

S.O.P. #: PERSONNEL 25

SUBJECT: HONOR GUARD

DIVISION: EMERGENCY OPERATIONS

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Objective: To outline the membership requirements, uniform policy, duties and responsibilities of the Baltimore County Fire Department Honor Guard.

Section 1: Membership Requirements- the Honor Guard will strive to represent the department's diversity and fitness standards.

- A. Membership shall be on a voluntary basis. The Officer in Charge of the Honor Guard shall approve membership and may remove any member from serving the Honor Guard for just cause.
- B. Members shall attend a minimum of five (5) drills and service functions per year.
- C. Members will be evaluated on an annual basis as to their level of participation.
- D. Members who do not meet the requirements of (C) above for a period of two (2) years, or, members who have no activity for a period of one (1) year will be considered inactive and will surrender all issued uniforms and/or equipment.
- E. Probationary members of the Baltimore County Fire Department are not eligible for membership status in the Honor Guard.
- F. Active Members, at the time of their retirement, shall become honorary members of the Honor Guard, effective on their retirement date.

Section 2: Appearance

- A. Members of the Honor Guard shall have a neat clean appearance, including regulation hair and facial hair requirements.
- B. Members shall present themselves in public with military bearing at all time, concurrent with S. O. P. Personnel 1.

Section 3: Uniform Policy

- A. It is the responsibility of each Honor Guard member to keep his entire uniform clean and neat, and ready for service.
- B. All members are responsible for all parts and pieces of their uniform. In the event of a size change, loss, or non-serviceability of an item, the member must contact the Honor Guard Commander immediately and complete and forward a Form 133P.
- C. The uniform of the Honor Guard will be that which has been approved by the Chief of the Department and his/her staff. This uniform is to be continually evaluated for change and updated by a subcommittee of the Honor Guard.

Section 4: Funeral Policy

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- A. The Honor Guard (*Commander or his/her designee*) shall be notified of the death of the following:
1. Any Line of Duty death of a career or volunteer member.
  2. Any active Baltimore County Fire Department member non-line of duty death.
  3. Any retired member of the Baltimore County Fire Dept.
- B. The Honor Guard (*Commander or his/her designee*) shall be notified by telephone.
- C. Line of Duty Deaths
1. Members of the Honor Guard will assist members of the Department in establishing an Honorary Guard which will stand at the head and foot of the casket during viewing.
    - a. Honorary Guard Personnel will stand at Parade rest.
    - b. Honorary Guard will stand at fifteen (15) minute intervals.
    - c. Department personnel who wish to participate, shall contact a member of the Honor Guard at the funeral home at least fifteen (15) minutes in advance.
  2. During the funeral service, the Honor Guard shall flank the casket, as room permits, during the pass and review.
  3. The Honor Guard shall act as pall bearers when requested.
  4. In the event of a flag draped casket, the Honor Guard shall fold the flag, unless uniformed Honorary Pall Bearers are present. In such case, it will be the responsibility of the Honor Guard to instruct and train those personnel chosen to perform this task.
  5. The Honor Guard will provide colors at the service and the interment.
  6. The Honor Guard shall provide taps, bagpipes, and gun salutes as deemed necessary.
  7. All verbal commands required for the operation of the services, shall be given by the Honor Guard Commander, or designee.
- D. Active Member Non-line of Duty Death
1. The Honor Guard shall be present, if requested by the family.
  2. The Honor Guard will provide colors, if requested, at the service and at the place of interment.
  3. Pallbearers shall be selected by the family. If not selected, the Honor Guard shall perform such duties, if requested.
  4. Special Requests:
    - a. The procession may go past the last duty station.
    - b. The casket will not be borne on the apparatus.
- E. Retired Members Death
1. The Honor Guard shall provide colors at the services and at the place of interment, if requested.

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2. Pallbearers shall be selected by the family. If not selected by the family, the Honor Guard shall perform such duty.
3. No other Fire Department procedures shall be provided.

