
	STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINE				
	ADMINISTRATION				
	FIRE DEPARTMENT MEMBER DEATH OR SERIOUS INJURY				
	Effective: 16/Jan/08	Revised: 26/Oct/2020	S.O.G. #: A-114	Page: 1 of 31	

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1.0 Objective

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to establish general procedural guidelines, along with an outline of duties and responsibilities of personnel assigned as liaison officers, in the event of the death (LODD) and/or serious injury to any member of the Highland Park Fire Department.

2.0 Policy

2.1 It is the policy of the Highland Park Fire Department to provide liaison assistance to the immediate survivors of a member of the Department who dies or is seriously injured. The Department will assist in providing clarification of survivor’s benefits, as well as physical assistance and emotional support for the surviving family members.

3.0 Responsibility

3.1 It is the responsibility of all Department personnel to understand the procedures documented in the Standard Operating Guideline.

3.2 If there is a conflict between the provisions of this S.O.G. and any applicable laws, rules, or agency procedures; then those laws, rules, and procedures shall prevail.

4.0 Definitions

4.1 Benefits Coordinator Officer – The person designated to assist the survivor(s) with obtaining information on benefits and filing necessary claims forms and other required paperwork. Employee Emergency Information Packet – A packet of forms that is completed by each employee, and retained by the Department in a confidential manner, so that the Department will have vital information in the event the employee is critically injured or dies in the line of duty. This packet includes the following: Personal information, family and friend contact information, funeral arrangement desires, and medical information. A copy of the current packet is attached to this S.O.G.

4.2 Family Liaison Officer(s) (FLO) – The person designated to maintain contact with, assist and act as liaison to the survivor(s). The FLO shall be available, subject to call 24 hours a day, for the family from the initial incident until deemed necessary, normally a week or two after the funeral.

4.3 Funeral Liaison/Procession Officer(s) – The person designated to arrange and direct the funeral procession and act as a liaison between the Department and funeral home.

4.4 Hospital/Morgue Liaison Officer(s) – The person(s) to be assigned to the receiving hospital(s) to maintain a liaison between the hospital staff, PIO, Fire Department administration and/or the incident commander.



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- 4.5 Investigation Team – An assigned group of individuals whose function is to conduct and manage any investigation related to the death or serious injury.
- 4.6 Job-related non-traumatic injury – A non-traumatic injury that is strongly believed to be, or has been proven to be, attributable to employment on the Highland Park Fire Department.
- 4.7 Line of Duty Death – The death of a member of the Highland Park Fire Department while on-duty or undergoing medical treatment for an injury or disease resulting from duty.
- 4.8 Non-job-related death – Deaths, natural and traumatic, that are not related to duties performed for the Highland Park Fire Department.
- 4.9 Notification Officer(s) – The person assigned by the Fire Chief or his designee that is responsible for making contact with the survivor(s).
- 4.10 Organizational Assistance for Family Packet – A packet of forms that is completed by each employee, and retained in a private location known to the employee’s family, so that the family members will know the employee’s wishes and other important information in the event the employee is critically injured or dies in the line of duty. The Department does not receive a copy of this packet – it is for family use only. This packet includes an introductory page and the following information sections: personal information, bank account information, insurance information, general financial information, and personal requests. A copy of the current packet is attached to this S.O.G.
- 4.11 Public Information Officer (PIO) – The person designated to conduct all communications with the news media.
- 4.12 Public Safety Officer Benefits (PSOB) – State and Federal programs that provide established benefits to firefighters and/or families of firefighters who are killed or seriously-injured in the line-of-duty.
- 4.13 Serious injury – An injury of a Highland Park Fire Department member sustained in the line of duty which is, or may become, life-threatening, or which will disable the employee for a substantial period of time.
- 4.14 Survivor – An immediate family member of a deceased or seriously-injured firefighter, to include spouse, children, step-children, parents, siblings, fiancée and/or significant other.
- 4.15 Traumatic injury – A blow to the body by an outside force, e.g., crushing injuries suffered in a building collapse, apparatus accident, or fall. Burns, smoke inhalation and such climatic injuries as heatstroke or frostbite are considered traumatic injuries.

5.0 Classifications of Funerals

- 5.1 The following classifications of funerals shall serve as a guide in determining the potential level of honors, as defined in Section 6.0. Funeral types may be at levels less than suggested for the applicable situation surrounding the death, at the option of the survivor(s).
 - 5.1.1 **Type I** – A Type I funeral is to be considered for a member of the Department who is killed at the scene of an emergency incident or killed while responding to, or returning from, the scene of an incident. A Type I funeral may also be considered for a member that is injured at a scene and who later dies as a result of those injuries. Type I funerals shall NOT be considered for those individuals who die of heart, lung, or other causes while not engaged in emergency activities at the time of death.
 - 5.1.2 **Type II** – A Type II funeral shall be considered for a member of the Department who dies while on-duty, but not due to injuries sustained while performing emergency or response activities.
 - 5.1.3 **Type III** – A Type III funeral shall be considered for a death occurring when an active employee is off duty and not engaged in emergency or response activity for the Highland Park Fire Department.



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5.1.4 **Type IV** – A Type IV funeral shall be considered when the deceased is a retiree or pensioner of the Highland Park Fire Department.

6.0 Defined Levels of Honors

6.1 The honors level herein shall coincide with the Funeral Type in Section 5.0 (Level Two honors for a Type II funeral). Again, specific honors may be less than those listed within the applicable level, if so desired by the survivor(s).

