

**FSH 1309.19 – FOREST SERVICE DEATH AND SERIOUS INJURY HANDBOOK
CHAPTER 20 – KEY EMPLOYEES’ COORDINATION ACTIVITIES**

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20.4 - Responsibility

20.4a - Dispatch Personnel

Dispatch personnel are integral to maintaining control of the immediate incident and providing assistance as needed to personnel at the scene and the chain of command. Dispatch personnel shall:

1. Ensure immediate appropriate medical and law enforcement response.
2. Ensure that personnel know not to use the employee's name over the radio to avoid interception by the media and others before appropriate family notification.
3. Use cell phone communication if possible when obtaining or relaying sensitive information.
4. If the family is transported by government vehicle (with Line Officer approval) do not allow discussion of the employee's condition over the radio while the family is in the government vehicle and may hear the radio traffic.
5. Dispatch should maintain an up-to-date contact list for Forest Service Supervisors and Managers and external agencies such as medical, law enforcement, and fire/incident personnel. The responding medical and/or law enforcement personnel contact the medical examiner's or coroner's office if appropriate.
6. In addition to normal documentation of radio traffic, a dispatch checklist for specific actions to take and document in the event of an employee's critical injury, medical emergency, or death is available on the following website: <http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/ibp>.
7. Retain all documentation per direction found in FSH 6209.11 – Records Management Handbook, chapter 40. Restrict access to all documents containing Personally Identifiable Information (PII).

20.4b - Notification Officer

The Notification Officer is responsible for informing the family of the condition or death of the employee. Notification should be expedient and factual. Employee's emergency contact form may have specific information. If possible, the Notification Officer should be a Forest Service employee and/or law enforcement official. Send someone who is sensitive to the cultural or religious background of the family.

1. The Notification Officer shall follow immediate procedures:

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- a. Ensure that key information is updated and current prior to notification.
 - b. Notify the immediate family in person as soon as possible, and preferably, concurrently with required Forest Service internal notifications.
 - c. Obtain assistance from Law Enforcement Investigations or local law enforcement agency. Do not go alone.
 - d. If the immediate family is not in the local area, request that the local Forest Service unit and/or local law enforcement agency with jurisdiction at the family's residence notify the family in person.
 - e. Immediately contact home tribal leadership for cultural considerations and inquire how they want the notification to occur, in case of serious injury or death to a Native American.
2. Adhere to Forest Service protocol whenever possible:
- a. It is preferable that the Notification Officer wear a uniform.
 - b. Never make notification to the family at the doorstep. Ask to be admitted into the house.
 - c. Determine if the member of the family to be notified has a medical condition that may result in additional care upon notification of incident and arrange for EMS personnel to be immediately available if needed.
 - d. If notification is to be made at a work place, ask for a Supervisor. Do not divulge details. Request a quiet room to talk with the next of kin.
 - e. Remain mindful of the cultural or religious background of the family. Be aware of "nontraditional family" situations and proceed accordingly.
 - f. Do not discuss or comment on matters you are not informed about or qualified to discuss.
 - g. If young children are in the home, ask the person being notified if they wish to have the children present during initial notification.
 - h. Inform family members slowly and clearly of the information you have. If specifics of the incident are known, relay as much information as possible to the family.
 - i. Notify the survivors in as forthright and empathetic manner as possible.

