

# International Association of Fire Fighters



## **Manual of Common Procedure And Related Subjects**

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<u>CODE OF ETHICS</u> .....	1
<u>LOCAL UNION OFFICERS</u> .....	2
<u>PRESIDENT</u> .....	2
<u>THE PRESIDENT AS ADMINISTRATOR</u> .....	2
<u>THE PRESIDENT AS PRESIDING OFFICER</u> .....	3
<u>SECRETARY (SECRETARY-TREASURER, RECORDING SECRETARY)</u> .....	7
<u>PLANNING</u> .....	7
<u>RECORD KEEPING</u> .....	8
<u>CORRESPONDENCE</u> .....	10
<u>COMMUNICATIONS (WITHIN THE LOCAL UNION)</u> .....	11
<u>TREASURER (FINANCIAL SECRETARY)</u> .....	12
<u>ANNUAL AUDIT</u> .....	12
<u>PER CAPITA TAX AND OTHER PAYMENTS</u> .....	13
<u>DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS</u> .....	13
<u>DELINQUENCY</u> .....	13
<u>INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS</u> .....	14
<u>OFFICER'S OATH</u> .....	15
<u>LOCAL UNION MEETINGS</u> .....	16
<u>RULES FOR MEETINGS</u> .....	16
<u>ORDER OF BUSINESS</u> .....	17
<u>OPENING OF MEETING</u> .....	18
<u>INITIATION OF NEW MEMBERS</u> .....	18
<u>CLOSING OF MEETING</u> .....	20
<u>TWO-SHIFT MEETINGS IN THE LOCAL UNION</u> .....	20
<u>COMMITTEES IN THE LOCAL UNION</u> .....	23
<u>STANDING COMMITTEES</u> .....	23
<u>SPECIAL COMMITTEES</u> .....	23
<u>ALL COMMITTEES</u> .....	23
<u>MATERIAL DISTRIBUTED TO THE COMMITTEE</u> .....	24
<u>PLANNING FOR COMMITTEE MEETINGS</u> .....	24
<u>WHO MAY ATTEND</u> .....	24
<u>PROCEDURES IN COMMITTEE MEETINGS</u> .....	25
<u>SUBCOMMITTEES</u> .....	25
<u>COMMITTEE REPORTS</u> .....	26
<u>COMMITTEE FAILING TO REPORT</u> .....	27
<u>EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS</u> .....	27
<u>MINORITY VIEWS</u> .....	27
<u>COMMITTEE MINUTES</u> .....	27
<u>SAMPLE LOCAL UNION CONSTITUTION AND/OR BY-LAWS</u> .....	29
<u>FUNERAL PROTOCOL</u> .....	36

## FOREWORD

The Manual of Common Procedure is provided so that important functions such as initiating candidates for union membership, installing officers, conducting meetings and the administration of local affiliates will be uniform throughout the IAFF.

Though the responsibilities of principal officers are stated in your local's constitution and/or by-laws, this booklet has a more detailed description of these responsibilities.

The Order of Business provides the method by which all members can be assured that no significant item of business will be omitted from full consideration. Members have the right to expect that the Order of Business will be followed exactly unless changed by vote of the members.

All local union officers should thoroughly study the contents of this manual. The information is vital to the performance of your duties, which in turn impacts your local union's (and the IAFF's) effectiveness.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Edward A. Kelly". The signature is written in dark ink and includes a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Edward A. Kelly  
General Secretary-Treasurer

## **CODE OF ETHICS**

It is a fundamental duty of a member of the International Association of Fire Fighters, to serve humanity; to safeguard and preserve life and property against the elements of fire and disaster; and maintain a proficiency in the art and science of fire engineering.

All members will uphold the standards of their profession, continually search for new and improved methods and share their knowledge and skills with their contemporaries and those new to the profession.

All members will never allow personal feelings, nor danger to self, to deter them from their responsibilities as a first responder.

All members will at all times, respect the property and rights of all men and women, the laws of their community and their country, and the chosen way of life of their fellow citizens.

All members will recognize the badge of their office as a symbol of public faith, and accept it as a public trust to be held so long as they are true to the ethics of the fire service. All members will constantly strive to achieve these objectives and ideals, dedicating themselves to their chosen profession—saving of life, fire prevention and fire suppression.

**AS A MEMBER OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS, I ACCEPT THIS SELF-IMPOSED AND SELF-ENFORCED OBLIGATION AS MY RESPONSIBILITY.**

# LOCAL UNION OFFICERS

## PRESIDENT

As President of your IAFF local union, you have duties under two general headings—administrative officer and presiding officer. There are numerous situations where these duties overlap; therefore, they cannot be considered as separate functions, but rather as two parts which together constitute the Office of President.

If you are a successful administrator but a poor presiding officer, the membership will often overlook your failings in presiding because of your other accomplishments. But continued mistakes in this area may cause personal dissatisfaction among your members. They may feel that their rights in meetings have been improperly taken away. There can be a minority ready to take advantage of the president's lack of knowledge of parliamentary law.

An effective president is one who deals adequately with both areas of his/her responsibility. If you don't know the rules for conducting union meetings, you should learn them. This is a simple procedure. Study them until you have a good working knowledge of them (the rules for meetings are contained in the "Local Union Meetings" section of this Manual). Make every effort to communicate with the members that you are interested in them as individuals and that you are serving them in a democratic manner.

It is an important part of your job to involve all members in discussion. The more members involved the more active your local will be. Administrative ability includes the ability to communicate and lead your local membership.

You must constantly bear in mind that you, as president of your local, are the leader of the organization. You are the executive head. Repeated uncertainty or hesitancy on your part undermines your authority and makes the task more difficult. More importantly, the best interests of the local may be affected.

### The President as Administrator

- You should consult frequently with the other officers of your local, especially the secretary and treasurer. There has to be an understanding of one another's duties and all must work together for a successful administration. This means that you will have to use a great deal of diplomacy in order to achieve and maintain harmony.
- An exchange of information among the officers is essential. It is here that communication between the IAFF and the affiliates is important. If you neglect to share information, communication is affected.
- Any decision made by an officer which affects the duties or concerns of other officers should be made known to them as soon as possible.
- Your organization functions through committees. The standing and special committees provide the vehicle for the president to perform his/her many duties and for the mandates of the membership to be carried out. Committees should be carefully chosen, and the chairperson should be instructed, in detail, as to what you expect from him/her.

