

# MISSOURI EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES



## FUNERAL RESPONSE TEAM FUNERAL SERVICE GUIDELINES

(Updated June 1, 2023)

MISSOURI EMS FUNERAL RESPONSE TEAM

1248 CR 1217

MOBERLY, MISSOURI 65270

ACTIVATION OF THE TEAM: 1-800-264-6914

BUSINESS 1-660-415-7990

1-660-670-1469

[www.moemsfuneralteam.org](http://www.moemsfuneralteam.org)

## PURPOSE OF THIS BOOKLET

When an ambulance district or helicopter service has one of its own lose their life in the line of duty, there is nothing harder to deal with. And if an organization does not have a plan in place, and you are faced with a situation, it is hard not to make decision using your emotions. It is a difficult task in being involved in a funeral for one of its members. There are a lot of questions associated with a funeral and what type of funeral honors are appropriate for the deceased. This booklet will assist organization in what the Missouri EMS Funeral Response Team policy provides. It can also be a guideline to help your organization set your policies if something happens in your organization.

These guidelines will define the different levels of honors. It also includes suggestions for visitations and funerals. To have consistency, the Missouri EMS Funeral Response Team will abide by these guidelines.

Through the entire event, greeting the families possibly before the visitation, at the visitation, and throughout the funeral the family's wishes must be considered before any plans are made. The family may choose not to do some suggested and appropriate level of honors services, but families should not influence an increase of the level of honor service.

The Missouri Emergency Medical Services Funeral Response Team is a trained and dedicated Corps of EMS Volunteers that will respond to your department when requested. Our goal is that every EMS/Pre-hospital provider that pays the ultimate price receives the honors they deserve during the funeral process.

We provide Honor Guard and logistic services, and we specialize in assistance with funeral procedures including planning for both Line of Duty and non- Line of Duty deaths, bringing the necessary supplies and knowledge. It is our mission to represent all members of the EMS profession with honor, dignity, and respect. Additionally, we will also strive to provide compassion, support, and assistance to the families and colleagues of fallen EMS personnel and their departments.

The team can be reached for activation by calling 1-800-274-6914 or 660-415-7990. General questions can be sent by email to either [t\\_yates@sbcglobal.net](mailto:t_yates@sbcglobal.net) or [gwright000@gmail.com](mailto:gwright000@gmail.com) or by calling 660-415-7990 or 660-670-1469.

# TYPES OF SERVICES

## The Ultimate Sacrifice—Line of Duty Death

The Line of Duty death, the ultimate sacrifice, will receive the highest level of ceremony. See the next page on Type One.

First, we need to make sure that this is truly a Line of Duty Death (LODD). What constitutes a line of duty is set by the federal guidelines. It defines line of duty deaths as:

***Death is a direct and proximate result of an injury sustained in the line of duty.***

In 2003, the “Hometown Heroes Act” became law. It states:

*That a public safety officer who suffered a fatal heart attack or stroke up to 24 hours after on-duty, nonroutine stressful event.* This is not 24 hours after the end of their shift. But when the nonroutine stressful event ends. In 2012 Vascular accidents was added to this.

In 2022, The “Public Safety Officers Support Act was signed into law”. This law is very new, and all nuances regarding filing requirements are not yet known. We do know the suicidal act must be related to one of the “events” in the law.

There are 3 types / levels of honors that is afforded to a public safety individual. In our case, EMS personal. Type one is the highest level of ceremony. These honors are reserved for those individuals that have given the “Ultimate Sacrifice”, their lives in the line of duty. That is why we call the “Ultimate Honors”

It is very important that organizations understand what level of honors their member may receive. It is important to have a policy in place for just that. It is also important that “Emotions” do not play a part. “Honoring Up” is a term used when organizations and families sometime want to provide more honors than the EMS individual is entitled to. It is very hard not to use emotions when planning. Having a policy in place with our organization will help you set guidelines in which to go by. Guidelines for a policy is on our web site under Emergency and pre-plan. You are welcome to us that, critic it, or make one of your own to work for your organization.