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- j. Use the employee's name during notification, being careful to pronounce the name correctly. Use the name the employee was most commonly known by, such as "Bob" rather than "Robert".
 - k. Never give the family false hope. If the employee has died, relay that information gently, using words such as "died" and "dead", rather than "gone away" or "passed away".
 - l. Be prepared for a wide range of responses from the family including intense physical or verbal interaction. Responses may range from no apparent emotional response to physical collapse.
 - m. Offer to assist with contacting a friend or family member who can respond to the home, workplace or hospital to provide support.
 - n. Ask the family if they would like you to stay with them for awhile, and do so if they desire. Provide as much support and assistance as possible.
 - o. Ensure that the family has Forest Service contact information regarding the employee and the incident and is aware they will be provided a Family Liaison for assistance. Provide the Family Liaison's name if available.
 - p. Inform the Hospital Liaison when the family is on its way to the hospital.
 - q. Assist the family in making arrangements for baby-sitting or other needs to enable appropriate family members to respond to the hospital or other location as soon as possible.
 - r. Request other assistance for the family as appropriate. This assistance may include the family minister, counselor, friends, or coworkers who can provide emotional support to the employee and family.
 - s. Go to the hospital and provide additional support to the family. Do not be intrusive, follow the family's lead on how much and what type of support they want.
 - t. Support the Hospital Liaison with coordination needs.
3. Retain all documentation per direction found in FSH 6209.11 – Records Management Handbook, chapter 40. Restrict access to all documents containing Personally Identifiable Information (PII).

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20.4c - Hospital Liaison

The Hospital Liaison is responsible for coordinating the arrival of the immediate family members, Forest Service personnel, the media and others at the hospital. The Hospital Liaison is also responsible for ensuring that ASC-HRM-Workers Compensation (WC) has been notified and with regard to Office of Workers Compensation Program (OWCP) matters will work under their direction. The desires of the family should be followed with regard to their accessibility to Forest Service employees, other agency(s) personnel, friends, media, etc.

1. Coordinate hospital arrangements with hospital staff to:
 - a. Ensure the family is advised and updated by the medical personnel.
 - b. Arrange for private waiting facilities for the family and others as desired by the family.
 - c. Arrange a separate waiting area for fellow employees and others to assemble.
 - d. Coordinate with the Information Officer and the hospital in establishing a press staging and briefing area if the situation dictates.
 - e. Assist the hospital staff, if necessary, with the management of Forest Service and/or other involved agency(s) vehicles so as not to interfere with hospital operations.
2. Provide family assistance.
 - a. Confirm that the hospital is aware that the family has arrived.
 - b. Make certain the family is the first to be updated on employee's condition before others.
 - c. Determine if specific cultural/religious considerations exist and support the family.
 - d. Notify all medical provider billing offices that all medical and/or transportation (ambulances) bills related to the injured or deceased employee must be sent directly to the Department of Labor. Remind them that the 9-digit OWCP claim number must be clearly annotated on each bill/document sent.
 - e. Assure the family that the ASC-HRM/WC facilitates the application for the Agency Death Gratuity payment.

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- f. Assure the family that, when applicable, the ASC-HRM/WC facilitates the application of the Federal Employees’ Compensation Act (FECA) Death Gratuity payment.
 - g. Assure the family that, when applicable, the ASC-HRM/WC facilitates the application for the Public Safety Officers Benefit (PSOB) program.
 - h. Ensure that the coroner is informed of PSOB requirements, if appropriate, and that the Forest Service requests a copy of the autopsy report as soon as possible.
 - i. For their safety, transport the family home, with approval from the Line Officer. If family members refuse, ensure that the family arrives safely back to their residence.
 - j. In the event of a prolonged stay, work with the Family Liaison to provide sufficient support at the hospital.
3. Retain all documentation per direction found in FSH 6209.11 – Records Management Handbook, chapter 40. Restrict access to all documents containing Personally Identifiable Information (PII).

20.4d - Family Liaison

Before accepting the role of the Family Liaison or asking someone to take on this role, carefully consider the following:

1. At times, Family Liaison duties are very emotional.
2. A long term commitment of time may be required, especially in the first few weeks.
3. This role may continue for a long time.
4. The role may be emotionally and/or physically demanding.
5. Consider your transition strategy from the Family Liaison role.
6. You must want to do this. The family will know if you are “just doing your job.”