A standing committee is elected or appointed for a definite term of office. This is usually the same as the term for the officers of the organization. Sometimes the terms of committee members expire at different times, and two or three may be up for election at a pre-determined date. When this occurs, the committee reorganizes at its first meeting following the election. If the committee has the power to elect its own chairperson, this is done at this first meeting. A secretary is also elected and subcommittees may be appointed.

Local union by-laws often provide that the president is an ex-officio member of all committees. This means that you can attend any committee meeting and speak and vote just like any other committee member. The committee chairperson will preside.

Whether or not you are a member of all committees, you must be kept informed of their work, when they meet, and what the agenda will be.

It is advisable that a written summary of each committee meeting be submitted to the president within an established deadline. This is all part of effective communication. Some people think of the word "communication" as referring only to something coming from an outside source. Actually, and very importantly, it also means the transfer of thought within the organization. Be sure that all committees function as they should and that their reports are part of the communication process of the organization.

- Your written communication must be carefully handled. This begins with prompt and careful attention to each letter and email. Answering correspondence promptly is a mark of efficiency, as well as evidence of leadership. Responding to requests for information or complaints provide an opportunity for personal contact with the membership.

The wording of your communications are important. You should remember that what is put in writing is permanent and may be saved for future reference. Haste in writing can result in unfortunate consequences.

When you send correspondence to the IAFF, a copy should always be sent to your District Vice President. Your District Vice President must be informed at all times of communication taking place in order to do his/her job properly. A copy should also be sent to your local union secretary for his/her information and inclusion in the local's official records.

- You should maintain continuing contact with your membership. Knowing members by name; recognizing and adopting their suggestions whenever possible; giving credit to the member who offered the suggestion; and being available for conversations with individual members are all part of the job.

### **The President as Presiding Officer**

- Plan for all meetings. Go over the agenda with the secretary in advance of the meeting. Any items of unfinished business which are to come before the meeting should be noted. For example, a motion that was tabled at the previous meeting and was not taken from the table at that meeting becomes unfinished business at the next meeting.

What items of new business will come before the meeting? This is a question that should always be asked when planning for a meeting. Some recommendations may be made by the Executive Board. Who will take the floor to explain them? Who will answer questions from the floor directed to any of the reporting committees? Such important matters must be determined in advance.

The president's agenda should be detailed with notes under each section so that nothing will be omitted.

In planning for the meeting, specific attention should be given to committees. Which committee will be ready to report? It is essential that these reports be in writing because they have to be filed with the secretary. If recommendations are to be made to the membership or Executive Board, they should be at the end of the report. If the committee Chair will not be present or does not want to give the report, who will be the reporting member? This also must be determined in advance.

Planning includes having definite objectives for accomplishment. Every meeting should have a purpose. Some reason must exist for asking members to be present even if it's simply that general membership meetings are required on a periodic basis by the local's governing document. The time to be taken at the meeting should also receive attention. You should make sure that meetings move along at an efficient pace.

- Begin meetings on time. If your local's governing document provides that meetings begin at 7:30 p.m., make sure that they begin at that time. Promptness in opening meetings is a mark of efficiency and respect for the value of members' time. There is no excuse for the habit of late meetings.
- You should always have on the table before you the following documents:
  - The most recent copy of the International Constitution and By-laws.
  - The most recent copy of your local union's constitution and/or by-laws.
  - A copy of this Manual of Common Procedure.
  - The manual specified in your local union constitution and/or by-laws as the parliamentary authority.

You should be acquainted with the contents of each of these documents, and be able to find anything you need to refer to in a few seconds. Go over them until you are familiar with their arrangement and the location of the various subjects.

- All of the items under "Order of Business," as provided in this manual, are to be followed in your meetings. This manual also contains the procedures and ritual for initiation of candidates and installation of officers, which is part of your duties as presiding officer.
- The most important single duty as presiding officer is to maintain order in the meeting. Members may address the meeting only after being given the floor by the presiding officer. The parliamentary authority adopted by your local contains various rules on when it is appropriate for members to speak from the floor.
- As presiding officer, you cannot participate in debate without first giving up the Chair. You should take this action only when the need is urgent and you decide that the issue is of sufficient importance to justify this unusual action. Upon taking the office of

president, your right to debate during a meeting is restricted. So it is only under unusual conditions that the president takes the floor and debates.

If you temporarily give up the Chair in order to debate, you cannot reclaim the Chair until the meeting has acted on the main motion that was pending when you left the Chair. Action in this case can include postponing the motion to another day, or tabling it or referring it to a committee, etc.

- The presiding officer sets the example for the members' compliance with all laws of the International Association of Fire Fighters. You should insist on compliance with these laws by all your members.

If a motion is made which is contrary to a provision of the International Constitution and By-Laws, you must rule this motion out of order (do not allow debate or a vote). Furthermore, if you refuse to accept such a motion, your decision is not subject to an appeal to the meeting. The remedy for those members who may be dissatisfied with your ruling is through the process of appeal as outlined in the International Constitution and By-Laws.

- It is expected that differences of opinion will be expressed in debate. However, such differences must never be allowed to result in physical or verbal abuse of a member or the questioning of members' motives. The idea may be attacked, but not the person advocating the idea. It is your responsibility to see that debate is orderly and germane to the issue.
- You have the authority to adjourn a meeting without a motion under the following circumstances:
  - The meeting becomes unruly to a point that it is impossible to proceed in an orderly manner.
  - A hazardous condition occurs because of natural forces (earthquake, flood, fire, etc. which would make continuation of the meeting dangerous to those present, or impossible to continue.
  - The time stated for adjournment is reached. This may be in the by-laws or a special rule adopted for the meeting.
- The meeting should be conducted at an efficient pace. When it appears that no new ideas are being presented, but that repetition of thoughts already expressed many times is taking place, the majority may be ready to stop debate and proceed to a vote. Experience is a great help in determining when that time has come. You may take the initiative in this matter by signaling a supporter to make the motion to end debate. As it takes a two-thirds vote to end debate, there is no question of anyone losing their right to speak unless a majority votes for it.
- Your local's constitution and/or by-laws, or the parliamentary authority for the local, contains rules on whether or when the president may participate in the vote on an issue. If those rules provide that the president may vote only in case of a tie, that is what you must follow. If there is no such provision and you wish to vote, you may do so just like any other member. No member, including you, can be forced to vote.



