



**London Ambulance Service
NHS Trust**

LAS Staff Service Funeral Procedure

For Use By: All staff.

Introduction

No hard and fast rules can be laid down with regard to the holding of Service Funerals, or the attendance of staff at private funerals of serving or retired staff. It is essential that such occasions should be conducted with the complete respect for the deceased person and their family befitting the London Ambulance Service NHS Trust.

The information given is intended as a guide, which can be adapted to suit the unique requirement of each individual funeral regardless of culture or religious belief.

These guidelines are primarily directed towards the staff responsible for arranging service funerals. They will also be of assistance where some involvement is requested by the family at funerals of members of the service and those in retirement.

Any bereavement is extremely emotional which may affect the judgement of those involved. Primary consideration must be given to the next of kin or nearest relation, who should never be led to feel that their views are being ignored. To this end, it may be worthwhile when first visiting the family of the deceased to select a relative who can act as a suitable spokesperson. A Family Liaison Officer (FLO) will be appointed to be the point of contact with the family/relatives.

Once the funeral has taken place the family should not be forgotten especially the remaining spouse or partner and close family. Periodic contact and visits by a trained bereavement visitor should be considered, but we should also recognise that time and geography might not allow this to happen. Above all the wishes of the family must be respected at all times

Objectives

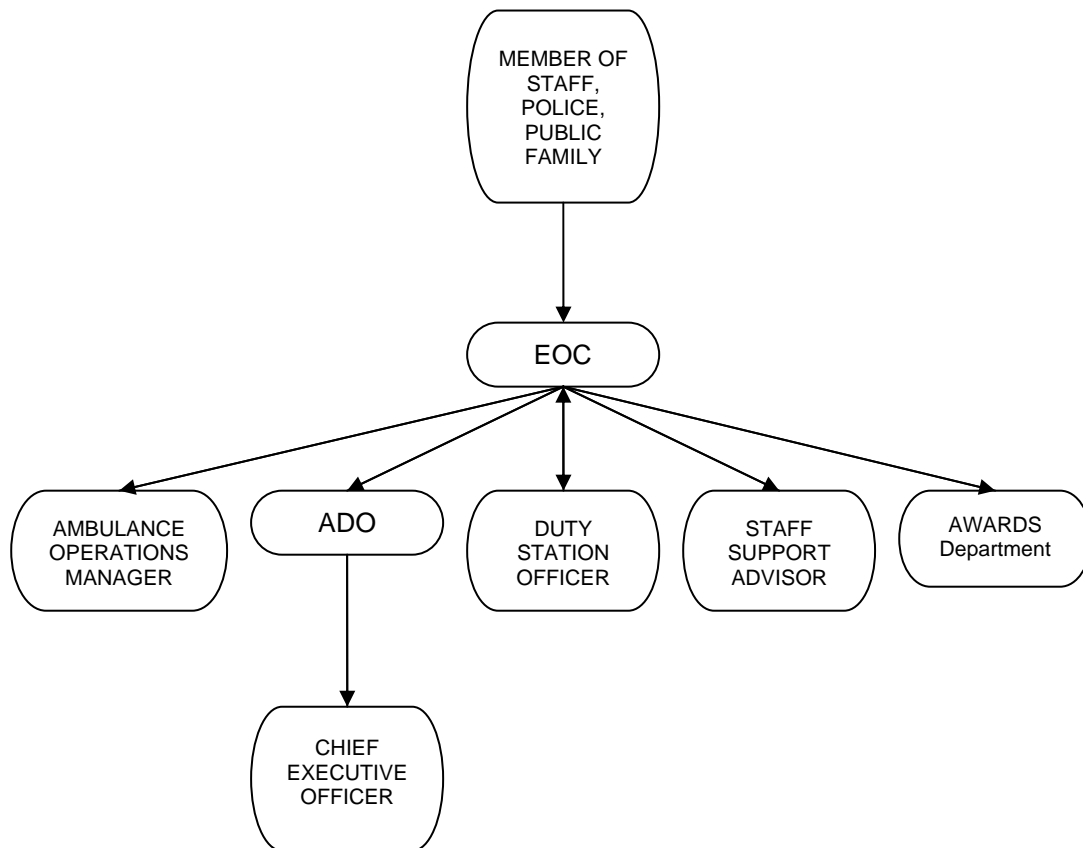
1. To organise and see that the funeral arrangements and the event are undertaken in a professional manner, bearing in mind the wishes of the family and the reputation of the service.
2. To ensure that all staff and members of outside agencies and the family are fully aware of the arrangements.
3. That support is given to staff and the bereaved family up to, and if appropriate, following the funeral, for an acceptable period.