The role of the Family Liaison is a critical assignment. It may be appropriate to assign a pair of employees to serve as Family Liaisons. Assign people who have the ability to develop a relationship with the family, demonstrate empathy, communicate with tact and respect and provide emotional support. The person must be able to provide support without causing undue stress and hardship on the family or themselves.

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An assessment should be done periodically to ensure the assigned Family Liaison is a “good match” with the family. It is better to find another person to assume the role than to continue with an unsuccessful relationship.

The Family Liaison shall have the capability to communicate and coordinate effectively with Forest Service Managers and non-Forest Service personnel. This person may have a close relationship with the family; however, they must also be able to balance the requirements and policies of the Forest Service along with the needs of the family.

The Family Liaison does not make decisions, but acts as a facilitator between the family and the Forest Service, and shall have direct access (outside the chain of command) with Forest Service officials necessary to accomplish their role. Share information up the chain of command as soon as possible.

The Family Liaison and the ASC-HRM/Workers’ Compensation and Benefits Coordinator shall work closely together. Oftentimes, the Workers’ Compensation and Benefits Coordinator role becomes the primary contact with the family until all benefits process is complete.

In the case of an accident on an incident managed by an Incident Management Team (IMT), the Family Liaison shall have a lead person or Coordinator who participates in IMT briefings and strategy meetings to relay information.

It is the responsibility of the Family Liaison to:

1. Ensure the needs and desires of the family are respected. The employee’s role is to the family first and the Forest Service is second.
2. Determine cultural or religious background of the family. If the employee is a Native American, determine if contact with the family is to be made through Tribal officials only.
3. Request that the family designate a representative who can act on behalf of the family.
4. Be immediately available to the family.
5. Ask the family what they want, do not make assumptions.
6. Relay details of the incident to the family at the earliest opportunity, with the concurrence of the involved officials.
7. Advise the family of the other Coordinator and Liaison positions and their roles and responsibilities.

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8. Reassure the family that you have accepted this position of Liaison by choice and are concerned for them.
9. Communicate and coordinate family needs with other Forest Service personnel. If the family is coming from out of town, the Family Liaison may assist or coordinate lodging, at the family's request.
10. Act as the intermediary between the family and Forest Service personnel. The family may choose to communicate directly with Forest Service personnel or they may wish to only communicate with the Family Liaison. Ensure they understand that it is their choice with whom, or if, they choose to communicate. Relay their choice and ensure Forest Service personnel are informed.
11. Do not burden the family with unnecessary demands.
12. Keep accurate records and safeguard personal information. A checklist for Family Support is provided on the following website: <http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/ibp>.
13. Keep the family advised of official investigations and related legal actions.
14. Coordinate with other Family Liaisons in the event of multiple fatalities or serious injuries.
15. Act as a long-term Liaison to the family to ensure that contact is maintained between the Forest Service and the family for as long as they feel the need for support.
16. Provide the family assistance with benefits.
 - a. Assist the family in obtaining and providing records to the Benefits Coordinator and the ASC-HRM/Workers Compensation Coordinator.
 - b. In cooperation with the Benefits Coordinator, Responsible Official, and Regional Liaison, advise the family regarding honor and/or award ceremonies and assist them with the necessary paperwork.
17. Provide the family with media assistance and communicate guidance with investigations.
 - a. In coordination with the Information Officer, advise the family regarding media contacts and determine how they would like those inquiries handled.
 - b. If possible, ensure that Forest Service accident investigations, results, reports, or news releases are provided to the family before released to Forest Service employees or the media.

