

## Firefighters' Memorial Flag

August 21, 1991

### I. Purpose

To prescribe the standards and requirements for the use, display, distribution and return of the Firefighters' Memorial Flag.

### II. Authority

The Firefighters' Memorial Flag Act, Act No. 168 of 1990.

### III. Background

The Firefighters' Memorial Flag Act became a law on December 7, 1990. The purpose of the Act is to honor firefighters who have died in the line of duty in Pennsylvania. The Firefighters' Memorial Flag is intended to serve as a visual expression of the gratitude that all citizens of Pennsylvania have for the public service provided by each fallen firefighter. The flag also provides a public recognition of the dedication and sacrifice that each fallen firefighter has provided to the citizens of Pennsylvania.

### IV. Eligibility for Use of Firefighters' Memorial Flag

A firefighter shall be deemed to be acting in the performance of his or her duties for the purposes of this act under the several conditions identified herein when going to or directly returning to a fire station or departmental headquarters from a fire which the fire company or fire department was officially dispatched. In the case of firefighters called from their homes or other locations, this includes travel from and direct return to a firefighter's home, place of business or other place where he or she shall have been when he or she received the call or alarm, or while participating in instruction fire drills, or in properly approved emergency management training and exercises as part of a fire department unit/component in which the fire department or fire company shall have participated or while repairing and doing other work about the fire apparatus, buildings and grounds of the fire company and fire department upon the authorization of the chief of the fire department or other person in charge, or while answering any emergency calls for any purpose or while riding upon the fire apparatus which is owned or used by the fire department or while performing any other duties of such fire department as authorized by the municipality.

### V. Persons Authorized to Request Use of the Firefighters' Memorial Flag

1. The following persons may request the use of the Firefighters' Memorial Flag from the Office of the State Fire Commissioner (OSFC).

- a. The officer of the fallen firefighter's fire department who is responsible for conducting the memorial service for the fallen firefighter.
- b. The funeral director who is in charge of the fallen firefighter's funeral, provided that the flag has been requested by the fallen firefighter's family for use at the public or private viewing, memorial service or procession.

VI. Procedure for Requesting Use of the Firefighters' Memorial Flag

1. The fire department officer or funeral director shall call the Office of the State Fire Commissioner, 800-670-3473, during office hours between 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. or the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) 24-hour number at 800-424-7362 and provide the following information:
  - a. Name of caller.
  - b. Telephone number of caller.
  - c. Name of fallen firefighter.
  - d. Organization to which fallen firefighter was associated.
  - e. Date, time, and place that flag is needed.
  - f. Name and phone number of person that OSFC can contact for additional information, if needed.
2. The person taking the information will notify the State Fire Commissioner or his designee to arrange for the delivery of the Firefighters' Memorial Flag to the requesting party.

VII. General Policy and Procedures

1. The Firefighters' Memorial Flag shall not be:
  - a. Draped over objects (except over the deceased firefighter's casket) or used as a bunting or a cover.
  - b. Permitted to touch the ground or floor when displayed.
  - c. Carried any way but flat.
  - d. Flown at half-mast.
  - e. Flown higher than the American Flag.
  - f. Used to cover a statue or monument.

VIII. Proper Display of the Firefighters' Memorial Flag

1. The Firefighters' Memorial Flag may be displayed in an enclosed area in the following ways:
  - a. Drape the fallen firefighter's closed casket during either a public or private funeral viewing. The flag shall be draped with its left side toward the head of the casket and its right side toward the foot of the casket.
  - b. Placement of the flag on a standard near the casket. The flag should not touch the floor.
  - c. Display the flag hanging lengthwise behind the casket reading from left to right.
2. The Firefighters' Memorial Flag may be flown outdoors for up to seven days after a funeral in the following ways:

- a. On a flag pole by itself or under the American Flag and flown over the fallen firefighter's memorial.
  - b. Placed on a standard adjacent to the memorial.
3. The Firefighters' Memorial Flag may be displayed during a funeral procession for the fallen firefighter:
  - a. The flag must be draped left to right over the closed casket that is being transported by vehicle.
  - b. The flag may be carried by a color guard on an appropriate standard.
4. The Firefighters' Memorial Flag may be flown from a flag pole located on public grounds owned by a political subdivision within the State.
  - a. The Firefighters' Memorial Flag shall be smaller than the American Flag and shall be flown lower than the American Flag.
  - b. The flag shall not be flown from a flag pole or displayed from a standard or hung as a memorial backdrop for more than seven days after the date of the fallen firefighter's funeral.
5. When the Firefighters' Memorial Flag is displayed on a platform or chancel in a church, the American Flag should be on the staff at the right of the clergy or speakers and to the left of the congregation. Any other flags, including the Firefighters' Memorial Flag shall be on the left of the clergy or speakers podium. If there is no platform or chancel and the flag is placed on the floor, then the process is reversed (American Flag to left of speaker, and other flags to right).
6. Other forms of display are not permitted unless approved by the State Fire Commissioner.

IX. Procedure for Returning the Firefighters' Memorial Flag

1. The fire department officer or funeral director shall return the Firefighters' Memorial Flag to the State Fire Commissioner's office in Harrisburg within ten days after the occurrence of the fallen firefighter's funeral in the approximate condition in which it was received. The flag may be hand delivered or sent insured by U.S. Postal Service or other courier service at the expense of the shipper.
  - a. The address for hand delivery of the flag is:

Office of the State Fire Commissioner  
2605 Interstate Drive, Suite 380  
Harrisburg, PA 17110
  - b. The address for mail delivery of the flag is:

Office of the State Fire Commissioner

2605 Interstate Drive  
Harrisburg, PA 17110-9364

2. NOTICE: Any fire department officer, funeral director or other person who fails to return the Firefighters' Memorial Flag in good condition that has been placed into his custody will be billed for the replacement cost of the flag by the State Fire Commissioner.

X. Availability of Flag for Families and Fire Companies

1. The Firefighters' Memorial Flags provided by OSFC for use during burial activities is the property of the commonwealth of Pennsylvania and shall not be given to the family of the deceased firefighter or to the firefighter's fire department or municipality.
2. Upon request from the firefighter's family or fire department, the State Fire Commissioner or his designate will present an 18" x 24" miniature replica of the Firefighters' Memorial Flag to the firefighter's immediate family at a time that is mutually convenient to both parties.
3. The 5' x 8' Firefighters' Memorial Flag may be purchased, by those fire departments that have lost a member in the line of duty, for memorial services by submitting a request in writing to the State Fire Commissioner's office in Harrisburg. A set of flag specifications and prospective vendors list will then be provided to the applicant.

XI. Supersession

None

XII. Duration of Directive

This Directive shall remain in effect until superseded or suspended.

David L. Smith  
State Fire Commissioner

Revised 9/11/97