F. Volunteer Line of Duty and Non-line of Duty Death

1. The Honor Guard shall work with the officers of the company of the deceased in making the funeral arrangements.
2. All items of Section 4.C shall apply to the assistance rendered for line of duty deaths.
3. Non-line of duty deaths will be given colors at the service and at the place of interment if requested by surviving family member(s).

G. Out of Jurisdiction Line of Duty Deaths:

1. The Honor Guard Commander will be notified immediately of any out of jurisdiction Fire Department line of duty death. This notification will be made through dispatch upon receipt of such information.
2. Honor Guard Personnel will be chosen on a first come basis due to the time consideration of travel, etc.
3. The Honor Guard Commander, or designee, will contact the involved agency to offer our services and assistance.

H. In any of the above cases, the Honor Guard shall have the well-being of the deceased's family in mind. Any services that can be extended to the family of the deceased shall be so extended.

Section 5: Honor Guard Notification System

- A. The Honor Guard Commander shall keep the Honor Guard portable radio and charger.
- B. The Honor Guard Commander is responsible to notify ADO who the designated point of contact is if he/she will be unable to fulfill his/her duties.
- C. Upon request from a deceased member's family, ADO will notify the Honor Guard Commander or designee.
- D. All information will be relayed to members of the unit via department e-mail from the primary source of contact. Follow-up phone calls will be made as necessary.
- E. Unit members shall frequently, but not less than once a tour, check their County e-mail for messages pertaining to pending details

Section 6: Honor Guard Drills

- A. The Honor Guard will meet no fewer *than* two (2) times a year to practice and conduct business of the unit.
- B. These drills shall be rotated between the shifts so as not to cause hardship on any one shift.
- C. The uniform of the day for drills shall be Class B.

Section 7: New Applicants

- A. Members of the Baltimore County Fire Dept. wishing to become a member of the Honor Guard must provide a letter of recommendation from their company commander or supervisor to the Honor Guard Commander on a Form 58.
- B. The Officer in Charge of the Honor Guard must give his/her approval on the request.

Section 8: Honor Guard Commander

- A. The Honor Guard Commander shall be responsible for all records pertaining to the Honor Guard, and its operation.
- B. The Honor Guard Commander and/or designee shall be responsible for all Honor Guard equipment and its state of readiness.
- C. All Form 133P's for equipment must be signed by the Honor Guard Commander.
- D. The Honor Guard Commander is responsible for the Honor Guard budget.
- E. The Honor Guard Commander may appoint sub-committees, as necessary, for the Guard's operation.
- F. The Honor Guard Commander must approve all Form 211's for compensatory time.
- G. The Honor Guard Commander, or designee, is responsible for making all arrangements necessary to carry out details assigned to the unit. Such arrangements shall include:
  - 1. Obtaining necessary vehicles
  - 2. Detailing of on-duty personnel
  - 3. Notification of personnel
  - 4. Equipment pickup and return
  - 5. Deciding the uniform-of-the-day
- H. The Honor Guard Commander shall be responsible for the evaluation of the performance of Honor Guard members as to their continuing membership in the Honor Guard.

Section 9: Chain of Command

- A. The Officer-in-Charge of the Honor Guard shall be a Chief Officer and be appointed by the Chief of the Fire Department.
- B. The Honor Guard Commander shall report to the Officer-in-Charge of the Honor Guard, or in his/her absence, his/her designee, for all matters pertaining to the Honor Guard to include, but not limited to:
  - 1. Approval of travel out of jurisdiction
  - 2. Authorization of Compensatory time
  - 3. Authorization of equipment purchase

Section 10: General Considerations

- A. Events that require the presence of the Honor Guard shall be staffed with on-duty personnel first. When staffing allows, personnel shall be detailed to a unit and personnel shall report to the event as a group. If on-duty personnel are unavailable, off duty personnel will be utilized.
- B. For the total respect of the National Colors, (the American Flag), the overall professionalism of the Honor Guard and the pride and appearance of the Baltimore County Fire Department, the Honor

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Guard will march from point of assembly to the detail area. The National Colors will **ALWAYS** be the lead flag.