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- c. If investigations surround the injury or death, inform the family of all new developments prior to release of information.
18. Assist family with retrieving/returning property.
- a. Return Employee's Personal Property. Arrange for delivery of the employee's personal belongings to the family once no longer needed by claims/law enforcement. The belongings should be packaged in a dignified manner (for example, not a garbage bag). Do not return any belongings with blood on them or other effects of the incident (such as burns or scorch marks), unless requested specifically by the family. The property should be given to the family at an appropriate time, in a caring manner. Depending on this situation, the return of the property may be ceremonial.
 - b. Retrieve Government Property. Arrange for return of government property that the employee may have had at home (for example, a government laptop computer). Except where safety is a concern, this should be accomplished well after the funeral in an appropriate, caring and coordinated fashion.
 - c. Lost or Damaged Personal Property. Assist employee or beneficiary(s) identifying lost or damaged personal property. Coordinate with ASC-B&F/Claims to ensure completion of the appropriate claim forms and documentation. Claims personnel provide the necessary information and assistance to the Family Liaison and/or claimant in working through the claims process.
19. Obtain resources:
- a. Document inquiries and interest in public donations to the family and assist the family in establishing a mechanism for receiving such contributions, as appropriate.
 - b. Advise the employee and/or family of the role of external organizations and the nature of the support programs they can provide. Provide family with lists of known organizations; see exhibit 01.
 - c. If desired by the family, assist them in contacting assistance organizations to advise them of the employee's serious injury or death.
 - d. Assist the family in determining the employee's membership in organizations that can provide assistance.
 - e. Determine, with the family, the type of assistance needed and how to obtain it. If applicable, introduce the family to court-provided victim's assistance personnel.

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- f. Provide information to the family regarding the Forest Service Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and/or other available resources to assist them with grief, critical incident stress or other related emotional issues. Assist the family with making contacts to arrange those services as they request.
20. Coordinate funeral/memorial services.
- a. Communicate and coordinate continuously with Funeral Liaison, other response team members and Forest Service management as appropriate.
 - b. Be present during family's meeting with response team members and/or Forest Service management regarding funeral service arrangements.
 - c. Determine family's preference regarding Forest Service, departmental, Federal, State, local or other personnel/dignitaries and Forest Service Honor Guard's presence at the funeral, including the desire to have "uniforms" present.
 - d. Communicate family's wishes to response team members.
 - e. Coordinate with response team members to determine who will be attending the funeral/services and provide the information to the family. See chapter 40 for policy.
 - f. Assist the family in their contacts with making funeral arrangements.
 - g. If the family so desires and it is appropriate, accompany the family, to memorial services, award ceremonies, and any other observances.
21. Retain all documentation per direction found in FSH 6209.11 – Records Management Handbook, chapter 40. Restrict access to all documents containing Personally Identifiable Information (PII).

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20.4d - Exhibit 01

Available Resources

Note: The Forest Service does not advocate any of the resources listed below. These and others are available for use by the Responsible Official or Family Liaison as determined appropriate.

National Fallen Firefighters Foundation

P.O. Drawer 498
Emmitsburg, MD 21727
(301) 447-1365-phone
(301) 447-1645-fax
www.firehero.org

Wildland Firefighter Foundation

2049 Airport Way
Boise, ID 83705
www.wffoundation.org

Concerns of Police Survivors (COPS)

For immediate family and/or coworker support as well as information regarding Federal and/or State benefits that may be immediately available in the event of a death of law enforcement personnel.
1-800-784-2677
www.nationalcops.org

Forest Service Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Employees may call their local/regional Employee Assistance Program contact in the Office of Human Resources for information and assistance.

The International Critical Incident Stress Foundation

A non-profit organization with critical incident management and support teams in all states with teams specialized in responses to line of duty deaths for law enforcement, rescue, and ambulance personnel. A 24-hour hotline is available that is routed to situation appropriate personnel.
(410)750-9600
Emergency Support 24 hour Hotline: (410) 313-2473
Fax: (410)750-9601
info@icisf.org
www.icisf.org
3290 Pine Orchard Lane, Suite 106
Ellicott City, MD 21042

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20.4d - Exhibit 01--Continued

Available Resources

AARP Grief Programs

State-by-State listing of support groups for widows and widowers.

