

**LAW ENFORCEMENT
FUNERAL MANUAL**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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The International Conference of Police Chaplains

Third Edition

LAW ENFORCEMENT FUNERAL MANUAL

**A Practical Guide for Law Enforcement
Agencies When Faced with the Death of a
Member of Their Department**

By

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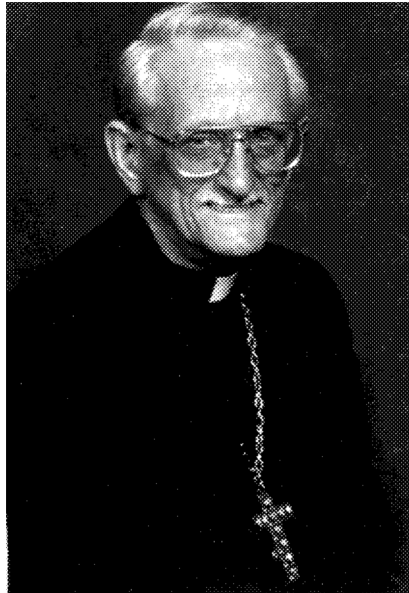
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Dedicated in loving memory of
Chaplain John A. “Jack” Price
August 4, 1928 – May 4, 1998



Ordained Lutheran Minister (37 years)

Chaplain–Albuquerque, New Mexico Police Department 1969–1998

Co-founder and second President of
the International Conference of Police Chaplains.

The annual International Conference of Police Chaplains Awards
for Excellence in Chaplaincy are named in his honor.

In 1982, he was given the Distinguished Citizen of New Mexico Award.

On July 8, 1998, the main headquarters buildings of the
Albuquerque Police Department and the Bernalillo County Sheriff's
Department was named the “John A. Price Law Enforcement Center.”



The International Conference of Police Chaplains (ICPC) is an organization that supports volunteer and paid law enforcement chaplains. It helps law enforcement agencies develop chaplaincy programs or improve their chaplaincy programs. The ICPC provides its members with educational opportunities in training seminars and materials and a network of mutual support helps disseminate and share information about law enforcement chaplaincy.

The International Conference of Police Chaplains was founded in 1973. It is multi-faith-based non-profit organization. The ICPC has over 2,700 active members worldwide. Its logo appears above and on the cover of this manual.

To contact the International Conference of Police Chaplains: office address: P.O. Box 5590, Destin, Florida 32540; office telephones: (850) 654-9736, FAX (850) 654-9742; E-mail: icpc@icpc4cops.org; Web-site: www.icpc4cops.org.

INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This funeral manual is intended to provide law enforcement agencies with a quick and informative reference when the unthinkable occurs—an unexpected death of a departmental member. The material contained herein has been gathered by the International Conference of Police Chaplains from numerous departments and sources. The author has utilized these materials and others that he has gathered. Credit is given when materials were cited or adapted.

The task of writing/composing a funeral manual that will cover all law enforcement circumstances/protocols and religious beliefs is very difficult. The following information is offered as a suggestion and a beginning place. This information will likely need to be adapted/adjusted to the philosophy/theology of those who suffered the loss of their loved one and the departments they served.

Included in this manual is information about survivor resources and help and support agencies. Particular attention should be given to Laurie Erickson Reinacher's suggestions of ongoing care for the deceased member's family. These will be found in the sections entitled: "Taking Care of Our Own" and "Promoting Healthy Healing" (Chapter 6, pages 67–71). Mrs. Reinacher offers these suggestions from her own personal experience. Her first husband, Michigan State Trooper Byron J. Erickson, died in the line of duty on July 31, 1993.

Special appreciation is given to Chief Brian Russell of the Buchanan Police Department, Michigan, for allowing his department's "Line of Duty or Serious Injury" General Order to be included in this manual as an example for other departments/agencies to use in drafting their own policies and procedures (see Appendix A, pages 83–106). Also, thanks is extended to the Mt. Vernon Police Department, Illinois, for being able to use their Line of Duty Injury or Death Information form (see pages 77–82).

The author thanks the following chaplains and persons who read this manual and perfected it (listed in alphabetical order): Rev. Dr. Paul Blacketor, Keene Police Department, Keene, New Hampshire; Mr. Mano Brahmabhatt, P.T.; Rev. David DeRevere, former Executive Director,

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Thanks to the Chaplain contributors to this third edition: Chere Bates (Horse funerals), Harold Gingerich (Amish communities), and Lang Yang (Hmong communities).

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A PART OF AMERICA DIED

Somebody killed a policeman today
And a part of America died . . .
And a piece of our country he swore to protect
Will be buried with him at his side.

The beat that he walked was a battlefield, too,
Just as if he had gone off to war;
Though the flag of our nation won't fly at half-mast
To his name they will add a gold star.

The suspect who shot him will stand up in court
With counsel demanding his rights,
While a young, widowed mother must work for her kids
And spend many long, lonely nights.

