



# PRINCE GEORGE FIRE AND EMS

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**Section No: 1.11**

**Date: July 1, 2015**

**Title: Funeral Guidelines and Etiquette**

**Authorized By:**

## **I. POLICY**

In the event of a Prince George Fire and EMS (PGFEMS) Department member's death, uniformed personnel are expected to adhere to the following dress and code of conduct. Upon the death of an active or retired member PGFEMS will provide family support and assist in providing a fitting memorial for the member. This procedure is written to provide guidance to our members in planning for, and participating in a department funeral.

In all cases, the level of fire department participation with the funeral arrangements will be at the discretion of the surviving family.

## **II. UNIFORM REQUIREMENTS**

- A. Active members shall wear the appropriate class uniform, if assigned, as indicated in the Incident Action Plan.
- B. Members assigned to apparatus stationed along the procession route shall also be in dress uniform to include tie and badge shroud. They will take a position near the apparatus and maintain an orderly, visible and respectful formation until the entire procession has passed their position.

## **III. PROCEDURES**

- A. At the time of death, Director of Fire and EMS will appoint team to handle all arrangements as requested by the family in conjunction with the requested funeral home. The Team will consist of the Director, the Company Chief, a family Liaison Officer, an Officer in Charge (OIC), and other personnel as appropriate. These officers will work in conjunction with the family of the deceased member to ensure their needs and wishes are achieved and to provide an honorable tribute to the deceased member.
- B. An incident action plan shall be created and disseminated by the Director or designee.
- C. Church Service
  - 1. Department members in proper uniform will arrive at pre-determined staging area prior to ceremony.



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2. For funerals/memorial services, the members will take a position outside in front of the church, in two facing ranks with senior officers and deceased member's company closest to the church.
3. As the casket is moved from the coach, the members will be called to attention by the officer-in-charge. (If casket is draped with a flag, the OIC will order a hand salute as the casket passes. The command will be "Present Arms!")
4. After the casket passes, the members will file into the church according to rank and sit in pre-designated area. (If casket is draped with a flag and members are at Present Arms, the command "Order Arms!" will be given prior to members filing into church.)
5. After the service, the members, on order of the OIC, will file out of the church and form ranks on both sides of the entry with senior officers deceased member's company closest to the hearse.
6. As casket is escorted out of the church, members are brought to attention and a hand salute is executed upon order of the OIC.

### D. Procession to Graveside

1. Escort of fire apparatus and fire personnel available if warranted by funeral arrangements made by family.

### E. Conduct during Ceremony (Inside Memorial Service)

1. If inside a structure, members will come to the position of attention as casket is placed in position. Members will remain at attention until deceased member's family and congregation are seated (hand salute will not be rendered at this time.)
2. As casket is escorted out, members will again come to the position of attention and remain at attention until deceased member's family has exited and the remainder of the congregation is dismissed.

### F. Conduct during Ceremony (At Graveside Service)

1. Members will come to attention and render a hand salute at the following times (civilian personnel will place hand over heart):
  - a. When the Colors pass in front of you.
  - b. When the casket is being moved.
  - c. While the casket is being lowered into the grave.
  - d. During the playing of "TAPS".
2. The members at the cemetery again form two ranks according to rank from the location of the hearse to the gravesite, with officers and deceased member's company closest to the grave (members will reform after casket is positioned for graveside service).



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3. As the flag-draped casket is removed from the hearse, members execute a hand salute on order of the OIC (if casket is not draped with flag, members will stand at attention).
4. If "TAPS" are sounded, uniformed members should execute hand salute on order of the OIC.
5. During religious graveside services all personnel will bow at words "Let us pray"
6. Members will be dismissed upon completion of the service.

### G. Ceremonial Courtesies

1. **Eulogy**- A eulogy may be appropriate at any point in the funeral ceremonies. The family should decide who will deliver the eulogy and when it is fitting. The Fire Chief, a clergy member, the department chaplain, or a close family friend from the fire department may be asked to perform this task.
2. **Static Equipment Display** - During the procession, the family may choose to have a static display of department apparatus and crews at attention and saluting the passing casket and family vehicle. This final tribute may be set up at the funeral home or church, at key locations along the procession route, at a fire station on the procession route, or at the place of final committal entrance.
3. **Burial in Uniform** - If the family chooses to bury the deceased firefighter in the departmental uniform, the Liaison Officer will deliver the uniform to the Funeral Director.
4. **Presentation of Fire Department Badge**- As a part of the funeral service at the funeral home or church, the Fire Chief may present the badge and nametag worn by the deceased firefighter to the next of kin. The items should be in a framed display containing a department uniform patch.
5. **Closed Casket**- If the family requests a closed casket, or only a memorial service, they may wish to place a picture of the firefighter in uniform along with the firefighter's helmet on top of or next to the casket.
6. **Walkthrough**- A walkthrough of firefighters at the funeral home may occur to pay tribute to the deceased firefighter. If so, the Officer-in-Charge will schedule the walkthrough and have firefighters form line by department. The formation will pass single file by the casket with each firefighter stopping briefly to pay tribute.