- Members have the right to ask for information on issues or about the work that is being done by officers and committees. You have the right to answer these questions from the Chair. In doing so, you must confine yourself to factual statements and avoid debating issues. Such questions often relate to procedural matters or the effect of pending amendments on motions that have been made in the meeting.

If you do not know the answer to the questions, say so. It is a great mistake to bluff. The statement, "I don't know the answer to that question, but I will find out for you" is an honest and practical approach to the situation. Every effort should then be made to obtain the answer as soon as possible.

No member has the right to attack you, as the president, from the floor or to make adverse comments on any of your acts. You represent the organization while you hold the office of president, and the respect given is not to the person but to the office. Your duty is to maintain the dignity of that office in every possible way. Any comment reflecting upon your conduct of your office should be ruled out of order. If a member desires, and has sufficient cause to do so, he/she may bring charges against you in the manner provided by the International Association of Fire Fighters' Constitution and/or by-laws.

The dignity of your office is evident in many ways. Your method of expressing yourself and your general conduct and appearance set an example to your membership. Those outside your organization will tend to judge you by what they see and hear you do.

Your duties as president require that you maintain a working democracy. Democracy does not mean a member can do or say whatever he/she wants in a meeting. Rules were developed over many years and must be followed. Every member has sworn to obey the rules of the International Association of Fire Fighters and the local union, and these include rules for meetings. These rules must be followed by all.

The essence of a democratic meeting is that members have the right to debate and to offer proper motions. Eventually, the majority has the right to determine the action taken, which then becomes the action of the body and is binding upon all.

To ensure that democratic principles are achieved, you must assert the powers of your office. You have the sole right to recognize the order in which members will speak. You have the responsibility for making decisions. You have the authority to maintain order. The successful performance of the many duties of president is indeed an arduous task, but the rewards are great. There is the satisfaction of a job well done, and the knowledge that you have made a contribution to the benefit of your brothers and sisters in the International Association of Fire Fighters.

## **SECRETARY (SECRETARY-TREASURER, RECORDING SECRETARY)**

Communication is an essential ingredient for making any organization effective. Without good communication, misunderstandings occur, efficiency is hampered and trivial matters may become magnified into membership resentment and dissatisfaction.

In this regard, your position as secretary is of vital importance. Through your recording of the minutes, your letters, and providing necessary information to your fellow officers you have a prime responsibility for communication within your local union.

As you consult your local union constitution and/or by-laws for your specific duties, you will find that these duties involve communication with your fellow officers, your membership, state and provincial associations, local, state or provincial labor bodies and the International Union. Any carelessness or neglect in performing your duties will have immediate and unfortunate results.

Your duties include four primary categories:

- Planning
- Record keeping
- Correspondence
- Communication

### **Planning**

In order for a business meeting to be effective, it must be planned in some detail. This means that an agenda must be prepared in collaboration with the president. In preparing the agenda, follow the items of business as set forth in this manual.

“Unfinished Business” is any motion that has been presented at a meeting on which final action has not been taken. Therefore, motions referred to a committee, or postponed until the next meeting as well as motions tabled at the previous meeting are all “Unfinished Business.”

“New Business,” as the name indicates, is business being introduced at the meeting for the first time. Under this heading would be recommendations from the Executive Board, main motions and any motions relating to them. Usually, you and the president will know, at least in a general way, what motions to expect from the floor. You will, of course, know what recommendations will be brought in by the Executive Board and other committees.

Planning for this part of your meeting involves assisting in seeing that the recommendations or motions are in the correct language, making sure that none are contrary to your local union constitution and/or by-laws or that of the International Association of Fire Fighters and that the motions to be made express the intent that is desired.

As you work with the president in planning for the meeting, carefully consider the time that will be necessary to accomplish the business of the meeting. If, in your collective judgment, it will take longer than an hour to conduct the meeting, plan for a 15-minute recess at the end of the first hour. Extensive research has proven that one hour is the optimum time for conducting business while keeping participants focused. Similar planning should take place prior to meetings of the Executive Board. There will be committee reports, possible unfinished business

and new business. Consult with the president as to these and any other items that may require attention.

At every meeting of your local union and of its Executive Board, you should have the following documents and materials, and you should be familiar enough with their contents to find anything needed quickly and easily.

1. The book of minutes (from prior meetings).
2. The committee reports book.
3. A current copy of the IAFF Constitution and By-Laws.
4. Your local union constitution and/or by-laws with latest amendments.
5. The parliamentary procedure manual adopted by your local.
6. This Manual of Common Procedure.
7. Notebook for your rough draft of the minutes of the meeting in progress.

Members have the right to ask the Chair questions during a meeting, and they may turn to you for the answer. If they do, you should be able to provide the required information from the various materials at your desk, with the minimum time spent in finding such information.

## **Record Keeping**

### Minutes of Meetings

Record keeping begins with properly written and maintained minutes of the local union meetings. The secretary may also serve as secretary of the Executive Board, thus requiring a second book for minutes.

### General procedure

You should have a notebook to be used for your rough notes during the meeting. Soon after the meeting, the minutes should be typed and placed in the Minutes Book from your rough notes. To assure accuracy in the wording of motions, you have the right to ask the Chair to request that any motion be put in writing. When such a request is made, the member submitting his/her written motion presents it to you. Such a procedure avoids mistakes.

The Minutes Book should be a volume with printed numbered pages.

### Guidelines for Drafting Minutes

- The time, day, month and year of the meeting, the name of the presiding officer and the fact that a quorum was present should be stated at the outset. Also, state the number of members present when the meeting was first called to order.
- Committee reports are noted in the minutes only by reference to the fact that such a committee did report. If there are committee recommendations, these should be entered verbatim in the minutes from the written committee report with the vote on each recommendation. The complete report of the committee should not be placed in the minutes. You should have a separate, loose-leaf binder for the full committee reports.