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Procedure

1.0 Initial Action By Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) on Hearing of Death.

- 1.1 If the member of staff is on duty and the death does not invoke the Serious Untoward Incidents Policy – TP /006 then EOC should be informed. EOC will contact the appropriate Duty Station Officer (DSO) who will attend the incident and inform EOC once death has been confirmed. EOC will inform the Ambulance Operations Manager and appropriate Assistant Director Operations (ADO), Staff Support Advisor and the Awards Department. It is the responsibility of the ADO to inform the Chief Executive Officer.
- 1.2 If the member of staff is non-operational then their manager will be contacted. The manager will inform Staff Support Adviser, payroll and team/colleagues.



- 1.3 If the Serious Untoward Incidents Policy is invoked by an event that involves the death of an on duty member of staff, then strict compliance with the laid down actions by the nominated Incident Manager must be followed (see Serious Untoward Incidents Policy).

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- 1.4 If the member of staff is employed by the Service but not on duty it is acknowledged that, whoever receives the initial call should contact EOC who will then contact the DSO. Other senior managers are then contacted in the same manner as above at 1.1.
- 1.4 If the member of staff is retired it is again recognised that notification of death may come from a variety of different sources at any time of day or night. EOC should be contacted who will then inform Communications Office, Ambulance Operations Manager, Staff Support Advisor and Awards Department
- 1.6 In the case of retired members of staff the complex nearest the home or funeral will ensure a representative attends if geographically possible.
- 1.7 For those who may need counselling consideration should be given for LINC Peer support to be alerted. The aim of this group is to promote physical, psychological and emotional well-being of staff. The scheme is there to support any member of staff regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, disability, religion, culture, sexual orientation, role within the service, or rank. It provides a 24 hour confidential listening service see Appendix 4 for contact number.

2.0 Completion of Documentation

- 2.1 On confirmation of the death the DSO should complete the form LA.257 Entitled: 'Death of a Serving LAS Employee' (see Appendix 1) and fax to EOC who will then forward copies to the Chief Executive, Staff Support Advisor and other appropriate managers.
- 2.2 The Obituary bulletin should go to all stations / departments either by fax, email or RIB.
- 2.3 Funeral arrangements should go to all departments and stations as soon as possible.

3.0 Responsibilities of Awards Department

The responsibilities of the Awards Department in the co-ordination of Service Funerals include:

- To see that the event is properly managed.
- To ensure that flags are at half-mast and returned to normal when appropriate.
- To ensure armbands, Cover, white gloves are available on request.
- To advise on protocol and etiquette.

4.0 Liaison with Family

- 4.1 At the earliest appropriate opportunity the line manager and FLO will visit the

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next of kin, to offer any help or support that is needed and to determine what type of funeral is wanted by the family i.e. Service or private. Consideration must be given to the cultural and religious needs of the next of kin/family

- 4.2 There are a variety of different formats for funerals from a full service, including LAS chaplain and printing of an ‘Order of Service’ (see Appendix 3), to several staff members in civilian dress and these should be discussed with the Awards Department prior to the visit.
- 4.3 Having established from the next of kin the Service involvement, if any, a manager should be appointed to make the Service contribution to the funeral arrangements. The family will arrange with their own choice of funeral director on dates, time, cost and venue etc. The FLO will assist with this if required, providing transport and support if necessary.
- 4.4 In the case of retired members of staff the complex nearest the home or funeral will ensure a representative attends if geographically possible.
- 4.5 The requirements, if any, of LAS Chaplain or whoever is conducting the funeral for non-Christian funerals should be identified as soon as possible, whether an Order of Service is required and any other practical and welfare issues.
- 4.6 When discussing the actual form of service for the funeral, do not assume that the deceased service member is a Christian. It could well be they are a practicing member of another faith, (i.e. Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Jewish, etc.) Advice should be sought in the first instance from the local minister of that faith. In the event of difficulties, the service Chaplain may be able to assist. See appendix 4.
- 4.7 The Staff Support Advisor will also visit the family of serving staff to deal with pay, pension benefits and also to identify and assist in resolving any difficulties see Appendix 4 for contact number.

