- ☐ Personnel who worked closely with the deceased
- ☐ Personnel who were on scene or involved in the incident

#### **Tier 2: Urgent notification (within 1-2 hours)**

- ☐ Off-duty personnel on current shift roster
- ☐ Part-time and per-diem personnel
- ☐ Recently retired personnel who remain close to the agency
- ☐ Personnel on leave (sick, vacation, etc.)

#### **Tier 3: Standard notification (within 4-6 hours)**

- ☐ All other agency personnel
- ☐ Volunteer members
- ☐ Administrative staff
- ☐ Support personnel

### Notification Team Assignments

#### **Assign specific personnel to make calls:**

- Agency Director/Chief: Key personnel and close colleagues
- Shift Supervisors: Their shift personnel
- Officers: Their assigned personnel
- CISM Team: Personnel who may need immediate support

#### **Calling assignments:**

- Divide the personnel roster among callers
- Assign approximately 10-15 calls per person
- Provide a prepared script to all callers
- Brief callers before they begin
- Track who has been notified
- Follow up on anyone not reached

### Tracking Notifications

#### **Create notification tracking log:**

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| Name | Phone | Notified By | Time | Method | Reaction | Follow-up Needed |
|------|-------|-------------|------|--------|----------|------------------|
|------|-------|-------------|------|--------|----------|------------------|

---

#### Track:

- Who was notified
  - When they were notified
  - How they were notified (phone, in-person, etc.)
  - Who notified them
  - Their immediate reaction
  - Whether follow-up support is needed
  - Anyone not yet reached
- 

## 4.3 PREPARED NOTIFICATION MESSAGE AND SCRIPT

### Notification Script for Phone Calls

#### Use this script for consistency and completeness:

*"[Name], this is [Your Name] from [Agency]. I'm calling with very difficult news. I need you to sit down if you're not already sitting."*

*[Pause for them to sit]*

*"I'm very sorry to tell you that [Deceased Name] was killed today in [brief description: ambulance accident, heart attack, etc.]. [They] died [at the scene/at the hospital] at approximately [time]. I'm so sorry."*

*[Pause for reaction—allow them to respond]*

*"I know this is a terrible shock. [Deceased Name] was [brief positive statement: a valued member of our team, an excellent paramedic, etc.]."*

*[Answer immediate questions if you can]*

*"Here's what I need you to know right now:*

- *[Their] family has been notified and is being supported.*
- *We are planning a full line-of-duty funeral with honors.*
- *Counseling services are available to you immediately through our CISM team.*
- *You do not need to report for duty if you're not emotionally ready.*

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- *We will have a station briefing at [time and location] where we'll provide more information and support.*

*Do you have any immediate questions?"*

[Answer questions]

*"I'm going to give you some important contact information:*

- *CISM Team: [phone number] - available 24/7*
- *My direct line: [phone number]*
- *Station briefing: [time and location]*

*Please do not post anything on social media yet. We will provide guidance on that at the briefing. Is there anything you need right now?"*

[Provide support]

*"I'm so sorry. We'll get through this together. Please call if you need anything."*

## Script Adaptations

### **For personnel who were on scene:**

*"I know you were there, and this is especially difficult for you. Please know that you did everything possible. We have counselors available specifically for you. Please call the CISM team right away at [number]."*

### **For close friends of the deceased:**

*"I know you and [Name] were close friends. This is a terrible loss. Please take care of yourself and reach out for support. We're here for you."*

### **For personnel on vacation or leave:**

*"I'm sorry to interrupt your [vacation/leave], but I needed to tell you personally. You don't need to return immediately unless you want to. We'll keep you informed of all arrangements."*

## Key Message Points

### **Every notification must include:**

1. Clear statement that the person is dead (not "passed away")
2. Brief description of what happened
3. Confirmation family has been notified
4. Availability of counseling services
5. Information about station briefing
6. Contact information for support

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7. Guidance on social media
  8. Offer of immediate assistance
- 

## 4.4 MANAGING RUMORS AND MISINFORMATION

### Preventing Rumors

#### **Before official notification:**

- Strict information control at the scene
- Radio discipline
- No social media by anyone
- Limit who knows the details
- Rapid notification process

#### **During the notification process:**

- Consistent message to all personnel
- Clear facts, no speculation
- Address rumors directly
- Provide approved information only

### Addressing Rumors

#### **If rumors are circulating:**

1. **Identify the rumor:** What is being said?
2. **Determine source:** Where did it start?
3. **Assess accuracy:** Is any part true?
4. **Correct immediately:** Provide accurate information
5. **Address directly:** Don't ignore or hope it goes away

#### **Sample statement addressing rumor:**

*"I'm aware that there is information circulating about [rumor]. Here are the facts: [accurate information]. Please disregard any other information and direct questions to [PIO/supervisor]."*

### Social Media Management

#### **Agency policy during LODD:**

- No social media posts by personnel until authorized
- No photos from the scene or the incident

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- No speculation or commentary
- No sharing of media reports
- Report any violations immediately

**Approved social media:**

- Official agency statement (PIO only)
- Approved memorial posts (PIO only)
- Sharing of official agency posts (after authorization)

**Monitor social media:**

- Assign personnel to monitor platforms
- Identify misinformation
- Correct errors
- Report inappropriate posts
- Document violations

## Controlling Information Flow

**Designate a single source of information:**

- Public Information Officer for external
- Agency Director/Chief for internal
- All questions directed to these sources
- Consistent messaging across all channels

**Information to control:**

- Deceased's name (until family notified)
- Incident details and cause
- Investigation information
- Family information
- Funeral arrangements (until finalized)

---

## 4.5 STATION BRIEFINGS AND SUPPORT

### Purpose of Station Briefings

Station briefings provide:

- Official information to all personnel

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- Opportunity for collective grieving
- Access to support resources
- Guidance on next steps
- Sense of unity and support

## Briefing Logistics

### Schedule briefings:

- Within 6-12 hours of the incident
- Multiple sessions to accommodate shifts
- Mandatory attendance if possible
- At each station or central location

### Briefing setup:

- Private space away from the public
- Comfortable seating
- Tissues available
- Water and coffee
- CISM team present
- Chaplain present if available

### Attendees:

- All agency personnel
- CISM team members
- Chaplain
- Agency leadership
- Union/association representatives
- Neighboring agency representatives, if appropriate

## Briefing Agenda

### 1. Opening (5 minutes)

- Agency Director/Chief opens briefing
- Acknowledge the loss
- Set tone of support and unity

*"Thank you all for being here. We are gathered because we have lost one of our own. [Name] was killed yesterday in [incident]. This is a tragedy for [their] family, for our agency, and for our community. We are here to support each other and to honor [Name]'s service."*

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## **2. Incident Information (10 minutes)**

- Factual account of what happened
- Timeline of events
- Current status of investigation
- What is known and what is not yet known
- No speculation or blame

*"Here's what we know: [factual information]. The investigation is ongoing, and we will share more information as it becomes available. Please do not speculate about cause or blame. Let the investigation proceed."*

## **3. Family Status (5 minutes)**

- Family has been notified and is being supported
- Family Liaison Officer assigned
- Family's immediate needs are being addressed
- Respect the family's privacy

*"[Name]'s family has been notified and is being supported by our Family Liaison Officer. They are devastated, as you can imagine. Please respect their privacy during this time. Do not contact them directly unless invited. We will coordinate any agency contact with the family."*

## **4. Funeral Arrangements (5 minutes)**

- Preliminary funeral plans
- Expected timeline
- Agency involvement
- How personnel can participate
- More details to follow

*"We are working with the family to plan a funeral with full honors. The service will likely be [day/date] at [location]. We will provide more details as they are finalized. All personnel are encouraged to attend if possible. We will arrange shift coverage."*

## **5. Support Resources (10 minutes)**

- CISM team introduction and availability
- Chaplain services
- Counseling resources
- Peer support
- How to access help

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*"We have counselors here today and available 24/7. Please use these resources. Grief is normal, and seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness. Here's how to access support: [contact information]."*

## **6. Operational Information (5 minutes)**

- Shift coverage and staffing
- Time off policy for grieving personnel
- Funeral attendance arrangements
- Operational status

*"We will continue to serve our community while supporting each other. If you need time off, please speak with your supervisor. We will arrange coverage. If you're not emotionally ready to work, please don't. Your well-being is our priority."*

## **7. Media and Communications (5 minutes)**

- Media policy
- Social media guidance
- Who speaks for the agency
- Protecting family privacy

*"All media inquiries must go through our PIO. Do not speak to the media. Do not post on social media about the incident. Protect [Name]'s family from unwanted attention. We will provide approved information through official channels."*

## **8. Questions and Discussion (15 minutes)**

- Open floor for questions
- Allow personnel to share feelings
- Provide honest answers
- Acknowledge emotions

## **9. Closing (5 minutes)**

- Reiterate support available
- Provide contact information
- Moment of silence for the deceased
- Dismiss with support

*"We will get through this together. [Name] served with honor, and we will honor [their] memory. Please take care of yourselves and each other. Let's have a moment of silence for [Name]."*

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## Follow-up Briefings

### **Schedule additional briefings:**

- Daily updates during the first week
- Before and after the funeral
- After the investigation findings were released
- As needed based on personnel needs

### **Ongoing communication:**

- Email updates
  - Shift briefings
  - Posted information at stations
  - Regular check-ins with personnel
- 

## 4.6 DOCUMENTATION OF AGENCY NOTIFICATIONS

### Required Documentation

#### **Track all agency notifications:**

##### **Notification Log:**

- Complete list of all personnel
- Date and time each was notified
- Method of notification
- Who notified them
- Their immediate reaction
- Support resources provided
- Follow-up needed

##### **Briefing Documentation:**

- Date, time, and location of each briefing
- Attendance roster
- Information provided
- Questions asked and answered
- Resources distributed
- Follow-up scheduled

##### **Support Services Documentation:**

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- CISM activations and services provided
- Counseling referrals made
- Personnel on leave for grief
- Ongoing support provided

## Confidentiality

### Protect personnel privacy:

- Individual reactions are confidential
- Counseling services are confidential
- Do not share personnel information with the media
- Limit access to documentation
- Maintain secure storage

## After-Action Review

### After the incident, review the notification process:

- What worked well?
- What could be improved?
- Were all personnel notified promptly?
- Was the information accurate and consistent?
- Were support resources adequate?
- What changes should be made to the protocol?

### Update procedures based on lessons learned.

---

## SECTION 5: MEDIA MANAGEMENT & PUBLIC INFORMATION

**Purpose:** To provide accurate public information while protecting family privacy, maintaining investigation integrity, and honoring the deceased with dignity.

**Key Personnel:** Public Information Officer, Agency Director/Chief

**Timeline:** Begins immediately after family notification; continues through funeral and beyond

**Critical Considerations:** Media interest will be intense. Proper media management protects the family, supports the investigation, and honors the deceased's service.

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## 5.1 MEDIA RELATIONS STRATEGY

### Understanding Media Interest

#### **Line-of-duty deaths generate significant media attention because:**

- Public safety deaths are newsworthy
- Community wants information
- The media has a job to inform the public
- Social media amplifies interest
- National media may be involved

#### **Media will seek:**

- Deceased's name and photo
- Details of the incident
- Cause of death
- Family information
- Agency response
- Funeral arrangements
- Interviews with family, colleagues, witnesses

### Media Management Goals

#### **Your media strategy must:**

1. **Protect family privacy** - Shield family from unwanted attention
2. **Support investigation** - Don't compromise evidence or findings
3. **Honor the deceased** - Respectful, dignified coverage
4. **Inform public** - Provide accurate, timely information
5. **Maintain agency reputation** - Professional, transparent communication

### Media Relations Principles

#### **Be:**

- **Timely:** Provide information as soon as appropriate
- **Accurate:** Only share confirmed facts
- **Consistent:** Same message across all channels
- **Compassionate:** Respectful tone in all communications
- **Transparent:** Honest about what you can and cannot share

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**Don't:**

- Speculate about cause or blame
  - Release information before family notification
  - Provide graphic details
  - Discuss investigation details
  - Allow media to harass family
- 

## 5.2 PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATES

### Initial Press Release (Immediately After Family Notification)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact:** [PIO Name]

[Agency Name]

[Phone Number]

[Email]

**[AGENCY] MOURNS LOSS OF [POSITION] IN LINE-OF-DUTY DEATH**

[CITY, STATE] – [Date] – [Agency Name] announces with deep sorrow the line-of-duty death of [Full Name], [age], a [position/rank] with [number] years of service.

[Name] died [date] at approximately [time] [brief description of incident: in an ambulance accident, of a medical emergency, etc.]. [They] were [on duty/responding to a call/etc] at the time.

"We are devastated by the loss of [Name]," said [Agency Director/Chief Name]. "[They] were dedicated [position] holders who served our community with honor and distinction. Our thoughts and prayers are with [their] family, friends, and colleagues during this incredibly difficult time."

[Name] joined [Agency] in [year] and served in [positions held]. [They] are survived by [basic family information if family approves: spouse, children, etc.].

The incident is under investigation by [investigating agency]. No further details are available at this time.

Funeral arrangements are pending and will be announced when finalized. The agency is coordinating with the family to plan a service with full honors.

Counseling services have been made available to agency personnel and the family.

The agency requests privacy for the family during this difficult time.

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Further information will be released as it becomes available.

## Follow-up Press Release (Funeral Arrangements)

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact:** [PIO Name]

[Agency Name]

[Phone Number]

[Email]

### **FUNERAL SERVICES ANNOUNCED FOR [NAME]**

[CITY, STATE] – [Date] – [Agency Name] announces funeral services for [Full Name], who died in the line of duty on [date].

#### **VISITATION:**

[Day, Date]

[Time]

[Location]

[Address]

#### **FUNERAL SERVICE:**

[Day, Date]

[Time]

[Location]

[Address]

#### **INTERMENT:**

[Cemetery Name]

[Address]

[Private/Public]

The funeral will be conducted with full [EMS/public safety] honors, including [honor guard, flag presentation, etc.].

The procession will travel from [location] to [location] via [route]. The public is invited to pay respects along the route.

[If applicable: The service will be livestreamed at [URL] for those unable to attend in person.]

Instead of flowers, the family requests donations to [charity/scholarship fund].

The family thanks the community for the outpouring of support during this difficult time.

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Media covering the funeral are asked to respect the family's privacy and to follow the agency's guidelines.

## Template for Incident Updates

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Contact:** [PIO Name]  
[Agency Name]  
[Phone Number]  
[Email]

### UPDATE: INVESTIGATION INTO LINE-OF-DUTY DEATH OF [NAME]

[CITY, STATE] – [Date] – [Agency Name] provides the following update regarding the line-of-duty death of [Name] on [date].

[Provide factual updates about investigation, findings, or other relevant information]

[If investigation complete: The investigation has determined that [findings]. OR: The investigation is ongoing, and no further information is available at this time.]

[Agency Director/Chief quote about findings or ongoing support for family]

The family continues to be supported by the agency and appreciates the community's continued thoughts and prayers.

[Any additional relevant information]

---

## 5.3 NEWS CONFERENCE PROTOCOLS

### When to Hold a News Conference

#### Consider a news conference for:

- Initial announcement (if media interest is high)
- Funeral arrangements announcement
- Investigation findings release
- Significant updates or developments

#### Don't hold a news conference if:

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- Information can be provided via a press release
- Family requests no media attention
- Investigation prohibits public discussion
- No new information to share

## News Conference Planning

### Logistics:

- ☐ Schedule at least 2 hours after family notification
- ☐ Choose a neutral location (agency headquarters, government building)
- ☐ Set up podium with agency logo/seal
- ☐ Arrange seating for media
- ☐ Test audio/visual equipment
- ☐ Provide press kits
- ☐ Livestream if possible

### Participants:

- Agency Director/Chief (primary speaker)
- Public Information Officer (moderator)
- Investigating agency representative (if appropriate)
- Elected official (if appropriate)
- **Not family members** (protect their privacy)

### Preparation:

- ☐ Prepare opening statement
- ☐ Anticipate questions and prepare answers
- ☐ Decide what information can and cannot be shared
- ☐ Brief all participants
- ☐ Prepare press kit materials
- ☐ Coordinate with investigating agencies

## News Conference Format

### 1. Opening Statement (5 minutes)

- PIO introduces participants
- Agency Director/Chief delivers statement
- Factual information about the incident
- Expression of sympathy for the family
- Acknowledgment of community support

### 2. Questions and Answers (15-20 minutes)

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- PIO moderates
- Take questions from the media
- Answer what you can
- Decline to answer what you can't
- Stay on message

### 3. Closing (2 minutes)

- Thank the media for respectful coverage
- Provide contact information for follow-up
- Announce next update timeline
- Dismiss

## Sample Opening Statement

*"Good [morning/afternoon]. I'm [Name], [Title] of [Agency]. Thank you for being here.*

*It is with profound sadness that I announce the line-of-duty death of [Full Name], a [position] with [Agency]. [Name] died [date] at approximately [time] [brief description of incident].*

*[Name] was [age] years old and had served with [Agency] for [number] years. They were dedicated [position] who served our community with distinction and honor.*

*[Name] is survived by [basic family information if approved]. Our hearts go out to [their] family, friends, and colleagues during this incredibly difficult time.*

*The incident is under investigation by [investigating agency]. We are cooperating fully with the investigation. I cannot provide details about the incident at this time as the investigation is ongoing.*

*We are working with [Name]'s family to plan a funeral service with full honors. Details will be announced as soon as they are finalized.*

*Counseling services have been made available to our personnel and to [Name]'s family.*

*I want to thank the community for the outpouring of support we have already received. [Name] dedicated their life to serving others, and we will honor that service.*

*I'll now take a few questions."*

## Handling Difficult Questions

### **"What caused the death?"**

*"The incident is under investigation. We will share findings when the investigation is complete."*

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**"Was anyone at fault?"**

*"The investigation will determine that. It would be inappropriate to speculate."*

**"Can we interview the family?"**

*"The family has requested privacy during this difficult time. We ask that you respect their wishes."*

**"Were there any safety violations?"**

*"The investigation will examine all aspects of the incident. We are committed to learning from this tragedy."*

**"Can we have photos of the deceased?"**

*"We will provide an official photo. Please do not use photos from social media without family permission."*

**If you don't know the answer:**

*"I don't have that information at this time. I will find out and get back to you."*

**If you can't answer:**

*"I cannot discuss that because [it's part of the investigation/it would violate family privacy/etc.]."*

---

## 5.4 PROTECTING FAMILY PRIVACY

### Family Privacy Rights

**The family has the right to:**

- Grieve privately without media intrusion
- Control their own story and information
- Decline media interviews
- Approve photos and information released
- Be protected from harassment

**Your responsibility:**

- Shield family from unwanted media attention
- Control information about the family
- Prevent media from contacting family directly
- Respect the family's wishes about publicity

### Information to Protect

**Do not release without family permission:**

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- Home address or phone number
- Children's names or information
- Photos beyond official agency photo
- Personal details or history
- Social media accounts
- Workplace information for family members

**Release only with family approval:**

- Deceased's photo (use official agency photo)
- Basic biographical information
- Survivors (spouse, children - first names only)
- Funeral arrangements
- Memorial fund information

## Preventing Media Harassment

**Protect the family from the media by:**

- ☐ Assigning Family Liaison Officer to screen calls
- ☐ Providing the family with the PIO contact for media requests
- ☐ Requesting media respect family privacy
- ☐ Monitoring family home for media presence
- ☐ Arranging a private entrance at the funeral home
- ☐ Controlling access at the funeral service
- ☐ Having law enforcement remove trespassing media

