

BOSTON FIRE FIGHTERS
LOCAL 718 IAFF
SPECIAL OPERATIONS UNIT

Standard Operating Procedure for Line of Duty Death

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Boston Firefighters Local 718 IAFF Special Operations Unit

Our Mission

"With dignity and professionalism bring a firefighter who has made the ultimate sacrifice to his final resting place".

The purpose of this document is to uniformly assist in the planning and logistics for a Departmental Line of Duty Death.

Cooperation is essential between all city departments to execute the uniform procedures regarding Line of Duty Funeral.

Special Operation Unit Command

Union representation from both NYFD Local 894 / Local 94 shall oversee the entire operations. The purpose of the Special Operation Unit is to standardize and formalize a modular command structure for funeral detail and to clearly define the roles of the SOU Commander and his/her subordinates.

When the funeral detail is under the command authority of the union/s, said designated SOU Command shall develop a tactical plan identifying who is going to do the work and when it will be done.

Note: At contract negotiations bargain for team members' time off " to perform duties.

SOU Command shall conduct meetings prior to the scheduled funeral. City Department Heads or their representatives (Police, Fire, EMS, Public Works, and Transportation) shall be brief, detailing the roles, duties and responsibilities of each agency.

SOU Command team members will be assigned designated sites.

SOU Command team leaders must have a clear vision of their responsibilities assigned to them. Upon completion of designated assignments, team members shall report back to specify team leaders.

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Special Operations Commander

Designated individual directly responsible for the management of all funeral operations. Special Operation Commander shall assign an assistant to record all proceedings at each informational meeting. Reports should include timelines, assignments, designated contact persons for each city agency, cell numbers / pages / and high profile contacts accessible to SOU Command.

Special Operations Command Staff

SOU Command Staff functions shall be those elements of the Funeral Detail that operate in direct support of the SOU Commander and contribute to the overall management of the operations. SOU Command Staff shall consist of: Funeral Home Commander, Church Site Commander, Cemetery Site Commander, Collation Commander, Central Command (union office), Equipment Technicians.

SOU Commanders shall be assigned team leaders / members to function within the designated sites.

SOU Command Staff must have a clear vision of their responsibilities and scope of the operation. Upon completion of all designated assignments team members shall report back to Command Staff.

Second meeting: A power point presentation should be conducted by the SOU Command to include overview maps with site / street locations. These maps shall be color coded with site locations / funeral cortege routes / staging areas / bus routes for deployment of members in / outside the city limits / designated parking areas, and hot zones.

A printed program should be made available to all present, detailing sites / timelines / assignments / restricted no parking areas / cleaning of streets / snow removal / illegally parked vehicles / contact personnel with radio calls signs or programmable Nextel's / weather forecasts / and any other pertinent information regarding the funeral detail.

Public Information Officer / assigned family liaison.

Inter-City Support Agencies

City Department Heads or their representatives, Local / State Law Enforcement, Fire Department, Public Transportation, Code Enforcement / shall be briefed; detailing the duties and responsibilities of each agency and assist elected union officials for a manageable operation.

Police Department shall provide sufficient patrolmen, motorcycle escorts, close streets, re-route traffic, designate staging areas and removal of any vehicles parked inside the perimeter of a site to ensure the safe passage of those attending the funeral.

Fire Department shall broadcast (10-43) special signal city wide, relating information pertaining to the funeral arrangements / church / funeral home. Bureau of Field Service (BFS) shall print General Orders pertaining to the same information, including pallbearers and company units excused from tour of duty the day of the funeral. Department flags to be flown (30) days ½ mast.

EMS provide sufficient medical staff the day of the funeral.

Public Works Department shall insure that designated streets are clean of debris and snow at both the funeral home and church site.

Code Enforcement / Transportation Department post "no parking sign" on routes / sites (1) day before the funeral service and remove any illegally parked vehicles (3) hours before the funeral detail.

Public Transportation provide buses / trains for members attending the funeral.

Communication Network

Command Staff and aides assigned (2) portable radios / Nextel phones for communications.

Funeral Home Site Commander

Funeral site Commander shall be in charge of the following duties listed below:

FH Commander shall meet with the funeral director, working collectively with the funeral director, briefing him on the official department **protocol** for line of duty.

FH Commander shall supply funeral director with the name of 6-8 **pallbearers**, provided by the family liaison representative. Pallbearers shall walk (with white gloves) along side Engine Co. (hearse). Pallbearers shall carry casket out of the funeral home. Pallbearers will hand off casket to the (16) *honorary* pallbearers standing on the scaffolding.

Casket shall be covered with American flag (vet), IAFF flag (non-vet).

Under Funeral Home Command, Equipment Tech's. shall break down scaffolding at the funeral home, transport / reassemble at the cemetery site.

FH Commander shall specify funeral cortege placement / motorcade routes and notify the funeral director : **Order of Assembly for funeral motorcade**: police escort / fire vehicle / chaplain vehicle / pallbearers limo or apparatus / Engine Co. or Truck Co. (flowers) / Engine Co. (hearse) / Family Limo / vehicles of civilian friends. Funeral Director / team leader should agree upon the motorcade route, from the funeral home to the church, church to the cemetery, with the approval of the police department / patrol supervisor.

