

Egg Harbor Fire Department and First Responders Standard Operating Guidelines

SUBJECT: LINE OF DUTY DEATH/CATASTROPHIC INJURY **SOG 025**

PURPOSE: To set department policy on Line of Duty Death/Catastrophic Injury

SCOPE: This policy shall apply to all members of the Egg Harbor Fire Department.

DEFINITION:

This SOG has been established to assist and direct officers and firefighters thoughts and actions along with initiating some very important steps. The fire company will be able to mitigate the incident which they responded to and proceed with the actions needed to assure that all requirements be met out of respect for the fallen or seriously injured firefighter and his/her family.

This SOG has been divided into two sections. The first section deals with line of duty death and the second section deals with catastrophic injury. The format for each section may be used as a checklist in order to make it easier for the fire company's administration and chief officers to follow and complete all notifications, investigations and follow up that are or may be required.

SECTION 1: LINE OF DUTY DEATH

DEFINITION:

A line of duty death is a death sustained in the line of duty. Further interpretation or application shall be done by the United States Department of Justice.

In the case of multiple LODD's, most of the following steps must be repeated for each fatality.

AT THE SCENE

- Maintain command over the emergency incident until the incident is mitigated.
- Request a Personnel Accountability report (PAR) from all groups and other departments.
- Assign new group / RIT to rescue firefighters and or recovery.
- Replace any on-scene emotionally distraught firefighters.
- Collect, bag, tag and secure the fallen firefighters full turn out gear, including SCBA and turn over to the investigation team or agency.
- Contact dispatch, by phone, to report a LODD and advise them that you will need a copy of the tape of the incident.
- Contact the Sheriff's Department.
- Contact the State Fire Marshall.

WITHIN FIRST 24 HOURS

- Open and review a fallen firefighters Public Safety Officer Benefit (PSOB) packet. Appendix contains a blank copy of this packet for reference.
- Send two fire company personnel to contact the fallen firefighters family. If there is more than one family member living in the household , take two vehicles – one for transporting family to the hospital; the other to allow a fire company member to remain with the rest of the family if permissible.
- Transport family member(s) to the hospital and act as the fire company / hospital liaison.
- Assure that an autopsy is performed within the guidelines of the United States Department of Justice/PSOB. Explain to the family why an autopsy must be performed.
- Provide assistance to the family in making phone calls to relatives and close friends. Answer incoming calls for the family or get messages to them at the hospital. .
- Fire department personnel are to remain with family members acting as a family support team and fire company / family liaison until assured that their presence is no longer necessary.
- Contact the Public Safety Officers Benefit Program, Washington, D.C. by telephone during the next business day. Bureau of Justice Assistance 1-888-744-6513 or 202-307-0635
- National Fire Academy and United States Fire Administration at the following numbers: USFA - (301) 447-1000.
- Contact the Critical Incident Stress Debriefing Team.
- Contact the Egg Harbor Town and Village Offices and attorney. Request that the Town Clerk contact appropriate Insurance agencies.
- Notify all Egg Harbor Fire Department personnel.
- Prepare a written statement to be used by a Chief Officer when making a statement to the press. Do not release any names of fallen or injured personnel until all involved families have been notified. Then schedule a media briefing.
 1. Prepare an area for appropriate media coverage away from the area where firefighters have gathered.
 2. Inform media when updates will be provided.

AFTER FIRST 24 HOURS

- Collect the fallen firefighter's personal belongings and prepare to deliver them upon the family's request. If any of these items must be held for the investigation team, explain why to the family.
- Assess the ability of the Egg Harbor Fire Department's firefighters to respond to calls.
- Explain to the fallen firefighter's family what outside organizations are doing to assist the family.

- Work with the family in planning funeral.
- If the family wants a fire service funeral, make sure a dress uniform is in their possession.
- Offer to have a member of the fire company stay with the family prior to the funeral.
- Contact dispatch to arrange mutual aid coverage on the day of the funeral.