5.0 Liaison with Clergy

- 5.1 This may be the clergy or religious leader requested by the family or LAS Chaplain. If the deceased staff member attended a place of worship locally, the next of kin will normally request that his church or place of worship and the local clergyman or religious leader is used.
- 5.2 However, it is possible that the member of staff was not attached to any one place of worship, in which case a suitable local church or place of worship of the deceased person’s religion or denomination should be sought.
- 5.3 The clergyman or religious leader responsible for that place of worship should be asked for permission to hold the service there. Alternatively the funeral service will probably take place in the nominated place of rest. The Service

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Chaplain will be pleased to conduct the service if required. Early notification of this must be given to the undertaker who, if not advised, will ask the on call vicar to conduct the service.

- 5.4 When making arrangements thought should be given to the size of the place of worship and the approximate number of persons they will hold. If it is to be a full Service funeral, held at a crematorium then please advise the family to arrange an extended time service or a 'double booking'- see 6.3. Wherever possible the religious leaders should be advised of potentially large numbers of mourners and the possibility of publicity.
- 5.5 Any assistance on religious matters can be sought from the Service Chaplain who is always willing to give advice and assistance.
- 5.6 Remember that the family will choose the hymns (if appropriate), reading and music, which are played at the beginning and end of the service. It is also worth checking that, if chosen, the words of the hymns are available at the place of worship, just in case they are unable to be printed in the Order of Service. The presiding religious leader will be able to assist see Appendix 4 for contact number.

6.0 Liaison with Funeral Director

- 6.1 A liaison must be established prior to the event between the appointed manager and the funeral director. It should be remembered that they have an overall responsibility for the event with particular regard to the family mourners and their wishes.
- 6.2 They will also maintain liaison with the Superintendent at the cemetery both in the case of cremations and funerals.
- 6.3 Extend time of Service at chapel (double booking) to account for length of service and staff Involvement.

7.0 Liaison with Police / Fire Brigade / Other Services

- 7.1 The police need to be informed of any potential large gathering and or when traffic may be delayed due to the cortege. Also when service motorcycles are being used as an escort to the hearse and they may wish to attend the service.
- 7.2 Members of the London Fire Brigade or other services may also be asked to attend.

8.0 Liaison with Cemetery Superintendent

- 8.1 The superintendent is responsible for all that occurs within the cemetery and as such will need to be advised of any arrangements concerning the internment etc.

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9.0 LAS Staff Involvement – Bearer Parties

- 9.1 In the event of the death of a serving staff member the immediate family may request that colleagues form a ‘Bearer Party’ either in uniform or plain clothes.
- 9.2 Subject to authority being granted by senior management, the following guidelines may be of assistance to organizers receiving such a request.
- 9.3 Staff Selection:
- The normal number required is six plus one to take command
 - The rank of the staff used is of no importance as the family may request closest colleagues, irrespective of rank to perform this duty.
 - If the family do not express who should take part then six ambulance staff with one manager to take command is normal practice.
 - The staff chosen should be of similar height, although a small variation in height will not normally affect the ceremony. They should all be fit and not suffer back or heart problems.
 - Two reserve staff should also be selected, as they will normally be required to assist either at the hearse or inside the place of worship.
- 9.4 The person in charge of the Bearer Party should, where possible, carry out a reconnaissance of the place of worship prior to the ceremony including rehearsal – see 12.0 below. The following points should be noted:
- “Set down” point for hearse.
 - Number of steps into or out of location.
 - Trestles or catafalque, height and location.
 - Position of graveside in case of burials.
 - Reserved seats for members of bearer party during the service.
- 9.5 The Funeral Director will normally arrange for a practice with a coffin if requested to do so.
- 9.6 The Service Ceremonial Squad (contacted through the Awards Department) may be able to assist with the above and if a burial, at the graveside.