**If the media contacts the family directly:**

- Family should refer them to the PIO
- Family should not feel obligated to respond
- Document any harassment
- Take action if the media is intrusive

## Social Media Protection

**Monitor and protect:**

- Deceased's social media accounts
- Family members' social media accounts
- Agency social media mentions
- Photos and videos are being shared

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**Actions:**

- ☐ Request the family to secure the deceased's accounts
  - ☐ Report inappropriate posts or photos
  - ☐ Request removal of private photos
  - ☐ Monitor for misinformation
  - ☐ Protect family from online harassment
- 

## 5.5 SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT

### Agency Social Media Policy During LODD

**Immediate actions:**

- ☐ Suspend all routine social media posts
- ☐ Post official statement after family notification
- ☐ Monitor all platforms for mentions
- ☐ Respond to misinformation
- ☐ Control comments on agency posts

**Approved social media content:**

- Official press releases
- Funeral arrangements
- Memorial tributes (with family approval)
- Community support information
- Photos from funeral (respectful, approved)

**Prohibited social media content:**

- Incident scene photos
- Graphic details
- Speculation about the cause
- Family information without permission
- Personnel reactions or comments
- Anything that compromises the investigation

### Sample Social Media Posts

**Initial Announcement:**

*"It is with profound sadness that we announce the line-of-duty death of [Name], a [position] with [Agency]. [Name] served our community with honor and dedication for [number] years. Our thoughts and prayers are with [their] family, friends, and colleagues. More information will be provided as it becomes available. #NeverForget"*

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**Funeral Arrangements:**

*"Funeral services for [Name] will be held [date] at [time] at [location]. The service will be conducted with full honors. The community is invited to pay respects. Details: [link to press release] #NeverForget."*

**Memorial Tribute:**

*"Today we honor the life and service of [Name]. [They] dedicated [their] life to serving others and will be deeply missed. Thank you to everyone who has supported [Name]'s family and our agency during this difficult time. [Photo] #NeverForget"*

## Monitoring and Response

**Monitor for:**

- Misinformation or rumors
- Inappropriate comments or posts
- Photos or videos from the incident
- Harassment of family or personnel
- Impersonation accounts

**Response protocol:**

- Correct misinformation with facts
- Report inappropriate content to platforms
- Request removal of private photos
- Block or ban abusive users
- Document all issues

## Personnel Social Media Guidance

**Instruct all personnel:**

- Do not post about the incident until authorized
- Do not share photos from the scene
- Do not speculate about the cause
- Do not discuss the investigation
- Do not share family information
- Refer media to PIO
- Be respectful in all posts

**Approved personnel posts:**

- Sharing official agency posts

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- Respectful tributes to the deceased (after the funeral)
  - Expressions of sympathy
  - Support for family
- 

## 5.6 MEDIA MANAGEMENT DURING FUNERAL

### Pre-Funeral Media Coordination

#### **Two weeks before the funeral:**

- ☐ Designate media staging area
- ☐ Establish media ground rules
- ☐ Provide media advisory with logistics
- ☐ Arrange media credentials if needed
- ☐ Assign media liaison for funeral day

#### **Media Advisory:**

#### **MEDIA ADVISORY**

#### **FUNERAL SERVICE FOR [NAME]**

[Agency Name] will conduct funeral services with full honors for [Name] on [date].

#### **MEDIA COVERAGE GUIDELINES:**

##### **Visitation:**

- Media are welcome to attend the visitation
- Photography allowed in designated areas only
- No interviews with family without their consent
- Respect mourners' privacy

##### **Funeral Service:**

- Media staging area: [location]
- Pool camera inside church: [Yes/No]
- Photography allowed: [specify restrictions]
- No interviews during service
- Remain in designated areas

##### **Procession:**

- Media may photograph the procession from public areas
- Do not block the procession route

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- Do not follow the procession
- Respect traffic control

#### **Graveside:**

- Media area: [location]
- Photography allowed from the designated area only
- No audio recording of private family moments
- Depart before family

#### **General Guidelines:**

- Respect the family's privacy at all times
- No interviews with family unless they initiate
- No photography of grieving family members
- Professional, respectful coverage
- Follow directions of agency personnel

**Media Contact:** [PIO Name, Phone, Email]

### **Funeral Day Media Management**

#### **Media liaison responsibilities:**

- ☐ Greet media at staging area
- ☐ Provide press kits
- ☐ Enforce media guidelines
- ☐ Coordinate pool camera if applicable
- ☐ Monitor media compliance
- ☐ Address any issues immediately
- ☐ Protect family from intrusion

#### **Press Kit Contents:**

- Funeral program
- Biography of the deceased
- Agency fact sheet
- Photos (approved by family)
- Press releases
- Contact information

### **Handling Media Violations**

#### **If the media violates guidelines:**

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1. Approach respectfully but firmly
2. Remind them of the agreed guidelines
3. Request compliance
4. Remove if necessary
5. Document violation
6. Consider banning from future access

**Sample intervention:**

*"Excuse me, you're in a restricted area. Media must remain in the designated staging area. Please move there now, or I'll have to ask you to leave."*

---

## 5.7 HANDLING DIGNITARY AND VIP REQUESTS

### Dignitary Attendance

**Potential dignitaries:**

- Governor or Lieutenant Governor
- U.S. Senators or Representatives
- State legislators
- County executives
- Mayors
- Agency heads (State EMS Director, etc.)
- National EMS leadership

**Dignitary coordination:**

- ☐ Confirm attendance
- ☐ Coordinate with their staff
- ☐ Arrange seating
- ☐ Coordinate security if needed
- ☐ Prepare remarks if they're speaking
- ☐ Brief on family preferences
- ☐ Manage media around dignitaries

### VIP Seating and Protocol

**Seating priority:**

1. Family (front rows)
2. Agency personnel
3. Dignitaries and elected officials

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4. Other public safety agencies
5. Community members

**Dignitary seating:**

- Reserved section near the front
- Clearly marked
- Coordinated with their staff
- Security considerations if needed

**Protocol considerations:**

- Introduce dignitaries appropriately
- Coordinate speaking roles
- Manage photo opportunities
- Balance honoring the deceased with political sensitivity

## Managing Political Considerations

**Challenges:**

- Multiple elected officials wanting to speak
- Political tensions or rivalries
- Media attention on politicians vs. the deceased
- Family preferences vs. political expectations

**Guidelines:**

- **Family wishes come first**
- Limit the number of speakers
- Keep remarks brief and focused on the deceased
- Avoid political statements or agendas
- Coordinate all speakers in advance

**If conflict arises:**

*"We appreciate your desire to honor [Name]. The family has requested that we limit the number of speakers to [number]. We hope you understand that our focus is on honoring [Name] and supporting the family."*

## Media and Dignitaries

**Manage media attention on dignitaries:**

- Designate time/place for dignitary statements

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- Keep focus on the deceased, not the politicians
- Prevent media circus at funeral
- Coordinate with dignitary staff

**Sample coordination with dignitary staff:**

*"The Governor is welcome to attend, and we're honored by his presence. We ask that any media availability occur before or after the service, not during. The family has requested that the focus remain on [Name]. We'll provide a designated area for any statements the Governor wishes to make."*

## Declining Unwanted Attention

**If the family prefers low-key service:**

- Politely decline high-profile attendees if appropriate
- Explain the family's wishes
- Offer alternative ways to honor the deceased
- Stand firm on family preferences

*"The family appreciates your desire to attend, but they have requested a small, private service. Perhaps you could send a letter of condolence or donate to the memorial fund in [Name]'s honor."*

---

## SECTION 6: INVESTIGATION & DOCUMENTATION

**Purpose:** To ensure thorough investigation of the incident, proper documentation for benefits and legal purposes, and learning to prevent future deaths.

**Key Personnel:** Agency Director/Chief, Investigation Liaison, Benefits Coordinator

**Timeline:** Begins immediately; continues for weeks to months

**Critical Considerations:** Proper investigation and documentation are essential for PSOB benefits, workers' compensation, legal protection, and the prevention of future tragedies.

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### 6.1 LAW ENFORCEMENT COORDINATION

#### Law Enforcement Role

**Law enforcement leads the investigation for:**

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- Criminal incidents (assault, homicide)
- Traffic accidents
- Suspicious deaths
- Any death requiring criminal investigation

**Your agency's role:**

- Cooperate fully with the investigation
- Provide all requested information
- Assign liaison to investigators
- Preserve evidence
- Do not interfere with the investigation

## Investigation Liaison

**Assign agency liaison to:**

- ☐ Serve as a single point of contact with investigators
- ☐ Facilitate access to personnel, records, and equipment
- ☐ Coordinate interviews and evidence collection
- ☐ Receive updates on investigation progress
- ☐ Communicate findings to agency leadership
- ☐ Protect investigation integrity

**Liaison should be:**

- High-ranking officer with authority
- Knowledgeable about agency operations
- Available throughout the investigation
- Trusted by investigators and the agency

## Providing Information to Investigators

**Investigators will need:**

- ☐ Personnel file for deceased
- ☐ Training records and certifications
- ☐ Medical records and fitness-for-duty evaluations
- ☐ Incident reports and documentation
- ☐ Equipment maintenance records
- ☐ Vehicle maintenance and inspection records
- ☐ Policies and procedures
- ☐ Witness statements
- ☐ Radio recordings and CAD data

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- ☐ Video footage
- ☐ GPS and electronic data

**Provide promptly and completely:**

- Organize records for easy access
- Make copies (preserve originals)
- Document what was provided
- Respond to additional requests quickly
- Maintain confidentiality

## Personnel Interviews

**Investigators will interview:**

- Personnel on scene
- Witnesses
- Supervisors
- Anyone with relevant information

**Prepare personnel for interviews:**

- Explain the investigation purpose
- Advise to be truthful and complete
- Provide union/association representation if requested
- Offer support before and after the interview
- Do not coach or influence testimony

**Personnel rights:**

- Right to union/association representation
- Right to review statements
- Protection from retaliation
- Confidentiality of statements

---

## 6.2 SCENE INVESTIGATION REQUIREMENTS

### Scene Preservation

 **CRITICAL:** Scene must be preserved exactly as it was at the time of the incident until released by investigators.

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**Scene preservation checklist:**

- ☐ Establish perimeter and control access
- ☐ Document the scene with photos and video
- ☐ Preserve all physical evidence
- ☐ Protect from weather and contamination
- ☐ Maintain chain of custody
- ☐ Do not move or alter anything
- ☐ Keep a detailed log of scene access

## Evidence Collection

**Types of evidence:**

- Medical equipment used
- Medications administered
- Patient care reports
- Vehicle components
- Environmental factors
- Witness statements
- Electronic data
- Photos and video

**Evidence handling:**

1. Photograph in place before moving
2. Tag and label each item
3. Document the chain of custody
4. Store securely
5. Preserve for investigation
6. Release only to investigators

## Vehicle Impoundment

**If vehicle involved:**

- ☐ Photograph thoroughly before moving
- ☐ Impound at a secure location
- ☐ Do not drive or operate
- ☐ Do not clean or repair
- ☐ Preserve all systems and settings
- ☐ Download electronic data
- ☐ Allow investigator inspection
- ☐ Maintain until released

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## Scene Reconstruction

### **Investigators may conduct:**

- Accident reconstruction
- Timeline development
- Witness interviews at the scene
- Re-enactments
- Technical analysis

### **Agency cooperation:**

- Provide access to the scene
  - Provide personnel for re-enactment if needed
  - Answer technical questions
  - Explain EMS procedures and equipment
  - Support investigation needs
- 

## 6.3 AUTOPSY AND MEDICAL EXAMINER PROCESS

### Medical Examiner Authority

#### **The medical examiner has legal authority over the body:**

- Takes custody immediately
- Determines cause and manner of death
- Orders autopsy if necessary
- Issues a death certificate
- Releases body to family

#### **The agency cannot:**

- Refuse medical examiner custody
- Prevent autopsy
- Access body without permission
- Interfere with the examination

### Autopsy Process

#### **Autopsy may be required for:**

- Unexpected deaths

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- Traumatic deaths
- Deaths under investigation
- Unclear cause of death
- Legal requirements

#### **Autopsy includes:**

- External examination
- Internal examination
- Toxicology testing
- Tissue analysis
- Photography and documentation

#### **Timeline:**

- Autopsy typically within 24-48 hours
- Preliminary findings within days
- Final report within weeks to months
- Toxicology results may take longer

### **Family Concerns About Autopsy**

#### **Family may object to autopsy due to:**

- Religious beliefs
- Emotional distress
- Misunderstanding of process
- Fear of disfigurement

#### **Address concerns:**

*"I understand this is difficult. The autopsy is required by law to determine the official cause of death. The medical examiner will treat [Name] with respect and dignity. The autopsy will not prevent viewing or an open casket if that's your wish. The information from the autopsy is important for benefits and for preventing future deaths."*

#### **Religious objections:**

- Explain legal requirements
- Offer to expedite the process
- Connect with a religious leader
- Accommodate religious practices where possible

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## Death Certificates

### **Request multiple certified copies:**

- Minimum 15-20 copies
- Needed for benefits, insurance, and legal matters
- Expensive to obtain later
- Medical examiner issues after autopsy

### **Death certificate information:**

- Legal name
- Date and time of death
- Place of death
- Cause of death
- Manner of death (accident, natural, homicide, etc.)
- Medical examiner signature

### **Uses for death certificates:**

- PSOB application
- Pension benefits
- Workers' compensation
- Life insurance claims
- Social Security
- Property transfers
- Legal proceedings

---

## 6.4 MEDICAL RECORDS AND DOCUMENTATION

### Medical Records to Collect

#### **Gather all medical records related to the incident:**

- ☐ Pre-hospital care reports (PCRs)
- ☐ Hospital emergency department records
- ☐ Trauma center records
- ☐ Surgical reports
- ☐ Intensive care records
- ☐ Physician notes
- ☐ Nursing notes

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- ☐ Diagnostic test results
- ☐ Autopsy report

**Also collect:**

- ☐ Deceased's personnel medical file
- ☐ Fitness-for-duty evaluations
- ☐ Pre-employment physical
- ☐ Occupational health records
- ☐ Workers' compensation history
- ☐ Previous injury reports

## HIPAA and Medical Records Release

**HIPAA protects medical records:**

- Requires authorization for release
- A family or estate representative can authorize
- A subpoena may be required for some records

**Obtain authorization from:**

- Spouse or next of kin
- Estate executor
- Legal representative

**Authorization should specify:**

- What records are requested
- Purpose of request
- Who can receive records
- Time period covered

## Medical Documentation for Benefits

**PSOB requires:**

- Complete medical records from the incident
- Autopsy report
- Death certificate
- Medical examiner findings
- Toxicology results

**Workers' compensation requires:**

- Medical records from the incident

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- Employment medical records
- Causation documentation
- Physician statements

**Pension benefits require:**

- Death certificate
- Medical records if death related to duty
- Disability records, if applicable

## Organizing Medical Records

**Create a comprehensive medical file:**

1. Chronological organization
2. Index of all records
3. Summary of key findings
4. Copies for each benefit application
5. Secure storage of originals

**Medical records coordinator:**

- Assign someone to gather and organize records
- Track what has been received
- Follow up on missing records
- Provide copies as needed
- Maintain confidentiality

---

## 6.5 PSOB DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

### Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program Overview

**PSOB provides:**

- Death benefit (currently \$370,376, adjusted annually)
- Education assistance for survivors
- Expedited processing for line-of-duty deaths

**Eligibility requirements:**

- Death must be in line of duty
- Must be a public safety officer
- Death must result from injury in line of duty

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- Specific exclusions apply

**Application deadline:**

- Must file within one year of death (can be extended)

**Required Documentation for PSOB**

**Complete application package requires:**

**1. PSOB Claim Form (DOJ Form 1)**

- ☐ Completed and signed by authorized agency representative
- ☐ Detailed narrative of the incident
- ☐ Determination that death was in line of duty

**2. Death Certificate**

- ☐ Certified copy
- ☐ Shows cause and manner of death

**3. Autopsy Report**

- ☐ Complete autopsy report
- ☐ Toxicology results
- ☐ Medical examiner findings

**4. Medical Records**

- ☐ All records from the incident
- ☐ Emergency department records
- ☐ Hospital records
- ☐ Physician statements
- ☐ Ambulance run reports
- ☐ Treatment documentation

**5. Employment Records**

- ☐ Personnel file
- ☐ Proof of employment status
- ☐ Job description
- ☐ Training records
- ☐ Duty roster showing on-duty status

**6. Incident Documentation**

- ☐ Incident reports
- ☐ Investigation reports
- ☐ Witness statements
- ☐ Scene photographs
- ☐ Radio logs and CAD records

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## **7. Agency Certification**

- ☐ Letter from agency head certifying line-of-duty death
- ☐ Agency organizational chart
- ☐ Proof of agency's public safety status

## **8. Survivor Information**

- ☐ Marriage certificate (if applicable)
- ☐ Birth certificates for children
- ☐ Proof of dependency
- ☐ Social Security numbers for all survivors

## **PSOB Application Process**

### **Step 1: Initial Contact (Within 30 days)**

- ☐ Contact PSOB office at (888) 744-6513
- ☐ Request claim forms and instructions
- ☐ Assign Benefits Coordinator to manage application
- ☐ Begin gathering documentation

### **Step 2: Documentation Assembly (30-60 days)**

- ☐ Collect all required documents
- ☐ Organize chronologically
- ☐ Create an index of all materials
- ☐ Make copies for agency records
- ☐ Review for completeness

### **Step 3: Application Submission (Within 1 year)**

- ☐ Complete all forms
- ☐ Attach all supporting documentation
- ☐ Have the agency head sign the certification
- ☐ Submit via certified mail
- ☐ Retain proof of mailing
- ☐ Keep a complete copy for records

### **Step 4: Follow-up (Ongoing)**

- ☐ Respond promptly to requests for additional information
- ☐ Track application status
- ☐ Maintain contact with PSOB office
- ☐ Update family on progress
- ☐ Assist with any appeals if necessary

## **PSOB Timeline Expectations**

### **Typical processing timeline:**

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- Application submission: Within 1 year of death
- Initial review: 30-60 days
- Additional information requests: 60-90 days
- Final determination: 6-12 months from submission
- Payment: 30 days after approval

**Expedited processing available for:**

- Clear line-of-duty deaths
- Complete documentation submitted
- No contested issues

## Common PSOB Issues and Solutions

**Issue: Incomplete medical records**

*Solution:* Assign someone to track down all records; obtain authorizations from family; follow up persistently

**Issue: Unclear line-of-duty determination**

*Solution:* Provide a detailed narrative; include witness statements; document all relevant circumstances

**Issue: Toxicology results showing substances**

*Solution:* Provide context (prescribed medications, etc.); obtain physician statements; explain any findings

**Issue: Missing employment documentation**

*Solution:* Reconstruct from payroll, training records, and duty rosters; obtain affidavits if necessary

## PSOB Education Benefits

**In addition to the death benefit, PSOB provides education assistance:**

- Available to surviving children
- Covers tuition and fees
- Up to \$1,200 per month
- Available until age 27
- Requires a separate application

**Education benefit documentation:**

- ☐ Proof of enrollment
- ☐ Tuition statements
- ☐ Birth certificate

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- ☐ Relationship to deceased
- ☐ Annual renewal application

## PSOB Contact Information

### Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program

Bureau of Justice Assistance  
U.S. Department of Justice  
810 Seventh Street NW  
Washington, DC 20531

