

Funerals

1038.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

It is the intent of this policy to ensure that every member of the District, both active and retired, who passes away may be offered the option of a funeral or assistance from the District. These guidelines will ensure proper support and care of the family and the posthumous honoring of a member of the District.

1038.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Level I, Line-of-Duty Death - Considered for all firefighters (career, reserve and volunteer) of the District who die as a direct result of injuries suffered at the scene of any emergency incident or while responding to or returning from the scene of an emergency incident. This includes medical conditions (e.g., heart attack) that result in the death at the scene of an emergency.

Level II, On-Duty Death - Pertains to all firefighters of the District who die while on-duty, but not due to injuries sustained while performing emergency activities. This includes firefighters whose death is a direct result of medical treatment or complications arising from a previous on-duty injury.

Level III, Active Employee Off-Duty - The death of an active firefighter that occurs while the firefighter is off-duty and the death is not related to any emergency activity.

Level IV, Retired Employee or Staff Professional - The death of a retiree or professional staff employee of the District. Level IV may also include a dignitary closely associated with the District, as designated by the Fire Chief, and upon whom the District wishes to bestow funeral honors. The death of a retired Fire Chief may be considered as a higher level, at the district's discretion.

Level V, Death of a Family Member - The death of a family member of an active firefighter, retiree or staff professional of the District. Level V may also include a family member of a dignitary closely associated with the District as designated by the Fire Chief, and upon whom the District wishes to bestow funeral honors.

1038.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Blue Ridge Fire District for the Fire Chief or the authorized designee to make the necessary assignments and coordinate actions with other district representatives any time the District learns that an active or retired employee has passed away. Activities should be in accordance with the Line-of-Duty Death, Line-of-Duty Death and Serious Injury Notification and Family Support Liaison policies.

If a responsible family member requests district assistance, the Fire Chief or the authorized designee should appoint, with the approval of the family member, an employee to act as a funeral detail officer and oversee all of the arrangements. The Fire Chief may deny the option of district participation if the circumstances of the member's death may reasonably bring discredit to the District.

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The Fire Chief or the authorized designee should determine the highest level of participation the District can provide, based on the cause of death.

1038.3 LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION

The desires of the family are paramount and shall be given fullest consideration; however, the district's funeral participation will be conducted according to the following guidelines:

- (a) A Level I funeral may include Level II criteria and any of the following:
 - 1. Crossed ladders
 - 2. Supreme Sacrifice Medal
 - 3. Helicopter fly-over
- (b) A Level II funeral may include Level III criteria and any of the following:
 - 1. Fire engine or caisson with casket
 - 2. Cordon of fire apparatus of both the District and visiting agencies
- (c) Level III funeral may include Level IV criteria and any of the following:
 - 1. Casket draped with the U.S. flag
 - 2. Honor Guard as pallbearers
 - 3. Procession with district apparatus from the firefighter's current battalion
 - 4. Bugler
 - 5. Bell ceremony
- (d) Level IV funeral may include:
 - 1. Hearse with casket
 - 2. Apparatus from last assignment (if appropriate)
 - 3. Honor Guard
 - 4. Pipe and drum band
 - 5. Administration and logistic support as needed
 - 6. Uniformed personnel
 - 7. Flag folding (if appropriate)
- (e) Level V funeral honors may include (with the approval of the Fire Chief):
 - 1. One piece of apparatus to be used as a static display (not to be included in a procession)
 - 2. Honor Guard (if appropriate)
 - 3. Uniformed personnel

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1038.4 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Fire Chief or the authorized designee may appoint one or more of the following positions to provide assistance with the funeral arrangements:

- **Family Support Liaison** - Any district member who is a close friend of the family and will make reasonable efforts to address the needs and desires of the family, communicate between the District and the family and coordinate details with the Officer in Charge.
- **Funeral detail officer** - An employee who is appointed by the Fire Chief to oversee all arrangements for a funeral.
- **Head usher** - The head usher is responsible for seating and parking arrangements at the funeral services, both at the church and at the grave site.
- **Honor Guard Commander/Officer in Charge of the Honor Guard and pipe and drum band** - This position will be filled by a member of the Honor Guard and will be responsible for the coordination of the Honor Guard, Color Guard and the pipe and drum band.
- **Honorary pallbearers** - Honorary pallbearers are those selected by the family. They will follow the casket from the location of the services to the grave site.
- **Logistics officer** - The logistics officer is charged with preparing the apparatus, vehicles, equipment and facilities for the funeral services.
- **Officer in Charge/detail officer** - Selected by the Fire Chief or the authorized designee, the detail officer is the person in charge of the overall district participation and is responsible for the coordination between the funeral director, the chaplain and the Family Support Liaison.
- **Public agency liaison (as needed)** - The public agency liaison will coordinate any interaction with other public agencies that wish to participate in the services.
- **Fire Chief (as needed)** - The Fire Chief will coordinate all media and public relations issues.
- **Pallbearers** - The pallbearers will be members of the Honor Guard, unless otherwise requested by the family.
- **Protocol liaison** - Appointed by the Fire Chief or the authorized designee, the protocol liaison will provide direction, advice and clarification to the family regarding proper funeral procedures.
- **Transportation officer** - The transportation officer is responsible for all transportation of family members, pallbearers and escort detail from a pre-determined location to the location of the services, from the service to the grave site and back to a pre-determined location (e.g., the family home, place of worship).