<u>LEVEL ONE</u>	<u>LEVEL TWO</u>	<u>LEVEL THREE</u>	<u>LEVEL FOUR</u>
American Flag	American Flag	American Flag	American Flag
Bagpipers	Bagpipers		
Bell Service	Bell Service	Bell Service	Bell Service
Bugler			
Badge Shrouds	Badge Shrouds	Badge Shrouds	Badge Shrouds
Crossed Ladders			
Eulogy	Eulogy	Eulogy	
Fire Engine Caisson	Hearse	Hearse	
Fire Service Flag	Fire Service Flag	Fire Service Flag	Fire Service Flag
Flower Unit	Flower Unit	Flower Unit	
Honor Guards	Honor Guards	Honor Guards	Honor Guards
Honor Detail	Honor Detail	Honor Detail	
Active Pall Bearers	Honorary Pall Bearers	Honorary Pall Bearers	
Station Bunting	Station Bunting		
Vehicle Bunting	Vehicle Bunting	Vehicle Bunting	
Walk Through	Walk - Through	Walk - Through	

7.0 Assigned Responsibilities – Time of Incident

7.1 All responsibilities may be delegated as is appropriate or in the absence of the indicated individual.

7.2 Fire Chief

7.2.1 Obtain the employee(s) Emergency Information packet.

7.2.2 Notify the City Manager/City Council of all pertinent information known at the time.

7.2.3 Notify the Illinois Fire Chiefs' Association and request a Funeral (LODD) response team, if applicable.

7.2.4 Assemble the notification team.

7.2.4.1 Fire Chief

7.2.4.2 Family Liaison Officer (*select the individual*)

7.2.4.3 A Fire Department co-worker or close family friend designated in the employee's Emergency Information packet.

7.2.5 Make notification to next-of-kin.

7.2.6 Notify the PIO that notification has been made.

7.2.7 Return to Station #33 for a supervisors' meeting.

7.2.8 Assign, and distribute informational packets specific to, each liaison officer position.



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7.2.9 Schedule meeting(s) with the rest of the members of the Department, and inform them of the situation within 24 hours of the incident.

7.3 Deputy Chief

7.3.1 Respond to the scene (*if not on the scene already*) and assist the on-duty Battalion Chief.

7.3.2 Act as Public Information Officer (PIO) at the scene.

7.3.2.1 Do not release any information about the member(s) involved until notified by the notification team.

7.3.2.2 Have a designated area away from the scene for media to organize, and give scheduled informational briefings.

7.3.2.3 Prepare a fact sheet with information pertaining to the incident

7.3.2.4 Prepare a short "Bio" sheet of member(s) involved.

7.3.3 Confirm that the scene is secure.

7.3.4 Confirm that any injured and/or killed firefighter's equipment is gathered as evidence.

7.3.5 Confirm that a Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) team has been notified and is responding.

7.3.6 Organize the Investigation Team.

7.3.7 Notify the local police department where the firefighter(s) lives and advise them of the situation. Ask them for a police detail at the home while the family is away from the home (hospital, funeral) and to check on them in the coming weeks.

7.3.8 Secure the member(s) vehicle(s) at their assigned stations.

7.4 Battalion Chief

7.4.1 Maintain control of the scene.

7.4.2 Assign new groups, divisions or branches as needed to oversee firefighter rescues, recoveries, etc.

7.4.3 Call for additional help (Box Alarm or off-duty) to relieve on-scene firefighters, if needed.

7.4.4 Secure the scene with the assistance of the Highland Park Police Department.

7.4.5 Obtain an assistant to document all actions from this point forward.

7.4.6 Notify Dispatch by phone of the involved firefighters' names and a brief description of scene details.

7.4.7 Gather the injured and/or killed firefighters' gear, SCBA, tools or other items used.

7.4.8 Keep all written documents and work sheets for the investigation team.

7.4.9 Assign a Hospital Liaison Officer(s) to accompany the injured and/or killed personnel to the hospital.

7.4.10 If possible, allow on-duty crews to contact family members about their well-being.



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7.4.11 In the event a death or serious injury occurs involving any Highland Park Fire Department vehicle(s), the vehicle(s) should be transported to the Highland Park Public Safety maintenance garage facility and secured for the investigation team.

7.5 Dispatch

7.5.1 Notify the Fire Chief, Deputy Fire Chief (*If not on the scene already*) and Chief of Police.

7.5.2 Notify all off-duty Highland Park Fire Department **supervisors** for a **mandatory** call back.

7.5.2.1 **Do not give any details to any personnel who may call.**

7.5.3 Call for a Critical Incident Stress Management team to respond to Station #33.

7.5.3.1 The Northern Illinois Critical Incident Stress Management Team number is 1-800-255-2473 (24 hour hotline).

7.5.4 Notify the Fire Department Safety Officer to respond to the scene, if not there already.

7.5.5 Notify the Fire Department Fire Inspector or his/her designee to respond to Station #33.

7.5.6 Keep a log of all pertinent information from radio traffic and phone calls made and received.

7.5.7 A recording and written transcript of all radio traffic and Dispatcher notes will be required for the Investigation Team.

7.5.8 Notify the Office of the State Fire Marshal (Arson Investigator, 1-800-252-2947 24 hours-a-day) to respond to the scene if the incident involves any type of structure fire. Call the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (1-800-846-7200) if requested to do so by the Investigation Team Leader, which request may be made if the fire is in a commercial structure.

7.6 Fire Marshal

7.6.1 Respond to Station #33 – call-in Fire Department clerical personnel to assist in the notification process.

7.6.2 Notify on-duty personnel spouses or family (*If not done at the scene*) that their “loved one” is not involved and is fine, after confirmation that the notification of the next-of-kin has been made by the Notification Team.

7.6.3 Notify off-duty personnel via telephone of the incident after confirmation that notification has been made to the next-of-kin by the Notification Team.

7.6.4 Keep a log of all phone calls (received and made), e.g., inquiries of the incident, donations, etc.

7.6.5 No information will be given over the phone to the media or public. Forward all questions to the PIO or his designee.

7.6.6 Refer to Section 9.0, the Department and Outside Agency Notification Plan.

7.7 Hospital/Morgue Liaison Officer(s)

7.7.1 If the firefighter is transported to a local hospital.

7.7.1.1 A Highland Park Fire Department member should accompany the injured member to the hospital, or follow-up in a vehicle as soon as possible.