**Phone:** (888) 744-6513

**Email:** [AskPSOB@usdoj.gov](mailto:AskPSOB@usdoj.gov)

**Website:** [psob.bja.ojp.gov](http://psob.bja.ojp.gov)

### Assign Benefits Coordinator to:

- ☐ Serve as a single point of contact with PSOB
- ☐ Track all documentation
- ☐ Respond to requests
- ☐ Update family regularly
- ☐ Ensure timely submission

---

## 6.6 WORKERS' COMPENSATION DOCUMENTATION

### Workers' Compensation Overview

#### Workers' compensation provides:

- Medical expense coverage
- Funeral and burial expenses (typically \$10,000-\$15,000)
- Death benefits to survivors
- Ongoing income replacement for dependents

#### Eligibility requirements:

- Death must arise out of employment
- Death must occur in the course of employment
- Must be a covered employee

#### Wisconsin-specific information:

- Governed by the Wisconsin Workers' Compensation Act
- Administered by Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development

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- Specific benefit schedules apply

## Required Documentation for Workers' Compensation

### Initial claim filing requires:

#### 1. First Report of Injury (Form WKC-12)

- ☐ Completed within 7 days of death
- ☐ Detailed description of the incident
- ☐ Witness information
- ☐ Supervisor statement

#### 2. Death Certificate

- ☐ Certified copy
- ☐ Showing work-related cause

#### 3. Medical Records

- ☐ All treatment records
- ☐ Autopsy report
- ☐ Medical examiner findings
- ☐ Physician causation statement

#### 4. Employment Records

- ☐ Proof of employment
- ☐ Wage records (last 52 weeks)
- ☐ Job description
- ☐ Personnel file
- ☐ Time cards/duty roster

#### 5. Dependent Information

- ☐ Marriage certificate
- ☐ Birth certificates for children
- ☐ Proof of dependency
- ☐ Social Security numbers

#### 6. Incident Documentation

- ☐ Incident reports
- ☐ Investigation findings
- ☐ Witness statements
- ☐ Scene photographs
- ☐ Equipment inspection records

## Workers' Compensation Filing Timeline

 **CRITICAL:** Workers' compensation claims have strict deadlines. File immediately to preserve rights.

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**Wisconsin deadlines:**

- **First Report of Injury:** Within 7 days of death
- **Claim filing:** Within 12 years (but file immediately)
- **Medical bills:** Within a reasonable time
- **Dependent benefits:** File as soon as possible

**Filing process:****Week 1:**

- ☐ Complete First Report of Injury
- ☐ Submit to the insurance carrier
- ☐ Notify Wisconsin DWD
- ☐ Provide copy to family

**Weeks 2-4:**

- ☐ Gather all medical records
- ☐ Collect employment documentation
- ☐ Obtain wage records
- ☐ Compile incident reports

**Weeks 4-8:**

- ☐ Submit complete claim package
- ☐ Respond to carrier requests
- ☐ Provide additional documentation
- ☐ Track claim status

**Ongoing:**

- ☐ Monitor claim processing
- ☐ Assist the family with questions
- ☐ Coordinate with other benefits
- ☐ Appeal if claim denied

## Workers' Compensation Benefits Available

**Death benefits include:****Funeral and burial expenses:**

- Maximum \$10,000 in Wisconsin
- Covers funeral home costs
- Burial plot and marker
- Reasonable expenses

**Dependent benefits:****Version 2.0 revised 4/2/2026**

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- Surviving spouse: 4 years of wages or remarriage
- Children: Until age 18 (or 26 if a student)
- Dependent parents: If no spouse/children
- Based on the deceased's average weekly wage

**Calculation example:**

*If the deceased earned \$50,000/year (\$961/week), the spouse receives approximately \$640/week for 4 years or until remarriage, plus the children receive benefits until age 18.*

## Coordination with Benefits Coordinator

**Benefits Coordinator responsibilities:**

- ☐ File workers' compensation claim
- ☐ Track all documentation
- ☐ Communicate with the insurance carrier
- ☐ Update family on claim status
- ☐ Coordinate with other benefits (PSOB, pension)
- ☐ Ensure maximum benefits received
- ☐ Assist with appeals if necessary

**Avoid benefit offsets:**

- Workers' comp may be reduced if PSOB is received
- Coordinate timing of applications
- Understand how benefits interact
- Maximize total benefits to family

**Document all communications:**

- ☐ Claim number and adjuster contact
- ☐ All phone calls and emails
- ☐ Requests for information
- ☐ Decisions and determinations
- ☐ Payment records

## Wisconsin Workers' Compensation Contacts

**Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development**

Worker's Compensation Division  
201 E. Washington Avenue  
Madison, WI 53703

**Phone:** (608) 266-1340

**Website:** [dwd.wisconsin.gov/wc](http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/wc)

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**Your insurance carrier:**

- ☐ Carrier name: \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Claim number: \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Adjuster name: \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Adjuster phone: \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Adjuster email: \_\_\_\_\_
- 

## 6.7 AGENCY INTERNAL REVIEW

### Purpose of Internal Review

**Internal review serves to:**

- Identify what happened and why
- Determine if policies were followed
- Identify training or equipment needs
- Prevent future incidents
- Improve agency operations
- Provide closure for personnel

**Internal review is separate from:**

- Criminal investigation (law enforcement)
- Workers' compensation claim
- PSOB application
- Disciplinary proceedings

### Timing of Internal Review

**When to conduct an internal review:**

- **After criminal investigation concludes** (if applicable)
- **After funeral services are complete** (allow time for grieving)
- **Typically 30-60 days after the incident**
- **Before memories fade** (but not rushed)

**Do not conduct an internal review:**

- While a criminal investigation is active
- Immediately after the incident (too raw)
- If it will interfere with legal proceedings
- Without legal counsel review

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## Internal Review Committee

### **Assemble review committee:**

#### **Committee composition:**

- ☐ Agency Director or Chief (chair)
- ☐ Operations officer
- ☐ Training officer
- ☐ Safety officer
- ☐ Union/association representative
- ☐ External subject matter expert (if appropriate)

#### **The committee should:**

- Be objective and fair
- Have necessary expertise
- Be trusted by personnel
- Have authority to make recommendations
- Document findings thoroughly

#### **Committee should NOT:**

- Assign blame to individuals
- Conduct a witch hunt
- Violate personnel rights
- Compromise legal proceedings

## What Should Be Reviewed

### **Comprehensive review includes:**

#### **1. Incident Timeline**

- ☐ Chronological reconstruction of events
- ☐ Dispatch information and response
- ☐ Actions taken by all personnel
- ☐ Decision points and rationale
- ☐ Communications throughout the incident

#### **2. Policies and Procedures**

- ☐ Were SOPs followed?
- ☐ Were SOPs adequate?
- ☐ Were personnel trained on SOPs?
- ☐ Were SOPs accessible and clear?
- ☐ Do SOPs need revision?

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### **3. Training and Qualifications**

- ☐ Was the deceased properly trained?
- ☐ Were certifications current?
- ☐ Was continuing education adequate?
- ☐ Were skills practiced regularly?
- ☐ Are training gaps identified?

### **4. Equipment and Vehicles**

- ☐ Was the equipment functioning properly?
- ☐ Was equipment maintained per schedule?
- ☐ Was appropriate equipment available?
- ☐ Were vehicles in safe condition?
- ☐ Are equipment upgrades needed?

### **5. Scene and Environmental Factors**

- ☐ What were road/weather conditions?
- ☐ Were there visibility issues?
- ☐ Were there traffic hazards?
- ☐ Were there scene safety issues?
- ☐ Could conditions have been mitigated?

### **6. Communications**

- ☐ Were communications clear and effective?
- ☐ Was radio traffic appropriate?
- ☐ Were notifications timely?
- ☐ Were proper channels used?
- ☐ Are communication improvements needed?

### **7. Supervision and Command**

- ☐ Was supervision adequate?
- ☐ Were command decisions appropriate?
- ☐ Was the chain of command followed?
- ☐ Were resources properly allocated?
- ☐ Could supervision be improved?

### **8. Contributing Factors**

- ☐ Fatigue or stress factors?
- ☐ Staffing or workload issues?
- ☐ Organizational culture factors?
- ☐ External pressures or influences?
- ☐ Systemic issues identified?

## **Documentation and Findings**

**The review committee should produce:**

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## **1. Factual Summary**

- What happened (chronological narrative)
- Who was involved
- What actions were taken
- What the outcome was

## **2. Analysis**

- Why events occurred as they did
- What factors contributed
- What could have been different
- What worked well

## **3. Findings**

- Policy compliance or violations
- Training adequacy
- Equipment performance
- Supervision effectiveness
- Systemic issues

## **4. Recommendations**

- Policy changes needed
- Training improvements
- Equipment upgrades
- Supervision enhancements
- Organizational changes

### **Report format:**

CONFIDENTIAL INTERNAL REVIEW  
Line-of-Duty Death of [Name]  
[Date of Incident]

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY  
[Brief overview of incident and key findings]

INCIDENT TIMELINE  
[Detailed chronological reconstruction]

ANALYSIS  
[Examination of contributing factors]

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## FINDINGS

[Specific determinations]

## RECOMMENDATIONS

[Actionable improvements]

## CONCLUSION

[Summary and path forward]

### **Report distribution:**

- Agency leadership
- Legal counsel (review before distribution)
- Union/association (if appropriate)
- Training officer (for implementation)
- **NOT public record** (protect from disclosure)
- **NOT to media** (confidential internal document)

## Preventing Future Incidents

### **Implement recommendations:**

#### **Policy Changes:**

- ☐ Revise SOPs based on findings
- ☐ Develop new policies if needed
- ☐ Communicate changes to all personnel
- ☐ Train on new procedures
- ☐ Monitor compliance

#### **Training Improvements:**

- ☐ Address identified training gaps
- ☐ Enhance scenario-based training
- ☐ Increase frequency of critical skills practice
- ☐ Provide specialized training where needed
- ☐ Document all training

#### **Equipment Upgrades:**

- ☐ Replace or upgrade deficient equipment
- ☐ Enhance maintenance programs
- ☐ Provide additional safety equipment
- ☐ Improve vehicle safety features
- ☐ Budget for necessary improvements

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**Organizational Changes:**

- ☐ Adjust staffing if needed
- ☐ Improve supervision structure
- ☐ Enhance safety culture
- ☐ Address workload or fatigue issues
- ☐ Improve communication systems

**Follow-up:**

- ☐ Track implementation of recommendations
- ☐ Measure the effectiveness of changes
- ☐ Report progress to personnel
- ☐ Conduct follow-up review in 6-12 months
- ☐ Continue improvement cycle

## Confidentiality and Legal Considerations

 **CRITICAL:** Internal review documents may be subject to legal discovery. Consult legal counsel before conducting a review and releasing findings.

**Protect internal review:**

- Mark all documents "CONFIDENTIAL - ATTORNEY WORK PRODUCT."
- Limit distribution
- Store securely
- Do not release to the media or the public
- Consult an attorney before sharing

**Personnel rights:**

- Right to representation during interviews
- Right to review statements
- Protection from retaliation
- Due process if discipline is considered
- Privacy protections

**Balance transparency with protection:**

- Share general findings with personnel
- Implement improvements openly
- Protect specific details and individuals
- Focus on learning, not blame
- Honor the deceased while improving safety

---

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# SECTION 7: TEAM STRUCTURE & ROLE ASSIGNMENTS

**Purpose:** To establish a clear command structure, assign specific responsibilities, and ensure a coordinated response to line-of-duty death. Proper team structure prevents confusion, ensures nothing is forgotten, and provides comprehensive support to the family and the agency.

---

## 7.1 INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM (ICS) STRUCTURE

### Why ICS for Funeral Management

#### ICS provides:

- Clear chain of command
- Defined roles and responsibilities
- Span of control (manageable assignments)
- Unified command with external agencies
- Scalable structure based on incident complexity
- Accountability and documentation

#### Funeral management is an incident:

- Requires coordination of multiple resources
- Involves numerous agencies and organizations
- Has specific objectives and a timeline
- Needs clear command and control
- Benefits from a structured approach

### ICS Structure for LODD Funeral

#### Command Level:

- **Incident Commander:** Agency Director/Chief
- **Unified Command:** May include law enforcement, fire, and other agencies
- **Command Staff:** PIO, Safety Officer, Liaison Officer

#### General Staff:

- **Operations Section:** Funeral Coordinator (manages all funeral operations)
- **Planning Section:** Timeline development, resource tracking
- **Logistics Section:** Supplies, facilities, transportation

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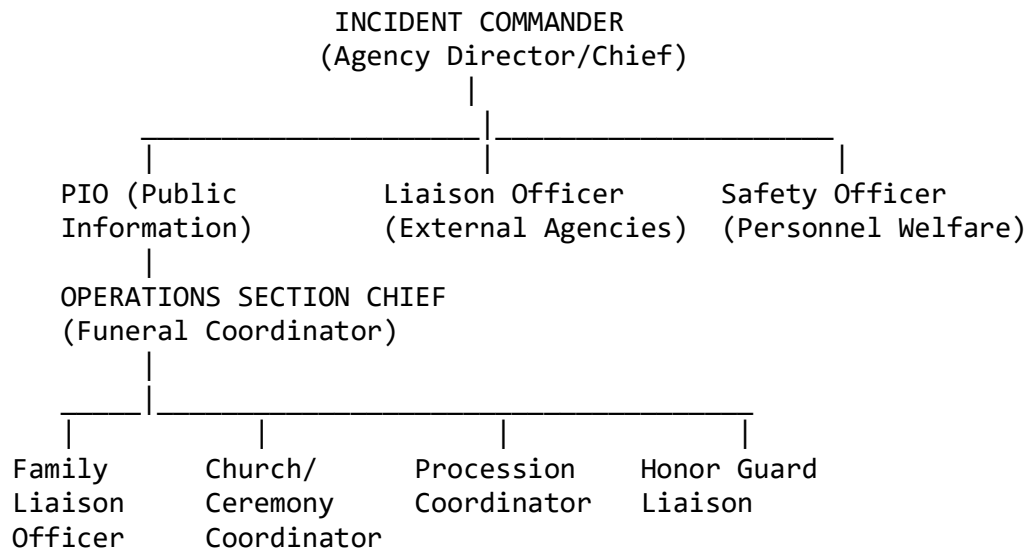
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- **Finance/Administration:** Budget tracking, documentation

#### Typical LODD funeral organization:



### Span of Control

#### Each supervisor should manage:

- 3-7 direct reports (optimal: 5)
- No more than 7 subordinates
- Delegate when span exceeds capacity
- Create additional positions if needed

#### For large funerals:

- Add deputy positions
- Create task forces for specific functions
- Expand organizational chart
- Maintain clear reporting relationships

---

## 7.2 INCIDENT COMMANDER (AGENCY DIRECTOR/CHIEF)

### Role and Responsibilities

#### The Incident Commander:

- Has overall authority and responsibility
- Makes final decisions on all matters

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- Approves all public communications
- Coordinates with external agencies
- Ensures family wishes are honored
- Manages agency resources
- Maintains operational readiness

#### **Key decisions requiring IC approval:**

- Funeral service type and scope
- Agency participation level
- Public information releases
- Resource allocation
- Budget expenditures
- External agency involvement
- Deviation from standard procedures

### **Daily Responsibilities**

#### **During the incident (first 72 hours):**

- ☐ Direct initial response and notifications
- ☐ Approve family notification approach
- ☐ Authorize public information releases
- ☐ Assign key personnel to roles
- ☐ Coordinate with investigating agencies
- ☐ Brief elected officials and stakeholders
- ☐ Ensure operational coverage is maintained

#### **During planning phase (days 3-7):**

- ☐ Meet with family to discuss funeral plans
- ☐ Approve funeral service arrangements
- ☐ Authorize resource commitments
- ☐ Coordinate with external agencies
- ☐ Brief personnel on funeral plans
- ☐ Ensure all roles are filled
- ☐ Review budget and authorize expenditures

#### **During funeral execution (days 7-14):**

- ☐ Attend all funeral events
- ☐ Represent the agency at services
- ☐ Ensure smooth execution of plans
- ☐ Address any issues that arise
- ☐ Support family throughout the process

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- ☐ Thank participating agencies
- ☐ Debrief with team after funeral

**Post-funeral (ongoing):**

- ☐ Ensure long-term family support continues
- ☐ Monitor benefit applications
- ☐ Conduct internal review
- ☐ Implement improvements
- ☐ Maintain contact with family
- ☐ Plan annual memorial observances

## Communication Protocols

**IC communicates with:**

- Family (directly or through Family Liaison Officer)
- Command staff (PIO, Liaison, Safety)
- Operations Section Chief (Funeral Coordinator)
- External agency leadership
- Elected officials
- Media (through PIO)

**IC receives information from:**

- All section chiefs (daily briefings)
- Family Liaison Officer (family updates)
- PIO (media and public sentiment)
- Liaison Officer (external agency coordination)
- Investigators (incident updates)

**IC provides information to:**

- All personnel (through briefings and updates)
  - Family (decisions and plans)
  - External agencies (coordination and requests)
  - Elected officials (status updates)
  - Community (through PIO)
-

## 7.3 FUNERAL COORDINATOR (OPERATIONS SECTION CHIEF)

### Role and Responsibilities

**The Funeral Coordinator manages all funeral operations:**

- Overall funeral logistics and execution
- Coordination with the funeral home
- Coordination with church/ceremony venue
- Coordination with the cemetery
- Coordination with external agencies (Honor Guard, law enforcement)
- Supervision of all operational personnel
- Timeline development and management
- Problem-solving and contingency planning

**Reports to:** Incident Commander

**Supervises:** Family Liaison Officer, Church/Ceremony Coordinator, Procession Coordinator, Honor Guard Liaison

**Ideal qualifications:**

- Senior officer with organizational skills
- Experience with funeral protocols
- Calm under pressure
- Detail-oriented
- Good communicator
- Respected by personnel and community

### Detailed Responsibilities

**Pre-funeral planning:**

- ☐ Meet with family to understand wishes
- ☐ Coordinate with the funeral home on all arrangements
- ☐ Reserve church/ceremony venue
- ☐ Coordinate with the cemetery for the graveside
- ☐ Develop a detailed timeline for all events
- ☐ Assign personnel to specific roles
- ☐ Coordinate with Wisconsin EMS Honor Guard
- ☐ Arrange for law enforcement traffic control
- ☐ Plan procession route and logistics
- ☐ Coordinate reception venue and catering
- ☐ Develop contingency plans for weather, etc.

