



Tri County EMS
Honor Guard



Planning Guide for EMS Services



Dear EMS agency,

The Tri County EMS Honor Guard was formed by EMS professionals to honor EMS professionals. Our mission is to assist your agency during a catastrophic event such as a provider's serious injury or death, in the Line of Duty or otherwise.

If your department is experiencing such an event, let us begin by expressing our condolences to you and to the members of your department. You may feel overwhelmed and burdened by both the desire to honor your member and the desire to "get it right". Funerals, especially Line of Duty deaths, are serious logistical challenges. Our mission is to provide your agency with expert guidance and assistance to help you carry out this mission. Please be assured, we will not "take over" at any time. We will provide as much or as little assistance as you desire. We are here to serve you and the family of your fallen member.

Enclosed in this manual are the procedures that we have adopted and they have proven to be very successful as we participated in EMS funerals. We utilize the Incident Command System when assigning roles, and have found it to be the best way to organize and carry out a funeral. This manual is designed to be used with our professional guidance, so immediate activation of our team is essential to ensure that all procedures are followed timely and with the utmost respect. We offer all levels of support, from phone support to having a team stay on site for the entire process. Again, we are here to support you.

To activate the Tri County EMS Association Honor Guard go to our website at www.TC-EMS.org or call 715-760-0524 or 715-760-1293.

We take the responsibility of honoring our fallen EMS brothers and sisters very seriously. It is with great pride that we honor those EMS providers who have served their communities, both paid and volunteer.

Sincerely,

TC-EMS HG

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---------|----------------------------------|
| Page 4 | Notification |
| Page 6 | Last Wishes and Information Form |
| Page 11 | Emergency Contact Form |
| Page 13 | Resources |

Notification

This is most difficult task to perform in the entire process. You must be able to deliver the death message in a manner that will effectively communicate what has happened and still be an act of positive public relations. Remember that you are there to assist a “victim of circumstance”, not to act judgmental regarding the deceased member or the circumstances of the death. You are there to assist the survivors to meet and work through the initial trauma of the notification.

Notification to the family:

1. Needs to be immediate, do not wait for the family to hear the news from the “grapevine”, or worse, the 5 o’clock news. Always make notification in person, never by phone.
2. Gather the notification team together. Notification always involves at least 2 people in uniform. If your department has a Chaplain, then allow him/her to be part of the notification team, either as one of the two, or in addition to. Also, if the member has identified a department member to be present at notification, then allow him/her to be part of the team. If the member’s family lives far from the department, it is permissible to ask for notification assistance from their local police department, but make every effort to make notification from your department. It is also helpful to have an EMS unit staged nearby for assistance if needed.
3. Bring 2 vehicles to the notification, this allows for the transportation of the family to the hospital or scene. If the family wishes to have their vehicle brought along, then provide a driver to take them in their own vehicle. Never refuse the family access to their deceased loved one.
4. Before making contact with the family, try to obtain as much information as possible:
 - a. What happened?
 - b. When did it happen?
 - c. Where did it happen?
 - d. How did it happen? (Beware of giving out too much detail)
 - e. For now, disregard Why it happened.
5. Clearly identify yourself and present identification if possible, and then ask to come in. Never make notification on the front door step. If children are present at the home, it is advisable to gather them together and make notification to the whole family at once. It is better for the department to suffer the burden of making notification to the children rather than having the spouse do it, that way the department is associated with the bad news, not the spouse.
-Give the news in small doses; allow information to “Soak in”.
6. Begin with “I have very bad news”, or “I’m sorry to have to tell you this”. Don’t be afraid to use the words “your husband/wife was killed”, or “because of injuries he/she sustained, (name) has died”.
7. Avoid using “We think that”, or “I know how you must feel”, or “he/she would have wanted to go that way”, or “he/she is in a better place now”.
8. Calmly answer questions the family may have. It’s okay to say “At this time, I don’t know”
9. Beware of the families reactions:
 - a. -Shock...fainting, sudden loss of bowel control
 - b. -Disbelief...severe denial
 - c. -Hysterical...uncontrolled crying and other uncontrolled behaviors
 - d. -Anger...fighting with you (teams have been assaulted)
 - e. -Blame...blaming you for the situation
10. Accept your own emotions. It is okay to cry during notification, but remain calm.
11. After making notification, offer to assist the family in calling additional family, clergy, and friends. When talking with additional family over the phone you should be prepared to explain the circumstances of the death and answer any questions, without going into too much detail. You should also notify the local police department and ask them to post a marked car outside the residence to provide security against the media, for high profile events. Also, offering to answer

their phone will ensure you can screen against the media fishing for information from the family, again, for high profile events.