We hope that these guidelines assist you in what may be provided in each level of honors. All 3 types are listed in this policy. Or you may contact the Missouri EMS Funeral team at the contact information on the front page.

## TYPES OF SERVICES

### TYPE ONE (1), Ultimate Sacrifice Deserves Ultimate Honors

**This is the highest level of ceremony.** It is reserved for our EMS family who die because of a line of duty incident or direct job-related event as set by the federal definition. This may include members whose death has occurred from injuries or illness directly sustained during active duty. This could include strokes, heart attacks, and suicide under certain circumstances. Other situations may be considered under certain circumstances. They will be looked at on a one-on-one basis. (This may include but not limited to training, to and from work, etc)

#### SERVICES OPTIONS FOR TYPE ONE FUNERAL

Casket Flag-American flag or EMS Flag – Nothing to be placed on the American Flag-No flowers on EMS flag

Ambulance as hearse

Badge shrouds/morning bands

Bagpiper/Pipe & Drum – option if one can be obtained or by PA system      Bugler – option (yes if Military)

Casket Vigil – See information in definitions.

Department Apparatus in procession

Eulogy – pallbearers—Casket Escorts\*-- Casket guards

Visitation department walk through      Color Guard      Honor Guard

Flags ½ mast (only by order of the governor)

Ladder with American flag – if available and weather permitting—option

Last Alarm Ceremony      Sea of Blue      Vehicle bunting & station bunting (if available)

Fly over-If available and weather permitting

Assist agency with nomination paperwork for national memorials-if applicable

\*If pallbearers are being provided, casket escort will escort casket to the caisson and at the cemetery.

# TYPES OF SERVICES

## TYPE TWO (2)

This level of service is available to our EMS Family who die while an active member, but the death was not job or duty related.

### SERVICES OPTIONS FOR TYPE TWO FUNERAL

American Flag—if Military EMS Flag-option Missouri Flag to family ( If EMS flag is not presented)

Hearse\*

Badge shrouds/morning bands

Bagpiper – option if one can be obtained or by PA system

Bugler – option (yes if Military)

Casket guard – 2 personal

Department Apparatus in procession

Eulogy -- pallbearers

Visitation department walk through

Honor Guard

Ladder with American flag – if available—option

Last Alarm Ceremony Sea of Blue

Vehicle bunting (if available) Fly over – if available and weather permitting

\*Ambulance as hearse is not an option for non-LODD type 2. The organization ambulance right in front of the hearse leading the honoree to his/her final resting place is an honor that organizations should be honored to preform for the honoree.

## TYPE THREE (3)

This level of service is available to retired, or inactive member that is not job or duty related or for the death of a current or charter board member.

American Flag—if Military

Bugler—if military

Hearse\*

Missouri Flag to family

Casket guard– 1 personal

Pallbearers

Visitation department walk through

\*Ambulance as hearse is not an option for non-LODD type 3. The organization ambulance right in front of the hearse leading the honoree to his/her final resting place is an honor that organizations should be honored to preform for the honoree.

## TYPE 4

Sometimes there may be a request for special honors. An example could be a Dr. who was instrumental in working with EMS, or a board member that served 20 years and was still serving as a board member. In many cases, this will fall under our type 2 or 3. These will be looked at as requested.

What is the difference between a casket guard and a casket vigil?

A casket vigil is done to ensure the fallen hero is always accompanied until they are laid to rest. This is done during the non-public times from the death until the hero is laid to rest. This is different from the casket guard, which is done during public events such as the visitation and funeral.

A vigil is a way to extend honor to an EMS hero. So, what is it? And how do organizations honor their fallen hero with a casket vigil?

When an EMS provider dies in the line of duty, it is appropriate to have that hero always accompanied, if possible. It is preferred to begin the vigil as soon as possible. Sometimes it may start at the ME's office or hospital. It may start at the funeral home. There will be sometimes that you will not be able to be right with the hero. But you can be in the building. This type of vigil is done only in Line of Duty event.