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- 7.7.1.2 Talk with hospital personnel to set-up a secure area for the family.
- 7.7.1.3 If any equipment, clothing or bunker gear is at the hospital, secure it immediately for the Investigation Team.
- 7.7.1.4 Act as a liaison between the hospital personnel and family members.
- 7.7.1.5 When the family arrives, meet with them in the secured area and answer any questions.
- 7.7.1.6 Continually notify the Chief and Deputy Chief of the condition of the member(s).
- 7.7.1.7 Do not stop the family from seeing their "loved one." If the member is burned, disfigured, or deceased, prepare them for what they are going to see. Encourage them to spend time with him/her. ***Allow family members to make the decision whether or not they wish to see their "loved one."
- 7.7.1.8 Act as a "gate keeper" in assisting the family with screening phone calls, visitors, etc. Ask for a list of people they would like to talk to or see.
- 7.7.1.9 Notify the hospital that all the medical bills are to be sent to the Fire Department, **not the family.**
- 7.7.1.10 Obtain written statements from paramedics, nurses, doctors and staff about statements the member may have made or other pertinent information for the Investigation Team.
- 7.7.1.11 Work with the family to arrange a plan for dealing with the media, or give the option of a Department member (PIO) speaking for them.
- 7.7.1.12 Assist in making arrangements for family members to get back to their residence(s), determining any needs the family may have with their home, children, or pets.
- 7.7.2 If the firefighter is transported to an out-of-the-area hospital, all tasks are basically the same, with minor additions of the following:
 - 7.7.2.1 Contact the local area fire department nearest the hospital that the member was transported to and ask that department for assistance at the hospital until a representative from the Highland Park Fire Department arrives.
 - 7.7.2.2 Obtain written statements from helicopter crew members, fire department representative(s) assisting, and staff about any statements made by the member, or other pertinent information that would assist in the investigation.

7.8 Next-of-Kin Notification Plan

- 7.8.1 The notification process will be implemented in the event of a Department member(s) serious injury or death. This process is used when a member requires transportation to the hospital, or dies in the line-of-duty. In cases of serious injury, never delay notification; get the next-of-kin to the hospital as soon as possible.
- 7.8.2 The importance of timely next-of-kin notification cannot be overemphasized. The sincerity, sensitivity, and compassion demonstrated by the Department's representatives are imperative, and are a major factor in creating and maintaining a positive working relationship with the family. It also marks the beginning of the grieving process.



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7.8.3 It is extremely important that the Fire Chief assemble a Notification Team comprised of predetermined members to quickly report to the injured or deceased family. If there are multiple deaths or injuries, there will be the need for more than one Notification Team. The Notification Team should be comprised of at least two members, preferably a chief officer, and, when possible, a co-worker or family friend designated in the employee's Emergency Information packet. At least one member should be in a Class A or Class B uniform.

7.8.3.1 Additionally, whenever possible, the Department chaplain and/or union representative (if applicable) may also be assigned to the Notification Team.

7.8.4 Notification procedures

7.8.4.1 Retrieve the firefighter's Emergency Information packet.

7.8.4.2 Notification is made in-person – always try to notify the next-of-kin in person, never by telephone.

7.8.4.2.1 Spouse, unmarried partners, or parents are the first priorities for notification.

7.8.4.2.2 For family living out of the local area, arrange for authorities in those areas to make personal notifications.

7.8.4.3 Notification is timely and with certainty

7.8.4.3.1 Before making notification, have positive identification of the deceased or seriously injured firefighter and make sure you are talking to the correct family member(s).

7.8.4.3.2 Get to the survivors quickly. Don't let the media notify them first.

7.8.4.3.3 Quickly gather as much information about the incident as possible before making the notification. Survivors will have questions. Have facts ready for their questions.

7.8.4.3.4 A word of warning: The family may strike-out and blame the Department for their loss. For this reason, the initial notification and how it is handled is extremely important.

7.8.4.4 Notification should be made by a minimum of two representatives

7.8.4.4.1 Before you arrive, decide who will speak and what the person will say.

7.8.4.4.2 Have a medical unit (ambulance/paramedic engine) on stand-by one block from the home.

7.8.4.4.3 Take two vehicles. This will allow one of you to take a survivor to the hospital, if necessary, while the second person stays with other survivors.

7.8.4.4.4 Have two people present to make the notification. Survivors may experience severe emotional or physical reactions when they learn of the death or serious injury.

7.8.4.4.5 Using the Emergency Information packet, identify a uniformed fire service member to accompany the Department's representative. It may be helpful to have the Department chaplain or friend of the firefighter's family, too.



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7.8.4.5 Use Plain Language

- 7.8.4.5.1 Clearly identify yourself and present identification, and then ask to come in.
- 7.8.4.5.2 Make sure you're talking to the right person.
- 7.8.4.5.3 Begin with "I have very bad news," or "I'm sorry to have to tell you this."
- 7.8.4.5.4 Use the words "died" and "dead" rather than "passed away" so the message is absolutely clear. Speak slowly. Get to the point.
- 7.8.4.5.5 Calmly answer the survivor's questions. It is fine to say, "I don't know" if you don't.
- 7.8.4.5.6 Do not make any promises that you may not be able to keep.
- 7.8.4.5.7 Use his or her name when referring to the firefighter, rather than saying "the body."

7.8.4.6 Demonstrate Compassion

- 7.8.4.6.1 Allow survivors to express emotions.
- 7.8.4.6.2 Accept your own emotions. It's OK if you cry during notification, but stay calm.
- 7.8.4.6.3 **Avoid** the following words or phrases:
 - 7.8.4.6.3.1 "I know how you feel"
 - 7.8.4.6.3.2 "It was God's will"
 - 7.8.4.6.3.3 "Life will go on"
 - 7.8.4.6.3.4 "He or she would have wanted to go this way"
 - 7.8.4.6.3.5 "Be brave"
- 7.8.4.6.4 Never leave immediately after making a notification. Offer to help the survivor call friends or family members. Do not leave before someone else arrives.
- 7.8.4.6.5 Do not take the firefighter's personal items with you when you make a notification. Tell the family they will receive them later. Most survivors will need some time before they feel able to deal with these items.
- 7.8.4.6.6 Offer to transport the family to where the firefighter is, and help prepare them for what they will see. Do not deny the family the opportunity to view the deceased or seriously injured even if the body is badly disfigured; people need to see, touch and hold their loved one, which helps the grieving process by counteracting denial.
- 7.8.4.6.7 Before leaving, write down important information, including the names and phone numbers of the Department personnel who will work with the family.
- 7.8.4.6.8 Have one member of the Department stay with the family, unless the family declines such.