- All motions made, seconded and stated by the Chair should be included in the minutes. The fact that a motion was defeated does not change this requirement. Always enter the number of votes for and against a motion if a vote is taken by a showing of hands, by members standing or by ballot. If a voice vote is taken, the entry should be “the motion was adopted” or “the motion was defeated”.
- All rulings of the Chair concerning points of order as well as points of order themselves should be entered in the minutes. You have the right to ask the Chair to have the member raising a point of order to put it in writing. Questions of privilege and the decision of the Chair should be entered, as should appeals (and the action thereon) taken from such decisions.
- The minutes are to reflect what was done in the meeting and not what was said. No member has the right to request that his/her views on any matter be “placed on record.” The only way that members’ views can be recorded is by a roll call vote, which means that the vote of each member is individually recorded.
- Your personal reaction to proceedings should never appear in the minutes. Only record the factual situation.
- Whether you enter the name of the seconder of a motion is a matter of custom in your local union. You should enter the name of the initial maker of the motion.
- Minutes must be brief and reflect what was done in the meeting.

#### Minutes of the Executive Board

The Executive Board Minutes should be handled in precisely the same manner as the minutes of the local union itself.

#### Minutes of Shift Meetings

The Minutes of Meeting “A” are to be read only at the next meeting of “A.” If meeting “A” passes a motion which is to be placed before meeting “B,” only the motion itself is to be transmitted to “B” and not the minutes of “A”. In your handling of the minutes for shift meetings, it is important to remember that these are separate meetings except for purposes of taking final action by a vote of both meetings. You should record the number voting “yes” and the number voting “no” at meeting “A” but this is not announced by the Chair prior to the vote by meeting “B”. For this purpose, the two shift meetings are considered to constitute one. As far as the minutes are concerned, however, they are to be recorded as two meetings.

#### Rights to the Minutes Book

Any member in good standing has the right at reasonable times, to ask to read the Minutes Book. This right does not mean that the Minutes Book can be taken from your custody. A member reading the book must do so in your presence. Only members of the Executive Board have the right of access to the Executive Board Minutes Book.

#### Committee Reports

All committee reports should be in writing and should be given to you upon completion. These reports should be filed in a loose-leaf binder for later reference.

Any member in good standing has the right, at reasonable times, to review committee reports. A member may not remove the binder—only read the reports.

## Files

The *International Fire Fighter* contains a large amount of information. All major happenings pertaining to fire fighters throughout the United States and Canada are recorded in this publication. It is strongly suggested that you maintain a file of these publications with cross references to subjects that might be referred to from time to time.

Every local union should appoint a committee to be responsible for indexing and cross-indexing the stories in every issue on receipt. You will find that such an index is a valuable timesaving tool. It will be especially helpful to you, as secretary, to have this file on hand for reference when the information is needed.

Your permanent file of pending business, reports of committees, minutes, etc., is of the greatest importance in the event of your illness when a temporary successor may be designated. It is also for the benefit of your successor at the close of your term of office. Such papers, books, etc., are the property of the local union. Upon leaving office, you are required to turn over to your successor all books, papers, and other property of the local union that may be in your possession at the close of your official term.

## **Correspondence**

### Correspondence with the IAFF

#### *General Practice*

When writing to the IAFF be sure to date all inquiries. All incoming mail to the IAFF is date stamped on receipt.

Remember that mail is not delivered to the IAFF on Saturdays, Sundays or holidays. Also, the difference between various time zones could result in a letter not being delivered until the day following expected delivery.

#### *Issues Involving IAFF or Local Union Constitution & By-Laws*

All matters pertaining to the IAFF Constitution and By-Laws or proposed amendments to your local union's constitution and/or by-laws are to be addressed to the IAFF General President.

#### *Membership Changes*

The Membership Changes Report informs the IAFF of changes in the membership of your local union. This report is the basis for issuing membership cards as well as constituting the source of representation of the local union at IAFF Conventions. It also provides the information necessary for the mailing of the *International Fire Fighter* magazine. The responsibility of correctly completing this report is one of the most important functions of your office.

Each member of the IAFF has a number which appears on their membership card and is used for identification. This prevents mistakes when there may be several IAFF members having the same first and last names. The Membership Changes Report form has the words “card number” in several places. When members change their address, it is your responsibility to send the new address, with postal code, to the IAFF office. Be sure to include the member’s membership number in order to avoid mistakes. It is not enough for the member to notify the post office regarding a change of address.

### *Election of Officers*

The name and address (with postal codes) and membership number of each individual elected or reelected to office should be promptly mailed, emailed, or faxed to the IAFF office. This information is used as the basis for mailing the material concerning all issues affecting the local union, and it is important that this record be up to date.

### *IAFF Convention Credentials*

The International Constitution and By-Laws requires that before being seated at an International Convention, “each elected delegate shall establish his/her identify and right to a voice and vote at the convention by presenting to the Credentials Committee the original form of official credential signed by the president and secretary-treasurer of the local union.” It also provides that “such credentials shall attest to the fact that the delegate is a member in good standing of the local union and that he/she has been elected by secret ballot vote by the members of such body as required by this Constitution and/or by-laws.” It is your duty to fill out the credential form prior to Conventions, making certain that these provisions are followed.

### Correspondence with the Local’s District Vice President

Copies of all important correspondence, except routine reports, replies to questionnaires, etc., should be sent to your District Vice President to apprise him/her of what is going on in the district. It is the practice at the IAFF to send copies of all important correspondence to the local to the District Vice President, and if you do the same it will assist everyone involved in achieving more efficiency.

### Correspondence within the Local Union

Correspondence consists of two general categories: The first requires consideration by the local union in the form of a motion and vote. The second requires only that information be supplied (either to other officers or to the general membership) and this can be done either by you from your records, or in consultation with others.

Correspondence requiring consideration by the local union through a motion and vote should be placed among your records under the heading “Communications and Bills” as mentioned in the Order of Business in this manual.