### H. Pallbearers

Should the family choose to use department members as pallbearers, it is the Family Liaison Officer's responsibility to ask which firefighters the family would like to use. There should be between six and eight pallbearers. Pallbearers shall wear Class A uniforms and white gloves.



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1. Due to their specific responsibilities, pallbearers are exempt from a majority of orders given to the remainder of the formation.
2. The OIC, with help from Funeral Director, should give instructions on removing, handling, and transporting the casket.
3. Members chosen as pallbearers, honor guard, speakers, etc, that are on duty will be granted Administrative Leave by PGFEMS.
4. If fire apparatus serves as a hearse, pallbearers should hold a practice session the day before the funeral. If this is not possible, pallbearers should report to the funeral home at least two hours before the beginning of the service for a protocol briefing and practice.
5. If the casket is draped with a flag to present to the next of kin, Honor Guard members will ceremoniously fold flag and present it to the Director of Fire and EMS, or an appointed representative, for presentation to the deceased member's family.
6. If casket is not draped with a flag, the department can present a pre-folded flag to the next of kin.

### I. Use of Fire Apparatus as a Hearse

1. A fire department engine may be appropriate as a caisson to carry the casket. If an engine is used, personnel must take it out of service for a period of time and prepare it as follows:
  - a) Thoroughly wash and wax the engine.
  - b) Remove hoses and dividers.
  - c) Add available mourning flags or bunting.
2. The operator of the engine should be in dress uniform.
3. In the event of inclement weather, an enclosed hearse should carry the casket and the apparatus should serve as a flower car.

### J. Use of Apparatus as a Flower Car

1. Fire and EMS Apparatus may also serve as a flower vehicle. If so, personnel must take it out of service and prepare it as indicated above for a caisson.
2. Hoses and dividers need not be removed.



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## **IV. PERIOD OF MOURNING**

- A. After notification of line-of-duty death is completed; flags at all jurisdictions' properties (government center, fire stations, schools, etc.) should be lowered to half-staff in honor of fallen firefighter.
- B. Flags at jurisdiction's properties should remain at half-staff from date of death through the date of committal.
- C. Flags at fire stations should remain at half-staff for a period of 30 days from date of death. Funeral bunting, if used, should also remain on fire stations for 30 days from date of death.
- D. After notification of line-of-duty death is completed, badge covers should be placed across the face of each member's badge. Badge cover should remain for 30 days from date of final committal.

## **V. STATION PREPARATIONS**

- A. The deceased member's fire station and department sign at fire administration may be draped in black bunting to symbolize mourning.
- B. Black cloth may be draped around the front of the building and apparatus bay doors.
- C. Similarly the apparatus is draped in black.
- D. Black wreaths may be placed on the grille work of the apparatus and cloth draped on the front and sides.
- E. If apparatus is taken out of service for the duration of the funeral, the draping can be done almost immediately.
- F. If the apparatus is to be used in the funeral procession as a hearse, all red warning lights are to be covered with black bunting or black tape and NOT turned on.
- G. All bunting will be done with dignity and honor.

## **VI. SERVICES OFFERED BY FUNERAL TYPE**

### **A. Funeral Services for Line-of-Duty Death**

Services may include, but are not limited to the following:

- 1. Memorial service to include but not limited to County and Department officials.
- 2. Honor guard escort of casket at memorial service, grave-side and visitation.
- 3. Presentation/static display of colors at grave-side and memorial service by the Honor Guard
- 4. Utilization of fire apparatus as a hearse (subject to family's request)



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5. Static display of American Flag
6. Escort of fire apparatus to include members' own company
7. Static display of fire apparatus and department uniformed personnel along pre-planned funeral procession route
8. Bell ceremony
9. Personal escort of family members by Prince George Fire and EMS
10. Badge shrouds
11. Bagpipers and Drums
12. "Last Alarm" ceremony
13. "TAPS"
14. Pallbearers
15. Station bunting
16. Vehicle bunting
17. Walkthrough
18. Lowering of county flags
19. Chaplain

### **B. Funeral Services for Non-Line-Of-Duty Death**

Services may include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Honor guard escort of casket at memorial service and grave-side by Honor Guard
2. Presentation of Colors and/or static display of Colors at memorial service/graveside by Honor Guard
3. Static display of fire apparatus and department uniformed personnel along funeral procession route
4. Static display of American Flag
5. Escort of fire apparatus
6. Badge shrouds
7. Bagpipes
8. "Last Alarm" ceremony
9. Pallbearers
10. Station bunting
11. Vehicle bunting
12. Walkthrough
13. Chaplain

**Note:** These procedures and formations are accepted courtesies but act as a guideline only and may be adjusted depending upon existing conditions at funeral home, church, or family member's wishes.