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- 7.8.4.6.9 If transporting any family member in a Department vehicle, notify Dispatch to communicate with you by cellular phone and/or turn off the radio or switch to a different channel.
- 7.8.4.6.10 Assure the family that their wishes are the Department's number one concern.
- 7.8.4.6.11 Advise the family that an autopsy is required by law and PSOB program benefits may be available.
- 7.8.4.6.12 Ensure that the family understands that they do not have to make any immediate decisions regarding services, mortuary, wills, etc.
- 7.8.4.6.13 Before leaving the residence, try to set a time for a "Family Planning Meeting." There are decisions that will need to be made by the family that will shape the planning process. This meeting should take place within the first 24 hours.

7.8.4.7 Provide needed information to the family:

7.8.4.7.1 Explain the role of the medical examiner and leave a contact number.

7.8.4.7.2 Lake County Coroner
26 N. Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue
Waukegan, IL 60085
847-377-2220

Office of the Cook County Medical Examiner
2121 W. Harrison Street
Chicago, IL 60612
312-666-0500

7.9 Family Liaison Officer (FLO)

- 7.9.1 The survivor's welfare is of the utmost importance. Assignment of the FLO is not determined by rank, and may be determined based upon the wishes specified in the firefighter's Emergency Information packet. In the absence of a designated person, a Department member close to the family who is qualified, willing, and able may handle this extremely stressful and complex assignment.
- 7.9.2 The FLO acts as the Department's single point-of-contact with the family; therefore, the Department must keep the FLO abreast of all contemporary issues surrounding the incident, death and investigation. The FLO is mainly responsible for attending to the family's needs; however, the FLO should not attempt to run the family's affairs. The family should make decisions unless the family delegates such authority to the FLO.
- 7.9.3 The FLO is designated as the lead person, with at least one other to assist and be present. These members must be available to the family at all times; the FLO should supply the family with his/her pager and telephone numbers for immediate contact.
- 7.9.4 Because this may be an emotionally difficult assignment, the Department must diligently monitor member(s) assigned to the FLO and assistant positions. They, too, may be grieving, and they may have family needs as well.
- 7.9.5 Immediate actions
 - 7.9.5.1 Confirm the ability to publicly release the deceased's name; contact the PIO after the family authorizes the release.



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- 7.9.5.2 Advise the family of known free or reduced-price funeral and burial services. Ensure that the family understands that they do not have to make any immediate decisions regarding services, mortuary, etc.
- 7.9.5.3 Provide information on a Fire Department funeral with honors and what is available based on circumstances and pursuant to Sections 5.0 and 6.0. Does the family wish a Fire Department funeral? Assure the family that their wishes are the Department's number one concern. If they prefer a private funeral, the Department can still hold a memorial service, if desired.
- 7.9.5.4 If a Fire Department funeral is desired, confer with the family regarding funeral options and their desires. Some decisions needing attention are:
- 7.9.5.4.1 Pall Bearers – family, Fire Department members, or both?
 - 7.9.5.4.2 Family eulogist?
 - 7.9.5.4.3 Children riding on the fire apparatus during processions?
 - 7.9.5.4.4 Procession travels by the family house?
 - 7.9.5.4.5 Donations in lieu of flowers?
 - 7.9.5.4.6 Burial in uniform?
- 7.9.5.5 **NOTE:** The family should refer to the Emergency Information and Organizational Assistance packets. The FLO should have access to the Emergency Information packet, as well.
- 7.9.5.6 The FLO responsibilities may include, but are not limited to:
- 7.9.5.6.1 Confirming that there is a law enforcement officer presence at the house whenever the family is not present. In the following weeks after the funeral, make routine checks.
 - 7.9.5.6.2 Acting as a “gatekeeper” to assist the family in screening or responding to incoming telephone calls and well-wishers stopping by.
 - 7.9.5.6.3 Assisting the family with media. If requested, the FLO may assist in speaking for the family or helping the family prepare a statement (the Department PIO may be used).
 - 7.9.5.6.4 Assisting the family with any logistics such as transportation, housing for out-of-town relatives and childcare.
 - 7.9.5.6.5 Assisting with household responsibilities such as running errands, driving children to school/after-school activities, mowing the lawn, pet care, or home/personal business needs.
 - 7.9.5.6.6 Keeping the family informed of all information surrounding the incident and death. Answering or finding answers to questions the family may have.
 - 7.9.5.6.7 Exercising care in selecting a tactful time to release personal effects to the next-of-kin. When done, the next-of-kin shall be given a listing of personal property received.
 - 7.9.5.6.8 Advising the family of the requirement of an autopsy for PSOB benefits. Providing them with the information on the coroner or medical examiner.



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8.0 Investigation

- 8.1 A thorough investigation into the cause of every serious injury or fatality shall be conducted, including consideration of the possibility of criminal activity. When an agency is involved in investigating an incident as serious as a line-of-duty death, the City's Corporation Counsel should be notified and may be of assistance. Agency insurance representatives may also be of assistance.
- 8.2 The Investigation Team should be comprised of the following personnel at a **minimum**:
 - 8.2.1 Battalion Chief/Safety Officer
 - 8.2.2 Training Officer
 - 8.2.3 Fire Investigation Team Supervisor (if the event occurs at a fire)
 - 8.2.4 Police Department Evidence Technician or Accident Reconstruction Officer (ARO for vehicle accidents only)
 - 8.2.5 A representative of the Office of the State Fire Marshal (if the event occurs at a fire)
 - 8.2.6 A representative of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (if determined to be desirable by the Investigation Team Leader or the Fire Chief)
 - 8.2.7 A Local Firefighters' Union Representative (if applicable)
 - 8.2.8 Other appropriate personnel, depending on circumstances.
- 8.3 Primary Objectives
 - 8.3.1 The Purpose of the Investigation Team is to determine the direct and indirect causal factors which resulted in the line-of-duty death or injury, particularly those factors that could be identified to prevent future occurrences of a similar nature, including:
 - 8.3.1.1 Identifying inadequacies involving apparatus, equipment, protective clothing, standard operating guidelines, supervision, training, or performance.
 - 8.3.1.2 Identifying situations that involve unacceptable risks.
 - 8.3.1.3 Identifying previously unknown or unanticipated risks.
 - 8.3.1.4 Identifying actions that must be taken to address problems or situations that are discovered.
 - 8.3.2 To ensure that the lessons learned from the investigation are effectively communicated to prevent future occurrences of a similar nature.
 - 8.3.3 To satisfy PSOB program requirements and other entitlements.
 - 8.3.4 To identify potential areas of negligence and causal factors that could result in criminal prosecution or civil litigation.
 - 8.3.5 To ensure that the incident and all related events are fully documented, and evidence is preserved for use in additional investigations or legal proceedings at a later date.



