

JOB DESCRIPTIONS

ACTION OFFICER SURVIVOR

It is recommended that the Chief assume - delegate the position of the **Survivor Action Officer** to act as a liaison to the next of kin. Typically, the **Survivor Action Officer** is a special staff assignment. As a direct representative of the Fire Chief, the **Survivor Action Officer** should receive the full cooperation of the entire department.

- **The Survivor Action Officer** is responsible for the management of several important activities. His principal concern is the ongoing welfare of the next of kin. It is his responsibility to render whatever assistance is necessary in settling the personal affairs of the deceased member and assisting the family through the crisis.
- **The Survivor Action Officer** coordinates the activities of a number of personnel assigned to handle specific aspects of the funeral arrangements to assist the surviving family. These assignments include the following:
 - **Family Liaison Officer-His** responsibilities include providing logistical support such as 24-hour on-call to the surviving family. He provides transportation and constant communication with the Survivor Action Officer.
 - **Funeral Officer-** He provides coordination and interaction with the Funeral Director. He also provides coordination and interaction with the church to arrange the funeral service, with the cemetery and arranges and directs the funeral procession.

Additional duties of the **Survivor Action Officer** include the following:

- Confirm that the next of kin has been notified.
- Notify all department personnel of the death.

- Confirm the notification of all outside agencies and vacationing personnel.
- Arrange to have flags lowered to half-mast and bunting placed on station(s) as appropriate.
- Assure that dispatch has been notified.
- Follow up contacts when funeral arrangements have been determined.
- Personally collect all of the deceased's personal items from the station and forward in person to the Family Liaison Officer.
- Conduct a coordination meeting with the "task force" of officers as soon as possible (Family Liaison and Funeral Officer) so that all key individuals will be instructed to make the appropriate contacts and when the next meeting will be scheduled.
- Remain a key contact person for outside agencies, news media and other departments in relation to the death and subsequent ceremony (PIO and Survivor Officer).
- Make appropriate arrangements for a post funeral meal and facility to handle a large group of people with the family's approval through the Liaison Officer.
- Call a final meeting of the "task force" to establish the Department's participation in the funeral services based on the family's wishes.
 - Establish a timetable or schedule of events.
 - Identify times and places for group gatherings in accordance with ceremonies.
 - Recontact all appropriate people and agencies with the schedule, meeting places and any special instructions.
- Contact support agencies as appropriate to arrange their assistance through the appropriate key person.

- Bands
 - Honor guards
 - Firing squads
 - Bugler
- Contact appropriate department (personnel to arrange for finalization of required paperwork, forms, etc.).
 - Obtain six (6) copies of the death certificate and distribute to the personnel department. -
 - Contact outside agencies for support during the funeral.
 - Maintain key coordination and contact position for the remainder of events.
 - Coordinate the post funeral meal process and establish milestones for future family follow up by Family Liaison Officer.
 - Assure that all department functions return to normal.

FAMILY LIAISON OFFICER

The **Family Liaison Officer** (FLO) reports directly to the Survivor Action Officer (SAO) and is responsible for maintain Ding a communication link between the family and the department. The **Family Liaison Officer provides** the logistical support to the family throughout the funeral process. The following applies:

- Should have a department vehicle assigned to him for the entire funeral process.
- After the official notification of the next of kin, the Family Liaison Officer along with the Chaplain, provide reassurance and support to family.
- The Family Liaison Officer must be prepared to discuss all parameters of the funeral process and its ceremonies with the family and the funeral director. The FLO must be able to relay information to the

department as to what level of involvement the department will have in the funeral process in accordance with the family's wishes.

- The role of the FLO is to inform the family as to the various traditional fire service funeral options that can be included in a service. This is accomplished with the cooperation of the Funeral Director. These might include readings, music, honor guards and military formations. All of the requests made by the surviving family must be relayed to the Survivor Action Officer for delegation to the "task force" of officers. Some of the areas that the Family Liaison Officer will assist the family in determining will be:
- Determine the number of primary pallbearers and whether honorary pal' bearers will be used.
- Type of interment.
- Which funeral home will be used.
- Which church/large assembly will be used.
- Which clergy will be used, including the department chaplain.
- Which cemetery will be used.
- Will the deceased be buried in uniform?
- Obtain all articles of clothing that the deceased will wear (except shoes) and deliver them to the funeral director/officer.
- Obtain a recent photograph of the deceased for funeral director.
- Determine the length of church service as well as:
 - Readers of the Scripture
 - What Scripture will be read
 - Music at the church
 - Who will deliver the sermon, eulogy, etc.
 - Ending last alarm bell service.

- Determine the length of the wake and establish a tentative schedule
- Determine what ceremonies will take place at the cemetery:
 - Band
 - Firing squad
 - Readings
 - Eulogy and who will deliver it
 - Taps

Procession items:

- Will an engine be used as a caisson or will a conventional hearse be used instead?
- Will an engine or ladder truck be used as a flower car?
- Will personnel walk alongside the caisson or drive in the procession?
- Identify and determine any other special considerations on behalf of the family and the special requests per the individual's personal information sheet.
- Maintain 24-hour contact with family for their assistance and the same contact with the Survivor Action Officer. The Family Liaison Officer will also have to address the following items with the family and the Survivor Action Officer:
 - Autopsy reports, birth certificates, marriage certificates, death certificates (Workman's Comp.) VA or military records. (Order death certificates in Departments name to obtain free of charge.)
 - Check the individual's retirement plan--survivor benefits • VA widow and children benefits and burial benefits
 - Social Security--survivor benefits

- Insurance policies
 - Continue medical plan for the family
 - Life insurance
 - Optional insurance
 - Widows and orphans funds
- W-2 form
 - Final paycheck, including sick leave and vacation time
 - Income tax report
- Outstanding loans
- Transfer of ownership of property and vehicles to survivors.
- Review all outstanding bills. Include the last medical and funeral expenses Determine what is covered by insurance.
- Advise survivors not to loan money
- Investigate possibility of college scholarships for dependents.
- Mortgage insurance
- Workmen's compensation

FUNERAL OFFICER

The **Funeral Officer's duties** include the primary responsibility of insuring that the wishes of family and the special requests of the individual are coordinated with the Funeral Director and Chaplains. The **Funeral Officer** reports directly to the Survivor Action Officer and keeps him well informed of the planning process.

Additional areas of responsibilities include:

- Establish a tentative schedule of events and the length of time the mourning and burial process will involve.
- Determine which fire department vehicles will be used as caissons or flower vehicles.
- Make arrangements for the surviving family from the funeral home to the cemetery.
- Establish an honor guard schedule to stand guard during the viewing at the funeral home. The honor guard should consist of four(4) fire fighters in the appropriate uniforms.