### **Communications (Within the local union)**

Often, correspondence sent from the IAFF is addressed to the secretary. It is the secretary’s job to determine whether the information should be passed along to someone else or whether he/she should handle the matter. In many instances, it will be essential to share the information

with the president or some other officer or a committee Chair, or at least call it to the attention of the Executive Board.

When telling members about information received, check the main points carefully. Be sure that these points are understood. If you address the membership at a meeting, first prepare thoroughly for your presentation. Know exactly what you intend to say and in what order you will say it. Anticipate questions from the membership.

You will read various materials at your membership meetings. As you do this, whether it is the minutes of the previous meeting, or correspondence from the IAFF, read slowly so that those who are listening can follow easily.

It is a good plan to confer with the president about communications that you receive. It is possible that in some instances parts of these could be summarized for the membership in the interest of saving time. If agreed, you should state this fact as you present the correspondence. Members have a right to know when a summary is being made. Of course, if requested to read the entire document, you do so. If no one objects, you may summarize.

## **TREASURER (FINANCIAL SECRETARY)**

Financial record keeping includes maintaining records of all income from dues, investments, interest on bank accounts, etc. It includes a complete accounting of all expenditures such as per capita tax paid to the International Association of Fire Fighters; sums paid to state or provincial associations and central labor councils, as well as payments to vendors.

Accurate and appropriate financial records are a requirement of the International's Constitution and By-Laws, government agencies and good business practice. As provided in the IAFF Constitution and By-Laws, Article VI, Section 2, the International General Secretary-Treasurer "is empowered, either in person or with the assistance of the vice president of the district in which the local union or other subordinate body is located, to at any time have an audit made of the books and accounts or to examine the books and accounts and membership records of any local union or other subordinate body of this Association."

One or more government agencies may inspect your books. It is the practice of the U.S. Labor Department to spot-check books and records of international labor unions, and in certain circumstances, their affiliated organizations. Although IAFF affiliates that represent only public sector (government) employees are exempt from most provisions of the Landrum-Griffin Act, nevertheless, it is essential that all affiliates maintain accurate, complete and up-to-date records.

### **Annual Audit**

Each affiliate must file an audit report with the International General Secretary-Treasurer annually. This audit is a requirement of the International Constitution and By-Laws, Article XIII, Section 9. It is also a requirement to comply with bonding regulations in the bonding of all officers and members handling funds of IAFF affiliates.

The IAFF provides \$5,000 bonding protection at no charge to each affiliate. The \$5,000 coverage is sufficient for any affiliate that has annual gross receipts/assets of \$50,000 or less. If

annual gross receipts or assets are greater than \$50,000, you should have bonding coverage equal to 10 percent of the total annual amount. The affiliate must pay for the additional coverage, which is available through the IAFF bonding company. Failure to have an annual audit on file may void a possible claim submitted to the bonding company should there be misappropriated funds.

### **Per Capita Tax and other payments**

The local's membership contained in the IAFF's database is now the basis for the monthly per capita statement. At the beginning of each month, the IAFF forwards a statement to each local which includes the number of active and retired-active members. Per capita is due not later than the 15<sup>th</sup> of the following month. It is important that your local's membership list is accurate. If members are initiated, retired, or withdrawn, their names should be submitted in writing (by letter or email) to the IAFF (see "Membership Changes," under the section on the duties of the Secretary).

### **Disbursement of Funds**

Your local union's constitution and/or by-laws should provide for the approval of bills prior to payment. Approval is sometimes delegated to the president, or to any two elected officers, or a three-member board of trustees elected for this purpose. You should be careful in following the provisions as outlined in your constitution and/or by-laws regarding this issue. Never issue a check without proper prior approval.

### **Delinquency**

The International Constitution and By-Laws, Article XIII, Section 4, provides that all dues shall be paid monthly by each member and that if he/she fails to make payment by the 15<sup>th</sup> day following the month such dues are payable, that the local union shall notify the member that he/she is delinquent and will be automatically suspended if payment is not made within 60 days following the notification.

You are required to make a monthly report of any members who are delinquent in their dues and any who have been suspended for nonpayment of dues.



## **INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS**

The following remarks and oath may be used as a means of installing newly elected officials.

### **PRESIDENT-ELECT**

INSTALLING OFFICIAL: "My sincere congratulations on your election as President of Local No. \_\_\_\_\_. I know that you will carry out the duties of your office with vigor and sincerity. Close cooperation with the other officers and committees of Local No. \_\_\_\_\_ will be required. Performance of your assigned tasks, in compliance with the Constitution and/or by-laws of the International and your own local, will result, not only in a strong sense of personal satisfaction but will also serve the interests those you represent—your membership."

### **VICE PRESIDENT-ELECT**

INSTALLING OFFICIAL: "Congratulations to you on your election as Vice President of Local No. \_\_\_\_\_. To perform your important function of assisting, or, when necessary, substituting for the president, requires that at all times you keep fully aware of all the issues of your organization. This is a significant assignment. My best wishes to you in the successful performance of that function."

### **SECRETARY-TREASURER-ELECT OR RECORDING SECRETARY-ELECT**

INSTALLING OFFICIAL: "As Secretary-Treasurer (or Recording Secretary), upon you is placed the burden of keeping an accurate, unbiased record of the history of your organization. The demands on your time will be great but necessary in order that the local operate with knowledge and understanding and without confusion. Congratulations to you."

### **TREASURER-ELECT OR FINANCIAL SECRETARY-ELECT**

INSTALLING OFFICIAL: "The success of any labor organization depends greatly upon the ability, honesty and versatility of its Treasurer (of Financial Secretary). That you have these qualities is evidenced by your election. On you rests the duty of keeping the life stream of your union flowing, namely, prompt receipt of income and payment of authorized expenses. My best wishes to you for success in your undertaking.

Your election as Treasurer indicates the membership's high respect and their confidence in your honesty and integrity. Your guardianship of your local's funds and the maintenance of true and accurate records of its financial matters is all important. Congratulations."