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8.3.6 To provide factual information to assist those involved who are trying to understand the events they have experienced.

8.3.7 To provide information to other individuals and organizations that have fire service occupational safety and health involvements.

8.4 Immediate actions

8.4.1 Confirm that the scene is secure and isolate unnecessary personnel from the scene.

8.4.2 If the death or serious injury is due to a fire, ensure that **TWO (2)** investigations take place: One for the fire and one for the death or injury.

8.4.3 Conduct an immediate and thorough investigation. Consider the use of other agencies that might either have jurisdiction or expertise, or that can offer neutrally-perceived findings.

8.4.3.1 The Office of the State Fire Marshal or the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives may be required to investigate or provide expertise.

8.4.3.2 Consider that some vehicular accidents should not be investigated solely by the Highland Park Police Department. Use Lake County Sheriff, Cook County Sheriff, or Illinois State Police investigators, if appropriate and possible.

8.4.4 Sketch, photograph and video tape the scene.

8.4.5 Recover and secure any of the deceased/injured personal gear or equipment as evidence. Document the condition of all safety equipment.

8.4.6 Impound any evidence. Start a Chain-of-Evidence Log.

8.4.7 Collect appropriate statements from individuals involved while they are still at the scene, if possible, but no later than 24 hours after the incident. Stick only to the facts. If facts are not known, this should be clearly stated. Use of a tape recorder during all interviews is suggested.

8.4.8 Toxicology (blood gases) and a full autopsy shall be completed to abide by PSOB requirements. The Department may have to pay for this; check with the Coroner or Medical Examiner.

8.5 Continued Actions

8.5.1 Maintain records – interviews, notes, radio tapes, photographs, incident reports, and drawings.

8.5.2 Obtain certified copies of the autopsy report and death certificate.

8.5.3 If a line-of-duty death occurs, NIOSH (1-800-356-4674) will conduct a thorough investigation. At the conclusion of their report, NIOSH will report back to the Department with their findings. Important: Share the findings with the survivors before they are made public.

9.0 Department and Outside Agency Notification Plan

9.1 **Fire Department personnel and agency notification is extremely important immediately following an incident. Rapid notification may prevent undue family and employee anxiety, prevent misinformation, and enable quick response by appropriate support agencies.**

9.2 On-duty personnel family members



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- 9.2.1 Within minutes of a serious injury incident, word travels very quickly that a Department member(s) has been injured or killed. Family members of non-injured on-duty personnel need to be notified to ensure that their "loved one" is safe.
- 9.2.2 If available and practical, personnel could place calls directly while at the scene or at the station. Personnel must be cautioned against discussing privileged information and names of the injured or deceased.
- 9.2.3 If it is not practical for personnel to make calls themselves, a statement must be carefully prepared and the Fire Marshal or other designated officer assigned to rapidly notify family members of on-duty personnel.
 - 9.2.3.1 The employee emergency contact number list shall be utilized.
 - 9.2.3.2 Personal information of the injured or deceased member(s) must not be given-out unless the notification has already been made to the next-of-kin.

9.3 Off-duty personnel

- 9.3.1 Prepare a notification statement to be read to personnel after confirmation that next-of-kin notification has been made.

9.4 Other notifications

- 9.4.1 A current list is maintained containing contact information of other individuals, agencies, and organizations that may need to be notified. This includes:
 - 9.4.1.1 Retired members
 - 9.4.1.2 Elected officials
 - 9.4.1.3 Department insurance carriers and the City's Corporation Counsel
 - 9.4.1.4 International Association of Firefighters and Associated Fire Fighters of Illinois (if applicable)
 - 9.4.1.5 Key people within the community
 - 9.4.1.6 Local, state and national emergency service agencies, who can be contacted by LEADS teletype or EMNET messages generated by the Highland Park Dispatch Center or the Fire Department
 - 9.4.1.7 Illinois Office of the State Fire Marshal (312-814-2693)
 - 9.4.1.8 NIOSH (800-356-4674)
 - 9.4.1.9 Illinois Department of Labor (800-356-4674)
 - 9.4.1.10 Public Safety Officer's Benefit program office (888-744-6513)
 - 9.4.1.11 National Fallen Firefighter Foundation (301-447-1365)
 - 9.4.1.12 State benefit programs
 - 9.4.1.13 Local assistance organizations, such as the 100 Club of Lake County



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10.0 Benefits

- 10.1 One of the main concerns survivors have is their financial well-being, especially in cases where the deceased was the sole financial contributor. Within days following a death, the Department needs to explain to the survivor(s) any local, state and federal benefits the survivors may be eligible to receive.
- 10.2 The Department should assign one person who is knowledgeable in local, state and federal benefits. The Benefits Coordinator must absolutely maintain confidentiality regarding survivor affairs; this trust must not be broken. The Benefits Coordinator is responsible for assembling and filing the benefits paperwork required by the agencies, and to assist the family with their benefits applications.
- 10.3 The Benefits Coordinator must assemble a list of benefits the survivor may be entitled to and meet with the survivor at his/her earliest convenience. Additionally, the Benefits Coordinator should recommend to the survivor that he/she has another family member or friend that he/she trusts present for the meeting; the friend or relative might better understand the information and be of assistance during this difficult time.
- 10.4 In the initial meeting, the Benefits Coordinator should:
 - 10.4.1 Expect that the survivor might have difficulty understanding everything.
 - 10.4.2 Explain that a meeting will be arranged again after the funeral to cover benefits more specifically.
 - 10.4.3 Speak generally and briefly; avoid technicalities.
 - 10.4.4 NOT promise any benefit until it is assured.
 - 10.4.5 Answer questions as he/she is able, and, if unable, respond after answers become available.
- 10.5 The Benefits Coordinator should assemble a detailed list of each benefit that clearly shows the following:
 - 10.5.1 Type of benefit
 - 10.5.2 Actions needed for application
 - 10.5.3 Money/service/bill payment expected
 - 10.5.4 Beneficiary (s)
 - 10.5.5 Expected time for receipt
- 10.6 **NOTE:** The State of Illinois has its own Public Safety Officer Benefits program, similar to the Federal PSOB program.
- 10.7 The survivor may want to secure the services of an attorney (for possible litigation) and/or a financial planner. Prior to assisting with securing professional services, the Benefits Coordinator shall consult with the Fire Chief, and possibly the City's Corporation Counsel, to assure that there is no actual, perceived, or potential conflict-of-interest.
- 10.8 Caution notes:
 - 10.8.1 The Benefits Coordinator should explain to the survivors that they should avoid publicly discussing their benefits.



