

# Washington State Fire Service Line of Duty Death Guidelines and Procedures



- **Level I: Line-of-Duty Death (LODD)**
  - **Volunteer Firefighter**

A volunteer firefighter whose death would have been considered presumptive per RCW 51.32.185 if they had been a career firefighter will be considered a LODD.

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## Implementation of the Line of Duty Death Procedures

The overriding philosophy of the fire service is that the first priority following a serious injury or line-of-duty death – after caring for the members – is the swift and compassionate notification of the injured or deceased member’s family and the extension of assistance and support to them.

As soon as is possible, the Chief should appoint an Incident Commander (IC), and a meeting should be held to assign or affirm the assignments within the Incident Command System (ICS) structure. The Appendices provide detailed roles and responsibilities for further reference. If there is a question as to whether or not the death is to be considered an LODD, please refer to the LODD Quick Determination Sheet in this document.

A briefing/planning meeting should be scheduled at least once a day until the conclusion of the Memorial Service and should include all section chiefs and other appropriate personnel. A final meeting for discussion of lessons learned and debriefing should be held no later than 48 hours after the conclusion of the Memorial Service.

The IC is responsible for the overall management of the activities that take place after the death of a member. This function is completely separate from the activity and command structure involved in the actual incident that caused the death.

The family will be presented the options available based on the classification of service, and their desires override all others. If the family wishes the help of the Agency, the sections of this document will lead the Agency and the family through the steps to properly honor the fallen member’s life. If the family does not want the assistance of the Agency, the Agency will then do whatever they can to support the family and take care of the needs of the personnel affected by the loss.

The Washington State LAST team is available to assist the agency and the family upon request. This resource is extremely valuable and brings LODD-specific knowledge and expertise to assist in planning and executing the service and ensuring that the family and the affected department are properly cared for. The team works for the Agency and acts in a support role. The Public Safety Officer Benefit (PSOB) is a key for survivors, and the LAST team can assist with this process. Planning these services is a very detail-orientated process, the services of the LAST Team is invaluable. Please contact Pat Ellis [pellis@pugetsoundfire.org](mailto:pellis@pugetsoundfire.org) and/or Pat Pawlak [ppawlak@pugetsoundfire.org](mailto:ppawlak@pugetsoundfire.org).

The Fire Chief may wish to consult with other fire departments that may have had recent experience with funeral planning. The National Fallen Firefighters Foundation offers the Chief-to-Chief Network, which pairs the Fire Chief who has just lost a member with a Chief who has experienced a loss in the past. The Foundation can be contacted at 301-447-1365 for more information.

## Time Sensitive Notifications Procedures

**If your department has suffered the death of a firefighter from a work-related incident the following, time sensitive notifications, must be made.**

### Volunteer Firefighter

**\*\*If the death is a Fire Fatality\*\***

**Within 2 business days of the death** the Washington State Fire Marshal's Office must be notified through the [Fire Fatality Report Form](#).

**Within 90 days of the death of a Volunteer Firefighter** the Board of Volunteer Firefighters must have the Accident Report Card submitted <https://bvff.Washington.gov/forms/accident-report-card>

### Washington State Fire Fighters' Association

[www.wsffa.org](http://www.wsffa.org)

1910 E. 4th Ave. PMB 117

Olympia, WA. 98506-4632

Phone or Fax: 360-

### Board for Volunteer Firefighters

[www.bvff.wa.gov](http://www.bvff.wa.gov)

PO Box 114, Olympia, WA. 98507

360-753-7318

877-753-7318

360-586-1987 (fax)

Accident Report Card submitted <https://bvff.Washington.gov/forms/accident-report-card>

### Washington Fire Chiefs

[www.washingtonfirechiefs.com](http://www.washingtonfirechiefs.com)

605 11<sup>th</sup> Ave, SE, Suite 211

Olympia, WA. 98501

360-352-0161

360-586-5868 (fax)

[wfc@Washingtonfirechiefs.com](mailto:wfc@Washingtonfirechiefs.com)

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**Washington State Fire Marshal's Office**  
[www.wsp.wa.gov/state-fire-marshals-office/](http://www.wsp.wa.gov/state-fire-marshals-office/)  
Washington State Patrol  
Helen Sommers Building  
106 11<sup>th</sup> Ave SW  
Olympia, WA 98501  
360-596-3900  
[firemarsh@wsp.wa.gov](mailto:firemarsh@wsp.wa.gov)

**U.S. Fire Administration**  
<http://apps.usfa.fema.gov/firefighter-fatalities/fatalityData/notification1>

**Washington State Local Assistant State Team (LAST)**  
<https://www.firehero.org/resources/department-resources/programs/local-assistance-state-team/>  
Pat Ellis – 253-856-5826/ [pellis@pugetsoundfire.org](mailto:pellis@pugetsoundfire.org) or [info@wsfff.org](mailto:info@wsfff.org)  
Pat Pawlak – 206-949-3039/ [ppawlak@pugetsoundfire.org](mailto:ppawlak@pugetsoundfire.org)