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- ☐ Conduct coordination meetings with all participants
- ☐ Create detailed run sheets for each event

**Funeral execution:**

- ☐ Arrive early to oversee setup
- ☐ Conduct final briefing with all personnel
- ☐ Ensure all participants know their roles
- ☐ Manage timeline and keep events on schedule
- ☐ Troubleshoot problems as they arise
- ☐ Coordinate transitions between events
- ☐ Ensure family needs are met throughout
- ☐ Supervise procession and graveside
- ☐ Oversee reception logistics
- ☐ Debrief with team after events

**Post-funeral:**

- ☐ Thank all participants
- ☐ Return borrowed equipment
- ☐ Compile documentation
- ☐ Conduct after-action review
- ☐ Submit final report to IC
- ☐ Identify lessons learned

## Daily Schedule (Typical Funeral Week)

**Monday (Day 1 - Incident Day):**

- Assume role immediately after family notification
- Begin coordination with the funeral home
- Contact Wisconsin EMS Honor Guard
- Assemble coordination team

**Tuesday-Wednesday (Days 2-3):**

- Meet with family to discuss funeral plans
- Reserve venues (church, cemetery, reception)
- Develop preliminary timeline
- Assign key personnel to roles
- Begin detailed planning

**Thursday-Friday (Days 4-5):**

- Finalize all arrangements
- Conduct coordination meetings

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- Develop detailed run sheets
- Brief all participants
- Confirm all resources

**Saturday-Sunday (Days 6-7 - Viewing/Visitation):**

- Oversee viewing logistics
- Ensure family supported
- Prepare for funeral service

**Monday (Day 8 - Funeral Day):**

- Execute funeral service
- Manage procession
- Oversee graveside ceremony
- Coordinate reception

**Tuesday-Wednesday (Days 9-10):**

- Debrief and after-action review
- Thank participants
- Complete documentation

## Coordination Meetings

**Funeral Coordinator chairs regular coordination meetings:**

**Initial Planning Meeting (Day 2):**

- Attendees: IC, all section chiefs, family liaison, PIO, chaplain
- Agenda: Family wishes, service type, preliminary timeline, role assignments
- Duration: 1-2 hours

**Mid-Planning Meeting (Day 5):**

- Attendees: All operational personnel, external agencies
- Agenda: Detailed timeline, specific assignments, contingency plans
- Duration: 2-3 hours

**Final Briefing (Day before funeral):**

- Attendees: All participants
- Agenda: Final run-through, last-minute changes, questions
- Duration: 1 hour

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### **Day-of Briefing (Morning of funeral):**

- Attendees: All personnel participating
  - Agenda: Final instructions, timing, assignments
  - Duration: 30 minutes
- 

## **7.4 FAMILY LIAISON OFFICER (FLO)**

### **Role and Responsibilities**

#### **The Family Liaison Officer is the family's primary contact and advocate:**

- 24/7 availability to family
- Single point of contact for all family needs
- Coordinates all agency support to the family
- Attends all family meetings
- Assists with funeral planning
- Manages benefit applications
- Provides emotional support
- Protects family privacy
- Advocates for family wishes

**Reports to:** Funeral Coordinator

**Works closely with:** Benefits Coordinator, Chaplain, CISM Team

 **CRITICAL:** Family Liaison Officer must be available 24/7 from notification through funeral and beyond. This is the most important support role.

### **Ideal Qualifications**

#### **FLO should be:**

- Compassionate and empathetic
- Excellent listener
- Organized and detail-oriented
- Available 24/7 for duration
- Trusted by family
- Calm under pressure
- Good problem-solver
- Respectful of boundaries

#### **FLO should NOT be:**

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- Close personal friend of deceased (too emotionally involved)
- Someone with conflicting responsibilities
- Someone unavailable for extended periods
- Someone uncomfortable with grief and emotion

## Detailed Responsibilities

### **Immediate (First 24-48 hours):**

- ☐ Present during death notification
- ☐ Remain with family after notification
- ☐ Provide contact information and 24/7 availability
- ☐ Assess immediate family needs
- ☐ Coordinate immediate assistance (meals, childcare, etc.)
- ☐ Explain what happens next
- ☐ Answer questions as they arise
- ☐ Protect family from unwanted intrusions
- ☐ Accompany family to hospital/morgue if needed
- ☐ Arrange viewing at the funeral home

### **Planning phase (Days 2-7):**

- ☐ Meet with family daily
- ☐ Assist with funeral planning decisions
- ☐ Coordinate with the funeral home
- ☐ Communicate family wishes to the Funeral Coordinator
- ☐ Help family with guest list and invitations
- ☐ Assist with obituary and program
- ☐ Coordinate out-of-town family travel and lodging
- ☐ Manage household needs (groceries, pets, medications)
- ☐ Screen phone calls and visitors
- ☐ Provide updates on the investigation and arrangements
- ☐ Begin benefit application process
- ☐ Connect family with counseling resources

### **Funeral execution (Days 7-10):**

- ☐ Accompany family to all events
- ☐ Ensure family has private space and time
- ☐ Manage family seating and logistics
- ☐ Shield family from media and unwanted attention
- ☐ Coordinate family transportation
- ☐ Ensure the family's needs are met throughout
- ☐ Provide tissues, water, support
- ☐ Help family navigate receiving line

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- ☐ Ensure children are cared for
- ☐ Give family space to grieve

**Post-funeral (Ongoing):**

- ☐ Continue regular contact (weekly, then monthly)
- ☐ Assist with benefit applications
- ☐ Coordinate ongoing household assistance
- ☐ Remember important dates (birthdays, anniversaries)
- ☐ Invite family to agency events
- ☐ Provide long-term emotional support
- ☐ Connect family with resources as needed
- ☐ Transition to long-term support plan

## Communication with Family

**FLO should:**

- Call or visit family daily during the first week
- Be available 24/7 by phone
- Respond to family calls/texts within 1 hour
- Provide updates proactively
- Listen more than talk
- Validate family's feelings
- Never make promises that can't be kept
- Be honest about what is and isn't known

**Sample daily check-in:**

*"Good morning, Mrs. Johnson. I wanted to check in and see how you're doing today. Do you have any questions about the arrangements? Is there anything you need help with? I'm here for you."*

## Protecting Family Privacy

**FLO shields family from:**

- Unwanted media contact
- Intrusive visitors
- Overwhelming phone calls
- Social media harassment
- Well-meaning but exhausting attention

**FLO can:**

- Screen calls and visitors

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- Manage guest list for funeral
  - Coordinate "family only" time
  - Limit visitation hours
  - Provide private space at events
  - Run interference with difficult people
- 

## 7.5 PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER (PIO)

### Role and Responsibilities

#### **The PIO manages all external communications:**

- All media relations and press releases
- Social media management
- Public information dissemination
- Media at funeral coordination
- Protecting family privacy
- Maintaining agency reputation
- Coordinating with external PIOs

**Reports to:** Incident Commander

**Works closely with:** Family Liaison Officer, Funeral Coordinator

### Detailed Responsibilities

#### **Immediate (First 24 hours):**

- ☐ Implement information control at the scene
- ☐ Monitor media and social media
- ☐ Prepare initial press release (after family notification)
- ☐ Coordinate with investigating agency PIOs
- ☐ Establish media inquiry protocols
- ☐ Brief IC on media interest

#### **Planning phase (Days 2-7):**

- ☐ Issue regular updates to the media
- ☐ Coordinate funeral arrangement announcements
- ☐ Develop a media plan for the funeral
- ☐ Prepare press kits
- ☐ Arrange news conferences if needed
- ☐ Monitor and correct misinformation
- ☐ Manage social media content
- ☐ Coordinate with family on photo releases

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**Funeral execution:**

- ☐ Manage media at all funeral events
- ☐ Designate media staging areas
- ☐ Enforce media guidelines
- ☐ Provide press kits
- ☐ Coordinate pool coverage if appropriate
- ☐ Protect family from media intrusion
- ☐ Monitor media coverage
- ☐ Address any violations of guidelines

**Post-funeral:**

- ☐ Issue thank-you statement
- ☐ Provide final updates
- ☐ Monitor ongoing coverage
- ☐ Archive all media coverage
- ☐ Compile media summary for IC

## Media Management Guidelines

**See Section 5 for complete media management protocols.**

**Key PIO principles:**

- Family privacy is paramount
- Accuracy over speed
- Transparency within appropriate limits
- Consistent messaging
- Professional relationships with the media
- Proactive communication

---

## 7.6 PROCESSION COORDINATOR

### Role and Responsibilities

**The Procession Coordinator manages all procession logistics:**

- Route planning and coordination
- Vehicle staging and ordering
- Law enforcement traffic control coordination
- Timing and pacing
- Contingency planning for delays
- Communication during procession

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- Graveside assembly coordination

**Reports to:** Funeral Coordinator

**Works closely with:** Law enforcement, Honor Guard, Church Coordinator

## Detailed Responsibilities

### Planning phase:

- ☐ Plan procession route from church to cemetery
- ☐ Coordinate with law enforcement for traffic control
- ☐ Determine vehicle order and staging
- ☐ Calculate timing and distances
- ☐ Identify potential delays or issues
- ☐ Develop contingency plans
- ☐ Create vehicle assignment list
- ☐ Prepare route maps for all drivers
- ☐ Conduct route reconnaissance
- ☐ Coordinate with the cemetery for arrival

### Pre-procession:

- ☐ Brief all drivers on route and procedures
- ☐ Distribute route maps
- ☐ Assign vehicles to staging positions
- ☐ Coordinate with law enforcement
- ☐ Test communications
- ☐ Verify all vehicles are fueled and ready
- ☐ Ensure funeral flags and lights are in place

### During procession:

- ☐ Lead procession or coordinate lead vehicle
- ☐ Maintain communication with law enforcement
- ☐ Monitor pace and spacing
- ☐ Address any issues or delays
- ☐ Coordinate arrival at the cemetery
- ☐ Direct vehicles to parking areas
- ☐ Ensure smooth transition to graveside

**See Section 11 for complete procession protocols.**

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## 7.7 CHURCH/CEREMONY COORDINATOR

### Role and Responsibilities

**The Church/Ceremony Coordinator manages all aspects of the funeral service:**

- Venue coordination and setup
- Clergy coordination
- Music and audio/visual coordination
- Program development
- Seating arrangements
- Ceremony flow and timing
- Participant coordination (speakers, pallbearers, honor guard)

**Reports to:** Funeral Coordinator

**Works closely with:** Family Liaison Officer, Honor Guard Liaison, PIO

### Detailed Responsibilities

#### **Planning phase:**

- ☐ Coordinate with church/venue staff
- ☐ Reserve venue and confirm date/time
- ☐ Meet with clergy to plan service
- ☐ Coordinate music selections
- ☐ Develop ceremony program
- ☐ Arrange for audio/visual needs
- ☐ Plan seating for family, dignitaries, personnel
- ☐ Coordinate with speakers and participants
- ☐ Arrange for accessibility accommodations
- ☐ Plan for recording/photography if desired

#### **Pre-service:**

- ☐ Oversee venue setup
- ☐ Test audio/visual equipment
- ☐ Arrange seating and reserved sections
- ☐ Coordinate with the honor guard on positioning
- ☐ Brief all participants on the ceremony flow
- ☐ Ensure programs are printed and distributed
- ☐ Coordinate with ushers
- ☐ Prepare for family arrival

#### **During service:**

- ☐ Manage ceremony timing
- ☐ Cue participants

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- ☐ Coordinate transitions
- ☐ Address any issues
- ☐ Ensure smooth flow
- ☐ Support family as needed

**See Section 10 for complete funeral service protocols.**

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## 7.8 BENEFITS COORDINATOR

### Role and Responsibilities

**The Benefits Coordinator assists the family with all benefit applications:**

- PSOB application and documentation
- Pension benefits
- Workers' compensation
- Social Security survivor benefits
- VA benefits (if applicable)
- Life insurance claims
- State and local benefits
- Tracking deadlines and requirements

**Reports to:** Incident Commander

**Works closely with:** Family Liaison Officer

### Detailed Responsibilities

**Immediate (First week):**

- ☐ Contact PSOB office
- ☐ Begin gathering required documentation
- ☐ Obtain multiple death certificates
- ☐ Collect employment records
- ☐ Organize medical records
- ☐ Create a benefit tracking spreadsheet

**Ongoing (Weeks 2-12):**

- ☐ Complete PSOB application
- ☐ File workers' compensation claim
- ☐ Assist with pension application
- ☐ Help family apply for Social Security benefits
- ☐ Coordinate VA benefits if applicable
- ☐ Assist with life insurance claims

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- ☐ Research state and local benefits
- ☐ Track all deadlines
- ☐ Respond to requests for information
- ☐ Update family on application status

**Long-term:**

- ☐ Monitor benefit payments
- ☐ Assist with annual renewals
- ☐ Help with education benefit applications
- ☐ Coordinate tax implications
- ☐ Ensure family receives all entitled benefits

**See Section 13 for complete benefits information.**

---

## 7.9 CHAPLAIN AND CISM TEAM COORDINATOR

### Chaplain Role and Responsibilities

**The Agency Chaplain provides spiritual and emotional support:**

- Participates in death notification
- Provides spiritual counseling to the family
- Offers grief support to personnel
- Coordinates with the family's clergy
- May participate in the funeral service
- Provides ongoing spiritual care

**Chaplain responsibilities:**

- ☐ Participate in the notification team
- ☐ Provide immediate spiritual support to the family
- ☐ Coordinate with the family's religious leader
- ☐ Offer counseling to agency personnel
- ☐ Participate in the funeral service if requested
- ☐ Conduct memorial services for the agency
- ☐ Provide long-term spiritual support

### CISM Team Coordinator Role

**The CISM Coordinator manages critical incident stress response:**

- Activates the CISM team immediately
- Provides defusing and debriefing

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- Offers individual counseling
- Monitors personnel for stress reactions
- Coordinates professional referrals
- Provides ongoing support

**CISM responsibilities:**

- ☐ Activate the team immediately after the incident
- ☐ Provide defusing for personnel on scene
- ☐ Conduct debriefing within 24-72 hours
- ☐ Offer individual counseling
- ☐ Monitor personnel for delayed reactions
- ☐ Provide support during the funeral
- ☐ Offer follow-up services
- ☐ Coordinate professional mental health referrals

**See Section 15 for complete CISM protocols.**

## 7.10 RESPONSIBILITY MATRIX AND COORDINATION

### Responsibility Matrix

**Use this matrix to assign and track responsibilities:**

| Task                    | Primary          | Backup     | Status                   | Notes |
|-------------------------|------------------|------------|--------------------------|-------|
| Family notification     | IC               | Chaplain   | <input type="checkbox"/> |       |
| Family liaison          | FLO              | Deputy FLO | <input type="checkbox"/> |       |
| Media relations         | PIO              | Deputy PIO | <input type="checkbox"/> |       |
| Funeral coordination    | Funeral Coord    | Deputy FC  | <input type="checkbox"/> |       |
| Church coordination     | Church Coord     |            | <input type="checkbox"/> |       |
| Procession coordination | Procession Coord |            | <input type="checkbox"/> |       |
| Benefits coordination   | Benefits Coord   |            | <input type="checkbox"/> |       |
| CISM coordination       | CISM Coord       |            | <input type="checkbox"/> |       |
| Honor Guard liaison     | HG Liaison       |            | <input type="checkbox"/> |       |
| Investigation liaison   | Invest Liaison   |            | <input type="checkbox"/> |       |

### Chain of Command

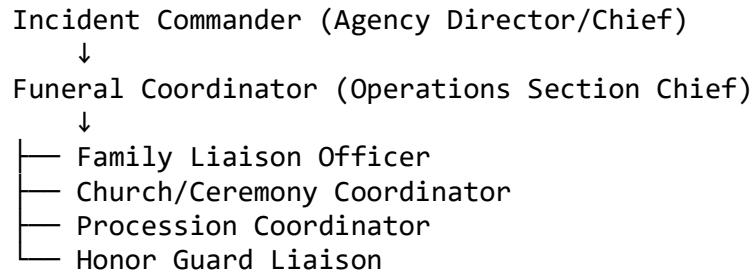
**A clear chain of command prevents confusion:**

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Command Staff (report directly to IC):

- ├ Public Information Officer
- ├ Liaison Officer (external agencies)
- └ Safety Officer (personnel welfare)

Support Staff:

- ├ Benefits Coordinator
- ├ CISM Team Coordinator
- └ Chaplain

## Communication Protocols

### Daily briefings:

- **Morning briefing (9:00 AM):** IC, all section chiefs, command staff
- **Evening briefing (5:00 PM):** IC, Funeral Coordinator, FLO, PIO
- **As-needed briefings:** When significant developments occur

### Communication methods:

- Face-to-face meetings (preferred for planning)
- Phone calls (for urgent matters)
- Text messages (for quick updates)
- Email (for documentation and non-urgent)
- Radio (during operations only)

### Information flow:

- All information flows through the chain of command
- FLO provides family updates to the Funeral Coordinator
- PIO coordinates all external communications with IC
- Section chiefs brief IC daily
- IC briefs all personnel regularly

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## Backup Assignments

 **CRITICAL:** Every key position must have a designated backup. Ensure backups are trained and ready to assume the role if needed.

### **Assign backups for:**

- Incident Commander (Deputy Chief or senior officer)
- Funeral Coordinator (experienced officer)
- Family Liaison Officer (compassionate personnel)
- PIO (trained communicator)
- All section chiefs and coordinators

### **Backup responsibilities:**

- Attend all briefings and meetings
- Understand primary responsibilities
- Be ready to assume the role immediately
- Assist the primary as needed
- Take over if the primary is unavailable

## Coordination Meetings Schedule

### **Establish regular coordination meetings:**

#### **Daily during the planning phase:**

- Time: 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM
- Attendees: IC, all section chiefs
- Duration: 30-60 minutes
- Purpose: Status updates, problem-solving, coordination

#### **Pre-funeral final briefing:**

- Time: Day before funeral, 2:00 PM
- Attendees: All personnel involved
- Duration: 2 hours
- Purpose: Final run-through, assignments, questions

#### **Day-of briefing:**

- Time: Morning of funeral, 2 hours before service
- Attendees: All participants
- Duration: 30 minutes

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- Purpose: Final instructions, timing, last-minute issues

**After-action review:**

- Time: 2-3 days after the funeral
  - Attendees: IC, all section chiefs, key personnel
  - Duration: 2 hours
  - Purpose: Lessons learned, improvements, documentation
- 

## SECTION 8: IMMEDIATE FAMILY SUPPORT - HOSPITAL TO HOME PHASE

**Purpose:** To provide comprehensive, compassionate support to the family from the moment of death through the first critical days. This phase establishes the foundation for the family's relationship with your agency and their ability to cope with their loss.