A vigil differs from a casket guard, which is done during the visitation and/or funeral. The vigil is typically done in one-to-two-hour shifts. However, the time frame is not set in stone. It is done prior to and between public events. The vigil ensures that the hero is always accompanied until they are laid to rest.

The vigil is a casual event where the hero is accompanied by one or two individuals. They do not stand at the casket. They basically stay in the room or building with the hero. Persons doing this vigil may be sitting in a chair or around a table, never leaving the building. They are not in uniform unless they wish to. If the funeral home will not allow the individuals to stay in the funeral home when they close for the evening, then the individuals stay outside the front door, either in chairs or their cars, depending on weather conditions.

Many times, organizations that cannot be there to honor the hero at the visitation or funeral will sign up for this. There are different methods to do this. The funeral team is working on that at the time of printing.

COMPARISON OF CASKET VISIT AND CASKET GUARD

CASKET VIGIL	CASKET GUARD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Private</li> <li>● Can begin at the scene of the death, at the hospital or ME's office, or the funeral home.</li> <li>● Minimum of 1 personal, no maximum.</li> <li>● Be in the room or building. Standing at the casket is not required.</li> <li>● Casual dress</li> <li>● Casual seating-chair, around a table, etc.</li> <li>● 1-2 hour shifts rotations (may vary)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Public</li> <li>● Performed at the location of the visitation, funeral or memorial service.</li> <li>● 1 or 2 personal, depending on level of honors.</li> <li>● Standing at the casket head and/or foot or as close as possible at ceremonial parade rest.</li> <li>● Usually, uniform dress but not required</li> <li>● 10–15-minute shift rotation</li> </ul>

***Honoring up-ambulance as hearse in type 2 or type 3 funerals***

When the response team response to show honors, it will abide by the guidelines set forth in the Missouri EMS Funeral Team guidelines. If at any time when responding to an organization, that organization wishes to “Honor up”, the funeral team commander or state commander will explain the funeral team position to the organization and the family as needed.

If the organization still does not abide by the funeral team’s guidelines the funeral team will still attend the visitation and show honors as the honoree deserves, following the guidelines of the team. However:

The EMS funeral team believes that using an ambulance as a hearse is the “Ultimate Honor” and is reserved for EMS providers that fall in the line of duty.



The EMS Funeral team guidelines would be to have the organizations or the honoree ambulance right in front of the hearse-- lead the hearse to the honorees final resting place.

If an organization insist that the ambulance be used as a hearse at the funeral, the funeral team, per our funeral team guidelines, will remove themselves and will not be involved with anything with transporting the casket to the ambulance, loading in the ambulance, or the removal of the casket from the ambulance. This also includes being pall bearers, escorts, and organizing and calling the "Sea of Blue". The funeral team will answer any questions the organization has about this and will show all other honors per our guidelines at the visitation.

### **DEFINITIONS OF TERMS**

**Active member:** A full-time or volunteer member of an agency serving in an active capacity.

**Affiliate Member:** An individual that has served in some other capacity with the agency. Director, board member Etc.

**American flag:** Provided to honorable discharged military veterans, or EMS personal that have lost their lives in the line of duty. Can be used to drape the casket. (Note: nothing is to be laid on the American flag while on the casket.)

**Badge Shroud / morning band:** Black elastic horizontally covering the uniform badge.

**Backstoppers:** Organization that assist families of LODD individuals in the St. Louis and surrounding countries.

**Bunting: Station:** mourning drapes that are placed on the outside of the ambulance base

**Vehicle:** Morning drapes that is used to adorn an ambulance participating in a service.

**Casket Guard/ silent guard:** One or Two uniformed personnel standing guard at the casket during visitation.

**Casket Escort; Line of duty:** 2 or 4 honor guard members escorting the pallbearers and casket.

**Casket Vigil:** Attendant or attendees who stay with the hero. See What is casket vigil in this pamphlet.

**Color Guard / Honor Guard:** A formal trained staff of EMS service staff that carry ceremonial flags and other implements that participate in marching and other formalized drill procedures.