Yes, somebody killed a policeman today . . .
Maybe in your town or mine,
While we slept in comfort behind our locked doors
A cop put his life on the line.

Now his ghost walks the beat on a dark city street,
And he stands at each new rookie's side;
He answered the call . . . of himself gave his all,
And a part of America died. . . .

Harry Koch

(In memory of Patrolman John Burke, Atlantic City, New Jersey Police
Department, and all of the others killed in the line of duty.)

ABBREVIATIONS

NRSV—the New Revised Standard Version translation of the Judeo-Christian Bible

RSV—the Revised Standard translation of the Judeo-Christian Bible

**LAW ENFORCEMENT
FUNERAL MANUAL**

Section I

WHERE DO WE START?

Chapter 1

PREPARING FOR THE FUNERAL

DEATH NOTIFICATIONS

Police chaplains and law enforcement personnel are usually called upon to make death notifications in the cases of death within their agencies and within the communities they serve. Notifying a person of the death of their loved one(s) is a task or role that requires careful preparation, sensitivity and planning. An excellent manual on recommended procedures for death notification has been published by the Iowa Organization for Victim Assistance (IOVA). This manual is entitled *In Person, In Time*.¹ The following suggestions are offered to assist a department/agency with death notifications and death notification training.

1. Be prompt. Be timely. In-person notification should be made within two (2) hours of the event.
2. Make sure you have the correct information: the name of the person to be notified, the address where that person might be, the name of the person who died, how (if you can find out) that person died, and a telephone number where the person(s) being notified can find out more information about the death.
3. The notification is time-consuming. **Note: If the informing person doesn't have time to make the call (at least two (2) hours)—don't make the call! Get someone else to do it!**

4. Before arriving at the place where the notification is going to be made, decide who is going to give the notification. **One person should do the notification, supported by the other(s).**
5. Upon arrival, the one making the announcement identifies themselves and their official capacity. Such as: “I am Chaplain/ Officer _____.” “I am with the _____ (agency).” Then introduce other members of the notification team.
6. Have the person(s) **sit down!** (They may faint or collapse and fall down upon notification.) Find out if there is anyone else in the home or business.
7. Then quickly, and as much to the point as possible, make the announcement in clear, plain language. A sample announcement might be: “I have some very difficult news to share with you. Your _____ has been killed.” Always refer to the victim by their name, never by terms such as “body” or “corpse.”
8. Next, wait for their reaction. **Whatever reaction they have is normal for them.** No two persons will react to tragic news in the same way. Expect the unexpected! In working with persons who are grieving, you need to be comfortable with it and allow it to happen. The chaplain/personnel should intervene only to prevent harm to them or others.
9. Your presence is what is important—a ministry of presence!
10. Give the person what is known, **but not why! Avoid euphemisms** (!) such as “God willed it. . . .” “(He/She) was a brave (man/ woman). . . .” “You’ll thank God for this some day,” etc.
11. Listen, listen, listen! You will need to be comfortable with silence at this point.
12. Offer to make calls to other family members or have other chaplains make these announcements **in person**. If the immediate family lives out of town, arrange for another law enforcement agency to make a face-to-face announcement.

13. When leaving, never leave the person alone—even if they ask for it! A support system must be in place prior to your departure: a faith leader, a member of their religious community, a family member, a friend, or a neighbor.
14. Leave a departmental/agency business card with the family in case they have any further concerns, questions, or needs.
15. Reminder: The notification process cannot be rushed. If it is winter, take off coat(s) to indicate that you are going to stay for a while.

THE ROLE OF THE CHAPLAIN IN DEPARTMENTAL FUNERALS

If the department/agency has a chaplain, the role of the Police Chaplain is to ASSIST the family, the family's faith leader (if any), and his/her fellow law enforcement officers through their sadness and grief. The chaplain can ask the family who will officiate at the service. If asked to conduct the funeral service, the chaplain's role is much broader than just the funeral itself. The ministry begins when the chaplain is first notified of the death of a law enforcement member and extends beyond the interment. The family needs immediate and continual support. (See pages 67–71 for specific information.) During the funeral, the chaplain comforts the bereaved and can pay tribute to the fallen officer. The chaplain serves as a counselor, spiritual advisor, and friend to the family of the deceased.

Since the conduct of the funeral service honors the wishes of the family, the chaplain may be asked to cooperate with the family's faith leader if available. The funeral service is primarily spiritual and is properly a function of the local faith leader. The chaplain should accede to the desire of the civilian faith leader and the traditions of the religious organization/tradition of the family.

The police chaplain has a dual role: as a member of the law enforcement community and as a faith leader. The elements that the chaplain must balance are: the military-style ceremony and the religious rite. The military-style ceremony recognizes the service and sacrifice of a law enforcement officer; the religious rite extends a spiritu-