---

### 8.1 HOSPITAL ARRIVAL PROTOCOLS

#### When Family Arrives at Hospital

**If the deceased is transported to the hospital:**

**Immediate actions:**

- ☐ Assign Family Liaison Officer to meet the family at the hospital
- ☐ Coordinate with hospital staff for private space
- ☐ Ensure family is escorted to the private area immediately
- ☐ Keep family away from the emergency department waiting area
- ☐ Provide chaplain or counselor support
- ☐ Shield family from media

**Hospital coordination:**

- Contact hospital social services in advance
- Request a private consultation room
- Ensure staff know the family is arriving
- Coordinate with hospital security if needed
- Arrange for pastoral care if the family desires

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## Private Space Requirements

### Private space must have:

- Door that closes and locks
- Comfortable seating for the family
- Tissues, water, coffee
- Phone access
- Bathroom nearby
- Privacy from public areas
- Space for extended family to gather

### FLO ensures:

- Family has privacy when needed
  - Family is not left alone unless they request it
  - Visitors are screened and managed
  - Media cannot access the family
  - Family has time and space to grieve
- 

## 8.2 VIEWING AND BODY IDENTIFICATION

### Preparing Family for Viewing

#### Before the family views the body:

##### FLO should:

- ☐ Explain what the family will see
- ☐ Describe any visible injuries honestly but gently
- ☐ Offer to accompany family
- ☐ Explain they can take as much time as needed
- ☐ Assure them it's okay to change their mind
- ☐ Provide chaplain support if desired

##### Sample preparation:

*"Mrs. Johnson, I want to prepare you for what you'll see. Michael looks peaceful, but he does have some bruising on his face from the accident. The hospital staff has cleaned him up and made him as comfortable as possible. I'll be right there with you, and you can take as much time as you need. If at any point you want to leave, that's completely okay. Would you like the chaplain to come with us?"*

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## Viewing Procedures

### During viewing:

#### FLO should:

- ☐ Accompany the family into the room
- ☐ Stay with family unless they request privacy
- ☐ Provide tissues and support
- ☐ Allow family to touch, hold, and talk to the deceased
- ☐ Give family as much time as they need
- ☐ Support the family's emotional reactions
- ☐ Offer to take photos if family desires (for children who aren't present)

### After viewing:

- ☐ Escort family back to private space
- ☐ Allow time to process
- ☐ Answer questions
- ☐ Discuss next steps when family is ready
- ☐ Offer continued support

## Special Considerations for Viewing

### If injuries are severe:

- Consult with the medical examiner and the funeral home
- Consider partial viewing (face only, covered body)
- Prepare the family extensively
- Offer alternative (closed casket, photos)
- Respect the family's decision
- Never force viewing if family declines

### If children want to view:

- Discuss with parent/guardian first
  - Prepare the child age-appropriately
  - Allow the child to decide
  - Have an adult accompany the child
  - Explain what the child will see
  - Support the child's reaction
- 

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## 8.3 ANSWERING FAMILY QUESTIONS AT THE HOSPITAL

### Common Questions and Responses

#### **"What exactly happened?"**

*"Here's what we know so far: [factual information]. The investigation is ongoing, and we'll share more information as we learn it. I know you have many questions, and we'll answer everything we can."*

#### **"Did he say anything?"**

- Be honest
- Share any last words if appropriate
- Don't fabricate or embellish
- *"He was unconscious and didn't suffer"* (if true)
- *"His last words were about you and the kids"* (if true and appropriate)

#### **"Could he have been saved?"**

- Be honest but compassionate
- Don't speculate or assign blame
- *"Everything possible was done to save him."*
- *"The injuries were not survivable."*
- *"The investigation will review all aspects of the response."*

#### **"What happens to his body now?"**

*"The medical examiner is required by law to examine him. This usually takes 24-48 hours. After that, his body will be released to the funeral home you choose. We'll help you with all of those arrangements."*

#### **"What do I do now?"**

*"Right now, you don't have to do anything. We're going to help you with everything. When you're ready, we'll talk about the next steps, but there's no rush. For now, focus on being with your family."*

### Information to Provide

#### **FLO should explain:**

- Medical examiner process and timeline
- When the body will be released
- How to choose a funeral home

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- What happens next (viewing at the funeral home, funeral planning)
- Benefits and financial assistance available
- Ongoing support from the agency
- How to reach FLO 24/7

**Provide in writing:**

- FLO contact information
  - Agency contact information
  - Chaplain contact information
  - CISM/counseling resources
  - Funeral home recommendations (if requested)
  - Timeline of next steps
- 

## 8.4 MANAGING VISITORS AND MEDIA AT HOSPITAL

### Visitor Management

**FLO coordinates all visitors:**

**Immediate family:**

- Allow immediate access
- Provide private space
- Support as needed

**Extended family and friends:**

- Screen before allowing access
- Ask family if they want visitors
- Limit numbers if overwhelming
- Manage time to prevent exhaustion

**Agency personnel:**

- Coordinate visits to avoid overwhelming the family
- Brief personnel on appropriate behavior
- Limit time and numbers
- Ensure the family wants visitors before allowing

**Sample visitor screening:**

*"Mrs. Johnson, several of Michael's colleagues are here and would like to see you. Would*

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*you like to see them now, or would you prefer some private time first? It's completely up to you."*

## Media Management at Hospital

⚠ **CRITICAL:** Protect family from media at hospital.  
Coordinate with hospital security to prevent media access.

### Media prevention:

- ☐ Coordinate with hospital security
- ☐ Identify family members to security
- ☐ Restrict media access to family areas
- ☐ Escort family through non-public areas
- ☐ Use private entrances/exits
- ☐ Shield family from cameras

### If the media approach the family:

- FLO intervenes immediately
  - *"The family requests privacy at this time. All media inquiries should go through our Public Information Officer."*
  - Provide PIO contact information
  - Remove family from the situation
  - Report to PIO
- 

## 8.5 ARRANGING VIEWING AT FUNERAL HOME

### Choosing a Funeral Home

#### FLO assists the family with the funeral home selection:

##### Provide options:

- List of local funeral homes
- Funeral homes experienced with LODD
- The family may prefer
- No pressure or recommendations unless requested

##### Considerations:

- Location convenient to family
- Experience with public safety funerals
- Religious affiliation is important

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- Cost and services offered
- Family's comfort level

**FLO coordinates:**

- ☐ Contact the funeral home on the family's behalf
- ☐ Arrange initial meeting
- ☐ Accompany family to meeting if desired
- ☐ Ensure the funeral home understands LODD protocols
- ☐ Coordinate with Funeral Coordinator

## Initial Funeral Home Meeting

**FLO should:**

- ☐ Accompany family to first meeting
- ☐ Help family understand options
- ☐ Take notes for family
- ☐ Ask questions that the family may not think of
- ☐ Ensure family isn't pressured
- ☐ Discuss costs and payment
- ☐ Coordinate agency involvement

**Topics to discuss:**

- Viewing/visitation arrangements
- Funeral service options
- Burial or cremation
- Casket selection
- Funeral program
- Flowers and donations
- Obituary
- Death certificates (order 15-20 copies)
- Costs and payment options

**See Section 9 for complete funeral planning protocols.**

## 8.6 MANAGING CHILDREN AND FAMILY MEMBERS

### Supporting Children

**Children's needs during crisis:**

- Age-appropriate information

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- Consistent routines where possible
- Permission to grieve in their own way
- Ongoing support and reassurance
- Connection to deceased parent's work family

**FLO can assist with:**

- ☐ Helping parents explain death to children
- ☐ Providing age-appropriate resources
- ☐ Arranging counseling for children
- ☐ Coordinating childcare during funeral planning
- ☐ Including children in funeral planning if appropriate
- ☐ Connecting children with agency (station visits, etc.)

**Age-appropriate support:**

**Young children (3-7):**

- Simple, concrete explanations
- Reassurance that they will be cared for
- Maintaining routines
- Physical comfort and presence

**School-age (8-12):**

- Honest information
- Opportunities to ask questions
- Involvement in funeral planning if desired
- Peer support

**Teenagers (13-18):**

- Complete information
- Respect for their grief process
- Involvement in decisions
- Connection to support resources

## Supporting Elderly Parents

**If the deceased's parents are elderly:**

**Special considerations:**

- ☐ May need extra time to process
- ☐ May have health issues triggered by stress
- ☐ May need transportation assistance

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- ☐ May need lodging if from out of town
- ☐ May need help with funeral planning
- ☐ May outlive their child (especially difficult)

**FLO provides:**

- Patient, repeated explanations
- Transportation to events
- Lodging arrangements
- Medical support if needed
- Emotional support
- Inclusion in planning

## Managing Extended Family Dynamics

**Potential challenges:**

- Estranged family members
- Conflict over funeral arrangements
- Disagreement about agency involvement
- Financial disputes
- Custody issues if children are involved

**FLO's role:**

- Support primary next of kin
- Remain neutral in family conflicts
- Focus on honoring the deceased
- Protect children from conflict
- Seek legal guidance if necessary
- Document all interactions

---

## 8.7 TRANSPORTATION AND LODGING FOR OUT-OF-STATE FAMILY

### Coordinating Travel Assistance

**If family members are traveling from out of state:**

**FLO coordinates:**

- ☐ Flight arrangements if needed
- ☐ Airport pickup and transportation
- ☐ Lodging reservations

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- ☐ Rental car if needed
- ☐ Local transportation to events
- ☐ Meal arrangements

**Funding sources:**

- Agency emergency fund
- Union/association assistance
- Community donations
- Airline bereavement fares
- Hotel discounts for funeral attendees

**Sample coordination:**

*"Mrs. Johnson, I understand your parents are flying in from Florida. I want to arrange for someone to pick them up at the airport and bring them to your home. We can also help with hotel reservations if they need a place to stay. What would be most helpful?"*

## Lodging Arrangements

**Options for out-of-town family:**

- Hotels near family home
- Hotels near funeral home/church
- Staying with a local family
- Agency-arranged housing

**FLO coordinates:**

- ☐ Reserve hotel rooms
- ☐ Negotiate group rates if many are traveling
- ☐ Arrange payment (agency, family, or donations)
- ☐ Provide directions and information
- ☐ Ensure accessibility needs met
- ☐ Coordinate transportation to/from the hotel

**Recommended hotels:**

- Close to family or funeral events
- Comfortable and appropriate
- Accessible for the elderly or the disabled
- Reasonably priced
- Willing to work with the agency on billing

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## 8.8 IMMEDIATE HOUSEHOLD NEEDS

### Assessing Household Needs

**FLO assesses what the family needs immediately:**

**Common needs:**

- ☐ Groceries and meals
- ☐ Pet care
- ☐ Childcare
- ☐ Prescription medications
- ☐ Household tasks (laundry, cleaning)
- ☐ Yard work
- ☐ Vehicle maintenance
- ☐ Bill paying
- ☐ Phone answering

**FLO asks:**

*"What can we help you with around the house? We have people ready to bring meals, watch the kids, take care of pets, or help with anything else you need. Please don't hesitate to ask."*

### Meal Coordination

**Organize meal delivery:**

- ☐ Create meal schedule (breakfast, lunch, dinner)
- ☐ Coordinate with agency personnel, community, and church
- ☐ Consider dietary restrictions and preferences
- ☐ Deliver meals at convenient times
- ☐ Include paper plates, utensils (less cleanup)
- ☐ Continue for 2-4 weeks after the funeral

**Meal coordination tips:**

- Use online meal coordination tools (MealTrain, SignUpGenius)
- Provide the family's preferences and restrictions
- Schedule deliveries to avoid overwhelming the family
- Include breakfast and lunch, not just dinner
- Provide gift cards for restaurants as an alternative

### Childcare Assistance

**If the family has young children:**

- ☐ Coordinate childcare during funeral planning
- ☐ Arrange care during funeral events

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- ☐ Provide care when the parent needs time alone
- ☐ Coordinate school communication
- ☐ Arrange transportation to activities
- ☐ Provide age-appropriate grief support

## Pet Care

### **If the family has pets:**

- ☐ Arrange dog walking
- ☐ Coordinate feeding if the family is away
- ☐ Take pets to vet if needed
- ☐ Provide pet supplies
- ☐ Arrange boarding if the family travels

## Household Tasks

### **Coordinate assistance with:**

- ☐ Laundry
- ☐ House cleaning
- ☐ Grocery shopping
- ☐ Yard work and snow removal
- ☐ Home repairs
- ☐ Vehicle maintenance
- ☐ Errands

### **Assign agency personnel or volunteers to:**

- Mow lawn
- Shovel snow
- Clean house
- Do laundry
- Run errands
- Whatever the family needs

---

## 8.9 24/7 FAMILY LIAISON PRESENCE

### Maintaining Constant Availability

 **CRITICAL:** Family Liaison Officer must be available 24/7 from notification through funeral and beyond.

### **FLO availability:**

- Cell phone on and answered 24/7

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- Responds to calls/texts within 1 hour
- Visits family daily during first week
- Attends all family meetings and events
- Available for middle-of-night calls
- Takes time off from regular duties

#### **Backup FLO:**

- Designated backup for when the primary is unavailable
- Backup knows family and situation
- Seamless transition if primary needs break
- Both have the family's contact information

### **Daily Contact Schedule**

#### **First 72 hours:**

- In-person contact: Multiple times daily
- Phone contact: As needed, 24/7
- Purpose: Immediate support, funeral planning, crisis intervention

#### **Days 4-7 (funeral week):**

- In-person contact: Daily
- Phone contact: Multiple times daily
- Purpose: Funeral coordination, ongoing support

#### **Week 2:**

- In-person contact: Every 2-3 days
- Phone contact: Daily
- Purpose: Post-funeral support, benefit applications

#### **Weeks 3-4:**

- In-person contact: Weekly
- Phone contact: Every 2-3 days
- Purpose: Ongoing support, household assistance

#### **Months 2-12:**

- In-person contact: Monthly
- Phone contact: Weekly, then bi-weekly
- Purpose: Long-term support, important dates

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## What FLO Provides During Contacts

### Each contact should:

- Check on the family's emotional state
- Ask about immediate needs
- Provide updates on arrangements/benefits
- Answer questions
- Offer specific assistance
- Remind family of FLO's availability
- Show genuine care and concern

### Sample daily check-in:

*"Good morning, Mrs. Johnson. I wanted to stop by and see how you're doing today. How did you sleep? Is there anything you need help with today? I'm meeting with the funeral home this afternoon—do you want to come with me, or would you like me to handle it? I'm here for whatever you need."*

---

## 8.10 FIRST WEEK SUPPORT PLANNING

### First Week Timeline and Support

#### Day 1 (Incident day):

- Death notification
- Hospital support
- Immediate needs assessment
- 24/7 FLO assignment
- Initial family meeting

#### Day 2:

- Funeral home selection
- Initial funeral planning
- Benefit information provided
- Household assistance begins
- Daily FLO visit

#### Day 3:

- Funeral home meeting

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- Service planning begins
- Out-of-town family coordination
- Continued household support
- Daily FLO visit

#### **Days 4-5:**

- Finalize funeral arrangements
- Coordinate viewing/visitation
- Prepare for funeral service
- Manage visitors and calls
- Daily FLO visits

#### **Days 6-7 (Viewing/Visitation):**

- Support family at viewing
- Manage visitors
- Prepare for the funeral
- Ensure family rests
- Constant FLO presence

#### **Day 8-10 (Funeral):**

- Support family through all events
- Manage logistics
- Shield from stress
- Ensure family's needs met
- Constant FLO presence

### **Transition to Long-Term Support**

#### **After the funeral:**

- Continue regular contact
- Begin benefit applications
- Coordinate ongoing household assistance
- Monitor the family's adjustment
- Connect with long-term resources
- Plan for important dates (holidays, anniversaries)

**See Section 14 for long-term family support protocols.**

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## SECTION 9: FUNERAL SERVICE PLANNING

**Purpose:** To work with the family to plan a meaningful funeral service that honors the deceased, respects the family's wishes, and provides closure for the agency and community. Family preferences always take precedence over agency traditions.

---

### 9.1 INITIAL FAMILY MEETING PROTOCOLS

#### Timing of Initial Meeting

**Schedule initial funeral planning meeting:**

- 24-48 hours after death notification
- After the family has had time to process the initial shock
- Before decisions become urgent
- When family is ready (don't rush)

**Meeting location:**

- Family's home (most comfortable)
- Funeral home (if family prefers)
- Agency office (private conference room)
- Wherever the family feels most comfortable

#### Meeting Participants

**Who should attend:**

**From family:**

- Primary next of kin (spouse, parents)
- Anyone in the family wants to be involved in decisions
- Family's clergy if desired

**From agency:**

- Family Liaison Officer (leads meeting)
- Funeral Coordinator
- Chaplain
- Funeral home representative (if meeting at funeral home)

**Meeting preparation:**

☐ Schedule at the family's convenience

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- ☐ Confirm attendees
- ☐ Prepare information packet for family
- ☐ Bring tissues, water, and a notepad
- ☐ Allow 2-3 hours (don't rush)
- ☐ Ensure private, comfortable space

## Meeting Agenda

### 1. Opening and Support (10 minutes)

- Express condolences
- Assess how the family is doing
- Explain the purpose of the meeting
- Assure family there's no rush
- Emphasize that the family's wishes come first

*"Mrs. Johnson, first, I want to say again how sorry we are for your loss. The purpose of this meeting is to help you plan a service that honors Michael in the way you want. There are no right or wrong answers, and your wishes are what matter most. We're here to support you and provide options, not to pressure you into anything. We can take as much time as you need."*

### 2. Service Type Options (20 minutes)

- Explain three service type options (see Section 9.2)
- Describe what each includes
- Discuss agency involvement level
- Answer questions
- Let family think about options

### 3. Religious and Cultural Preferences (15 minutes)

- Discuss the family's religious traditions
- Identify cultural considerations
- Coordinate with the family's clergy
- Respect family's beliefs
- Adapt agency traditions to fit

### 4. Venue and Timing (15 minutes)

- Discuss church, funeral home, or other venue
- Consider capacity and accessibility
- Discuss preferred date and time

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- Consider family's schedule
- Consider community and agency needs

#### **5. Service Elements (30 minutes)**

- Clergy and officiant
- Music selections
- Speakers and eulogies
- Special tributes or presentations
- Agency honors (if desired)
- Program and order of service

#### **6. Burial or Cremation (15 minutes)**

- Family's preference
- Cemetery selection
- Graveside service
- Military honors if applicable
- Cremation arrangements if chosen

#### **7. Visitation and Viewing (15 minutes)**

- Public visitation or private family time
- Timing and duration
- Open or closed casket
- Agency participation

#### **8. Reception (10 minutes)**

- Post-funeral gathering
- Location and catering
- Who will attend
- Agency coordination

#### **9. Next Steps and Timeline (10 minutes)**

- What happens next
- Who will coordinate what
- Timeline for decisions
- Follow-up meetings
- FLO availability

#### **10. Questions and Closing (10 minutes)**

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- Answer any questions
- Provide written summary
- Schedule next meeting
- Reassure family of support
- Provide contact information

## Meeting Documentation

### **FLO documents:**

- ☐ Family's preferences and decisions
- ☐ Service type selected
- ☐ Venue and date
- ☐ Religious/cultural considerations
- ☐ Special requests
- ☐ Follow-up needed
- ☐ Next meeting scheduled

### **Provide family with:**

- Written summary of decisions
- Timeline of next steps
- Contact information
- Resources and information
- Funeral planning worksheet (see Appendix)

---

## 9.2 SERVICE TYPE OPTIONS EXPLANATION

### Three Service Type Options

#### **Provide family with three options for agency involvement:**

#### Type I: Full Agency Funeral with Honors

##### **Description:**

Full formal funeral service with maximum agency participation, procession, and graveside ceremony with honors.

##### **Includes:**

- Agency personnel in dress uniform
- Honor guard participation
- Formal procession with emergency vehicles

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- Law enforcement traffic control
- Graveside ceremony with flag presentation
- Rifle volley (if line-of-duty death)
- Bagpipes and/or bugler
- Agency speakers and tributes
- Full agency coordination and support

**Appropriate for:**

- Line-of-duty deaths
- Family desires full agency honors
- Deceased had long, distinguished career
- Community expects public service
- Family comfortable with large, formal service

**Agency commitment:**

- Extensive personnel time
- Significant coordination required
- Public and media attention
- Formal protocols and procedures
- Wisconsin EMS Honor Guard involvement

## Type II: Memorial Service with Agency Participation

**Description:**

Memorial service with moderate agency involvement; agency participates but family controls most elements.

**Includes:**

- Agency personnel attendance in uniform
- Honor guard at service (if desired)
- Agency speakers or tributes (if desired)
- Flag presentation (if desired)
- Limited procession or no procession
- Graveside committal (family and close friends)
- Agency coordination support

**Appropriate for:**

- Non-line-of-duty deaths

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- Family prefers smaller, more intimate service
- Religious or cultural traditions take precedence
- Family wants some agency involvement but not full honors
- Private person who preferred low-key recognition

**Agency commitment:**

- Moderate personnel time
- Coordination with family's plans
- Respectful participation
- Support without dominating service

### Type III: Family-Directed Service with Minimal Agency Involvement

**Description:**

Family plans and conducts service according to their preferences; agency provides support but minimal participation.