**National Fallen Firefighters Foundation**  
P.O. Drawer 498  
Emmitsburg, MD 21727  
LODD 24hr Hot Line 886-736-5868  
301-447-1365  
301-447-1645 fax  
[www.firehero.org](http://www.firehero.org)

## **Levels of Honor At-A-Glance**

### **Level I**

- Badge Shrouds/Flag Lowering – Time Protocol
- Honor Watch
- Station Bunting
- Fire Engine Caisson
- Multi-Agency Vehicle Procession to the ceremony
- Vehicle Bunting on all department vehicles
- Crossed Ladders with American Flag
- Home Agency and Honor Guard Cordon of Honor
- Massed Band/Bagpipers and Drum Corps
- Honor Detail Pallbearers
- Color Guard to post and retire the colors
- Honor Guard
- Washington State Flag presented by the Governor
- Walk of Honor Certificate by Washington State Association of Fire Chiefs
- IAFF Medal of Valor Presentation if IAFF member
- Washington State Firefighters' Association Presidents Coin if Volunteer
- American Flag Presentation – Presentation Protocol
- Honor Flags
- Bell Ceremony
- Bugler for Taps
- Last Alarm Radio Call
- Amazing Grace

## Level I: Line-of-Duty Death (LODD)

The death occurs while in the line-of-duty or from a job-related medical injury covered by [RCW 51.32.185](#). The funeral service may include all honors and assistance which include the following.

- Badge Shrouds
  - Worn from time of death until 30 days after the funeral/memorial ceremony
- American Flags lowered to half-staff in compliance with local flag lowering policies
  - Lowered at time of death until sunset day of the service
- Honor Watch (Recommended for a combat type death only)
  - Active-duty firefighter remains with the fallen firefighter from time of death until the service
- Station Bunting
  - From time of death until after the service
- Fire Engine Caisson
- Multi-Agency Vehicle Procession to the ceremony
- Vehicle Bunting on all department vehicles
- Crossed Ladders with American Flag
- Multi Agency Member Cordon of Honor upon arrival at service venue
- Home Agency Member and Honor Guard Cordon of Honor at the start of the service
- Massed Band/Bagpipers and Drum Corps
  - Mass Band will lead vehicle procession, lead the remains to the ceremony, play at the beginning of the ceremony, and play Amazing Grace at the end of the ceremony
- Honor Detail Pallbearers
  - Remains will be posted by Honor Guard until the start of the service
- Viewing of remains before the ceremony if in a casket
- Color Guard to post and retire the colors
- Honor Guard
- Fire Service Honors
  - Washington State Flag presented by the Governor
  - Walk of Honor Certificate by Washington State Association of Fire Chiefs
  - IAFF Medal of Valor Presentation if IAFF member
  - Washington State Firefighters' Association Presidents Coin if Volunteer
  - American Flag Presentation
    - Casket: Flag is draped over the casket and is folded and presented to the family
    - Urn: Flag is tri-folded, unfolded and refolded then presented to the family
  - Honor Flags
    - American Flags flown over the station the firefighter worked
  - Bell Ceremony
  - Bugler for Taps
  - Last Alarm Radio Call
  - Amazing Grace

## **Honors Considerations**

### **Time of Death**

As soon as it is possible and appropriate the fallen firefighter will be covered by an American Flag. This flag will always remain with the fallen firefighter until presented to the family during the funeral/memorial service or appropriate time. The flag should be a government spec. casket sized flag. If this size flag is not available any American Flag would be appropriate.

### **Movement of Fallen Firefighter**

Anytime the fallen firefighter is moved, the movement will be done with honors and escorted by law enforcement and fire service apparatus. The fallen firefighter should be transported by a department aid car or appropriate vehicle. This movement will include from the location of death to the Coroner/Medical Examiner's Office and/or to the funeral home.

### **Honor Posting**

For combat type deaths a uniformed firefighter will be stationed with or near the fallen firefighter from the time of death until the time of the funeral/memorial service. Honor Posting for a medical/cancer related death is not suggested.

### **Procession to the Service Location**

The procession to the service location will be open to all Fire and Police agencies that wish to participate. The firefighter may be transported in a department vehicle/apparatus to the location of the service. Police Escort must be pre-arranged with the local law enforcement jurisdiction. This type of procession needs to be well coordinated and considerations need to be made regarding adequate staging and parking locations.

### **Military**

Military Honors include a presentation of the American Flag and Taps by a military honor guard and should be rendered graveside. If there is no graveside service, these honors can be rendered at the funeral/memorial. If the fallen firefighter is receiving a flag for their military service, they may also receive a flag for their fire service. It is suggested that the fire service flag be an Honor Flag or a tri-folded fallen firefighter memorial flag.