10.0 LAS Staff Involvement – Street Lining and Guards of Honour

- 10.1 There can be street lining by Service staff on the approach to the place of worship, graveyard or crematorium. The staff nearest to the church should be colleagues from the deceased member of staff’s own station or department.
- 10.2 On the approach to the place of worship there may sometimes only be sufficient room for a small Guard of Honour, which should consist of colleagues of the deceased member of staff only. On the approach of the

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coffin only the staff of the rank of Ambulance Operations Managers, and above, will salute, all other staff standing to attention.

- 10.3 If the cortege passes the deceased member of staff's station en route to the place of worship there should be a small Guard of Honour positioned outside.
- 10.4 Only Ambulance Operations Managers and above will salute as the cortege passes.
- 10.5 LAS Motor cyclist may be arranged to escort the hearse.
- 10.6 Helicopter Emergency Medical Services (HEMS) may be arranged to make a 'fly over'
- 10.7 Remember that the local police station must be advised if any of section 10 above is taking place.

11.0 Funeral Dress

11.1 General:

Uniform staff attending the funeral as mourners will generally wear operational dress. Consultation should be made with the religious leader prior to the service to ascertain if female members of staff should wear some form of head covering. It should be noted head covering may affect both men and women (in a Sikh temple for instance) to avoid offending members of the congregation.

11.2 Bearer Party and Reserves:

Operational Dress (white cotton gloves and medals – NO hats or raincoats).

11.3 Plain Clothes:

Plain clothes may be worn if desired, or at the request the family. It should be a dark suit, white shirt and black tie for male staff and dark skirt or trousers and jacket/coat with white or neutral colour blouse for female staff. A black armband may be worn on the left arm above the elbow.

11.4 Street Liners:

If staff are required to form a street or path lining party outside the church they should wear operational dress. It should be remembered that some staff might have to travel long distances to the funeral; therefore thought should be given to some nearby Station premises for changing purposes.

- 11.6 It is the responsibility of the LAS Stations to ensure dress uniforms are ordered from the Stores.

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12.0 Rehearsals

12.1 Rehearsals for any other participants, e.g. readers of lessons or addresses, ushers, lining party or Guard of Honour must be considered to ensure they are conversant with the layout of the place of worship and the acoustics of the building. These rehearsals should, if at all possible, take place with guidance from the presiding religious leader, as any mistakes by the participants on the day could cause embarrassment and possible distress to the next of kin.

13.0 Briefings

13.1 All participants involved with any aspect of the service either outside, on the route, or participating at the place of the service, must be fully briefed.

13.2 Mourners should be requested to meet with an appointed manager prior to the service for an informal briefing.

14.0 Transport

141 Coach transport may be pre-arranged to convey staff to and from the funeral from and agreed pick up point.

15.0 Service Flags

15.1 The Awards Department will ensure that Service flags are flown on Service buildings at half-mast on the day of the funeral.

15.2 If the death(s) occurred in circumstances which effect the whole Service, instructions will be given by the Awards Department, through EOC, for flags to be flown at half mast from sunrise to sunset at all Service buildings where facilities exist, on the day of the incident or the day after and on the day of the funeral.

15.3 Facilities exist at the following locations:

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| Headquarters | Ilford | West Ham |
| New Malden | Poplar | Whipps Cross |
| Forest Hill | Shoreditch | Edmonton |
| Isleworth | Fulham | |

16.0 Wreaths

16.1 On the day of the funeral and where circumstances indicate a large public response in terms of wreaths, a staff member should be nominated to look after and organise the layout of wreaths. The undertaker will arrange for family flowers to be placed on the coffin. Others should be laid out in a suitable place (e.g. the churchyard). After the funeral a list should be kept of

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wreaths and cards for the information of the family. The wreaths can then be taken to the graveside or crematorium by service or the undertaker as requested by the family.

17.0 Funerals - Kit

17.1 A funeral kit comprising of one Service drape, one centre wreath badge, six pairs of white cotton gloves and three armbands for Ushers can be ordered through the Awards Department. The responsibility for the equipment rests with the officer concerned. A cost will be charged for replacement of any damaged / lost items on return of the kit. However, no budget will be issued to cover this eventuality.

18.0 Ethnic Culture Considerations.

18.1 Consideration should also be given to the possible need of an interpreter for both liaison with the family in the planning stages and for readings within the place of worship. Details of how to access interpreters can be gained from the Diversity Team see appendix 4.