**Includes:**

- Agency personnel attendance (out of uniform if family prefers)
- Agency representative speaks if invited
- No formal honors or procession
- Private family service
- Agency provides support services (meals, household help, benefits)
- Separate agency memorial service if desired

**Appropriate for:**

- Family prefers private, family-only service
- Religious or cultural traditions require specific format
- Deceased preferred privacy
- Family uncomfortable with public attention
- Estranged relationship

**Agency commitment:**

- Minimal personnel time
- Respect for family's privacy
- Support services only
- Separate agency memorial if desired

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## Helping Family Choose Service Type

### FLO should:

- Explain all three options clearly
- Emphasize that family's preference is what matters
- Provide examples of each type
- Allow time for family to consider
- Reassure family that any choice is acceptable

### Sample explanation:

*"Mrs. Johnson, we want to honor Michael in the way that feels right to you and your family. We have three levels of agency involvement we can offer. I'll explain each one, and you can think about what would be most meaningful to you. There's no wrong choice—this is entirely about what you want."*

### Questions to help family decide:

- "What kind of service do you envision?"
- "How comfortable are you with a large, public service?"
- "Are there religious or cultural traditions that are important to you?"
- "How much agency involvement feels right to you?"
- "What would Michael have wanted?"

### Document family's choice:

- ☐ Service type selected: Type I / Type II / Type III
  - ☐ Family's reasoning documented
  - ☐ Special requests noted
  - ☐ Funeral Coordinator notified
  - ☐ Planning proceeds accordingly
- 

## 9.3 RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL PREFERENCES

### Importance of Religious and Cultural Sensitivity

 **CRITICAL:** Religious and cultural preferences ALWAYS take precedence over agency traditions. Adapt agency protocols to fit family's beliefs, not the other way around.

### Why this matters:

- Funeral is a sacred religious ceremony for many families
- Cultural traditions provide comfort and meaning

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- Disrespecting beliefs causes lasting harm
- Family's spiritual needs come first
- Agency honors the person, not just the uniform

## Discussing Religious Preferences

### **FLO should ask:**

- "What is your religious or spiritual tradition?"
- "Are there specific religious customs we should observe?"
- "Would you like your clergy to lead the service?"
- "Are there prayers, readings, or rituals that are important?"
- "Are there any restrictions we should know about?"

### **Common religious considerations:**

#### **Christian traditions:**

- Clergy-led service with prayers and scripture
- Hymns and Christian music
- Communion or Eucharist (some denominations)
- Burial preferred over cremation (some denominations)
- Open or closed casket traditions vary

#### **Catholic:**

- Funeral Mass or Memorial Service
- Priest presides
- Specific prayers and liturgy
- Rosary vigil may precede funeral
- Burial strongly preferred

#### **Jewish traditions:**

- Burial within 24-48 hours if possible
- Closed casket always
- Rabbi leads service
- Specific prayers (Kaddish)
- Shiva period (7 days of mourning at home)
- No flowers (donations to charity instead)
- No embalming preferred

#### **Islamic traditions:**

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- Burial within 24 hours if possible
- Body washed and wrapped in white cloth
- Imam leads prayers
- Burial only (no cremation)
- Grave faces Mecca
- Simple grave marker
- No embalming
- Gender-separated mourning

#### **Buddhist traditions:**

- Cremation common
- Monk may lead chanting
- Incense and offerings
- Specific timing based on tradition
- Family may prefer simple service

#### **Hindu traditions:**

- Cremation required
- Specific rituals and prayers
- Priest (Pandit) leads the ceremony
- Timing based on astrological considerations
- Ashes scattered in sacred water if possible

#### **Non-religious/Secular:**

- Celebration of life format
- Personal tributes and memories
- Music and readings chosen by family
- No religious content
- Focus on person's life and values

### **Discussing Cultural Preferences**

#### **Cultural considerations may include:**

##### **Hispanic/Latino traditions:**

- Extended family involvement
- Viewing very important
- Rosary or prayer vigil

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- Large gathering expected
- Food and fellowship central
- May prefer Spanish language elements

#### **African American traditions:**

- Church-centered service common
- Gospel music
- Emotional expression welcomed
- "Homegoing" celebration
- Repast (meal) after service
- Strong community involvement

#### **Asian traditions:**

- Respect for elders in planning
- Specific colors (white for mourning in some cultures)
- Incense and offerings
- Ancestor veneration
- Family hierarchy in seating and participation

#### **Native American traditions:**

- Tribal-specific customs
- Smudging or blessing ceremonies
- Traditional songs or drumming
- Sacred objects
- Specific burial practices
- Consultation with tribal elders

#### **Military traditions:**

- Military honors if veteran
- Flag presentation
- Rifle volley and Taps
- Military chaplain
- Veteran service organization involvement

### **Adapting Agency Protocols**

#### **Agency should adapt:**

##### **Timing:**

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- Accommodate religious requirements for quick burial
- Allow extended mourning periods
- Schedule around religious holidays or observances

#### **Ceremony elements:**

- Clergy leads instead of agency chaplain
- Religious music instead of traditional funeral music
- Prayers and readings from family's tradition
- Rituals and customs incorporated

#### **Dress and appearance:**

- Head coverings if required
- Modest dress
- Removal of shoes if required
- Gender separation if required

#### **Food and hospitality:**

- Dietary restrictions observed (kosher, halal, vegetarian)
- Alcohol-free reception if preferred
- Traditional foods if desired

#### **Burial practices:**

- Specific grave orientation
- Burial timing requirements
- Cremation or burial as required
- Grave markers per tradition

### **Sample Conversation**

*"Mrs. Johnson, we want to make sure Michael's service honors your family's beliefs and traditions. Can you tell me about your religious or cultural background? Are there specific customs or practices that are important to you? We will adapt everything we do to fit what's meaningful to your family."*

#### **Document religious and cultural preferences:**

- ☐ Religious tradition: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Clergy contact: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Specific customs to observe: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Restrictions or prohibitions: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Language preferences: \_\_\_\_\_

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- ☐ Dietary requirements: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Burial/cremation requirement: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Timing requirements: \_\_\_\_\_
- 

## 9.4 VENUE SELECTION AND COORDINATION

### Venue Options

#### **Common venue choices:**

##### **Church or religious facility:**

- Family's home church (most common)
- Deceased's church if different
- Large church if family's church too small
- Denominational church if family has no home church

##### **Funeral home chapel:**

- Convenient for viewing and service in one location
- Professional staff and equipment
- Appropriate for smaller services
- Neutral religious setting

##### **Community venue:**

- High school gymnasium or auditorium (for very large services)
- Community center
- Convention center
- Civic auditorium
- Appropriate for large community turnout

##### **Outdoor venue:**

- Park or memorial garden
- Graveside only
- Weather-dependent
- Requires contingency planning

##### **Agency facility:**

- Fire station or EMS headquarters

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- Apparatus bay for large gathering
- Meaningful to EMS family
- Requires significant setup

## Venue Selection Considerations

### **Capacity:**

- Expected attendance (LODD may draw 1,000+ people)
- Seating for family, agency, dignitaries, public
- Standing room if needed
- Overflow space or video feed to other rooms

### **Accessibility:**

- Wheelchair accessible
- Parking availability
- Proximity to family's home
- Proximity to cemetery
- Public transportation access

### **Facilities:**

- Sound system adequate for size
- Climate control (heating/cooling)
- Restrooms sufficient for crowd
- Space for honor guard and pallbearers
- Area for family privacy before/after
- Kitchen or catering facilities if reception on-site

### **Religious appropriateness:**

- Matches family's tradition
- Clergy comfortable with venue
- Religious symbols appropriate or neutral
- Flexibility for religious customs

### **Availability:**

- Available on desired date and time
- Sufficient time for setup and rehearsal
- Available for viewing/visitation if desired

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**Cost:**

- Rental fees, if any
- Included services and equipment
- Additional costs for setup, cleanup, and security
- Agency or community may cover costs

## Coordinating with the Venue

**Church/Ceremony Coordinator responsibilities:**

- ☐ Contact the venue as soon as the date is selected
- ☐ Reserve date and time
- ☐ Confirm capacity and facilities
- ☐ Discuss setup requirements
- ☐ Coordinate with venue staff
- ☐ Arrange rehearsal time
- ☐ Confirm sound system and equipment
- ☐ Discuss parking and traffic flow
- ☐ Arrange for overflow seating if needed
- ☐ Coordinate with clergy or officiant
- ☐ Confirm accessibility accommodations
- ☐ Discuss security needs
- ☐ Arrange for programs and materials
- ☐ Confirm cleanup responsibilities

## Venue Setup Requirements

**Typical setup needs:****Seating arrangement:**

- Reserved front rows for family
- Reserved section for agency personnel
- Reserved seating for dignitaries
- General seating for the public
- Overflow seating or standing room
- Clear aisles for processions

**Staging and presentation:**

- Casket or urn placement
- Flowers and memorial displays
- Photo displays or video screens

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- Podium or lectern for speakers
- Microphones (podium, handheld, lapel)
- Sound system for music
- Lighting appropriate for the ceremony

#### **Honor guard positioning:**

- Space for the honor guard to stand
- Entry and exit routes
- Flag presentation area
- Rifle volley team positioning (if outdoors)

#### **Family area:**

- Private room for family before service
- Tissues, water, seating
- Privacy from the public and the media
- Direct access to the sanctuary

#### **Accessibility:**

- Wheelchair seating areas
- Assistive listening devices
- Sign language interpreter position if needed
- Accessible restrooms clearly marked

#### **Media area:**

- Designated area for cameras (if media allowed)
- Rear or balcony position
- Pool camera if multiple media outlets
- No flash photography

### **Venue Coordination Timeline**

#### **2 weeks before service:**

- ☐ Venue reserved and confirmed
- ☐ Initial setup plan developed
- ☐ Clergy/officiant confirmed
- ☐ Sound and equipment needs identified

#### **1 week before service:**

- ☐ Detailed setup plan finalized

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- ☐ Seating chart created
- ☐ Rehearsal scheduled
- ☐ All participants notified of venue and time

**2 days before service:**

- ☐ Rehearsal conducted
- ☐ Setup begins
- ☐ Sound system tested
- ☐ Seating arranged
- ☐ Signage posted

**Day before service:**

- ☐ Final setup completed
- ☐ All equipment tested
- ☐ Programs delivered
- ☐ Flowers and displays arranged
- ☐ Security briefed
- ☐ Final walk-through

**Day of service:**

- ☐ Arrive 2 hours early
- ☐ Final checks of all systems
- ☐ Greet family and provide support
- ☐ Coordinate with all participants
- ☐ Manage any last-minute issues

---

## 9.5 CLERGY AND MUSIC SELECTION

### Selecting Clergy or Officiant

**Family's clergy takes precedence:**

- Family's pastor, priest, rabbi, imam, or spiritual leader
- Knows the family and the deceased
- Understands family's beliefs and traditions
- Provides spiritual comfort

**If the family has no clergy:**

- Agency chaplain may officiate
- The funeral home may provide an officiant
- Community clergy may volunteer

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- A family member or friend may lead
- Professional celebrant for non-religious service

### **Coordinating with clergy:**

- ☐ Contact clergy as soon as the service date is set
- ☐ Confirm availability and willingness
- ☐ Discuss family's wishes and preferences
- ☐ Provide information about the deceased
- ☐ Explain agency involvement and honors
- ☐ Coordinate ceremony elements and timing
- ☐ Arrange rehearsal
- ☐ Provide honorarium if appropriate

## Clergy's Role in Service

### **Typical clergy responsibilities:**

- Opening invocation or prayer
- Scripture readings or sacred texts
- Homily, sermon, or spiritual message
- Prayers throughout the service
- Committal at graveside
- Blessing and dismissal

### **Clergy should be informed about:**

- Deceased's life, service, and character
- Family's specific wishes
- Agency traditions and honors
- Other speakers and participants
- Timing and flow of service
- Any special elements or requests

## Music Selection

### **Music provides comfort and meaning:**

- Reflects the deceased's preferences
- Honors family's traditions
- Sets tone for service
- Provides moments for reflection
- Expresses emotions that words cannot

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**Types of music:****Religious/Sacred music:**

- Hymns and spiritual songs
- Choir or congregational singing
- Organ or piano accompaniment
- Contemporary Christian music
- Traditional religious music from the family's tradition

**Patriotic music:**

- "America the Beautiful"
- "God Bless America."
- "Battle Hymn of the Republic."
- "America" (My Country 'Tis of Thee)
- National Anthem (if appropriate)

**EMS/First Responder music:**

- "Bring Him Home" (Les Misérables)
- "The Impossible Dream."
- "Go Rest High on That Mountain."
- "I Can Only Imagine."
- "Amazing Grace" (bagpipes traditional)

**Personal favorites:**

- Deceased's favorite songs
- Songs meaningful to family
- Music from significant life events
- Contemporary or popular music if appropriate

**Instrumental music:**

- Bagpipes (traditional for public safety)
- Trumpet (Taps at graveside)
- String quartet
- Piano or organ
- Guitar

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## Coordinating Musicians

### Identify musicians needed:

- ☐ Organist or pianist
- ☐ Vocalist or choir
- ☐ Bagpiper
- ☐ Trumpet player (for Taps)
- ☐ Other instrumentalists
- ☐ Sound system operator

### Coordinate with musicians:

- ☐ Contact and confirm availability
- ☐ Provide music selections
- ☐ Discuss timing and placement in service
- ☐ Arrange rehearsal time
- ☐ Confirm sound system needs
- ☐ Provide honorarium if appropriate
- ☐ Ensure musicians know when to perform

## Sample Music Program

### Prelude (as guests arrive):

- Soft instrumental music
- Organ or piano
- 20-30 minutes before service

### Processional (family enters):

- "Amazing Grace" (instrumental)
- Hymn or sacred music
- Signals start of service

### During service:

- Opening hymn (congregation stands)
- Solo or choir performance
- Congregational hymn
- Instrumental reflection
- Closing hymn

### Recessional (family exits):

- "Going Home" or similar

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- Bagpipes if traditional
- Signals end of service

**Postlude (as guests depart):**

- Soft instrumental music
- Continues until all have exited

## Special Music Considerations

**Bagpipes:**

- Traditional for public safety funerals
- "Amazing Grace" is the most common
- Played during processional or recessional
- May play at graveside
- Coordinate with the bagpiper well in advance

**Taps:**

- Played at the graveside for military veterans or LODD
- Live trumpet preferred over recording
- Coordinate with military or veteran organizations
- Played after flag presentation
- Signals final farewell

**Recording vs. live music:**

- Live music preferred when possible
- Recordings acceptable if live not available
- Test sound system with recordings in advance
- Have backup in case of technical issues

**Family's music preferences:**

- ☐ Religious/sacred music: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Patriotic music: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Personal favorites: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Instrumental music: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Bagpipes: Yes / No
- ☐ Special requests: \_\_\_\_\_

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## 9.6 GUEST LIST AND INVITATION PLANNING

### Determining Expected Attendance

#### **Attendance depends on:**

- Type of death (LODD typically draws the largest crowds)
- Deceased's length of service and community involvement
- Family's preference for public or private service
- Community size and support
- Media coverage and publicity

#### **Typical attendance estimates:**

##### **Type I (Full Agency Funeral):**

- 500-2,000+ attendees
- Includes public, neighboring agencies, and dignitaries
- Requires a large venue
- Significant planning and coordination

##### **Type II (Memorial Service):**

- 200-500 attendees
- Family, friends, agency, close community
- Moderate venue size
- Manageable coordination

##### **Type III (Family Service):**

- 50-200 attendees
- Primarily family and close friends
- Small to moderate venue
- Minimal agency coordination

### Guest Categories

#### **Immediate family:**

- Spouse and children
- Parents and siblings
- Grandparents
- Deceased's household members

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**Extended family:**

- Aunts, uncles, cousins
- In-laws and step-family
- Close family friends are considered "family."

**Agency personnel:**

- All agency members (on-duty and off-duty)
- Retired members
- Volunteer members
- Administrative staff

**External agencies:**

- Mutual aid partners
- Neighboring EMS agencies
- Fire departments
- Law enforcement agencies
- Dispatch centers
- Hospital partners

**Dignitaries and officials:**

- Mayor and city council
- County executives
- State legislators
- Governor (for LODD)
- Federal officials (for LODD)
- EMS and public safety leadership

**Community members:**

- Friends and neighbors
- Patients and families served
- Community organizations
- Faith community
- General public (for public service)

**Invitation Protocols****Formal invitations are typically not sent for funerals:****Version 2.0 revised 4/2/2026**

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- Public notice through obituary
- Media announcements
- Agency notifications
- Word of mouth

**Special invitations may be sent to:**

- Dignitaries and officials
- Out-of-state family
- Special guests' families want to ensure attendance
- Neighboring agencies for formal participation

**Sample invitation to dignitary:**

*Dear [Title and Name],*

*It is with deep sadness that we inform you of the line-of-duty death of Paramedic Michael Johnson of [Agency Name]. Michael died on [Date] while responding to a medical emergency.*

*The funeral service will be held on [Date] at [Time] at [Venue]. We would be honored by your attendance as we celebrate Michael's life and service to our community.*

*Please contact [Name] at [Phone] if you plan to attend so we may reserve seating for you.*

*Respectfully,*

*[Agency Director Name and Title]*

## Managing VIP and Dignitary Attendance

**See Section 5.7 for complete dignitary protocols.**

**Coordinate with dignitaries:**

- ☐ Send formal invitation
- ☐ Confirm attendance
- ☐ Coordinate with their staff/security
- ☐ Reserve seating
- ☐ Arrange for speaking role if appropriate
- ☐ Provide program and schedule
- ☐ Assign liaison for day of service
- ☐ Coordinate arrival and departure
- ☐ Manage media coverage of dignitaries

## Seating Arrangements

**Reserved seating areas:**

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**Front rows (closest to casket):**

- Immediate family
- Extended family as needed
- Family's clergy

**Next section:**

- Agency leadership
- Dignitaries and officials
- Special guests

**General reserved section:**

- Agency personnel in uniform
- Retired members
- External agencies participating in honors

**General seating:**

- Friends and community members
- Public attendees
- Overflow standing room

**Accessibility seating:**

- Wheelchair accessible areas
- Assistive listening device areas
- Near exits for those who may need to leave

## Guest Management

**Funeral Coordinator assigns:**

- Greeters at entrance
- Ushers to assist with seating
- Program distributors
- Parking attendants
- Security personnel
- Family liaison to stay with family

**Guest management responsibilities:**

- ☐ Greet all attendees warmly
- ☐ Distribute programs

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- ☐ Direct to appropriate seating
  - ☐ Assist elderly or disabled guests
  - ☐ Manage overflow seating
  - ☐ Maintain order and decorum
  - ☐ Protect family privacy
  - ☐ Coordinate with security
  - ☐ Handle any disruptions discreetly
- 

## 9.7 SPECIAL REQUESTS AND ACCOMMODATIONS

### Identifying Special Needs

#### **FLO should ask family:**

- "Are there any special accommodations we should arrange?"
- "Does anyone have accessibility needs?"
- "Are there language or communication needs?"
- "Are there any special requests for the service?"
- "Is there anything that would make this easier for your family?"