ONGOING SUPPORT

- Only promise what the fire company can actually do. Keep all promises.
- Offer to help with specific tasks rather than asking if anything needs to be done.
- Continue to talk with family about memories of the fallen firefighter. Most families want to hear about their loved one, even if it is emotionally difficult.
- Take all steps necessary to secure benefits for the family. This process is often lengthy; so keep the family informed.
- Continue to invite the family to fire company events.
- Contact the family before releasing any information concerning investigations, incident reports, etc.
- Provide survivors with information on the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation's programs for survivors.
- Encourage the family and the fire company members to attend any national, state or local tributes.
- Periodically, check with family to ask if they need any help

SECTION 2: CATASTROPHIC INJURY

DEFINITION:

A CI is one in which the consequences of the accidental injury sustained in the line of duty permanently prevents an individual from performing or gaining work. Further interpretation or application shall be done by the United States Department of Justice. In cases of multiple CI's most of the following steps must be repeated for each firefighter.

AT THE SCENE

- Maintain command over the emergency incident until the incident is mitigated.
- Request a Personnel Accountability Report (PAR) from all group / departments.
- Assign group (Rapid Intervention Team) to rescue firefighter(s)
- Replace any on-scene distraught firefighters.
- Do not transmit name(s) of injured firefighter(s) over radios.
- Contact dispatch, over phone to report an injured firefighter, and advise them that you will need a copy of the tape of the incident.
- Contact the State Fire Marshall.

WITHIN FIRST 24 HOURS

- Open and review injured firefighter's Public Safety Officers Benefit (PSOB) Packet. See Appendix.

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- Send two fire company personnel to contact the injured firefighter's family. If there is more than one family member living in the household, take two vehicles, one for transporting family members to the hospital; the other to allow fire company member to remain with the rest of the family.
- Transport family member(s) to hospital and act as fire company/hospital liaison.
- Provide assistance to the family in making telephone calls to family and close friends. Answer incoming calls for the family or get messages to them at the hospital.
- Two fire company personnel are to remain with the family, acting as family support and Fire Company / family liaison until assured that their presence is no longer necessary.
- Contact the Public Safety Officers Benefit Program, Washington, D.C. by telephone during the next business day. Bureau of Justice Assistance 1-888-744-6513 or 202-307-0635
- National Fire Academy and United States Fire Administration at the following numbers: USFA - (301) 447-1000.
- Contact the Critical Incident Stress Debriefing Team.
- Contact the Egg Harbor Town and Village Offices and attorney. Request that the Town Clerk contact appropriate Insurance agencies.
- Notify all Egg Harbor Fire Department personnel.
- Prepare a summary of facts about the injured firefighter and the incident for public information purposes.
- Prepare a written statement to be used by Chief Officer when making a statement to the press. Do not release names of any injured firefighters until all involved families have been notified.
- Schedule a media briefing.
 1. Prepare an area for appropriate media coverage away from the area where firefighters have gathered.
 2. Inform media when updates will be provided if necessary.

AFTER FIRST 24 HOURS

- Assess the ability of the Egg Harbor Fire Department's firefighters to respond to calls.
- Meet with the injured firefighter(s) family and discuss what support the Egg Harbor Fire Department can provide and explain what outside organizations are doing to assist them.
- Encourage the family and firefighters to spend time with the injured firefighter, regardless of the type of injury.
- Have someone available to drive the family home from the hospital. Offer to help with continuing visits as much as resources allow.
- If donations are collected for the family, offer to set up a bank account in which to deposit these funds.

ONGOING SUPPORT

- Only promise what the fire company can actually do. Keep all promises.
- Offer to help with specific tasks rather than asking can anything be done.
- Remember that parents of an injured firefighter need support and contact just like spouses and children do.
- Take all steps necessary to secure benefits for the family. The process is often lengthy; so keep the family informed.
- Contact the family before releasing any information concerning investigations, incident reports, etc.
- Periodically check in with family and continue to support them.