### **TRUSTEE-ELECT**

INSTALLING OFFICIAL: "Congratulations to each of you on your election as Trustee of Local No. \_\_\_\_\_. A commitment to perform your duties faithfully is required for the benefit of the membership and, likewise, for the benefit of its officers. You represent the members directly in seeing that the officers fully perform their financial duties. You will also conduct or oversee (with professional assistance) the annual audit of the local union. To the officers you are members of influence in your local, to whom they will look for counsel and upon whom they will depend for

assistance in carrying out tasks assigned them by the membership. Again, my best wishes to you.”

## **OFFICER’S OATH**

The Installing Official will ask the newly-elected officers to raise their right hand and repeat the oath as stated by the Installing Official in short, separate phrases.

“I pledge my honor..to perform the duties of my office..in compliance with the Constitution and/or by-laws..of the International Association of Fire Fighters and this local union.

All properties and records of this union..will be turned over to my successor in office..at the close of my official term. I will dutifully abide by and promote..the positions taken by the majority.

I will dedicate my talents and energies..to represent the mandates and directives of this union. I will use my good office..to promote unity and harmony..all of which I solemnly promise and swear..to keep to the best of my ability.

Installing Official: “Congratulations on your election to office in Local No.\_\_\_\_\_. To perform your respective functions requires skill, ability, honesty and good judgment as you face the challenges and opportunities of leadership. Your fellow members have shown their confidence in your ability by electing you to office. Perform your duties faithfully and well.”

(To those assembled)

“Your officers have been installed and charged with the responsibilities of their respective offices. That they will conduct themselves well seems apparent from the fact that you elected them. While it is easy to charge these officers with their duties, your own responsibilities to them are of equal importance. No officer, no matter how intelligent and hard working, can succeed without the cooperation of every member of your local. Remember the strength of any labor organization is directly related to the interest of its members and their regular attendance at meetings.”

“Attend your meetings regularly; provide input when necessary, but do it constructively. Debate on issues is healthy, and a core principle of the democratic process. When a decision has been reached, close ranks solidly and present a united front in pursuit of the will of the majority. Only in this manner will your organization be effective.”

# LOCAL UNION MEETINGS

## RULES FOR MEETINGS

The following rules are to be used to conduct meetings:

1. The regular order of business may be suspended by a two-thirds vote to dispose of an urgent matter.
2. Any motion must be put in writing if requested by the Chair.
3. Any conversation or action which disturbs a member who is speaking or hinders the transaction of business is in violation of order and shall not be permitted.
4. For a motion to be accepted by the Chair it must be seconded and the mover and seconder shall be recognized by the Chair.
5. A member can withdraw his/her motion only before it has been stated (repeated) by the Chair. After it has been stated, a motion can be withdrawn by a majority vote on the motion, e.g., "I move that the member offering the pending motion be given permission to withdraw it." In either procedure, the seconder has nothing to say about it, but may vote on the motion to give permission to withdraw.
6. A motion to amend an amendment shall be in order, but no additional amendments may be offered until the proposed amendment to an amendment has been voted upon.
7. A motion cannot be debated until it has been made by a member recognized by the Chair, seconded by another member and stated by the Chair.
8. When a member wishes to speak, the member shall rise to speak or raise his/her hand and respectfully address the Chair and if recognized by the Chair, the member shall proceed.
9. If two or more members wish to speak at the same time, the Chair shall decide which member is entitled to the floor and such decision is not subject to appeal.
10. A member shall confine his/her remarks to the question under debate and avoid personal, profane or sarcastic language. A member should not have his/her motives questioned during debate. Discussion shall concern the ideas presented at the meeting, not the individuals expressing those ideas.
11. No member shall interrupt another who is speaking, except on a point of order, and then only if it is urgent. The Chair shall immediately decide the point of order without debate.
12. If a member, while speaking, is called to order, he/she shall not speak further until the point of order is decided. After the ruling has been made, he/she shall continue with his/her remarks. The time taken by the point of order and the ruling thereon, shall not come from the member's time.
13. Appeal can be made from decisions of the Chair, except those decisions based upon the Constitution and By-Laws of the International Association of Fire Fighters, the Local constitution and/or by-laws, these rules or general parliamentary law. Decisions based upon any of the foregoing are not subject to appeal by the meeting.
14. When an appeal is made from a decision of the Chair, it shall be put to the meeting in these words, "Shall the decision of the Chair be sustained as the decision of this Union?" The member has the right to state the reasons for appeal, the Chair has the right to give the reasons for his/her decision; thereupon the members shall vote on the appeal without further debate. It shall require a majority vote to sustain the decision of the Chair.
15. No member shall speak more than once on the same subject until all the members desiring to speak on the matter have had an opportunity to do so; or more than twice

without unanimous consent; nor more than five minutes at any one time without consent of two-thirds vote of all members present.

16. The Chair shall not participate in debate unless he/she designates another to preside temporarily and takes a place on the floor. In the event that this happens, the Chair cannot resume presiding until after that motion has been voted on.
17. When a motion is before a meeting, no other motion shall be in order except the following:
  - Postpone indefinitely \*
  - Amend\*
  - Amend an amendment\*
  - Refer to a committee\*
  - Postpone to a definite time\*
  - Limit or extend debate
  - Stop debate
  - Appeal
  - Table
  - Recess
  - Adjourn only if Order of Business is completed
  - These motions have priority in the order given, reading down the list. Those marked with an "\*" are subject to debate by the members.
18. A motion to adjourn cannot be made until the Order of Business as provided in this manual has been completed, unless the members, by two-thirds vote, suspend the Order of Business for this purpose. A motion to adjourn cannot be made when a member has the floor or when members are voting.
19. If an amendment to a motion is pending, the proposed amendment shall be voted on first. If more than one amendment has been offered, the items shall be handled in the following order:
  1. Amendment to the amendment.
  2. Amendment
  3. Main motion.
20. Before taking a vote, the presiding officer shall ask "Are you ready for the Question?" If no member rises to speak, the Chair shall then put the question in this form: "All in favor of this motion raise your hand;" and after these have been counted, "Those opposed, raise your hand." After counting, the presiding officer shall announce the results. Any member may "doubt the vote" in which case the Chair shall take the vote again by a standing vote, which shall be final.
21. A motion to reconsider shall be made by a member who voted with the prevailing side. Such motion shall be in order only on the same day as the motion to which it applies was voted upon, or on the next day. The presiding officer shall ask a member who makes the motion to reconsider, "Did you vote with the prevailing side?"
22. A member who has been told three times by the Chair to be seated or to stop speaking, and who does not do so, shall be excluded from participating in any further business at that meeting.