### Accessibility Accommodations

#### **Physical accessibility:**

- ☐ Wheelchair accessible venue and restrooms
- ☐ Accessible parking close to entrance
- ☐ Ramps or elevators if needed
- ☐ Seating areas for wheelchairs
- ☐ Accessible routes throughout venue
- ☐ Assistance available for those who need it

#### **Hearing accommodations:**

- ☐ Assistive listening devices available
- ☐ Sign language interpreter if needed
- ☐ Written programs with all spoken content
- ☐ Clear sight lines to speakers
- ☐ Quality sound system

#### **Visual accommodations:**

- ☐ Large print programs available
- ☐ Braille programs if requested
- ☐ Audio description if needed

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- ☐ Good lighting throughout venue
- ☐ Clear signage and wayfinding

## Language and Communication Needs

### **If family or guests speak limited English:**

- ☐ Provide interpreter for planning meetings
- ☐ Translate programs and materials
- ☐ Provide interpretation during service if desired
- ☐ Ensure FLO can communicate with family
- ☐ Respect language preferences

### **Bilingual service elements:**

- Prayers or readings in family's language
- Bilingual programs
- Speakers who can address family in their language
- Interpreter for non-family-language speakers

## Medical and Health Accommodations

### **For family members with health needs:**

- ☐ Seating near exits for those who may need to leave
- ☐ Private room for medical needs or rest
- ☐ Medical personnel on standby if needed
- ☐ Oxygen or other medical equipment accommodated
- ☐ Medication storage if needed
- ☐ Quiet space for those overwhelmed

### **For elderly or frail family members:**

- ☐ Comfortable seating with back support
- ☐ Assistance with standing/sitting
- ☐ Shorter service if needed
- ☐ Climate control for comfort
- ☐ Frequent breaks if service is long
- ☐ Transportation assistance

## Childcare and Children's Needs

### **If young children attending:**

- ☐ Quiet room or nursery available
- ☐ Childcare providers if family desires
- ☐ Children's activity bags (quiet toys, coloring)
- ☐ Snacks and drinks available

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- ☐ Changing table in restroom
- ☐ Family seating near exit for easy departure

**Age-appropriate participation:**

- Children may serve as junior pallbearers
- Children may place flowers or mementos
- Children may read poem or share memory
- Children may participate in music
- Always optional, never required

## Cultural and Religious Accommodations

**See Section 9.3 for detailed religious and cultural considerations.**

**Common accommodations:**

- ☐ Prayer rooms or quiet spaces
- ☐ Gender-separated seating if required
- ☐ Head covering requirements respected
- ☐ Dietary restrictions observed
- ☐ Ritual washing facilities if needed
- ☐ Specific timing requirements honored
- ☐ Sacred objects or symbols accommodated

## Special Requests from Family

**Common special requests:**

**Memorial displays:**

- Photo boards or video montages
- Deceased's personal items (helmet, badge, uniform)
- Hobby or interest displays
- Memory table for guests to sign or leave notes
- Candle lighting ceremony

**Participation opportunities:**

- Family members speaking or reading
- Friends sharing memories
- Colleagues offering tributes
- Children's participation
- Community involvement

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**Symbolic gestures:**

- Releasing balloons or doves (check local regulations)
- Planting memorial tree
- Lighting candles
- Placing flowers on casket
- Final alarm or radio call

**Recording and keepsakes:**

- Video recording of service
- Audio recording
- Professional photography (tasteful and discreet)
- Programs as keepsakes
- Memorial cards or bookmarks

## Documenting Special Requests

**FLO documents all special requests:**

- ☐ Request: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Coordinator assigned: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Resources needed: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Cost if any: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Timeline: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Status: \_\_\_\_\_

**Ensure all requests are:**

- Feasible and safe
- Respectful and appropriate
- Coordinated with venue and participants
- Communicated to all involved
- Executed as promised

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## 9.8 MEMORIAL FUNDS AND CHARITABLE DONATIONS

### Establishing Memorial Fund

**Memorial fund provides:**

- Financial support for family
- Scholarship for children

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- Charitable donations in deceased's name
- Community way to show support
- Ongoing legacy

### **Types of memorial funds:**

#### **Family assistance fund:**

- Direct financial support to family
- Helps with immediate expenses
- Supplements insurance and benefits
- Managed by agency or community organization

#### **Scholarship fund:**

- Educational support for deceased's children
- Annual scholarships in deceased's name
- Managed by school district or community foundation
- Lasting legacy

#### **Charitable fund:**

- Donations to cause important to deceased
- Supports organization deceased cared about
- Reflects deceased's values
- Managed by charity

## **Setting Up Memorial Fund**

### **Steps to establish fund:**

- ☐ Determine fund purpose and beneficiary
- ☐ Select fund administrator (agency, union, community foundation)
- ☐ Establish bank account
- ☐ Obtain tax-exempt status if possible (501(c)(3))
- ☐ Create donation procedures
- ☐ Publicize fund information
- ☐ Track all donations
- ☐ Provide receipts to donors
- ☐ Report to family regularly
- ☐ Distribute funds according to purpose

### **Fund administrator responsibilities:**

- Receive and deposit donations

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- Maintain accurate records
- Provide tax receipts
- Safeguard funds
- Distribute according to purpose
- Report to family and donors
- Ensure transparency and accountability

## Publicizing Memorial Fund

### Include fund information in:

- Obituary
- Funeral program
- Agency website
- Social media posts
- Press releases
- Community announcements

### Sample obituary language:

*"In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Michael Johnson Memorial Fund, c/o [Agency Name], [Address]. Donations will support Michael's children's education."*

### Sample program language:

*"The family requests that memorial contributions be made to the Michael Johnson Scholarship Fund. Donations may be sent to [Address] or made online at [Website]. All donations are tax-deductible and will support scholarships for local students pursuing careers in emergency medical services."*

## Managing Donations

### Donation tracking:

- ☐ Record donor name and contact information
- ☐ Record donation amount and date
- ☐ Record donation method (check, cash, online)
- ☐ Provide receipt for tax purposes
- ☐ Send thank-you note
- ☐ Update family on total donations
- ☐ Maintain confidentiality of donor information

### Thank-you notes:

- Sent by family or on family's behalf

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- Acknowledge donation and express gratitude
- Explain how funds will be used
- Provide tax receipt information

#### **Sample thank-you note:**

*Dear [Donor Name],*

*Thank you for your generous donation to the Michael Johnson Memorial Fund. Your kindness and support mean so much to our family during this difficult time.*

*Your contribution will help provide for Michael's children's education, ensuring that his legacy of service and dedication continues through them.*

*With heartfelt gratitude,  
The Johnson Family*

### **Alternative to Flowers**

#### **Many families prefer donations over flowers:**

- Flowers are beautiful but temporary
- Donations provide lasting support
- Reflects values of service and giving
- Reduces overwhelming number of flower arrangements

#### **If family prefers flowers:**

- Respect their wishes
- Coordinate flower delivery to venue
- Arrange for flowers to be taken to cemetery
- Offer flowers to family after service
- Donate flowers to nursing homes or hospitals

### **Long-Term Fund Management**

#### **For ongoing scholarship or memorial funds:**

- ☐ Establish selection criteria
- ☐ Create application process
- ☐ Form selection committee
- ☐ Award scholarships annually
- ☐ Publicize awards and recipients
- ☐ Invite family to participate in selection
- ☐ Maintain fund in perpetuity if possible
- ☐ Report annually to donors and family

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**See Section 14 for long-term commemoration and scholarship programs.**

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## 9.9 BUDGET AND FINANCIAL PLANNING

### Funeral Costs Overview

#### **Typical funeral expenses:**

##### **Funeral home services:**

- Basic services fee: \$2,000-\$3,000
- Embalming: \$500-\$800
- Preparation and dressing: \$200-\$400
- Casket: \$2,000-\$10,000+
- Vault: \$1,000-\$3,000
- Viewing/visitation: \$400-\$600
- Funeral service: \$400-\$600
- Hearse: \$300-\$400
- Limousine: \$200-\$400 per vehicle

##### **Cemetery costs:**

- Burial plot: \$1,000-\$5,000
- Opening and closing grave: \$1,000-\$2,000
- Grave marker or headstone: \$1,000-\$5,000+
- Perpetual care fee: \$200-\$500

##### **Additional costs:**

- Clergy honorarium: \$200-\$400
- Musicians: \$200-\$500
- Programs and memorial cards: \$200-\$500
- Flowers: \$500-\$2,000
- Reception: \$500-\$3,000+
- Death certificates: \$20-\$50 each (need 15-20)

**Total typical cost: \$10,000-\$25,000+**

### Who Pays for Funeral

#### **Funding sources:**

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**Family's responsibility:**

- Funeral home and cemetery costs
- Personal choices (casket, flowers, etc.)
- Reception if family-hosted

**Agency may cover:**

- Honor guard services
- Agency participation costs
- Programs and materials
- Reception if agency-hosted
- Transportation for agency personnel

**Workers' compensation:**

- Funeral and burial expenses up to \$10,000 (Wisconsin)
- Paid directly to the funeral home or reimbursed to the family

**Life insurance:**

- Proceeds paid to beneficiary
- Can be used for funeral expenses
- May take weeks to receive

**PSOB:**

- Does not cover funeral expenses
- Death benefit paid months later
- Cannot be used for immediate costs

**Community donations:**

- Memorial fund contributions
- Community fundraisers
- Donated services (catering, flowers, etc.)

## Financial Planning with Family

**FLO should discuss finances sensitively:**

*"Mrs. Johnson, I know this is a difficult topic, but we need to discuss the financial aspects of the funeral. There are several sources of funding available, and we want to make sure you understand all your options. You don't have to make any decisions right now, but I want you to know what resources are available."*

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**Discuss with family:**

- ☐ Estimated funeral costs
- ☐ Workers' compensation coverage (\$10,000)
- ☐ Life insurance proceeds and timeline
- ☐ Memorial fund donations
- ☐ Agency financial assistance if available
- ☐ Payment options with the funeral home
- ☐ What family can afford comfortably
- ☐ Avoiding financial hardship

## Agency Financial Assistance

**The agency may provide:**

- Emergency fund for immediate expenses
- Advance on workers' comp or benefits
- Loan to be repaid from insurance proceeds
- Grant that doesn't require repayment
- Fundraising to support the family

**Union or association may provide:**

- Death benefit (typically \$1,000-\$5,000)
- Emergency assistance fund
- Fundraising support
- Coordination of community donations

## Avoiding Financial Exploitation

 **CRITICAL:** Protect family from financial pressure or exploitation during a vulnerable time. Ensure all financial decisions are informed and voluntary.

**FLO should:**

- Accompany family to funeral home meetings
- Review all contracts before the family signs
- Ensure family understands all costs
- Prevent upselling of unnecessary services
- Advocate for the family's financial interests
- Connect family with a financial counselor if needed

**Red flags:**

- Pressure to make immediate decisions

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- Upselling expensive caskets or services
- Unclear or hidden fees
- The family doesn't understand the contracts
- Services the family doesn't want or need

**Family should:**

- Take time to review all options
- Ask questions about all costs
- Compare prices if desired
- Choose services that fit their budget
- Do not feel pressured to overspend
- Seek advice from a trusted advisor

## Budget Worksheet

**Use this worksheet to track funeral expenses:**

| Expense Category            | Estimated Cost | Actual Cost | Paid By | Status                   |
|-----------------------------|----------------|-------------|---------|--------------------------|
| Funeral home basic services | \$             | \$          |         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Casket/urn                  | \$             | \$          |         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Vault                       | \$             | \$          |         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Burial plot                 | \$             | \$          |         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Opening/closing a grave     | \$             | \$          |         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Headstone                   | \$             | \$          |         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Clergy                      | \$             | \$          |         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Musicians                   | \$             | \$          |         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Programs                    | \$             | \$          |         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Flowers                     | \$             | \$          |         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Reception                   | \$             | \$          |         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Death certificates          | \$             | \$          |         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other: _____                | \$             | \$          |         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                | <b>\$</b>      | <b>\$</b>   |         |                          |

**Funding sources:**

- Workers' compensation: \$10,000
- Life insurance: \$\_\_\_\_\_

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- Memorial fund: \$\_\_\_\_\_
  - Agency assistance: \$\_\_\_\_\_
  - Family funds: \$\_\_\_\_\_
  - **TOTAL AVAILABLE: \$\_\_\_\_\_**
- 

## 9.10 TIMELINE DEVELOPMENT

### Funeral Planning Timeline

**Typical timeline from death to funeral: 7-10 days**

**Day 1 (Incident day):**

- Death occurs
- Family notified
- Agency notified
- Investigation begins
- FLO assigned
- Media notified (after family)

**Day 2:**

- Family meets with FLO
- Funeral home selected
- Initial planning begins
- Autopsy conducted (if required)
- Benefits Coordinator assigned

**Day 3:**

- Family meets with the funeral home
- Service type and venue selected
- Clergy contacted
- Date and time set
- Obituary drafted

**Day 4:**

- Obituary published
- Funeral planning continues
- Agency coordination begins

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- External agencies notified
- Honor guard contacted

**Day 5:**

- Service details finalized
- Programs designed
- Music and speakers confirmed
- Reception planned
- Procession route planned

**Day 6:**

- Viewing/visitation (evening)
- Family receives guests
- Agency personnel pay respects
- Final preparations for funeral

**Day 7:**

- Viewing/visitation continues (if multi-day)
- Rehearsal conducted
- Final coordination meeting
- All participants briefed

**Day 8 (Funeral day):**

- Funeral service
- Procession to cemetery
- Graveside committal
- Reception
- Family supported throughout

**Days 9-10:**

- Thank-you notes begin
- After-action review
- Transition to long-term support
- Benefits applications begin

## Factors Affecting Timeline

**Timeline may be shorter if:**

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- Religious requirements (Jewish, Islamic burial within 24-48 hours)
- Family preference for quick burial
- No autopsy required
- Simple service planned

**Timeline may be longer if:**

- Complex investigation
- Delayed autopsy results
- Out-of-state family travel
- Venue availability
- Large, complex service planned
- Holiday or weekend timing

## Daily Planning Checklist

**Use this checklist to track daily progress:**

**Day 1:**

- ☐ Family notified
- ☐ Agency notified
- ☐ FLO assigned
- ☐ Investigation initiated
- ☐ Media notified
- ☐ Command post established

**Day 2:**

- ☐ Family meeting conducted
- ☐ Funeral home selected
- ☐ Service type discussed
- ☐ Autopsy conducted
- ☐ Benefits Coordinator assigned

**Day 3:**

- ☐ Funeral home meeting
- ☐ Venue selected and reserved
- ☐ Date and time set
- ☐ Clergy contacted
- ☐ Obituary drafted and submitted

**Day 4:**

- ☐ Obituary published
- ☐ Agency coordination begins
- ☐ External agencies notified

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- ☐ Honor guard contacted
- ☐ Procession planning begins

**Day 5:**

- ☐ Service details finalized
- ☐ Programs designed
- ☐ Music confirmed
- ☐ Speakers confirmed
- ☐ Reception venue reserved

**Day 6:**

- ☐ Viewing/visitation conducted
- ☐ Family supported
- ☐ Agency personnel attend
- ☐ Final preparations completed

**Day 7:**

- ☐ Continued viewing if multi-day
- ☐ Rehearsal conducted
- ☐ Final coordination meeting
- ☐ All participants briefed

**Day 8:**

- ☐ Funeral service executed
- ☐ Procession conducted
- ☐ Graveside committal
- ☐ Reception hosted
- ☐ Family supported

**Days 9-10:**

- ☐ After-action review
- ☐ Thank participants
- ☐ Begin thank-you notes
- ☐ Transition to long-term support

---

## 9.11 FAMILY-CENTERED DECISION MAKING

### Core Principle: Family First

 **CRITICAL:** Every decision must be guided by the question: "What does the family want?" Agency traditions and preferences are secondary to family's wishes.

### Family-centered approach means:

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- Family's preferences take precedence
- Family makes all major decisions
- Agency adapts to family's wishes
- Family is never pressured or directed
- Family's grief is respected and supported

## Empowering Family to Make Decisions

### **FLO should:**

- Provide options, not directives
- Explain choices clearly
- Allow time for family to decide
- Respect family's decisions
- Support family's choices even if different from agency preference

### **Sample language:**

*"Mrs. Johnson, here are the options available to you. There's no right or wrong choice—this is entirely about what feels right to you and your family. Take your time, and let me know what you decide. We'll support whatever you choose."*

## When Family is Overwhelmed

### **If family cannot make decisions:**

- Simplify choices to essential decisions only
- Offer to make minor decisions on family's behalf
- Suggest what "most families choose" as guidance
- Allow family to delegate decisions to trusted person
- Make reversible decisions when possible
- Check back with family before finalizing

### **Sample approach:**

*"I know this is overwhelming. Let's focus on just the most important decisions right now. For the smaller details, I can suggest what most families choose, and you can tell me if that sounds okay or if you'd prefer something different. Does that help?"*

## Respecting Family's "No"

### **Family may decline:**

- Full agency funeral honors
- Public service

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- Media coverage
- Agency participation
- Viewing or visitation
- Reception
- Any element of traditional funeral

**Agency must respect family's decisions:**

- No pressure or persuasion
- No guilt or obligation
- No judgment
- Full support regardless
- Alternative ways to honor deceased

**Sample response to family's "no":**

*"We completely understand and respect your decision. This is about what's right for your family. We'll support you in whatever way you need, and we'll honor Michael in the way that feels right to you."*

## Balancing Family and Agency Needs

**Occasionally family's wishes conflict with agency needs:**

- Family wants private service; agency wants to honor publicly
- Family wants quick burial; agency needs time to coordinate
- Family wants minimal involvement; agency wants full honors

**Resolution approach:**

1. Family's wishes take priority
2. Explain agency's perspective respectfully
3. Seek compromise if possible
4. Offer alternative solutions
5. Accept family's final decision
6. Agency can hold separate memorial if needed

**Sample conversation:**

*"Mrs. Johnson, I understand you prefer a small, private service. We respect that completely. Many of Michael's colleagues would like to pay their respects. Would you be comfortable with a brief agency memorial service at a separate time? That way you can have the private family service you want, and the agency can honor Michael as well. But if you'd prefer not, we'll respect that too."*

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## Documenting Family's Decisions

### **FLO documents all family decisions:**

- ☐ Service type selected
- ☐ Venue chosen
- ☐ Date and time set
- ☐ Clergy selected
- ☐ Music choices
- ☐ Speakers confirmed
- ☐ Burial or cremation
- ☐ Viewing preferences
- ☐ Reception plans
- ☐ Special requests
- ☐ Declined options

### **Documentation ensures:**

- Family's wishes are honored
- All coordinators know the family's preferences
- No confusion or conflicting information
- Family doesn't have to repeat decisions
- Accountability for honoring the family's choices

## Final Family Meeting Before Service

### **Schedule final meeting 1-2 days before the funeral:**

#### **Purpose:**

- Review all plans and decisions
- Confirm family is comfortable with everything
- Make any last-minute changes
- Answer any remaining questions
- Reassure family of support

#### **FLO reviews:**

- ☐ Complete timeline of events
- ☐ Who will be where and when
- ☐ What family needs to do (very little)
- ☐ What agency will handle
- ☐ How family will be supported
- ☐ Emergency contacts and backup plans
- ☐ Any concerns or questions

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**Sample closing:**

*"Mrs. Johnson, we've planned everything according to your wishes. On the day of the funeral, your only job is to be present and grieve. We'll take care of everything else. I'll be with you the entire time, and you can ask me anything or tell me if you need anything. We're here to support you and honor Michael in the way you've chosen."*

---

## SECTION 10: FUNERAL & MEMORIAL SERVICE EXECUTION

**Purpose:** To execute the funeral or memorial service with dignity, precision, and compassion, honoring the deceased and supporting the family while managing all logistical details.