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10.8.2 Family and friends may ask to borrow money – the Benefits Coordinator should be ready for this and prepare the survivor(s) accordingly.

10.8.3 When receiving money, it may be traumatic to the survivor(s). (It feels like blood money.)

10.9 **Note:** In order for a firefighter's surviving dependents to receive PSOB benefits, certain tests must be obtained before death or at the time of death.

10.9.1 It is necessary to obtain a complete blood toxicology (blood/urine) report, primarily concerning blood alcohol and carbon monoxide levels. The report must be signed by the toxicologist or medical examiner, and bear the raised seal of the office or be notarized.

10.9.2 In cases involving non-traumatic injuries, such as heart attacks, it is also necessary to obtain a complete toxicology report as stated above. It is imperative that benefits programs receive an accurate toxicology report to complete benefit payments. If local labs are unable to obtain accurate carbon monoxide levels below 10%, contact the Department of Justice and they will be able to complete the tests.

10.9.3 A copy of the autopsy must be provided, or, if no autopsy was performed, an affidavit stating one was not performed must be provided. The death certificate must also bear the raised seal of the office or be notarized.

10.10 If a firefighter is injured in the line-of-duty to the point of permanent disability, he/she is eligible for a one-time lump sum payment equal to the then-currently defined benefit, provided he/she meets the following criteria:

10.10.1 (S) He is **TOTALLY DISABLED**, and will **NEVER** be able to hold another job.

10.10.2 (S) He receives the maximum benefit from his/her primary workers' compensation claim.

10.10.3 (S) He is no longer working for the Fire Department (is a pensioner or has separated).



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Federal Public Safety Officers Benefits Checklist

1. Immediately after the fatality...	The Fire Department must... <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Notify the family.2. Secure the scene.3. Begin an investigation of the incident.4. Make arrangements for an autopsy.5. Identify a Fire Department member to serve as a liaison between the Fire Department and the Public Safety Officer Benefits (PSOB) office.
2. Immediately after being named the Fire Department's Liaison Officer...	The Liaison Officer must ... <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Call the PSOB office at 1-888-744-65132. Provide accurate, up-to-date information including the following:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><u>A.</u> Fire Department name<u>B.</u> Liaison's name<u>C.</u> Phone numbers for the Fire Department and Liaison Officer.<u>D.</u> A fax number and/or mailing address of the Fire Department so PSOB can send a claim initiation guidance letter.<u>E.</u> Deceased firefighter(s) name(s).<u>F.</u> Date of the incident and date of death. <p>Relay the information very carefully and include only what is known. Do not speculate on the cause of death if you do not know it.</p> <p>On evenings, weekends, and holidays, leave a phone message providing the Fire Department Liaison Officer's name and telephone numbers.</p>



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<p>3. PSOB responds.</p>	<p>After receiving the call, the PSOB office will fax or mail a “Claims Guidance Package” to the Fire Department Liaison Officer as soon as possible. The package will include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Claim initiation guidance letter. 2. Report of Public Safety Officers Death form and Claim for Death Benefits form. 3. Consent to Release Confidential Information form. 4. A copy of the PSOB Act.
---------------------------------	---

State of Illinois Benefits for Line-of-Duty Deaths

<p>One-time Death Benefit</p>	<p>Illinois has a duty death survivor benefit when a death results from injury received in the active performance of duties. Death benefit amount changes yearly on October 1st. Death must occur within one year from the date the injury was received, and the injury must result from violence or other accidental cause. Benefits cover firefighters employed by the state or local governments, volunteer firefighters, and officially-designated fire department chaplains. Payments are made to designated beneficiaries. If no beneficiary is designated, the entire sum is paid to the spouse. If there is no surviving spouse, payment is made to surviving children in equal parts. Parents receive the benefits if there is no surviving spouse or children.</p> <p>Contact: Court of Claims 630 South College Street Springfield, IL 62756 (217)782-0111</p> <p style="text-align: right;">or Attorney General Court of Claims (312)814-6125</p>
<p>Workers’ Compensation</p>	<p>All first-aid, medical and hospital expenses connected with a fatal injury are paid. A benefit of 66 2/3% of the deceased’s gross average weekly wage continues until the spouse is compensated for 20 years or total compensation reaches \$250,000, whichever is greater; until children attain age 18 and leave school or they attain age 23 if they are attending accredited educational institutions; or until dependency ends for any other dependents. Payments to the spouse end at remarriage with a 2-year lump sum payment.</p> <p>Contact: Illinois Industrial Commission 701 S. Second Street Springfield, IL 60274 (866)352-3033</p>
<p>Funeral Benefit</p>	<p>Maximum of \$10,000 provided through Workers’ Compensation Contact: Illinois Industrial Commission, as listed above.</p> <p>Additional burial benefit of up to \$10,000 provided to the surviving spouse or estate. Contact: Court of Claims, as listed above.</p>
<p>Retirement/Pension</p>	<p>The Downstate Firefighters’ Pension Plan provides a minimum of 100% of salary as of the last day of service.</p>
<p>Education Benefit – Children & Spouse</p>	<p>There is a waiver of tuition and mandatory fees at any approved public post-secondary institution. Students at private Illinois institutions receive the equivalent of tuition and mandatory fees at the most expensive comparable program at a public post-secondary institution. These are limited to the full-time equivalent of eight semesters, or twelve quarters, for undergraduate and graduate programs. Full-time or part-time students are eligible until the age of 25. NOTE: Spouse benefits are the same as for children, except for age restrictions. Step-children are not eligible.</p>
<p>Non-Profit or Private Organizations</p>	<p>Illinois Fire Chiefs Association P.O. Box 7 Skokie, IL 60076</p> <p>Illinois Firefighters Memorial Foundation c/o Timothy S. Clemens, Chairman 188 Industrial Drive, Suite 18A</p>



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(847)966-0732

Elmhurst, IL 60126

Educational and Research Foundation Scholarships are provided through the Illinois Fire Chiefs Association and Illinois Firefighters Association.