FH Commander shall assign a Member to supervisor **casket watch** detail. Company members shall stand casket watch during the wake. Company members shall be relieved every 10 minutes, as not to disrupt or cause distraction to the family of the deceased. Company members shall wear class A uniform, white gloves, badge covers and cover. Company members shall standing at attention on each side of the casket. Designated member shall list the order for casket watch, from the firehouse of the deceased. Company members should assemble in the funeral home, not distracting to the family during the wake.

FH Command Staff shall place company members, shoulder to shoulder and arrange flower display, on top of the apparatus.

FH Commander shall advise motorcycle detail with motorcade route, from funeral home site to the church, church to the cemetery.

Funeral Procession Cortège

1. Funeral Home Commander shall assign Command Staff member to the funeral cortège. Command Staff member shall be assigned to list the exact order of vehicles that will be in the funeral procession.
2. Funeral Home Commander shall advise the funeral director of the operation and accompany him in the lead vehicle.
3. Funeral Home Commander shall communicate with the Church Site Commander and advise him of the movement and location of the procession.
4. There may be times when the vehicles at funeral procession have to be turned around while the funeral mass is in progress. Church Site Command and Funeral Home Command shall assist each other to rearrange the movement of vehicles in the opposite direction.
5. Ladder Companies shall reposition themselves and relocate to a designated location. Equipment Technician shall insure the American flag is correctly positioned.
6. At the conclusion of the funeral service, Funeral Home Commander shall accompany funeral director and advise Cemetery Site Commander of his location and movement of the procession in route.

Equipment Technicians:

(8) **Equipment Technician** assigned to funeral home detail shall provide transportation / tools and vehicles necessary to assemble a two-stage scaffold platform, capable of carry the weight of 16 honorary pallbearer's (8) on each side. *Official pallbearers shall hand off casket to honorary pallbearers standing on platform. Casket will remain equally horizontal when on and off loading.*

Lead Equipment Technician shall be responsible for locking down casket to apparatus.

Equipment Team Members shall position staging scaffold behind the rear of the Engine Co. (hearse) and lock down wheels.

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Special Operation Unit Command Posts:

Central Command (union office)
Funeral Home Command Site
Church Site Command
Cemetery Site Command
Collation Command

Central Command (union office)

Central Command should be activated under the command of Local 718 President.

Central Command shall make notification of the Executive Board / Death & Welfare Committee.

Volunteers should not be discouraged, micromanage assignments to insure no one is overburden with an assignment.

Central Command shall provide information to the membership / media regarding the funeral details, when they become available.

Central Command shall order sufficient white gloves and badge covers.

Central Command shall notify public transportation to provide enough buses to designated staging area for deployment to church site w/ police escort.

Central Command shall e mail each IAFF District Vice President. IAFF shall notify their constituents with the LOD funeral arrangements.

Central Command phone banks shall be established at the union office, notify telephone company to provide temporary lines at the union office.

Coordinate personal transportation / lodging for IAFF Delegates arriving from the airport.

Assign a union member to log all letters of condolence sent by unions, so thank you notes can be sent.

It's important to have a pre-determine team available 24/7 for activation.

Central Command Staff shall order (black) bunting for apparatus (hearse / flowers), firehouse / headquarters / union office.

Central Command Staff members assigned to the firehouses shall all answer phone inquires regarding funeral arrangements / interviews from the press / and liaison to Central Command.

Church Site Commander

Church Site Commander shall be in charge of the following duties listed below:

1. Two aerial ladders shall extend aerial ladders parallel, American flag to be flown vertically. Church Site Detail responsible for the safe placement of the truck company forming an arch at or near the Church Site allowing the Funeral Cortege to pass under. Equipment Technicians to secure with steel leads; the cables attached to the top of the flag connecting the upper beam. Equipment Tech. shall instruct turntable operators to rotate aerial and extend to make the flag flat.
2. Truck Company officers / members shall stand at attention, left to right, in order of height. Senior/Officer shall give the command to "present arms" when the Engine Company (hearse) passes under the flag.
3. Church Site Commander, shall provide placement for the Department's Honor Guard on the outside stairwells of the church. Any additional honor guards (outside departments) shall be placed along the sidewalk, at equal distant from the front stairs of the church. Colors shall proceed the casket marching down the center aisle, inside the church and colors to be posted to the left side of the altar.
4. Church Site Commander shall position the Gaelic Brigade at the area behind the Department Colors, to the left / right side of the church front doors.
5. Department Colors / Honor Guard / Pallbearers / Gaelic Brigade shall be instructed by the Church Site Commander where to form (street location) and lead the funeral Cortege to the Church Site.
6. (4) Team Members shall position the scaffolding at the rear of the Engine Co. (hearse). Engine Co. (hearse) shall park beyond the church front doors, so that the casket when offloading from the scaffolding turns at a 90 degree angle to the center of the church stairs.
7. Pallbearers shall take a position at the foot of the scaffolding and receive the casket from *honorary* pallbearers already positioned on the staging. At this time the Drill Master shall order members to attention "present arms" and pallbearers shall carry the casket into the church. Color Guard and Helmet Bearer to lead casket, proceeding up the center stairs of the church. Color Guard shall walk down the left aisle of the church and post colors to the left side of the altar. Helmet Bearer shall walk down the right side aisle and place helmet on the scansion to the right of the altar.
8. Detail Company in white gloves / badge covers shall report the Drill Master (30) minutes prior to the church services and muster along the center line of the street, in front of the

church. A public address system should be used to bring the members of the department to attention.

