

# FUNERAL PROTOCOL

*For Fire Fighters*



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DIRECTORS  
ASSOCIATION**



# INTRODUCTION

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**T**he Ohio Association of Professional Fire Fighters, in collaboration with the Ohio Fire Chiefs Association, Ohio Funeral Directors Association, Ohio State Firefighters Association, and Ohio State Fire Marshal's office have prepared this funeral protocol to assist with arrangements when a fire fighter death occurs.

This funeral protocol is intended as a resource guide, and while the basic procedures are acceptable for all fire fighters, certain aspects will need to be altered or omitted depending on the department's particular situation and size. In addition, the member's ethnic or religious affiliation may dictate certain customs. It is important that the organizer of the services be sensitive to the particular situation and to the wishes of the family or household involved.

\*Please note that this protocol is intended only to assist in providing the appropriate funeral service for our fallen. These documents do not reflect the benefits received for line-of-duty deaths set forth by the State of Ohio, or by federal and local jurisdictions.



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# **FIRE DEPARTMENT FUNERALS**

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**T**here are four circumstances that generally entitle a fire department member or an individual affiliated with a department to receive a fire service honors at a funeral or memorial services. The four categories listed below are defined by the circumstances surrounding a members death. These categories are designed to assist departments in deciding the appropriate level of honors for the deceased.

- **Line-Of-Duty Death**

Specifically reserved for a brother or sister who passes or is killed on the fire-ground, actively fighting a fire, or as a result of injuries sustained during a critical incident. This level of funeral is reserved for those who have made the ultimate sacrifice, and they shall be bestowed the highest honors.

- **Active On-Duty**

The term Active On-Duty refers to any member who passes away while on duty but was not actively involved in a critical incident or suppression activities. This includes occupational diseases, heart attacks, and any death on-duty which does not occur on the active fire ground.

- **Active Off-Duty**

The term Active Off-Duty refers to any member who passes away while off duty. This includes all occupational diseases, health reasons, traumatic accidents, and any death which occurs while a member is not on duty.

- **Retired**

Retired refers to any member who passes away once they have separated from the fire service.

# FAMILY WISHES

Please keep in mind that the surviving family members ultimately determine what honors they wish to have performed at the memorial service or funeral. It is advised that a department develops a standard and makes every effort to adhere to it. Only under unique and extreme circumstances would a department or company vary from what has already been established. The following pages outline the appropriate level honors that are to be bestowed for each category.



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# LINE-OF-DUTY DEATH

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The recommended honors that are bestowed during a Line-of-Duty fire fighter's funeral are listed below. Specifically reserved for a brother or sister who dies on the fire-ground, actively fighting a fire, or during a critical incident. This level of funeral is reserved for those who have made the ultimate sacrifice, and they shall be bestowed the highest honors.

## HONORS

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- Department Honor and Color Guard
- Department Chaplain
- Station & Apparatus Bunting
- Static Display of Apparatus
- Casket Vigil
- Honorary Pallbearers
- Department Apparatus used as caisson
- Department Apparatus used as flower truck
- Mourning badge bands worn 1 month from time of death
- Bag Piper
- Family Transportation
- Department Casket Team
- Helmet and badge presentation
- IAFF Medal Presentation
- Crossed Aerial ladders with flag drape
- Bell Ceremony
- Final Tone-out
- Flag Presentation
- Fly Over (Helicopter)
- Military Standards observed

\*Bunker gear presentation is no longer recommended due to cancer causing contaminants and PFAS.



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# ACTIVE ON-DUTY DEATH

The recommended Honors that are bestowed during an Active On-Duty fire fighter's funeral are listed below. This includes occupational diseases, heart attacks, and any death on-duty not occur the active fire ground.

## HONORS

- Department Honor and Color Guard
- Department Chaplain
- Station & Apparatus Bunting
- Casket Vigil
- Honorary Pallbearers
- Mourning badge bands worn for 2 weeks following death
- Department Casket Team
- Flag Presentation
- Bag Piper
- Helmet and badge presentation
- IAFF Medal Presentation
- Non-Crossed Aerial ladders (Straight up) with flag drape
- Bell Ceremony
- Final Tone-out
- Flag Presentation
- Military Standards Observed (If Applicable)

\*Bunker gear presentation is no longer recommended due to cancer causing contaminants and PFAS.