Scholarships are available for children of firefighters who are deceased as a result of the performance of duty. Applications are available on the Illinois State Fire Marshal's web site at www.state.il.us/osfm/memorial/ffmohscholarshipapplicationform.pdf

100 Club of Lake County – The club provides a one-time donation of approximately \$2,000 immediately after a death. The club offers scholarships for dependents. Families are given \$500 annually – (708)681-1700

Health Benefits

NOTE: Information below is a limited description taken directly from the State of Illinois Legislative web site as of the date this S.O.G. was published. Please read the entire Act for a complete description of benefits, or to identify changes or updates.

EMPLOYMENT (820 ILCS 320/) Public Safety Employee Benefits Act.

An employer who employs a full-time firefighter who suffers a catastrophic injury or is killed in the line of duty shall pay the entire premium of the employer's health insurance plan for the injured employee, the injured employee's spouse, and for each dependent child of the injured employee until the child reaches the age of majority or until the end of the calendar year in which the child reaches the age of 25 if the child continues to be dependent for support or the child is a full-time or part-time student and is dependent for support. The term "health insurance plan" does not include supplemental benefits that are not part of the basic group health insurance plan. If the injured employee subsequently dies, the employer shall continue to pay the entire health insurance premium for the surviving spouse until remarried and for the dependent children under the conditions established in this Section.

However, health insurance benefits payable from any other source shall reduce benefits payable under this section.

In order for the firefighter, spouse, or dependent children to be eligible for insurance coverage under this Act, the injury or death must have occurred as the result of the firefighter's response to what is reasonably believed to be an emergency.

Benefits Checklist

Organization/Benefit available	Yes	No	Contact Name & Number	Notes
Public Safety Officers Benefit (888-744-6513)				
Illinois Court of Claims (IL PSOB) (217-782-0111)				
Workers' Compensation Illinois Industrial Commission (866-352-3033) (Medical bills)				
(Funeral Benefits)				
1. Illinois Industrial Commission				
2. Court of Claims				



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3. Social Security Admin.				
Highland Park Firefighters Pension Board (Pension)				
City of Highland Park – Final paycheck, unused vacation, sick time				
100 Club of Lake County (708-681-1700) (Donation & Scholarship)				
Highland Park Firefighters Association (IAFF Local 822) (Donation)				
IAFF W. H. "Howie" McClennan Scholarship				
National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (301) 447-1365 (Scholarship)				
Illinois Student Assistance Commission (800) 899-4722 (Scholarship)				
Illinois Firefighters Memorial Foundation (Scholarship)				
Personal Life Insurance Policies				
Loans Insured in Case of Death				

10.11 Documentation Needed

10.11.1 To assure sufficient documentation for the various benefit applications, prepare TWELVE (minimum) copies of each of the following. Original copies are preferred; however, notarized copies are in many cases now sufficient. Check each benefit's application process for exact requirements.

From the Department:

- _____ Incident reports
- _____ Training records
- _____ Witness statements
- _____ Investigation reports, police reports, interviews, weather conditions
- _____ Chief's statement (statement of circumstances)
- _____ Causality reports
- _____ Associated press releases
- _____ Associated press articles
- _____ Autopsy report or Coroner inquiry report
- _____ Toxicology report



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____ EMS report: ambulance and hospital reports

____ Death certificates (need 20 copies)

From the claimant:

____ Driver's license or other identification cards

____ Birth certificates for the deceased and each family member

____ Marriage certificate

____ Divorce decree, custody agreements, or spouse's death certificate

____ Copies of life insurance policies

____ Claim for Death Benefit form (PSOB)

____ Social Security Card

____ Previous year's W2 forms/tax returns

____ Military records

10.11.2 Take all steps to secure benefits for the family. The process is often lengthy, so keep the family involved.

10.11.3 Each family should keep all copies of their personal information in a home safe or safety deposit box.

10.11.4 Offer to continue to assist the family with all related medical bills and claims.

11.0 Funeral Director Contact

11.1 One of the most critical elements of the funeral process is developing a positive working arrangement with the funeral director. Remember that the funeral is his/her legal responsibility and the company's reputation may be jeopardized should something go wrong.

11.2 Explain your role as Funeral Liaison. (You need to win their trust and support)

11.2.1 Family has requested Fire Department participation

11.2.2 Confirm nothing is done, or movement made, without the funeral director's permission, and that they are ultimately in charge.

11.2.3 Explain that all planning will be confirmed with them before implementing.

11.3 Confirm wake and funeral details.

11.4 Work to develop final plans with the funeral director.

11.5 Review planning already completed. Also discuss:

11.5.1 Are white gloves needed?

11.5.2 Can the flag be draped on the casket or did the family order a casket spray?



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11.5.3 Staging location for Honor Guards

11.5.4 Walk-through planning.

11.5.5 Will they seat family and friends before the walk-through?

11.6 Plans for the funeral or memorial service. Review planning already completed; discuss:

11.6.1 Activity timing – who will do what?

11.6.2 Casket closure – removal of items that may be presented to the family (**with family permission only**) such as badges, collar pins, hat, etc.