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9. Church Site Command Staff to secure perimeter around the church, only authorized personnel shall enter prior the service, keeping the public from capturing any seats.
10. Escorted by members of the Church Committee: family members / friends seated to the right of the center aisle, before the casket enters the church. Pallbearers / union officials / elected public officials / company members / chief officers / department members / outside department members file down the center aisle and seat to the left side of the center aisle with covers over the left breast.
11. Church Committee to hand out "Last Alarm" prayers with deceased picture as members / family enters the church.
12. After the funeral service: reverse the order. Members shall leave from the back of the church, with covers over the left breast and reassemble in the street.
13. Color Guard shall lead the casket out of the church. Family members (funeral director) shall follow the casket down the center aisle.
14. Honor Guard positioned on the center church stairs. Color Guard bottom of stairs.
15. Gaelic Brigade commences playing as casket is carried into and out of church.
16. Drill Master shall order Detail Company to attention and present "arms" as pallbearers carry casket out of the church and down the center stairs.
17. Pallbearers shall walk with Engine Company (hearse) past members at attention.
18. Funeral cortege deployed to Cemetery Site, Drill Master shall hold Detail Company at "parade rest" and dismiss Detail Company after all vehicles have past Church Site.
19. Assign union legislative agent to recognize elected political figures, State Senator, Mayor, Governor, City Council, assemble at a designated area in front, and to the side of the church. Legislative Agent shall escort said delegations into the church to the left side of the center aisle, behind union officials and in front of the company members.
20. Assign Trustees of the Death & Welfare Fund Committee to stand on both sides of the family limousines to open the doors, and shall remain at parade rest.
21. Transportation shall be provided for department members / spouses / color guard / honor guard attending the services at the cemetery site, travel the shortest distant to that location. Police shall provide motorcycle escort for buses to cemetery site; arriving before the funeral cortege and assemble department / company members in formation, at the cemetery site.

Family Liaison

One member of the Department assigned to act and assist as a point of contact between the family and union officials, forwarding any communications/requests/inquires directly to the Special Operation Unit Command. This member should attend operational meetings with team leaders and maintain contact regarding funeral arrangements.

Cemetery Site Commander

1. Members assigned to the Funeral Home Commander shall be deployed to the Cemetery Site Command immediately after the funeral procession has left the funeral home.
2. Cemetery Site Commander shall directly erection of the scaffolding at the site, removal of flowers and casket to the open site. All fire apparatus and non-essential equipment should be cleared from the hot zone for family limo's.
3. Cemetery Command Staff shall instruct Color Guard / Honor Guard / Gaelic Brigade to march to the site proceeding before the apparatus, starting at the entrance of the cemetery.
4. Cemetery Site Commander / Staff cue placement of the above, including company members to stand in formation opposite the gravesite. Place fire helmet in the center of the casket with company device facing the family.
5. After prayer service: Fire Helmet Barriers and (2) escorts remove fire helmet and present it to the widow or pre-arranged family member.
6. VET: military personnel to remove flag from casket and fold. Military personnel shall present flag to the spouse. PLAY TAPS.
7. Gaelic Brigade play AMAZING GRACE

Missing Man Formation

Massachusetts State Police Air Wing / United States Coast Guard / Med-Flight shall perform *missing man formation* at the Church Site or Cemetery Site [weather permitting]

Collation

Collation Commander shall oversee the distribution of food and refreshments. It is important that Command Staff secure the hall area, to ensure family / company members attending the cemetery service, have an designated area for themselves. Its embarrassing when members returning from the cemetery service are unaware that the deceased member's family will be attending the collation, and the food is all consumed.

Local president / IAFF president / State President should be invited to speak thanking the outside departments / his own department / police department / and any agencies who contributed their services at the funeral service.

Most importantly reflect on the member who was killed in the Line of Duty.

Collation Command should set a time frame on when the bar should be closed.

Never have an open bar; this only causes problems later on in the afternoon.

Media

Public Information Officer, shall be the media liaison for the Church Site Commander, placement of TV vehicles and sound equipment for live coverage in the hot zone. Designate (1) TV video person to feed the other TV stations.

Public Information Officer to assign department member /s: provide live color commentary of the duties of a fire fighter / inherent dangers associated with the job / team work / camaraderie. If TV video cameras allowed in church, have Church Committee Member provide Mass commentary, describing what is taking place.

Public Information Office to cut all articles from each newspaper, providing documentation before and after the fact.

Photograph Unit / Fire Investigation Unit shoot still pictures of the funeral service.