<http://www.aarp.org/family/lifeafterloss/>

Grief and Healing Page

The web address below is a grief-related website with a message board providing opportunities to give and receive help with other grieving men and women.

www.webhealing.com

NOVA

The National Organization of Victim Awareness provides Critical Incident Stress support.

www.trynova.org

Journey of Hearts

Provides resources and support for both new and long-term grief

www.journeyofhearts.org

Virtual Memorials

Website which provides space for and assistance with developing memorial pages for loved ones including photographs and graphics.

<http://www.virtual-memorials.com>

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20.4e - Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Coordinator

The CISM response to critical incidents is comprehensive and on-going. Appropriate services vary depending upon the scope and details of the incident as well as those involved in the incident. Appropriate protocols and services span the spectrum from pre-incident preparation and education, through the acute response phase, and finally the post-incident phase and follow-up. CISM response to a critical incident must be multi-componential as no one intervention technique is proven effective in all situations. The CISM response must be comprehensive or valuable opportunities to assist those in crisis may be missed.

1. The CISM Coordinator shall first collaborate with the Washington Office serious accident investigation team leader before witnesses and other participants are allowed to undergo CISM.
2. CISM services should be available and provided for the affected employee, employees involved in the incident or witness to the incident, coworkers, and personnel from external agencies who were involved in the incident or response to the incident, and the affected employee's family.
3. The CISM Coordinator should be aware of CISM services and other counseling practices and applications to be able to appropriately determine what type of services are necessary or helpful. It is beneficial if the CISM Coordinator is trained in CISM response or is a Peer Counselor so they may help provide needed emotional support services.
4. In addition to CISM services, grief and/or other counseling services may be needed immediately or in the long-term after an incident.
5. It is the responsibility of the CISM coordinator to:
 - a. Coordinate immediate CISM needs with the on-scene Supervisor, Dispatch, second-line Supervisor, or the Unit Manager to determine the extent of the situation. Identify the following:
 - (1) Number of Forest Service employees affected and how affected.
 - (2) Names of employees involved in the incident.
 - (3) Names of employees witnessing the incident.
 - (4) Names of employees working with the affected employee but not involved in the incident.

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- (5) Home unit of the employees listed above.
 - (6) Other agencies involved and names of their personnel,
 - (7) Current location of all the above.
 - (8) Location of all the above within the next week.
 - (9) If other involved agencies are providing CISM services and coordinate interagency services with them.
- b. Determine if CISM services are appropriate at the scene or the hospital and contact the local CISM team or Employee Assistance Program (EAP) as appropriate.
 - c. Consult with Unit Manager, Forest Supervisor or other appropriate official to ascertain if administrative or criminal investigation procedures affect or require coordination of timing, scope or other aspects of CISM services.
 - d. Coordinate with the Line Officer/Responsible Official to meet with employees who were involved with the incident or witnessed the incident and explain CISM and assistance available.
 - e. Coordinate with the Line Officer/Responsible Official to meet with coworkers who were not at the scene. Because their experiences were different than those employees who were at the scene, a separate group debriefing or other services should be offered to them.
 - f. Determine the appropriate services needed such as group defusing, one-on-one intervention, debriefing, and any other inquiries.
 - g. Contact the Regions, Stations, and Area EAP Coordinator to contact CISM team, Peer Counselors or EAP, determine their capabilities, and coordinate to make the necessary arrangements.
 - h. Arrange the date, time, place for the CISM services.
 - i. Ensure that all affected personnel are personally notified of the CISM services and provided the details of where and when they are scheduled to occur.
 - j. Assure employees that no records are kept regarding CISM services' attendance and content.
 - k. Offer one-on-one follow-up to those who did not choose to or were unable to attend group debriefing services, and make the arrangements for the one-on-one services, as requested.