---

### 10.1 PRE-SERVICE CHECKLIST (48 HOURS BEFORE)

#### Final Coordination Meeting

**Schedule final coordination meeting 48 hours before service:**

**Attendees:**

- Incident Commander
- Funeral Coordinator
- Family Liaison Officer
- Church/Ceremony Coordinator
- Procession Coordinator
- Honor Guard Liaison
- PIO
- All section chiefs

**Agenda:**

- ☐ Review the complete timeline
- ☐ Confirm all assignments
- ☐ Review contingency plans
- ☐ Address any outstanding issues
- ☐ Confirm family's final wishes
- ☐ Review communication protocols
- ☐ Confirm all resources in place

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## Venue Preparation Checklist

### **Church/Ceremony Coordinator ensures:**

- ☐ Venue reserved and confirmed
- ☐ Seating arranged per plan
- ☐ Reserved seating marked
- ☐ Sound system tested
- ☐ Microphones tested (podium, handheld, lapel)
- ☐ Lighting appropriate
- ☐ Climate control set
- ☐ Restrooms stocked and clean
- ☐ Accessibility accommodations in place
- ☐ Signage posted (parking, entrances, restrooms, reserved seating)
- ☐ Programs printed and ready
- ☐ Memorial displays set up
- ☐ Flowers arranged
- ☐ Casket or urn placement confirmed
- ☐ Honor guard positions marked
- ☐ Family private room prepared
- ☐ Media area designated (if applicable)
- ☐ Security briefed
- ☐ Emergency exits clear
- ☐ First aid kit available

## Personnel Assignments Confirmed

### **Funeral Coordinator confirms all assignments:**

- ☐ Greeters (2-4 people)
- ☐ Ushers (4-6 people)
- ☐ Program distributors (2-3 people)
- ☐ Parking attendants (2-4 people)
- ☐ Security personnel (as needed)
- ☐ Honor guard members
- ☐ Pallbearers (6-8 people)
- ☐ Clergy and speakers
- ☐ Musicians
- ☐ Sound system operator
- ☐ Photographer/videographer (if applicable)
- ☐ Family liaison (FLO)
- ☐ Dignitary liaison (if needed)

### **Each person receives:**

- Written assignment and responsibilities

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- Timeline and schedule
- Contact information for coordinators
- Dress code and appearance standards
- Arrival time and location

## Communications Check

### Ensure all communication systems working:

- ☐ Cell phones charged and tested
- ☐ Radio channels assigned and tested
- ☐ Contact list distributed to all coordinators
- ☐ Backup communication methods identified
- ☐ Command post phone number publicized

## Contingency Planning

### Prepare for potential issues:

#### Weather contingencies:

- ☐ Outdoor ceremony backup plan
- ☐ Umbrellas available
- ☐ Tent or canopy if needed
- ☐ Heating or cooling backup

#### Personnel contingencies:

- ☐ Backup for every key role
- ☐ On-call personnel identified
- ☐ Substitutes briefed and ready

#### Equipment contingencies:

- ☐ Backup sound system
- ☐ Backup microphones
- ☐ Backup music (recording if live fails)
- ☐ Generator if power fails

#### Family contingencies:

- ☐ Medical personnel on standby
- ☐ Private room for family emergencies
- ☐ Transportation backup
- ☐ Childcare backup

## Final Family Contact

### FLO contacts family 24 hours before service:

- ☐ Confirm family is ready

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- ☐ Review timeline for family
- ☐ Confirm transportation arrangements
- ☐ Confirm family's arrival time
- ☐ Answer any last-minute questions
- ☐ Reassure family of support
- ☐ Provide FLO's cell phone number
- ☐ Confirm family knows what to expect

**Sample conversation:**

*"Mrs. Johnson, I wanted to check in with you before tomorrow. Everything is ready, and we'll be there to support you every step of the way. You and your family should arrive at 9:30 AM, and I'll meet you at the side entrance. Do you have any questions or concerns? Remember, I'll be with you the entire time, and you can ask me anything."*

---

## 10.2 VIEWING/VISITATION LOGISTICS

### Purpose of Viewing/Visitation

**Viewing provides:**

- Opportunity for family and friends to pay respects
- Closure through seeing deceased
- Social support for family
- Community expression of sympathy
- Transition before funeral service

**Viewing options:**

- Private family viewing only
- Public visitation (1-2 hours before funeral)
- Extended visitation (evening before funeral)
- Multi-day visitation
- No viewing (closed casket or cremation)

### Viewing Schedule

**Typical viewing schedule:**

**Private family viewing:**

- 1 hour before public visitation
- Family only

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- Quiet, private time
- FLO present for support

#### **Public visitation:**

- 2-4 hours before funeral, or
- Evening before funeral (5:00-8:00 PM)
- Open to all
- Receiving line or informal

#### **Day-of viewing:**

- 1-2 hours before funeral service
- Allows guests to pay respects before service
- Family may or may not be present

### **Viewing Logistics**

#### **Funeral home or church coordinator ensures:**

- ☐ Casket positioned appropriately
- ☐ Open or closed per family's wishes
- ☐ Flowers arranged around the casket
- ☐ Memorial displays set up
- ☐ Guest book and pens available
- ☐ Memorial cards or programs available
- ☐ Seating for family
- ☐ Tissues available
- ☐ Soft music playing
- ☐ Lighting appropriate (soft, respectful)
- ☐ Climate comfortable
- ☐ Parking attendants in place
- ☐ Greeters at the entrance
- ☐ Security if needed

### **Supporting Family During Viewing**

#### **FLO responsibilities during viewing:**

- ☐ Arrive before family
- ☐ Ensure everything is ready
- ☐ Greet family and provide support
- ☐ Stay with family throughout
- ☐ Manage receiving line if family desires
- ☐ Shield family from overwhelming situations
- ☐ Provide breaks for family as needed

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- ☐ Ensure family has water, tissues, seating
- ☐ Manage time so family isn't exhausted
- ☐ Coordinate with funeral home staff

**Receiving line protocol:**

- Family stands near the casket
- Guests approach, offer condolences, move on
- FLO stands nearby to assist
- Limit time if line is long
- Provide breaks for family
- Elderly family members may sit

**If the family prefers not to stand in line:**

- Family sits in private area
- Guests view and sign book
- Family mingles informally if desired
- Less formal, less exhausting

## Managing Guests at Viewing

**Greeters and ushers: (WI EMS HG)**

- ☐ Welcome all guests warmly
- ☐ Direct to guest book
- ☐ Provide memorial cards or programs
- ☐ Direct to casket or family
- ☐ Assist elderly or disabled guests
- ☐ Maintain a respectful atmosphere
- ☐ Manage flow to prevent crowding
- ☐ Handle any disruptions discreetly

**Guest book:**

- Placed at the entrance
- Guests sign name and address
- Provides a record of attendees
- Family treasures as keepsake
- May include space for messages

## Agency Personnel Attendance at Viewing

**Agency personnel should:**

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- Attend in uniform (if on-duty) or appropriate civilian attire
- Pay respects to the deceased
- Offer condolences to the family
- Keep visits brief to allow others
- Maintain professional demeanor
- Support each other

**Honor guard may:**

- Stand vigil at the casket
- Rotate every 30 minutes
- Maintain a silent, respectful presence
- Provide ceremonial honor

## Closing Viewing

**At end of viewing:**

- ☐ Announce 15-minute warning
- ☐ Allow final guests to pay respects
- ☐ Give family final private time if desired
- ☐ Close casket if family requests
- ☐ Secure venue for night
- ☐ Ensure family has transportation home
- ☐ Remind family of next day's schedule

---

## 10.3 FUNERAL SERVICE PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

### Purpose of Funeral Program

**The program provides:**

- Order of service for guests
- Information about deceased
- Keepsake for family and friends
- Guidance for participation (standing, sitting, singing)
- Tribute to the deceased's life

### Program Content

**Cover:**

- Deceased's name

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- Dates of birth and death
- Photo (optional but common)
- "In Loving Memory" or similar phrase
- Agency logo or emblem (if appropriate)

**Inside pages:**

**Order of Service:**

- Prelude
- Processional
- Opening prayer or invocation
- Hymn or song
- Scripture readings
- Eulogies and tributes
- Special music
- Homily or message
- Closing prayer
- Recessional
- Postlude

**Obituary or Life Summary:**

- Brief biography
- Career highlights
- Family information
- Hobbies and interests
- Community involvement
- Survived by (family members)

**Acknowledgments:**

- Family thanks to supporters
- Appreciation for attendance
- Memorial fund information
- Reception information

**Back cover:**

- Poem, prayer, or quote
- Additional photo

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- Pallbearers' names
- Honorary pallbearers

## Sample Program Layout

[FRONT COVER]

[Photo of Deceased]

In Loving Memory of

MICHAEL JAMES JOHNSON  
Paramedic  
[Agency Name]

June 15, 1985 - March 10, 2024

[Agency Emblem]

---

[INSIDE LEFT]

ORDER OF SERVICE

Prelude  
Instrumental Music

Processional  
"Amazing Grace" - Bagpipes

Opening Prayer  
Reverend John Smith

Hymn  
"How Great Thou Art"

Scripture Reading  
Psalm 23

Eulogy  
Chief Robert Williams

Tribute from Colleagues  
Paramedic Sarah Martinez

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Special Music

"Go Rest High on That Mountain"

Performed by [Name]

Homily

Reverend John Smith

Closing Prayer

Recessional

"Going Home" - Bagpipes

---

[INSIDE RIGHT]

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF  
MICHAEL JAMES JOHNSON

Michael Johnson was born on June 15, 1985, in Madison, Wisconsin, to Robert and Mary Johnson. He graduated from Madison West High School in 2003 and earned his Paramedic certification from Madison Area Technical College in 2005.

Michael served the community as a Paramedic with [Agency Name] for 18 years. He was known for his compassion, skill, and dedication to helping others. Michael received numerous commendations for his outstanding service and was respected by colleagues and patients alike.

Michael married his high school sweetheart, Jennifer, in 2007. Together they raised two wonderful children, Emma (14) and Jack (11). Michael was a devoted husband and father who loved coaching his kids' soccer teams and camping with his family.

In his free time, Michael enjoyed fishing, woodworking, and volunteering with the local youth mentoring program. He had a gift for making everyone feel valued and cared for.

Michael is survived by his wife Jennifer; children Emma and Jack; parents Robert and Mary Johnson; sister Lisa (Tom) Anderson; and numerous extended family members and friends.

---

[BACK COVER]

Do not stand at my grave and weep,

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I am not there, I do not sleep.  
I am a thousand winds that blow,  
I am the diamond glints on snow.  
I am the sunlight on ripened grain,  
I am the gentle autumn rain.  
When you awaken in the morning's hush,  
I am the swift uplifting rush  
Of quiet birds in circled flight.  
I am the soft stars that shine at night.  
Do not stand at my grave and cry,  
I am not there, I did not die.

---

PALLBEARERS  
[Names]

HONORARY PALLBEARERS  
All Members of [Agency Name]

---

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to:  
Michael Johnson Memorial Scholarship Fund  
c/o [Agency Name]  
[Address]

---

A reception will follow the graveside service at:  
[Venue Name and Address]

## Program Production

### Timeline:

- ☐ Draft program 5 days before service
- ☐ Family reviews and approves 4 days before
- ☐ Final edits 3 days before
- ☐ Print 2 days before
- ☐ Deliver to the venue the day before

### Printing:

- Print 25-50% more than expected attendance
- Quality paper and printing
- Color if budget allows

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- Folded or booklet format
- Professional appearance

**Distribution:**

- Placed on chairs before service, or
- Handed to guests as they enter
- Extras available at the entrance
- Save copies for family and archives

## 10.4 CEREMONY FLOW AND TIMING

### Typical Funeral Service Timeline

**2 hours before service:**

- ☐ Coordinators arrive
- ☐ Final venue check
- ☐ Sound system tested
- ☐ Programs distributed to seats
- ☐ Flowers and displays arranged

**1.5 hours before:**

- ☐ Greeters and ushers arrive
- ☐ Parking attendants in place
- ☐ Security briefed
- ☐ Honor guard arrives and prepares

**1 hour before:**

- ☐ Clergy and musicians arrive
- ☐ Speakers arrive and are briefed
- ☐ Pallbearers arrive and are briefed
- ☐ Guests begin arriving
- ☐ Prelude music begins

**30 minutes before:**

- ☐ Family arrives at private entrance
- ☐ FLO greets and supports family
- ☐ Family has private time
- ☐ Dignitaries arrive and are seated
- ☐ Agency personnel arrive and are seated

**15 minutes before:**

- ☐ Honor guard takes positions

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- ☐ Pallbearers ready
- ☐ Clergy and participants ready
- ☐ Family ready to process

**Service begins (on time):**

- ☐ Processional music begins
- ☐ Clergy enters
- ☐ Casket processed by pallbearers
- ☐ Honor guard escorts
- ☐ Family processes and is seated

**Service (45-90 minutes):**

- Opening prayer (3 minutes)
- Hymn or song (4 minutes)
- Scripture reading (3 minutes)
- Eulogy (10 minutes)
- Tributes (5-10 minutes each)
- Special music (4 minutes)
- Homily or message (15-20 minutes)
- Closing prayer (3 minutes)
- Announcements (2 minutes)

**Service concludes:**

- ☐ Recessional music begins
- ☐ Family exits first
- ☐ Pallbearers process casket
- ☐ Honor guard escorts
- ☐ Clergy exits
- ☐ Guests dismissed row by row

**After service:**

- ☐ Family has private time if desired
- ☐ Casket loaded into hearse
- ☐ Procession forms
- ☐ Guests directed to vehicles
- ☐ Procession departs for the cemetery

## Ceremony Flow Details

**Processional:**

- Clergy enters first

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- Casket carried by pallbearers
- Honor guard flanks casket
- Family follows casket
- Processional music plays
- All stand

#### **Opening:**

- Clergy welcomes all
- Opening prayer
- Invites all to be seated
- Sets tone for service

#### **Readings and Music:**

- Scripture or meaningful readings
- Hymns or songs
- Congregation may participate
- Provides reflection time

#### **Eulogies and Tributes:**

- Clergy or family member speaks first
- Agency representative speaks
- Colleague or friend speaks
- Keep to time limits (10 minutes each)
- Emotional but composed

#### **Homily or Message:**

- Clergy provides a spiritual message
- Comfort and hope
- Reflection on life and death
- 15-20 minutes

#### **Closing:**

- Final prayer
- Committal words
- Announcements (procession, reception)
- Blessing

#### **Recessional:**

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- Family exits first
- Casket processed out
- Honor guard escorts
- Clergy exits
- Recessional music plays
- All stand

## Timing Management

### **Ceremony Coordinator manages timing:**

- ☐ Keeps service on schedule
- ☐ Signals speakers when time is up
- ☐ Adjusts if running long
- ☐ Ensures smooth transitions
- ☐ Coordinates with musicians and clergy

### **If service runs long:**

- Skip or shorten less essential elements
- Limit the number of speakers
- Shorten musical selections
- Keep homily concise
- Maintain dignity while managing time

---

## 10.5 PERSONNEL ASSIGNMENTS AND POSITIONING

### Honor Guard Positioning

#### **Honor guard responsibilities:**

- Escort casket into and out of service
- Stand vigil during service (optional)
- Present flag at graveside
- Provide ceremonial honors

#### **Positioning:**

- Flank casket during processional and recessional
- Stand at attention at front of sanctuary during the service, or
- Sit in reserved section if not standing vigil
- Maintain military bearing and precision

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**See Section 11 for complete honor guard protocols.**

## **Pallbearer Assignments**

### **Pallbearers carry the casket:**

- 6-8 pallbearers (6 active, 2 alternate)
- Typically, agency colleagues or family members
- Should be similar height if possible
- Physically able to carry casket (200-400 lbs)

### **Pallbearer responsibilities:**

- ☐ Arrive 1 hour before service
- ☐ Receive briefing from coordinator
- ☐ Practice carrying casket
- ☐ Carry casket into service
- ☐ Sit in reserved seating during service
- ☐ Carry casket out of service
- ☐ Load casket into hearse
- ☐ Carry casket at graveside
- ☐ Maintain dignity and composure

### **Pallbearer positioning:**

- Three on each side of the casket
- Tallest in middle, shorter at the ends
- Synchronized movements
- Slow, measured pace
- Maintain the level of the casket

## **Usher and Greeter Assignments**

### **Greeters (2-4 people):**

- ☐ Welcome guests at the entrance
- ☐ Provide programs
- ☐ Direct to ushers
- ☐ Assist the elderly or disabled
- ☐ Maintain warm, respectful demeanor

### **Ushers (4-6 people):**

- ☐ Escort guests to seats
- ☐ Seat family in reserved section
- ☐ Seat dignitaries in reserved section
- ☐ Seat agency personnel together

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- ☐ Manage overflow seating
- ☐ Dismiss rows after service
- ☐ Direct guests to procession or reception

## Speaker and Participant Positioning

### **Speakers sit in the front row or the designated area:**

- Clergy
- Eulogists
- Tribute speakers
- Musicians

### **Speakers should:**

- ☐ Arrive 30 minutes early
- ☐ Check microphone and sound
- ☐ Review remarks
- ☐ Know when they speak
- ☐ Keep to time limit
- ☐ Speak clearly and slowly
- ☐ Maintain composure

## Family Positioning

### **Family sits in front rows:**

- Immediate family in first row
- Extended family in next rows
- Reserved seating clearly marked
- Tissues and water available
- FLO sits with or near family

### **Family should:**

- Arrive through private entrance
- Have private time before service
- Process in after casket
- Be seated first
- Exit first after service
- Have privacy as needed

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## 10.6 MANAGING DIGNITARIES AND VIP ATTENDEES

### Dignitary Coordination

**See Section 5.7 for complete dignitary protocols.**

#### **Assign dignitary liaison:**

- Greets dignitaries on arrival
- Escorts to reserved seating
- Provides program and information
- Coordinates speaking role if applicable
- Manages media coverage of dignitaries
- Coordinates departure

#### **Dignitary seating:**

- Reserved section near front
- Clearly marked
- Appropriate for their position
- Accessible and comfortable

#### **Dignitary participation:**

- May offer remarks if invited
- Typically 3-5 minutes
- Coordinate with clergy and family
- Brief on timing and expectations

### VIP Arrival and Departure

#### **Coordinate VIP logistics:**

- ☐ Confirm arrival time
- ☐ Arrange parking or drop-off
- ☐ Assign liaison to greet
- ☐ Escort to private area if needed
- ☐ Seat at appropriate time
- ☐ Coordinate departure
- ☐ Manage media coverage

#### **Security considerations:**

- Coordinate with VIP's security detail
- Ensure secure entrance and exit

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- Screen attendees if necessary
  - Maintain crowd control
  - Protect VIP and family privacy
- 

## 10.7 MEDIA MANAGEMENT AT SERVICE

### Media Access at Funeral

#### **Family decides media access:**

- Full media access (cameras in service)
- Pool camera only (one camera represents all)
- Exterior coverage only (no cameras inside)
- No media coverage (private service)

#### **If media allowed inside:**

- ☐ Designate media area (rear or balcony)
- ☐ Pool camera if multiple outlets
- ☐ No flash photography
- ☐ No movement during service
- ☐ No interviews inside venue
- ☐ Respect family privacy
- ☐ PIO coordinates all media

#### **If media outside only:**

- ☐ Designate media area away from entrance
- ☐ No blocking family or guests
- ☐ Exterior shots only
- ☐ Interviews only with willing participants
- ☐ No approaching family
- ☐ PIO available for questions

### Protecting Family from Media

#### **FLO and security ensure:**

- ☐ Family enters through private entrance
- ☐ Family shielded from cameras
- ☐ No media in family private areas
- ☐ No interviews unless family consents
- ☐ Media maintains respectful distance
- ☐ Any violations addressed immediately

**\*\*See Section 5 for complete media management protocols**

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