TOLEDO FIRE & RESCUE DEPARTMENT

B-28 Last Alarm Services

Non-Emergency Manual

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Policy/Procedure

The Last Alarm Service is a Fire Department memorial service held at a funeral home for the purposes of paying final respects to a fellow firefighter who has passed away, and to offer our sympathies to the family. This is a separate service, usually held on the night before the burial, that commences on or about 1900 hours.

1. Firefighters, both active and retired, are directed to assemble shortly before the service outdoors or outside of the viewing parlor in order to receive directions specific to the service's location, including line-up instructions or other instructions regarding the service. Badges should be covered in black mourning bands or with black electrical tape.

2. The President of the Toledo Firefighter's Retirees Association, or a designee, begins the service by offering condolences to the family. The President then directs a member to read the decedent's record. Included in the reading are the decedent's name, date of birth, appointment date, badge number, assignments, promotions, commendations/awards, and any other relevant information regarding the decedent's service.

3. The President then reads a Firefighter's Prayer. When the prayer is concluded, the President instructs both active and retired firefighters to pay their last respects by passing the casket individually. Many times, firefighters will have been directed to line up in double-file fashion to consolidate the procession, though single-file is acceptable and, at times, preferred.

4. More often than not, active firefighters will lead the procession, followed directly by retired members. Some firefighters may choose to salute, while others will simply pass by the casket in reverence. If saluting while in double-file formation, it is best for the firefighters standing together at the casket to attempt to unify their actions, saluting together slowly and deliberately. The gong is sounded during this portion of the ceremony.

5. Upon conclusion of the procession, and depending upon the size of the room, firefighters may remain in the room and wait silently until all members have had the opportunity to pay their respects. If room size is a concern, firefighters leading the procession shall exit the parlor following their expression of respect and gather silently outdoors until the service concludes.

6. Taps may be sounded, if the decedent was a member of the military, following the last member's passing of the casket. The Honor Guard will then face the casket and give a final salute. When the Honor Guard has finished the President will announce the completion of the Last Alarm Service.

7. Only at the conclusion of the service should conversation commence among fire personnel. As many funeral homes cannot accommodate large numbers of people, every effort must be made to remain silent during the Last Alarm Service. Idle chatting amongst members disrupts the service and demonstrates a lack of respect to the family of the deceased firefighter. Talking in hushed tones is acceptable outside of the building only, both before and after the ceremony.

Proper attire for the Last Alarm Service is as follows:

- Off-duty, active personnel may wear a Class "A" uniform, a Class "B" uniform with a tie, a suit, a dress, or casual clothing. Members off duty, in uniform, shall adhere to the TFRD grooming policy.
- Toledo Fire and Rescue Department dress uniform caps should be placed under a member's left arm during the readings and worn when passing by the casket.
- On-duty, active personnel should wear a Class B uniform with a tie.
- Retired members may wear a suit, a dress, or casual clothing.
- Members of fire departments other than the Toledo Fire and Rescue Department may wear Class "A" uniform clothing, Class "B" uniform clothing, a suit, a dress, or casual clothing.
- Polo shirts, shorts, and New York-style sweatshirts should not be worn by active members at any time.

The Last Alarm Service is one of the final opportunities for active and retired members of the Toledo Fire and Rescue Department, or other department's, to express their professional gratitude for services rendered by a deceased firefighter. It should be understood that deaths of members of the Toledo Fire and Rescue Department, or other departments nation-wide, often occur without notice or forewarning. Members should strive to maintain Class "A" uniforms, caps, and ties, in a state of readiness for use when the unexpected occurs.

See Also:

Permanent link:
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