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- l. Coordinate with the Family Liaison to ensure the employee and their family is aware of CISM and counseling services available and how to contact them. Assist them in making the contacts and arrangements if they so choose.
 - m. Ensure all coworkers are aware of and have the information for EAP and other follow-up CISM services. Offer to assist them in making appropriate contacts and arrangements.
 - n. Continually follow-up with the Line Officer/Responsible Official and Family Liaison to determine if additional one-on-one or group CISM or counseling services are needed. Be mindful that such a need may arise a week, a month, a year or more after the incident occurred.
6. Retain all documentation per direction found in FSH 6209.11 – Records Management Handbook, chapter 40. Restrict access to all documents containing Personally Identifiable Information (PII).

20.4f - ASC-HRM Benefits Coordinator

It is the responsibility of the ASC-HRM Benefits Coordinator to:

1. Provide information to Forest Service management and Family Liaison regarding benefits available and the process each benefit entails. Work closely with the Family Liaison and the family. Maintain contact with the family until benefit issues are resolved. See the information on the following website: <http://fsweb.asc.fs.fed.us/HRM/benefits/>.
2. Advise the employee and/or family regarding all the benefits available to them and assist them with all the necessary benefits documentation.
3. Summarize all documentation of benefits and payments due the employee and/or family members to include the nature and amount of benefits to be received by each beneficiary, the schedule of payments, and the name of the contact person or facilitator at each benefit or payment office.
4. Coordinate the Public Safety Officer Benefit (PSOB) notification with the ASC-HRM/WC and other appropriate agencies or organizations to determine current benefits and procedures.
5. Retain all documentation per direction found in FSH 6209.11 – Records Management Handbook, chapter 40. Restrict access to all documents containing Personally Identifiable Information (PII).

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20.4g - ASC-HRM Workers Compensation Coordinator

It is the responsibility of the ASC-HRM Workers Compensation Coordinator (an employee of the ASC-HRM Workers Compensation group) to:

1. Provide the information required to file a claim with the Department of Labor, Office of Workers Compensation (OWCP) to facilitate and assist the employee or designated family representative with the claims process. See the information on the following website: http://fsweb.asc.fs.fed.us/HRM/owcp/WorkersComp_index.php2. Have direct contact with the injured worker whenever possible, in order to serve as the injured workers' single point of contact for advice and liaison to Department of Labor OWCP. If the injured worker is unable to make direct contact with ASC-HRM/WC, a designated representative can act on their behalf (Local Unit Coordinator could serve this role).
3. Ensure that the authorization to provide necessary medical treatment is approved.
4. Communicate with Department of Labor OWCP regarding the employee's status.
5. Communicate with the Local Unit Benefits Coordinator as needed.
6. Obtain the name and contact information for the employee's designated representative (if necessary) to act on behalf of the employee to:
 - a. Ensure contact is made with ASC-HRM/Benefits section.
 - b. Facilitate the completion of the forms CA-1, CA-5, CA-6 (if not already done).
 - c. Ensure that ASC-HRM/WC personnel understand the needs of the injured employee or family.
 - d. Coordinate the Public Safety Officer Benefit (PSOB) notification with the ASC-HRM/WC and other appropriate agencies or organizations to determine current benefits and procedures.
 - e. See section 31.1, exhibit 01 for information related to the OWCP process for incident-related serious injuries.
7. Retain all documentation per direction found in FSH 6209.11 – Records Management Handbook, chapter 40. Restrict access to all documents containing Personally Identifiable Information (PII).

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20.4h - Funeral Liaison Officer

It is the responsibility of the Funeral Liaison to:

1. Act as facilitator between a deceased employee's family and the Agency during the wake, funeral, and memorial services. Communication and coordination with the family is done in conjunction with the Family Liaison.
2. Provide support to the family.
 - a. Meet with family members and explain your responsibilities to them.
 - b. Ensure that the needs and wishes of the family regarding any and all services come before those of the Agency.
3. Follow Forest Service funeral protocol.
 - a. Agency involvement and/or participation in the funeral or other services occurs only to the extent desired by the family. The wishes of the family shall be the primary consideration for agency involvement with the funeral and their preferences take precedence over the Agency's preferences regarding funeral arrangements.
 - b. The Family Liaison and the Funeral Liaison Officer works with the family to determine their requests and preferences and communicate such to all response team members as appropriate. All response team members work together to meet those wishes and needs.
 - c. If the family chooses, an honor funeral may be arranged by the Agency. Considerations to be determined include:
 - (1) The type of funeral or service to be held (for example, law enforcement honor, Forest Service honor, religious, or memorial service).
 - (2) People expected to attend (for example, public, private, semi-private, or uniform presence or not).
 - (3) Who will speak at the service?
 - (4) If Agency personnel will serve as greeters, ushers, and so forth.
 - (5) Where the service should be held (for example, church, gymnasium, or park).
 - (6) How the funeral procession, if desired, should be conducted (for example, marked units or not).

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- (7) If post-service gatherings should be held and, if so, what type of gathering (for example, public or private) and where.
4. Funeral arrangements – if desired by the family, be present at the funeral home to assist the family in coordinating with the funeral director regarding funeral arrangements.
- a. Brief the family members about the procedures involved in the Agency coordinated funeral or memorial service and request their consent for the procedures to take place. Ensure the family understands the potentially large size and scope of a public funeral.
 - b. Determine if the family desires a burial in uniform. If so, coordinate with the Family Liaison to obtain a uniform along with all accoutrements and deliver them to the funeral home.
 - c. Ensure that the employee's immediate family, including the spouse, children, parents, and siblings, receive recognition and that proper placement is arranged for them during services.
 - d. Assign employees for usher duty at the funeral or memorial service, if desired by the family.
 - e. Coordinate with the Regional Liaison Officer for proper seating of dignitaries attending the funeral, speeches by the dignitaries, and/or other arrangements.
 - f. Coordinate needs and arrangements for any honor ceremonies or special memorials. The Funeral Liaison Officer shall help facilitate the arrangements and coordinate with the financial specialist to obtain approvals, flags, and other purchases.
 - g. Coordinate with local law enforcement to advise that a large number of emergency vehicles may arrive to participate in the funeral procession. Locate facilities of sufficient size.
 - h. Obtain a suitable U.S. flag for draping the coffin. Obtain and coordinate an appropriate Honor Guard for events. The Forest Service and U.S. Capitol Police have a dress honor guard for such occasions. See FSH 1309.13 Honor Guard Handbook.
5. Retain all documentation per direction found in FSH 6209.11 – Records Management Handbook, chapter 40. Restrict access to all documents containing Personally Identifiable Information (PII).

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20.4i - Information Officer Responsibilities

The Forest, Regional, or Station Public Affairs Officer may be an appropriate person for this position. However, the Forest Service may not be the lead agency in the investigation of an incident, and therefore, may not be the lead agency for contact with the media. The Public Affairs Officer should coordinate with the team members to determine this.

It is the responsibility of the Information Officer to:

1. Ensure that all information released about the incident is accurate and verified beyond doubt.
2. Coordinate with law enforcement, ASC-B&F-Claims and the Office of the General Counsel (as appropriate), Forest Service accident investigation team, Line Officers, response team members and other agencies involved regarding release of information to the media.
3. Learn the families' wishes about media coverage early. In turn, learning the media's desires and helping them meet those desires within the parameters of the families' wishes is our mission.
4. Coordinate with the above to determine the appropriate information for release internally within the Forest Service and provide the information to the regional and Washington Office of Communication, as appropriate, for release to all employees.
5. Coordinate with management officials to establish primary spokesperson for external release of information. Use the appropriate Line Officers and/or staff to serve as spokesperson or subject matter experts as needed and when called for.
6. Be aware of and sensitive to cultural norms. If the affected employee is Native American, coordinate with the tribe and release information in accordance to their beliefs and traditions.
7. Develop an initial prepared statement and show concern.
8. Say what is being done and specify what resources responded.
9. Explain Forest Service response activities, including interagency roles and cooperation.
10. Develop mechanism for dissemination for follow-up information to family members/survivors:

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- a. Give any verified, releasable facts that are available which have been approved for release.
 - b. Report current status; do not speculate or talk off record; state only facts. Confirm the obvious.
 - c. Discuss initiation of investigation/review, if appropriate.
11. Stress that safety of the rescue crews, investigation team, community, and others is paramount.
12. Say what the public can do to help, and thank cooperators.
13. Use the media to get secondary message to public, for example, closures.
14. Ensure technical experts (safety, fire, law enforcement) are available and prepared for media interviews.
15. Media will want to know the “whys” and “hows” and should be directed to a separate investigation team Public Information Office spokesperson if one has been designated.
 - a. Schedule regular press briefings/updates.
 - b. In the event employees are injured and transported to a hospital, provide a Public Information Officer at the hospital or medical facility to coordinate media interest and assist the family as needed.
 - c. Provide and coordinate media access to the incident site in coordination with lead agency, criminal investigation team, and accident investigation team, and so forth.
 - d. Brief media on incident-site and airspace restrictions. Consider media pool arrangements.
 - e. Anticipate media’s needs such as photos/bios, deadlines, protective gear, photo and video opportunities, and interviews.
16. Brief Receptionists, Dispatchers and others on routing/handling of incoming calls and visitors.
 - a. Provide personnel to assist at dispatch centers and reception areas, if appropriate.
 - b. Set up communication center and assign employees to assist in answering phone calls or place orders for additional personnel, if appropriate.

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- c. Publicize telephone number and location for more information.
- 17. Obtain maps and graphics as necessary.
- 18. Continue coordination and release of information both internally and externally as changes in status of the incident and/or employee occurs.
- 19. Develop key messages, talking points, and possible Q&A's. Coordinate release of this material with the appropriate agency contact. Eliminate messages that are too defensive, overly complex, or raise too many other questions.
 - a. Coordinate with the Family Liaison and assist the employee and/or family with media inquiries, if they so desire.
 - b. Protect the rights of those who do not want media contact.
 - c. Coordinate information regarding funeral arrangements, memorial services, and related ceremonies with team members and release information to Forest Service employees, Department of Agriculture personnel and other external agencies. Coordinate with local Forest Service personnel to determine which agencies would most likely want to send representatives to the funeral.
 - d. Assist the Funeral Liaison with services program, announcement and bulletins, as desired by the family.
 - e. Coordinate with the Family Liaison and the Funeral Liaison to provide media whatever access is possible at funerals and other services and still maintain the dignity of the ceremony and the privacy of the family.
- 20. If desired by the family, provide an official person(s) to record services via photos and/or video. Such records can be valuable to a family who may not remember the services or who attended, and may be of particular value to children in later years so they can see the honors provided to their parent.
- 21. Keep the affected employee, their family, Forest Service Managers, and all incident response personnel informed of any released information or talking points. You cannot give too much attention to the local unit employees.
- 22. Ensure the employee, family and response team members have information regarding proper media contact referrals.
- 23. Recognize that impacts to local communities and others may be significant. Consider establishing networks to facilitate information flow to those groups and advise them of Forest Service sponsored events if appropriate.

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- a. Keep the community informed; arrange community briefings by the responsible official or team leader, as appropriate.
 - b. Take advantage of existing newsletters and other established communication tools.
 - c. Follow-up and coordinate with the Responsible Official, Regional Liaison, and Team Leader regarding external requests for media, movie companies, special flights or permit requests.
 - d. Because the duties may extend for months or years due to trial continuances, and other hindrances, ensure a smooth transition to a local Public Affairs Office if appropriate, and anticipate and plan for future media interest as events progress through the legal system and/or internal agency accident reviews.
24. Retain all documentation per direction found in FSH 6209.11 – Records Management Handbook, chapter 40. Restrict access to all documents containing Personally Identifiable Information (PII).