

Family Liaison Officer (FLO) Checklist

April 23, 2025

Once activated as a liaison

- Ask yourself if you are ready to do the work
- Notify your family. You will not know what your availability will be for the next two weeks
- Begin to clear your personal and work calendar, including home responsibilities
 - Put together some personal supplies, notebook, hygiene, Advil, healthy snacks, and water.
- Review Department Policy 1053
- Speak with the department leader
 - Clarify who is your primary contact with the department (Chief 1) and discuss expectations for the role
 - Identify who is impacted and gain a general understanding of what happened. Get the shift captain's name and contact information.
 - If notification has occurred, where is the family and their contact information? Do not be the person who makes the actual notification.
 - Location of deceased/injured- Scene, Hospital, ME office
 - If you don't have a department cell phone, one will be issued to you. Discuss the need of having a department vehicle.
 - Identify department vehicle for errands and transport of family members, preferred unmarked
 - Identify your primary contract with the union president for union resources
 - Identify a backup
- Ensure the needs and desires of the family are respected and come first
 - You protect the family from disruptive and intrusive events and people

First Meeting with Family

- Have a brand-new notepad and always have it with you to track the information
 - Maintain a log of all contacts and their information
- Explain your role as an immediate liaison between the family and the fire department.
- Never speculate, never assume family wants, ask

- Identify the immediate needs the family has and communicate with the Chief
 - Especially with transportation, home security,
- Have the family explain all the key family members and friends to you. Get key contact information. Clarify out-of-town family members and any unique family dynamics that are important to know.
 - Have many business cards. Either your own or a general one that you add the cell number. Have many cards
- Remember you will not have all the answers, under-promise and over-deliver
- Confirm home security until service
- Determine the cultural or religious background of the family
- Management of personal property: keys, vehicle, wallet...
 - Returned in a dignified and clean manner

First 24 hours

- Arrange for a meeting with the Chief and MHP
- Establish coordination on public information messaging and the privacy desires of the family
- Identify other support needs-clergy, chaplains, mental health, funeral home
- Be prepared to explain what is next in the process.
 - Processional
 - Medical examiner
 - Funeral home
 - Meeting with the funeral director
 - Viewing
 - Memorial services
 - Human resources, benefits
- There may be media, financial, legal, and professional concerns
- Explain the roles of those involved
- Coordinate conversations with Chief, MHP, City Manager, HR
- Protect the family from unnecessary demands

Pre-Memorial/Service

- Remember to stay connected to the rest of the department (meetings, functions...)
- Stay connected to your family and communicate with them your schedule
- Involvement with department and foundation planning meetings
- Make sure your Uniform is cleaned and ready
- Identify your backup person from the department (MHP or another)

- Support work with the funeral director to help navigate service components: faith tradition, fire tradition, honor guard, military,
- Support the selection of pictures and memorial items

Memorial service

- The primary role is to be available to the family
 - Coordination of logistics-Transportation, movement-timing, location of all events, knowing who should be involved and to what level
- During the wake, services will be escorted and be with the family the whole time
- Assign an FD member to “liaison” your personal family

After Services

- Clarifying when you are released from the role as family liaison
 - Confirm the pathway for communicating family needs
- Confirming involvement in numerous memorial events (IAFF, Federal, State, and Local)
- Coordinate conversations with the Chief, MHP, City Manager, HR
- Keep family advised of legal proceedings
- Work to understand the ongoing needs of the family
 - Property maintenance/repair
 - Legal
 - Financial
 - Bereavement and counseling services

Family Liaison Boundaries

Liaisons are responsible for setting boundaries when interacting with the deceased's family. All family liaisons must know that replacing the deceased is not their role.

The family liaison needs to understand that there needs to be a balance between providing family support during a difficult time and meeting the needs of their own personal, family, and professional responsibilities.

Family liaisons must be able to say, "No, I can't do this." No family liaison is on duty 24/7.

Family liaisons cannot always make themselves available. Their work is an ongoing and transitional process; therefore, it is vital that they conduct these activities in moderation to prevent burnout and maintain appropriate boundaries.

Family liaisons must become familiar with their personal limits and judge for themselves when to take a break. At a certain point, it will be time to stop being a family liaison or ask for help or a replacement. Family liaisons can seek support from their family and other fire department members or professional assistance.