### **Medical LODD**

A medical LODD can be given all the same honors as a combat LODD but best practice suggests that these honors be scaled back to fit the situation and location of the service. Medical LODD services are not attended to the scale of a combat LODD service therefore the venue will be smaller. Honor Guard Details and Massed Band attendance will be smaller and available as needed.

### **Badge Shrouding**

Notification for Statewide Badge Shrouding will be sent out via the Washington State Council of Firefighters, Washington State Fire Chiefs Association, and the Washington State Fire Fighters' Association. Notification for regional badge shrouding will be sent out via the fallen firefighter's department and/or the Washington State Council of Firefighters, Washington State Fire Chiefs Association, and the Washington State Fire Fighters' Association.



- **Combat Death**
  - When a Firefighter dies in a fire at an emergency scene all fire service agencies in the state will authorize badge shrouds from the time of death to 1700hrs the day of the service.
    - The Home Department will shroud badges for a 30-day mourning period after the service.
- **Medical Death**
  - When a Firefighter dies from a medical incident all fire departments in the region will authorize badge shrouds from the time of death to 1700hrs the day of the service.
    - The fallen firefighter's agency may largely define the region such as the fire service response zone or county. It is recommended that home department reach out to their automatic and mutual aid partners, and any other regional partners as appropriate, such as training or policy consortiums that the agency may be involved with.
    - A department outside the region that has a connection with the firefighter may decide to shroud their badges.
- **Medical Retiree Death**
  - When a retired Firefighter dies of a LODD Cancer the home department will authorize badge shrouds from the day of death to 1700hrs the day of the service.

# Level I LODD: Suggested Order of Service

## Arrival at Service Location

The family should arrive at the service location at least one (1) hour prior to the start of the service. If the department has the resources, a large American Flag can be hung by a single ladder truck or by crossed ladders, two ladder trucks with ladders crossed. Department members and other uniformed personnel should be in formal ranks to receive the family and the urn/casket. All uniformed personnel will salute as family moves from the vehicles to the building.

- Family Vehicles enter under Crossed Ladders and are escorted by Honor Guard and Massed Band
- Family Escorted to Family Room
- For an Urn
  - Urn can be escorted to the Family Room, the front of service area, or can be left on apparatus until service start time. No matter where the Urn is placed, it needs to be posted by Honor Guard until the time of the service.
- For a Casket
  - Casket is left on apparatus until service start time or carried in to the service area and placed in the front. This would be done for a walk through (Viewing). The casket will be posted by Honor Guard, whether it is left on the apparatus or placed in the front of the service area.

## Start of Service

- Cordon of Honor formed 15 minutes prior to service start time
  - Cordon of Honor includes all Uniformed Personnel
- Service Announcements
  - Instructions to audience regarding saluting protocols
- Entrance of Family
  - Escorted and Seated by Honor Guard
  - Procession Order
    - Piper
    - Honor Guard
    - Chaplain
    - Flag and Urn/Casket (if not already in place)
    - Family
    - Honor Guard
  - Cordon of Honor Called to Attention and Salute as family passes through
- Cordon of Honor Dismissed to their seats
  - If there is an Urn/Casket Watch Detail in place, they will dismiss with the Color Guard. Urn/Casket Watch concludes at the start of the service
- Posting of the Colors – Color Guard
- Memorial Emblems Placed by Honor Guard
  - Firefighters Bunker Gear and Helmet
- Invocation/Welcome – Chaplain or Family Clergy

- Chief's Welcome
- Remembrances
  - Family/Friends Speakers/Music/Eulogy
- Slide Show
- Honors
  - Military (See Military Considerations)
    - Presentation of Flag and Taps
  - Washington State Flag presented by the Governor
  - Walk of Honor Certificate by Washington State Association of Fire Chiefs
  - IAFF Medal of Valor Presentation if IAFF member
  - Washington State Firefighters' Association Presidents Coin if Volunteer
  - Fire Department
    - Any departmental memorial tokens for the family such as a plaque or challenge coin
    - Presentation of American Flag (non-military)
      - For non-military the flag is pre-folded and not unfolded during ceremony (More than 1 flag may be presented to family members)
  - Bugler for Taps
  - American Flag Presentation
    - Casket: Flag is draped over the casket and is folded and presented to the family
    - Urn: Flag is tri-folded, unfolded and refolded then presented to the family
  - Honor Flags
    - American Flags flown over the station the firefighter worked
  - Bell Ceremony
  - Amazing Grace
  - Last Alarm Radio Call
- Closing Comments
- Benediction
- Retiring of the Colors – Color Guard
- Family Dismissal by Honor Guard
- Fallen Firefighter's Fire Department Members Dismissal
- Audience Dismissal

This service should last no longer than 90 mins.