12. Unless the family declines, try to keep a department member with the family at all times.
13. Before the notification team leaves the home, assure they have established a firm point of contact with a name and phone number so that the Family Liaison Officer has a way to communicate with the family.
14. If the member is seriously injured and has been transported to a hospital, special needs have got to be met while the member is in the hospital. Assign a Hospital Liaison Officer and have that Officer transported to the hospital immediately. They have tasks that need to be taken care of before the family arrives. Some basic duties of the Hospital Liaison Officer include:
15. Meeting with hospital staff to arrange for the appropriate reception of family members. Arrange for a waiting room for arriving family, friends and arriving department members. If needed, arrange for refreshments to be brought to the waiting room.
16. If the injured member has not yet died, the family has the right to visit the individual prior to death. It is psychologically beneficial for surviving family members, especially older children to be able to do so. Whether the member has died at the incident, in route to the hospital or at the hospital, the immediate family members should be allowed to see their loved one if they desire.
17. The Hospital Liaison Officer should provide information regarding the status of the member to the family as soon as they arrive at the hospital. This Officer should remain in contact with the family at the hospital until relieved by the Family Liaison Officer.

Notification to the department:

1. Now that the family is notified, it's time to turn your attention to the members other "family". It is advisable to notify both on duty and off duty crews of the event at this time. This should be done through secure channels of information, do not broadcast sensitive information over scanners. Not notifying members of your department after family notification runs the risk of offending and upsetting members of the department, which can cause problems later.
2. Once your department is notified, it's a good idea to have a channel of communication open (email, phone tree, etc) that will provide updates whenever information becomes available.
3. If the provider is critically injured but not deceased, have your Hospital Liaison Officer respond to the hospital immediately. He needs to gather as much information as he can so an updated report can be given to the family upon their arrival.
4. Many members of your department will want to know immediately what they can do to help. It is advisable to assign an Operations Coordinator that can take these requests and assign roles to these individuals as they come up.

Last Wishes and Information Form

On the next pages you will find a comprehensive Last Wishes and Information form.

This form is to be filled out by each member of your department. Ideally, once this form is filled out, it is returned and locked away by your department.

When needed, it can be easily accessed and its information will be readily available to use in the event of a Line of Duty serious injury or death. If you decide to keep this at your department the best way to ensure confidentiality is to have the member put this form in a manila envelope in your presence.

Once sealed, both you and the member sign and date across the seal. Envelopes are kept in a locked location until, (1) the member is seriously injured or dies, (2) the information needs updating, or (3) the member leaves the department. If you choose however, the form can be filled out and kept at the location that the member chooses, but they must notify their next of kin where it is located so it can be rapidly accessed and used when needed.

LAST WISHES AND INFORMATION FORM

CONFIDENTIAL

Personal Information

Name: _____ DOB: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Social Security #: _____

Single: _____ Married: _____ Divorced: _____ Widowed: _____

Family Information

Spouse or Significant Other Name: _____

Relationship: _____ Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Additional Phones: _____

Childs Name: _____ DOB: _____

Childs Name: _____ DOB: _____

Childs Name: _____ DOB: _____

Childs Name: _____ DOB: _____

Is your Father living? YES NO

Fathers Name: _____ Phone # _____

Is your Mother living? YES NO

Mothers Name: _____ Phone # _____

Other Contact Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Whom should be notified first of your LODD? _____

Medical Information

This information may be needed when applying for federal death benefits that will be payable to your family.