11.6.3 Fire Department flag use.

11.6.4 Pallbearer responsibilities – review who directs them and when.

11.6.5 Flowers – can the Department be of assistance in transporting or handling?

11.6.6 Firefighters and firefighters' family-member seating.

11.6.7 Is dignitary seating required?

11.7 Procession plans. Review planning already completed; discuss:

11.7.1 Staging of Highland Park Fire Department vehicles at the service location.

11.7.1.1 Assign a Staging Coordinator

11.7.1.1.1 Develop a written parking and processional plan.

11.7.1.2 Who will lead the procession?

11.7.1.2.1 The individual must know the route and procedures, including cemetery plans.

11.7.1.2.2 The individual needs the ability to communicate with the Staging Coordinator

11.7.1.3 Final route of travel.

11.7.1.3.1 Pass-by one or more Fire Stations?

11.7.1.3.2 Pass-by the deceased's home?

11.7.1.4 Processional order – engines, trucks, squads etc.

11.8 Cemetery plans. Review plans already completed. Also discuss:

11.8.1 The order of the service following the actual burial, e.g., firing squad (or bell service), Taps, flag folding presentations, final salute, re-forming ranks, etc.

11.8.2 Reception plans, if any, need to be disseminated at the cemetery.

12.0 Station and Employee Preparations



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- 12.1 The sudden and unexpected traumatic event of a Department member's serious injury or death will cause extraordinary stress on the remaining members. The remaining members of the Department need to react professionally, with compassion for one another, the grieving family, and the public. The following may be helpful:
- 12.1.1 In the event of a death, Fire Department flags (not US flags) should be lowered to half-staff from the time of the announcement until 24 hours after the end of the service.
 - 12.1.2 Black shrouds should be worn on badges from the time of the incident until 30 days after the funeral or memorial service.
 - 12.1.3 A temporary memorial may be placed in front of one or more of the fire stations that consists of a bunker coat, boots and helmet on a chair or a stand with a candle and flowers. This gives members of the community the opportunity to add to the memorial and anonymously pay their respects.
 - 12.1.4 Station duties – Vehicles are to remain cleaned. General cleaning of public areas within the station will continue, with proper stocking of necessary personal needs. Dignitaries, media, family, and surrounding department members are some visitors that should be expected.
 - 12.1.5 Food – There should be a supply of food and beverages for members that are working, as well as visitors.
 - 12.1.6 Call takers should have a statement prepared by the PIO next to the phones. Call takers should track calls for money and food donations by the public. (*The family will most likely want to have this information*). Additionally, call takers track organizations planning to attend either the memorial service or funeral. (*See Donation Log – Appendix A and Vehicle Tracking Form – Appendix B*) This will help in preparing staging and parking areas.
 - 12.1.7 A dry erase/chalk board should be used to track the statuses of the committees and liaisons. This is an easy way for everyone to know statuses and what still needs to be done, as well as who is responsible for each task.
 - 12.1.8 Dress uniforms should be kept in a “ready state” at all times.
 - 12.1.9 Prepare your family for your involvement during the crisis. Do not neglect them; they are also grieving.
 - 12.1.10 Things to consider about the media during this event:
 - 12.1.10.1 They will be searching for background information about the member(s) involved and the incident.
 - 12.1.10.2 They will be at the scene and all the stations searching for information. Please be careful discussing information in the presence of the media. They have very powerful equipment to listen in on conversations.
 - 12.1.10.3 They will attempt to gain information from you. Forward all requests for information to the PIO. They will be expecting you to panic under questioning and possibly provide confidential information.
 - 12.1.10.4 They will seek to dramatize the situation, and will look for the best way to get the most dramatic video or photograph possible.



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Vehicle and Station Bunting



There is no established way to display vehicle and station bunting. Please use these pictures as guidelines in placing bunting.



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13.0 Ongoing Family Support

13.1 It is important to survivors that the Department continues to provide support following the funeral. The following points provide family support guidance:

13.1.1 Only promise what you actually can do--keep all your promises.

13.1.2 Instead of saying "Call if you need anything," offer to help with specific tasks and then follow-through. For instance, say, "I would like to come over on Thursday to fix the fence; is that alright with you?"

13.1.3 Help with what the firefighter used to do -- yard work, fixing things around the house, etc. Be part of the events the firefighter would have attended.

Note: While helping the survivors with daily activities is encouraged, it should be short -term. Members must not lose sight of their own family obligations. Long-term family support should involve many department members.

13.1.4 Continue to talk with the family about your memories of the firefighter. Most families want to hear about their loved one, even if it is emotionally difficult.

13.1.4.1 Some people have a tendency to avoid contact with survivors for fear of either not knowing what to say or evoking their emotions. If you don't know what to say, then ask how they are and provide comfort by showing concern. Family members will likely show emotion; this is all right.

13.1.5 Remember that parents and siblings of fallen firefighters need support and contact just like spouses and children do.

13.1.6 Continue to invite the family to Department functions, but don't be disappointed if they don't attend.

13.1.6.1 Department members may be an integral part of the survivors' primary social community, and, following the firefighter's death, the next-of-kin may suffer yet another tragedy if they are excluded from Department activities and social events. Survivors should be encouraged to attend and participate in Department and social functions. Let the family decide if they wish to attend.

13.1.7 Remember that some events, such as holidays or the anniversary of the date of death, may be especially difficult for the family. Even families who seemed to be doing well may need extra support and contact during these times.



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- 13.1.8 Contact the family before any information is released regarding investigations, incident reports, or any information related to their loved one. Remember to include the family in planning and delivering any special programs honoring their loved one.
- 13.1.9 Provide survivors with information on the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation's programs for survivors. Contact the Foundation to get support for the family.
(301) 447-1365; www.firehero.org; email firehero@firehero.org.
- 13.1.10 Encourage the family to attend the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Weekend and other local, state, and national tributes. Offer to help with travel arrangements, and attend with them whenever possible.
- 13.1.11 Consider creating some kind of tribute to the fallen firefighter. This could include, but would not be limited to, a local memorial such as a video tribute, a scrapbook, or a scholarship in the firefighter's name. Prepare a tribute that is fitting for the firefighter and special to the family. See www.firehero.org for examples.

14.0 Reference

- 14.1 Bureau of Justice
- 14.2 National Fallen Firefighters Foundation
- 14.3 State of Illinois – Court of Claims
- 14.4 State of Illinois – Industrial Commission
- 14.5 Illinois Compiled Statutes.

Approved  Fire Chief