**EMS Flag:** EMS casket flag that can be draped over the casket in LODD and Non-LODD visitation and funeral. No flowers are to be laid on the EMS flag.

**Folds of Honors:** Beginning in 2022, Folds of Honor expanded its mission to include first responders. Its educational scholarships support private-school tuition or tutoring in grades K-12 as well as post-secondary tuition. (trade schools Technical schools, etc.

**Fly Over:** A helicopter fly over at the appropriate time in the service if weather allows.

**Honoring Up;** Providing more honors than the individuals should receive.

**Inactive member:** A retired or former member of an agency who remains in good standing.

**Line of Duty Death (LODD):** Death is a direct and proximate result of an injury sustained in the line of duty. OR That a public safety officer who suffered a fatal heart attack or stroke up to 24 hours after on-duty, nonroutine stressful event.

**Non-Duty Related Deaths:** Death that results from injury or illness that is not directly related in the performance of their duties.

**PSOB Benefits:** Public safety officer's benefits is a federal program that provides financial and educational support for EMS, fire, and law enforcement providers that give the ultimate sacrifice. Benefits apply to government entities and possibly others. See the Department of Justice PSOB information for more details.

**Sea of Blue:** Non-detailed / uniformed members and visiting department's member's procession. Members may walk in a procession or create a corridor that the casket passes through, or both.

**Shield 24-7:** Mid Missouri organization that assists with financial aid to its members.

**Supporting Heroes:** Organization that will assist families of LODD heroes in Missouri, Kentucky, and Indiana in several areas including but not limited to financial aid.

**Visitation Walk Through:** A predetermined time during the visitation when uniform / non-uniformed members and dignitaries enter for a unified tribute.

Missouri EMS Funeral Response check list      Check all that apply

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Deceased: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of funeral; \_\_\_\_\_ Type 1    \_\_\_\_\_ Type 2    \_\_\_\_\_ Type 3    Casket open \_\_\_ closed \_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ American Flag (Type 1 or Military)    \_\_\_\_\_ EMS Flag (Type 1, 2)    \_\_\_\_\_ Missouri Flag (Type 1,2,3)

Give To: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Ambulance as hearse (Type 1 only)

\_\_\_\_\_ Hearse (Type 1, 2, 3)

\_\_\_\_\_ Badge Shroud / morning bands (Type 1,2)

\_\_\_\_\_ Bagpiper (Type 1, 2)    \_\_\_\_\_ Bugler (Type 1,2,military)

\_\_\_\_\_ 2 Casket guard (Type 1,2)    \_\_\_\_\_ 1 Casket guard (Type 3)

\_\_\_\_\_ Casket Vigil (Type 1)

\_\_\_\_\_ Department Apparatus in procession (Type 1,2)

\_\_\_\_\_ Eulogy (Type 1,2)

\_\_\_\_\_ Pallbearers (Type 1,2,3)

\_\_\_\_\_ Casket escort (Type 1)

\_\_\_\_\_ Visitation department walk through (Type 1,2,3)

\_\_\_\_\_ Flags ½ mast: by order of the governor (Type 1)

\_\_\_\_\_ Color guard / honor guards (Type 1,2)

\_\_\_\_\_ Ladder with American flag (Type 1,2)

\_\_\_\_\_ Last Alarm Ceremony (Type 1,2)

\_\_\_\_\_ Sea of blue (Type 1,2)

\_\_\_\_\_ Vehicle bunting (Type 1,2)    \_\_\_\_\_ Station Bunting

**Service information:**

Visitation Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Visitation Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Where: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Funeral Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Funeral Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Where: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Cemetery Information:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Directions:

**Cemetery Procedures:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Fly over (type 1,2) (If weather permitting)

Contact person \_\_\_\_\_