TOLEDO FIRE & RESCUE DEPARTMENT

C-20 Death Procedure

Emergency Manual

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Policy/Procedure

1. Fire Death

If, during firefighting operations, a victim is found, the following steps shall be taken:

1. If there is any indication that a victim can be saved, crews shall remove him or her from the building or area and begin emergency medical treatment as soon as practical.

2. If the victim is obviously deceased, the following protocol shall be observed:

    1. Fire personnel discovering the victim shall notify Command using the assigned frequency or face to face that they “have a Code 18.”

    2. The victim shall not be moved unless the fire or the stability of the structure necessitates doing so. If the body is removed and determined to be deceased, the dignity of the victim shall be maintained.

    3. Per directive of the coroner, the body shall remain uncovered, if possible. If the body must be covered prior to exam by the coroner, it shall be covered with a disposable blanket with the plastic side down.

    4. Yellow scene tape shall be used to secure the following:

        1. The property line of the incident.

        2. The entire room or area where the victim was found.

5. The only fire operations to continue are those needed to extinguish the major area(s) of fire.

    1. Overhaul shall be limited, balancing evidence preservation with containing fire spread, until the Fire Investigator's or Coroner's Office gives their approval to complete the overhaul process.

6. When Command is informed that there is a fatality they shall ask Dispatch to notify FIU, all Deputy Chiefs and the Fire Chief.

7. In the absence of the Department's assigned Public Information Officer (PIO), a Chief Officer or Fire Investigator shall be designated the PIO.

2. Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Incident - Not Hospice

When the cause of death is unknown or there are signs of violence or any other unusual circumstances at an EMS incident, the following protocol shall be observed:

1. The body shall not be moved or disturbed, nor shall any other objects on the premises. Firefighters shall endeavor to prevent anyone else from doing so.

2. Fire personnel at the scene shall notify Dispatch they have a Code 18, and request the response of a police crew.

3. Upon arrival, law enforcement officers will take over the investigation. Fire personnel shall furnish them with all information at their disposal and assist as needed. At this point, the Fire Department's responsibility is ended. The incident commander shall identify the police unit responding in their narrative.

3. Hospice Deaths

When fire personnel encounter individuals who have died while in care of Hospice personnel, the following protocol shall be observed:

1. The incident commander shall request verification that the nurse in charge is employed by Hospice. If a Hospice nurse is not on the scene, or it cannot be verified the nurse in charge is employed by Hospice, the incident commander shall observe the protocols specified above for an EMS Incident death. Tact should be employed in making this determination to ensure the credentials of caregivers on-scene are not prematurely discounted.

2. If it is verified the patient was under care of Hospice, the death will not be considered a coroner's case and law enforcement shall not be notified.

3. In the event of suspicious circumstances on the scene, the Incident Commander may request TPD.

See Also:

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https://www.tfrdpolicies.com/dokuwiki/doku.php?id=c_manual:c20

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