19.0 Communications.

19.1 A suitable radio equipped vehicle should be placed in the car park of the place of worship to receive any messages for those attending the service who should be reminded to switch off pagers and mobile phones. The vehicle will monitor channel seven and EOC will act as a link between the vehicle and main headquarters switchboard. All messages should be written and passed to the relevant members of staff.

19.2 A public address (PA) system is available to relay the service when large numbers of mourners are expected. The PA system is obtainable by completion on the order system to the Awards Department. The responsibility for the equipment rests with the officer concerned. A charge will be made to the hirer for installation and withdrawal of the equipment and replacement of any damaged or lost items on return of the equipment. However, no budget will be issued to cover this eventuality.

Reference: TP / 006 Serious Untoward Incidents Policy.

LAS Ethnic Health and Cultural Awareness Information Handbook.

Signature:



**Peter Bradley CBE
Chief Executive Officer.**

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Appendix 1

LA 275

LONDON AMBULANCE SERVICE NHS TRUST

DEATH OF A SERVING LAS EMPLOYEE

FULL NAME: _____

RANK: _____

STATION / DEPT / OPERATIONS CENTRE _____

DATE OF DEATH: _____

DATE OF JOINING: _____

CAUSE OF DEATH (IF KNOWN) _____

ON / OFF DUTY: _____

ON SICK LEAVE: _____

HOME ADDRESS _____

HOME TELEPHONE NO: _____

MARRIED: _____

CHILDREN: _____

NEXT OF KIN: _____

ADDRESS: _____

(IF DIFFERENT TO ABOVE) _____

BRIEF CIRCUMSTANCES:

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FUNERAL MESSAGE

The private/service funeral of the late

_____ (full name)

attached to _____ who died on _____
(Station – Department – Control)

_____ will take place at _____ on _____
(Date) (Time) (Day) (Date)

at _____
(Place of worship or Crematorium and address)

Floral tributes may be sent to _____
(Home, Undertaker or Station/Dept/Control)

by _____
(Time and Date)

Staff who attend may do so in uniform or plain clothes and should report to

_____ at _____
(Nominated Officer)

by _____
(Time)

It is requested that Officers who wish to attend should contact _____

_____ in good time.
(Name and telephone no of Local Officer)

The late _____ has served at _____
(Station/Dept/Control)

Further details can be obtained from _____ on

Tel No: _____

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ORDER OF SERVICE

**Appropriate
Religious
Symbol**

FULL NAME

ADDRESS OF THE PLACE OF WORSHIP CREMATORIUM

DAY, DATE, TIME

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THE SENTENCES*

**OR OTHER HEADING IF NOT A CHRISTIAN FUNERAL*

HYMN 436: Praise My Soul, The King of Heaven

READING: John 14 v 1-3, 18, 19, 25 – 27
(Name of person reading)

EULOGY: Name of Person

READING: Revelations 21 v 1 – 7
(Name of person reading)

HYMN 372: He Who Would Valiant Be

THE PRAYERS

HYMN 368: Guide me, O Thou Great Redeemer

BLESSING

THE FAMILY THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS SERVICE

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Appendix 4

| USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS / CONTACT POINTS | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| CONTACT | BUSINESS | MOBILE |
| SERVICE SUPPORT ADVISOR | | |
| TINA VINCE | 020 7463 2636 | 07798 860384 |
| UNISON | | |
| | 020 7463-2619 | 07881 810430 |
| SENIOR OPERATIONS OFFICER (EOC) | | |
| | 020 7921 5197 (24 HOURS) | |
| SERVICE CHAPLAIN: | | |
| REVEREND NEIL KINGHORN | 0208 553 2132 | 07811 524715 |
| LINC PEER SUPPORT 24 HOUR COORDINATOR | | |
| Lesley Ingram Homerton | | 07900917104 |
| Jackie Bishop Oval | | 07769741294 |
| Frank Jacobson Newham | | 07769744972 |
| AWARDS DEPARTMENT | | |
| Claire Clarkson | 020 7463 3106 | 0789492719 |
| DIVERSITY MANAGER | | |
| PAUL CARSWELL | 0207 921 5182 | 07766112365 |
| SUDDEN DEATH SUPPORT ASSOCIATION | | |
| | 01189-733939 | |
| COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS SUPPORTING BEREAVED PARENTS | | |
| | 08451- 232304 | |

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