Physician Name: _____

Phone # _____ Blood Type: _____

Significant Medical

History: _____

Medications: _____

Allergies: _____

Do you have a DNR? YES NO

Do you have a Living Will? YES NO

Are you an Organ Donor? YES NO

If you answered YES to any question above, where is the information kept? _____

Dentist Name: _____ Phone # _____

Religious Information

Religious Affiliation/Denomination: _____

Church Name: _____

Clergy Name: _____ Phone # _____

Do you want this person contacted once notification is made to your loved ones? YES NO

Any other Clergy or Counselor you request to be notified: _____

Phone # _____

Business Information

Do you have a Will? YES NO

If YES, where is it located? _____

Attorney Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Bank Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Type of accounts _____

List any insurance policies, or investments: _____

Other Information

Are you serving in the Military now under any capacity? YES NO

Are you a military veteran of the United States? YES NO

If YES, what branch of service and when did you serve? _____

List any clubs, associations, or organizations that you are a member of: _____

Do any of these organizations offer death benefits to you? YES NO

Should the liaison notify this organization of your death? YES NO

Funeral Arrangements

If you are entitled to a military funeral, do you wish to have one? YES NO

(Answering YES does not mean you will not get EMS funeral benefits, it merely specifies that you want the military Honor Guard to fold and present the U.S flag to your loved ones, otherwise the EMS Honor Guard will perform this honor)

If NO, do you wish to have the Honor Guard conduct an EMS funeral? YES NO

(As specified in the Honor Guard Funeral Guide)

If NO, do you want a private service with NO Honor Guard participation? YES NO

If NO, please document your requests here: _____

Do you wish to be cremated? YES NO

If NO, do you wish the Honor Guard to be your pallbearers? YES NO

If NO, please list who you specify to carry the casket? If you want a joint effort, please describe:

Funeral Home: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Contact Person: _____ Phone # _____

Cemetery Name and Location: _____

Lot Number _____

Requested Person(s) to speak at my funeral:

Name: _____ Phone # _____

Name: _____ Phone # _____

Name: _____ Phone # _____

Do you wish the Chief to make a Eulogy at the funeral? YES NO

Special Wishes or Requests: _____

I have filled out this form as truthfully and as accurately as possible. I understand that all information is voluntary and any information contained or missing is my prerogative. All information that is completed is my part of my last wishes and can only be changed or altered by me in a state of conscious alertness. By signing this form I agree to all information and procedures.

Signature

Date

Emergency Contact Form

On the next page is the Emergency Contact Form.

The purpose of this form is to allow the member to identify the next of kin to be notified first and any additional department members they wish to accompany the notification team.

These additional individuals may include partners, supervisors, etc of the members choosing. Ideally, the member should choose someone that is familiar to the next of kin, with the purpose of allowing the next of kin a familiar face when notifications are made.

This form should be kept at the department since this form will need to be accessed prior to making the notification. This form will need to be easily available at all times of the day and night while maintaining the confidentiality of the member's request.

Line of Duty Serious Injury/Line of Duty Death
Emergency Contact Form

CONFIDENTIAL

Personal Information

Name _____

Contact Person

In the event of my untimely serious injury or death while on duty, I have selected the following person to be contacted first by the department and notified.

Name _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Additional Phones: _____

Relationship: _____

List additional department personnel you would like to accompany the notification team to make the death notification to the above person. Please make sure these personnel are aware of your request.

Name: _____ Phone # _____

Name: _____ Phone # _____

Signature

Date

Resources

Line of Duty Deaths are serious logistical challenges. This fact cannot be overstated. An event of this magnitude will tax even the most prepared agencies. The following are a listing of resources that will prove useful in preplanning for an event of this magnitude.

Unfortunately in our line of business, the question we should be asking ourselves is not IF this happens to my department, but WHEN. Every year we lose an average of 20-30 EMS responders nationwide to Line of Duty deaths. With preplanning and preparation we can help ease the workload and stress when having to face this situation.

Important phone numbers to have on hand:

CISD Team

American Red Cross

Salvation Army

Local Bus Company

Local Pizza/Deli/Sandwich Store

Walmart/Target

Grocery Store

Local Funeral Homes

Local Cemeteries

Local Honor Guards

This guide was developed to assist you, the department Chief or Administrator, in the first few hours of a Line of Duty serious injury or death.

Please be very aware that this guide only consists of the basic initial information you will need to get started. You will need to contact our Honor Guard immediately before or after notification is performed.

Failure to notify our team immediately could result in loss of honors or benefits to the survivors. Again, we are here to assist you, we will NOT take over for your department. We are a resource EMS funerals.

This guide will be updated as needed. To ensure you have the latest updates please watch the tri County EMS Association website.

www.TC-EMS.org