C. The flags, known as colors, are to be covered, (protected at both ends), with weapons. The Honor Guard has two (2) types of ceremonial weapons (W), axes and tin hooks. Axes will be the cover of choice for Fire Department related events however, if sufficient personnel are available, both may be carried. At no time will only one (1) weapon of each type be carried. The axes and/or hooks are to create a mirrored image.

D. The order of flag presentation is as follows;

1. The National Colors (American Flag)
2. The Maryland State Flag
3. The Baltimore County Flag
4. The Baltimore County Fire Department Flag
5. The Baltimore County Volunteer Fire Association Flag
6. Local 1311 Union Flag
7. The Baltimore County Fire Department Retirees Flag
8. The Fallen Firefighters Foundation Flag, (This flag is generally used only for events at The National Fire Academy in Emmetsburg and Line of Duty Death, (LODD), services.

(Flags 4, 5, 6, and 7 are listed in the order in which those organizations were established)

E. Recommended display of flags and weapons (W) contingent upon number of service personnel available;

1. Line of duty death
  - a. Three (3)member team- flags 1, 2, (4 or 5)
  - b. Four (4) member team- (W), flags 1, 2, (W)
  - c. Five (5) member team- (W), 1, 2, (4 or5), (W)
  - d. Six (6) member team- (W), 1, 2, 3, (4 or5), (W)
  - e. Seven (7) member team- (W), 1 ,2 ,3, (4 or5), 6, (W)
  - f. Eight (8) member team- (W), 1, 2, 3, (4 or 5), 6, 7, (W)

\*Note - The Baltimore County Fire Department Flag, or The Baltimore County Volunteer Fire Association Flag follows the fallen member. It may join the color team during times of static display.

2. Active duty death
  - a. Three (3) member team- flags 1, 2, (4 or 5)
  - b. Four (4) member team- (W), 1, (4 or 5), (W)
  - c. Five (5) member team- (W), 1, 4, 5, (W)
  - d. Six (6) member team- (W), 1, 2, 4, 5, (W)
  - e. Seven (7)member team- (W), 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, (W)
  - f. Eight (8) member team- (W), 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, (W)
3. Retiree's death
  - a. Three (3) member team- flags 1, 2, 7
  - b. Four (4) member team- (W), 1, 7, (W)
  - c. Five (5) member team- (W), 1, 2, 7, (W)
  - d. Six (6) member team- (W), 1, 2, 4, 7, (W)
  - e. Seven (7) member team- (W), 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, (W)

- f. Eight (8) member team- (W), 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, (W)
  
- 4. Graduation or Promotional Ceremony
  - a. Three (3) member team- flags 1, 2, 4
  - b. Four (4) member team- (W), 1, 4, (W)
  - c. Five (5) member team- (W), 1, 2, 4, (W)
  - d. Six (6) member team- (W), 1, 2, 3, 4, (W)
  - e. Seven (7) member team- (W), 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, (W)
  - f. Eight (8) member team- (W), 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, (W)
  
- 5. Awards Ceremony
  - a. Three (3) member team- flags 1, 4, 5
  - b. Four (4) member team- (W), 1, 4, (W)
  - c. Five (5) member team- (W), 1, 4, 5, (W)
  - d. Six (6) member team- (W), 1, 2, 4, 5, (W)
  - e. Seven (7) member team- (W), 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, (W)
  - f. Eight (8) member team- (W), 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, (W)
  
- 6. Memorial Services and Parades
  - a. Three (3) member team- flags 1, 4, 5
  - b. Four (4) member team- (W), 1, 4, (W)
  - c. Five (5) member team- (W), 1, 4, 5, (W)
  - d. Six (6) member team- (W), 1, 2, 4, 5, (W)
  - e. Seven (7) member team- (W), 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, (W)
  - f. Eight (8) member team- (W), 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, (W)