



## Church Sector Officer Checklist

Church Sector Officer Responsible for everything occurring on the church or facility campus. Responsibilities may include: parking, arrival of the procession, movement of the fallen, on-site honor guard activities, seating, movement of people, church services, the Last Alarm, and onsite rehab. This is a huge job and requires strong organizational skills.

### Church Sector Officer

- ✓ For events in busy metropolitan areas, consider scheduling services to avoid morning and evening commutes.
- ✓ Be sure to discuss specific religious protocols or services with clergy and the planning team to insure both fire service and religious services are managed accordingly and in unison.
- ✓ Consider the use of large facilities like auditoriums or community centers.
- ✓ Be aware that other events scheduled at the facility slated for the funeral or reception may pose logistical challenges for your planning team.
- ✓ Consider asking volunteer groups or other support organization to help with the reception following the main services.
- ✓ Perform a “walk through” of the plan at least the day before the funeral. This will enable the various sections to practice things like marching, saluting, where to stand, casket handling, where to sit, ringing of the bell, etc.
- ✓ When applicable, contact the media to identify the location they are to function from, determine whether there will be a “pool feed” or individual cameras for TV outlets, and some basic ground rules for tactful photographic coverage, re: protect the family. Seating Arrangements.
- ✓ Assign someone to prepare a seating plan to accommodate the needs of the family, department members, dignitaries, visiting departments and the public.
- ✓ Normally, if ushers are used, they should be assigned to the rear of each aisle and given specific instructions on how to facilitate the seating plan.
- ✓ Attendees seeking a good seat may arrive an hour or more before the service is scheduled to start. Be prepared to handle their arrival.
- ✓ If you have a facility without adequate seating, the family, their friends, the department and dignitaries should be given priority. All others can stand through the service.
- ✓ A room should be provided to gather family members, department leaders and Coordinators before the start of services.

- ✓ If a large facility cannot be found, then overflow seating must be considered to accommodate a large crowd. If visibility or hearing is a problem, you will need to consider additional audio coverage of the service. If overflow seating is not available and people must stand through the service, consideration should be given to providing water and portable restroom facilities. Don't forget seating for handicapped or persons requiring special accommodations.

#### Religious Service, Protocols and Speakers.

- ✓ Religious services take precedence over fire service functions. Planners should meet with the family and the officiating Clergy to determine and define the extent of the department's involvement.
- ✓ Some Clergy members may be inflexible regarding fire department protocols. In such cases it is imperative to have a clear understanding of the family's wishes.
- ✓ In some faiths or denominations, the only fire department involvement will be as an Honor Guard.
- ✓ Certain fire service traditions may have to be performed at graveside rather than at the church.
- ✓ When the family requests a private service, the department may request a memorial service. It would, of course, be held on a different day.
- ✓ The number of speakers and musical selections will determine how much time is allotted to each speaker. A good rule of thumb is 5-10 minutes each.
- ✓ It is preferable to have a Chaplain or a Clergy person who is familiar with fire service traditions do the service. They can also serve in an advisory capacity for other Clergy.
- ✓ The service should generally last no more than one and one-half hours.