

## PROCEDURE

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Ceremonial Duties</b>	
Practice / Business Area:	Corporate Management	
Department Responsible:	Corporate Development	
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**SOUTH WALES POLICE MISSION & VISION:****KEEPING SOUTH WALES SAFE**

**TO BE THE BEST AT UNDERSTANDING AND RESPONDING TO OUR COMMUNITIES' NEEDS**

**SOUTH WALES POLICE PROCEDURE OBJECTIVE:**

To provide guidance in relation to funerals where the family of a member of staff who has died during service or after retirement requests police involvement.

**PROCEDURE:****EXTENT OF POLICE CEREMONIAL INVOLVEMENT****Serving Members of Staff**

The wishes of the family will always be paramount. Should the family request a ceremonial funeral, subject to exigencies of duty, the BCU Commander/Head of Department will arrange for police attendance. A motorcycle escort and officers from the mounted section together with an honour guard made up of colleagues wishing to pay their respects would be appropriate as would the attendance of chief police officers.

**Retired Members of Staff**

Where the family request police involvement at a funeral this should be confined to former colleagues and friends who wish to pay their last respects in uniform and act as bearers if they wish.

Liaison officers should manage expectation sensitively and explain the rationale behind the limited involvement.

**LIAISON WITH THE FAMILY**

Contact will be made with the bereaved family at the earliest appropriate opportunity. A trained member of the force Welfare Department or a nominated person of supervisory rank from the deceased's department or division will act as liaison officer and offer the opportunity for support or advice from the Welfare Department. *Family wishes are paramount when ascertaining funeral requirements and care must be taken to ensure, where possible, that the funeral complies with their wishes.*

Requests in relation to retired staff are usually initiated by family members. Although their wishes may have fewer implications for the organisation, a liaison officer should be appointed to ensure that family requests are organised efficiently and professionally. When family wishes are established, the divisional commander or departmental head of the deceased will be advised of funeral details and requests.

**BEARER PARTY**

Bearer parties for retired staff are usually drawn from the staff working in the division or department last associated with the deceased.

A bearer party will consist of a party commander and six members of staff. The bearer

party commander will be of supervisory rank.

The bearer party commander will be responsible for ensuring the bearer party escorts the coffin through the various stages of the funeral in a co-ordinated and dignified manner. It is advisable that the party commander visit the ceremony site/s prior to the funeral to ensure that obstacles, tight corners and steps etc are identified and can be negotiated with minimum disruption. Members of the bearer party must also be briefed prior to the service to ensure they are familiar with their role.

### **BEARER PARTY PROTOCOL**

Bearer party protocol includes the following [these may vary depending on the religious beliefs and wishes of the family]:

- Uniformed bearer party members will wear full police uniform with tunics. They will not wear headgear, gloves, appointments or overcoats.
- The party commander will ensure that the bearer party receives and escorts the coffin into and out of the service.
- Instructions from the commander to the bearer party will be passed quietly and concisely.
- Three bearers will form up on each side of the coffin. The commander will follow the bearer party at a distance of two to three paces.
- The coffin should be dressed in a flag bearing the force crest. Responsibility for obtaining the flag from the Welfare Department, Police Headquarters, lies with the bearer party commander. On some occasions a family wreath and/or police head dress are also placed on the coffin. It may be appropriate for the commander to carry the head dress and replace it when the coffin is placed at the altar.
- A seating area for the bearer party is usually reserved near the front of the congregation for use during the service
- Health and safety considerations at all funerals no longer permit bearer parties to carry the coffin in the traditional manner. Instead, bearers will move the coffin with the assistance of a trolley.
- A graveside burial service will require additional health and safety considerations for members of the bearer party. A site visit should be made and the funeral directors consulted regarding standard procedures at the graveside. Every effort should be made to minimise risk of injury to officers required to escort the coffin over uneven or wet ground.

### **GUARD OF HONOUR**

Funerals of police officers who have died in service usually include an honour guard of uniformed officers who served with the deceased. It is traditional for the guard to honour the funeral cortege by standing to attention as it arrives and leaves the funeral. The size and dimensions of the guard are dependent on its location and the number of officers involved.

Members of the honour guard will wear full police uniform with tunics, white gloves [brown gloves for Inspectors and above] and headgear. They will not wear appointments or overcoats.

A substantive supervisory officer should be appointed to organise and instruct the guard. The guard of honour shall form up at an appropriate location prior to the arrival of the funeral cortege. At the approach of the funeral cortege, the honour guard commander will call the guard to attention. The officer in charge of the honour guard will salute the funeral cortege as it passes. Further instructions to 'stand at ease' and dismiss will be made by the honour guard commander as appropriate.

At the conclusion of the funeral service the honour guard will reform and stand to attention as the cortege leaves. The most senior officer present at the funeral will pay the respects

of the Police Service by saluting.

### **OFFICERS ALONG ROUTE**

Large Police funerals can also include the deployment of uniformed officers at key locations along the route to honour the funeral cortege. The senior officer present will stand to attention and salute as the hearse and principal cars pass.

Such officers will wear full police uniform with tunics, white gloves and headgear. They will not wear appointments or overcoats. Health and safety considerations dictate that when such officers are deployed for this ceremonial purpose they must not be utilised for other traffic or crowd duties. Wherever available officers deployed to such ceremonial duties should be provided with personal radios.

### **TRAFFIC ESCORT**

Traffic motorcyclists are often utilised to escort the funeral cortege and stop traffic at junctions on the route to ensure that there is no disruption to the movement of the motorcade.

- Traffic motorcyclists performing such duties will wear uniform, appointments and equipment dictated by force policy

### **SALUTING**

- Force policy in relation to saluting will be complied with at police funerals.

### **LOGISTICS**

An operational order must be prepared for all ceremonial funerals.

Additional consideration should include the following:

- MESSAGE CIRCULATION – Details concerning the death of a member of staff, whether in service or retired should be circulated to all force personnel via the force e-mail system (Force Information). Text should include details of the deceased and the funeral arrangements. Information concerning the circulation of an operational order should be included if appropriate
- FORCE FLAG – When a member of the police service dies during service, the force flag will be lowered to half-mast as a sign of respect. This will apply to the flag at force headquarters and all divisional stations. The flag will be flown at half mast on the day that death occurred and on the day of the funeral. If death occurred on a weekend the force flag should also be flown at half mast on the following Monday
- NATIONAL FLAG - The national flag will remain at full mast.
- COFFIN COVER – The force has a tailored coffin cover which bears the force crest. The cover is available from the Welfare Department, Police Headquarters.
- TRAFFIC CONTROL – The deployment of additional officers/traffic wardens to manage traffic congestion at key locations should be considered for large funerals.
- COMMUNITY IMPLICATIONS – Large funerals of this nature will have an impact on the communities in which they are held. Consideration must be given to the impact of such disruption and plans formulated to minimise disruption.

### **CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS BELIEFS**

This procedure does not make specific reference to a particular culture or religion. When complying with family wishes for police funerals, officers must not assume the cultural or religious beliefs of the deceased or the wishes of the next of kin.

In the case of staff from a minority ethnic background, advice should be sought from an appropriately trained officer within the divisional Community Safety Department to ensure that cultural and religious issues are taken into account.