## **ORDER OF BUSINESS**

- Opening.
- Roll call of officers and members.
- Reading of minutes of prior meeting.
- Announcement of applications for membership.
- Report of Membership Committee

- Voting on applications for membership.
- Initiation of candidates for membership.
- Receipt of dues and assessments.
- Reports of officers and committees.
- Unfinished business.
- Communication and bills.
- Good and welfare.
- Report of the evening's receipts and expenditures.
- New business.
- Closing

## **OPENING OF MEETING**

The announced time for the start of the meeting having arrived and a quorum being present, the local president shall call the meeting to order, upon which, all officers and members shall be seated and a general silence observed.

President: "Brothers and Sisters, the secretary being prepared to record the proceedings and a sufficient number of brothers and sisters being present, I declare this meeting duly convened and qualified to consider and transact such business as may come before it that is recognized by the International Association of Fire Fighters. All who are not members of the Association and are not authorized to be present will please leave."

If any officers are absent, the president will make such appointments pro tempore as may be necessary.

President: "I now declare this meeting open for the transaction of such business as may legally come before it."

The president will then conduct the meeting according to the provisions of the IAFF and Local Union Constitution and/or by-laws, and this Manual of Common Procedure.

## **INITIATION OF NEW MEMBERS**

President: "Brother/Sister Sergeant-at-Arms, seeing that the candidates in waiting have been duly approved for membership in this local union and the IAFF, please introduce them for initiation."

When the Sergeant-at-Arms arrives with the candidates the members will rise to their feet. The Sergeant-at-Arms will then say:

Sergeant-At-Arms: "Brother/Sister President, permit me to introduce \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ fire fighters of good character and accepted by the membership who come of their own free will to be admitted to the privilege of membership in the International Association of Fire Fighters."

President: "Brother/Sister Fire Fighters, it is my duty to inform you that the International Association of Fire Fighters requires perfect freedom of inclination in every candidate for membership in its body. An obligation of fidelity is required; but let me assure you that this obligation contains nothing contrary to your civil or religious duties. With this understanding, are

you willing to take an obligation which binds you upon your honor as a man/woman to keep the same as long as life remains?

(Applicants respond “yes” or “no.”)

President: “Each of you will now place your right hand over your heart while I recite the obligation.” (When there is but one candidate use the singular instead of the plural.)

“Do you, of your own free will, sincerely promise to abide by the laws of the International Association of Fire Fighters and its subordinate local union of which you are members?”

Do you also promise to bear true allegiance to the International Association of Fire Fighters and all for which it stands, and never consent to subordinate its interests to those of any other labor organization of which you may now or hereafter, be a member?

Do you further promise that you will never knowingly wrong a brother or sister or see him or her wronged, if in your power to prevent it and that you will endeavor to subordinate every selfish impulse to the task of elevating the material, intellectual, and moral condition of the entire laboring class?

Do you further solemnly promise, on your honor, that you will, whenever and wherever possible, purchase only strictly union made goods and you will use your best endeavors to influence others to do likewise and never become faithless to your obligation?

To all of this you pledge your honor to observe, and keep as long as life remains, or until you may be absolved from this obligation by the International Association of Fire Fighters.”

- “Do you promise?”
- (answer).

“You have just assumed the obligation of a member of the International Association of Fire Fighters. I greet you now as brothers and sisters and welcome you to membership in IAFF Local No.\_\_\_\_\_.

You are now also members of the AFL-CIO (or in Canada, the CLC), the largest and most powerful organization of free working men and women in the world. This organization is strong and has achieved greatness only through the individual members of its locals. Each of you by your action as a vigorous member of Local No.\_\_\_\_\_ has an effect on the continued strength of your own International, and hence, on the AFL-CIO (or in Canada, the CLC).

By your membership in Local No. \_\_\_\_\_ you have assumed the obligation of attending and taking part in the affairs of the local and the further obligation of initiating and supporting programs designed to benefit the majority of the members of your local. It should always be your aim in supporting or opposing any point of discussion to base your stand on a common-sense, reasonable basis.

The next matter I would like to emphasize is the necessity of supporting your officers. Whatever they accomplish will be in direct proportion to the support and encouragement you give them.

In undertaking to be a good member of Local No. \_\_\_\_\_, being a good fire fighter will take you a long way to being a good union member. We all know that you are identified with the

uniform of a fire fighter. When you wear that uniform well and reflect credit upon it, you also reflect credit upon your union.

Since you deal with the public constantly, use that contact at every opportunity to impress the public favorably. If you do, you will find that the undertakings of your union will be sympathetically received and acted upon when you need public support.

Finally, think carefully of the meaning of the word 'Brother/Sister' and apply the term with all its connotations, in your dealings with other fire fighters. If you do, your satisfaction in being a fire fighter and a brother/sister of Local No. \_\_\_\_\_ will be a most rewarding experience. Congratulations and best wishes."

The Sergeant-at-Arms will then direct the new members to the Secretary, who will present them with their membership cards; and then direct them to the reserved seats, where they will remain until the close of the meeting.

### **CLOSING OF MEETING**

President: "There being no further business before the union, we will now proceed to close.

You will all bear in mind your obligations. Support the union for it promotes your health and welfare; have faith in the union, and it will comfort you in need; have zeal for the union, for in its growth you will find happiness for yourself and your fellow fire fighters.

By virtue of my office, I now declare this meeting adjourned until our next regular session (unless specially called), when I hope to see you all present."

### **TWO-SHIFT MEETINGS IN THE LOCAL UNION**

Shift meetings should be regarded as generally undesirable if any other method can be used to achieve the desired results. This is because of the fundamental difficulty in conducting this type of meeting, which includes the necessity for agreement between the two meetings as to final action. When shift meetings are determined to be necessary, it is essential that the following procedures be followed.