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# ACTIVE OFF-DUTY DEATH

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The recommended honors that are bestowed during an Active Off-Duty fire fighter's funeral are listed below. This includes all occupational diseases, health reasons, traumatic accidents, and any death which occurs while a member is not on duty.

## HONORS

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- Department Honor and Color Guard
- Department Chaplain
- Casket Vigil
- Honorary Pallbearers
- Mourning badge bands worn until day after funeral
- Bag Piper
- Department Casket Team
- Helmet and badge presentation
- Bell Ceremony
- Final Tone-out
- Flag Presentation
- Military Standards Observed (If Applicable)

\*Bunker gear presentation is no longer recommended due to cancer causing contaminants and PFAS.



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# RETIREE

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The recommended honors that are bestowed during a retired fire fighter's funeral are listed below.

## HONORS

- Department Honor and Color Guard
- Casket Vigil
- Bag Piper
- Bell Ceremony
- Fireman's Prayer
- Military Standards Observed (If Applicable)



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# DEFINITIONS

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- **Bell Ceremony** - After the religious ceremony or interment, the fire department member reads a prepared statement about the fire fighter's last call. A portable fire department bell is then tolled by another member. The bell ringing recalls a time when the fire bell rang to call firefighters to an alarm and then, again, to signal that the alarm had ended.
- **Helmet and badge presentation** - The presentation of the fallen fire fighters bunker gear, helmet and or badge to the designated surviving family member. This is usually performed by the fallen fire fighters officer, fire chief of the department, or other designated representative of the fire department. (It is no longer acceptable to present a fire fighters bunker gear due to PFAS and other cancer causing contaminants within the gear.)
- **Casket Vigil** - Two Fire department Honor Guard members stand guard at the head and foot of the casket during the visitation, memorial service, and or funeral service.
- **Crossed Aerial Ladders with flag drape** - This is the crossing of two fire department aerial ladders in the air, with the American Flag draped in between.
- **Department Apparatus used as a flower truck** - Fire truck or other specified apparatus is used to transport funeral flowers in place of a traditional funeral flower car.
- **Department Apparatus used as a caisson** - Fire truck or other apparatus is used to transport the casket before, and after the services to the cemetery in place of a traditional funeral coach.
- **Department Casket Team** - This is a group of uniformed fire department members who serve as the casket bearers.
- **Department Chaplain** - A fire department Chaplain tends to be the person who notifies the family of an injured or killed fire fighter. The Chaplain takes the family to the hospital or morgue and stays with the family until others arrive to help.
- **Department Honor Guard and Color Guard** - Highly Disciplined Fire Department team serving with honor at ceremonial functions.

# DEFINITIONS

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- **Family Transportation** - Transportation provided by fire department members to the family of the deceased. This includes but not limited to transportation to and from the airport for out of town family members. Transportation to and from the funeral home for arrangements and or funeral services.
- **Final Tone-Out** - Performed over the radio by dispatch, signifying the deceased members last call.
- **Flag Presentation** - US flag (If Applicable) or Department flag is presented to the surviving family member of the fallen member.
- **Fly over (helicopter)** - Department aircraft or Hospital aircraft perform a ceremonial flyover during the interment.
- **Honorary Pallbearers** - Persons chosen either by the family of department to stand in formation near the funeral coach or caisson. These pallbearers do not physically carry the casket.
- **IAFF Medal Presentation** - This presentation is done for active IAFF members who have died in the Line of duty, or because of an occupational death. The IAFF medal is usually presented to the designated surviving family member by the President of the local union, or other designated representative of the IAFF.
- **Military Standards Observed** - All active Military and Honorably discharged military service personnel will be afforded a military service per U.S. Military Standards.
- **Non-Crossed aerial ladders (Straight Up) with flag drape** - This is accomplished utilizing two fire department aerials whose ladders are each raised straight up into the air, with the American flag secured to each ladder draped in between.
- **Station & Apparatus Bunting** - Bunting is often hung on fire stations and apparatus to signify mourning for fallen fire fighters. Typical bunting is black, although purple is sometime added.
- **Static Display of Apparatus** - Fire Department Apparatus is parked outside on display of the funeral home, church, or other specified funeral location.

# NOTES

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