1. Both shift meetings should be held, if possible, within 24 hours. It is always desirable to complete action as soon as it can be done. This is true of any group decision and especially true of shift meetings.

Both meetings are considered as constituting one meeting as far as total votes are concerned and also the final results that are to be determined.

2. In order to establish the results of action taken in shift meetings, the total votes cast for and against the motion are added together. For example, let us assume that Meeting A votes for a motion and Meeting B votes against it. Meeting A--40 "for", 20 "against"; Meeting B--30 "for," 40 "against." The total vote is 70 "for" and 60 "against," 130 votes. A majority is necessary to adopt any main motion, in this case 66 votes. So the motion is adopted.

If Meeting A adopts a motion and Meeting B amends it and sends it back to Meeting A, and Meeting A defeats the amendment, the total number of votes in both meetings determines whether the amendment is adopted.

	For	Against
Meeting B	80	50
Meeting A	<u>50</u>	<u>55</u>
	130	105

The total vote is 235. The vote necessary for adoption of the amendment is 118, so the amendment is adopted.

3. The announcement of a vote may be made only after final action by the last meeting to vote. It is essential that NO announcement be made until after the final vote.
4. If a motion is made at one meeting and later, in the same meeting, it is indefinitely postponed, the motion is killed and does not go to the other meeting.
5. If an amendment is offered at Meeting A and this amendment is defeated at that meeting, and later the same amendment is offered at Meeting B and adopted, it is necessary for the motion as amended, to be returned to Meeting A for final vote.
6. If a motion is made and adopted at Meeting A, it is not in order for Meeting B to table it. Meeting B must take some action on the motion, whether amendment, reference to committee, or something else.
7. If Meeting A defeats a motion, it does not go to Meeting B. However, Meeting B can originate another motion, the same as that defeated in Meeting A. As a practical matter, this would only be done when the proponents of the motion have reason to believe that there have been changes of viewpoint toward the motion, or that the combination of votes in the two meetings in favor would be enough to adopt the motion.
8. If Meeting A adopts a motion and it is considered by Meeting B which proposes amendments and adopts them, and then adopts the motion as amended, the motion as amended must be voted on by Meeting A.
9. If a motion is passed by Meeting A and Meeting B votes to refer it to a committee, this has to be referred back to Meeting A for a final vote on referring to a committee; the combined votes of both meetings determine whether it goes to committee.
10. If Meeting A, when considering a motion that originated at that meeting, votes to table it, the motion does not go to Meeting B. Meeting B, however, may originate the same or a similar motion and, if adopted, send it to Meeting A.
11. If Meeting A votes to postpone a motion to a definite time, the motion and the postponement to a definite time will both be considered by Meeting B. The total votes cast for the postponement will determine whether this is done.
12. If meeting A adopts a motion and meeting B votes to postpone it to a definite time, the motion for postponement is to be considered by Meeting A.



13. The Minutes of Meeting A are to be read only at the next session of Meeting A, not at Meeting B. Each set of Minutes require action for adoption by the meeting where they originate and no action by the other meeting.

14. When the action by one meeting makes it necessary to consider a motion at a later meeting where some of the members, because of a shift change, also change their meeting attendance, a roll-call vote should always be taken. Unless this is done, there is no way to prevent complete confusion as to when and how a member has already voted. As this situation of change of shift is a part of the two shift procedure, the practice of roll-call voting should be followed in shift meetings.

Roll-call lists have to be prepared in advance by the Local Union Secretary. The names of all members in good standing are listed, in strictly alphabetical order, on the left of each page; to the right are three columns headed, "Yes", "No" and "Present."

The Secretary calls each name and the member responds by saying "Yes" or "No" or "Present." This response is recorded by the Secretary in the proper column.

Members have a right to change their votes from "yes" to "no" or from "no" to "yes"; or from "present" to "yes" or from "present" to "no" at any time before the result is announced. They cannot change their vote from "yes" or "no" to "present." After the vote has been announced, there can be no changes.

15. Having the vote taken by written ballot is not to be done in shift meetings, except, of course, in elections. The object of the roll-call vote is to assure that members vote only once, even though their shift may have changed.

16. Because of the fact that, if there are three shifts, 2/3 of the members will be off duty at a given time, there is no need for three-shift meetings. There are too many possible complications in running three-shift meetings, all of which for some purposes would have to be regarded as one meeting. There could be almost endless adoptions of amendments to motions and delaying tactics of various kinds. A determined minority in these meetings could effectively prevent action through tactics to be found in any manual of parliamentary law.

The object of Local Union meetings includes the consideration of subjects properly presented to the membership and to take action by majority vote. Under the circumstances which would prevail in the three-meeting procedures, it would be extremely difficult to either adequately consider subjects or to take final action upon them.

Responsible union leadership is properly concerned with providing the maximum practical protection for member's rights in meetings. The three-shift meeting procedure, by its very structure, offers many opportunities for the curtailment of these rights. It is for these reasons that such meetings should not be held.

As the Local plans and conducts two-shift meetings, it should keep in mind the basic principles which apply to the conduct of all meetings: the minority has the right to express its views and to offer any proper motion, but in the end the majority makes the decision. Once the decision has been made, it is the duty of all members to abide by the result until another decision is reached. This is the essence of democracy.

## **COMMITTEES IN THE LOCAL UNION**

Many organizations do most of its work through their committees. Before a membership meeting considers a subject, a committee often makes a preliminary investigation and offers its recommendations for consideration. After the meeting has voted on a policy, it often instructs a committee to take the necessary action to carry out the policy. Local unions function through committees in the same way that other organizations do and the importance of this part of union activity deserves special consideration.

Only a few members can hold office in a local union, but many can serve on committees. The experience gained in such service is helpful in understanding the functions of the local, and it often presents a member with his/her first opportunity to demonstrate leadership skills. Successful committee assignments frequently lead to consideration for other leadership posts, thus strengthening the organization.

It is obvious that a local union with active and effective committees can benefit by increased efficiency and by having a rich source of future leaders.

There are two categories of committees that are often established within unions – standing and special.

### **STANDING COMMITTEES**

This type of committee is elected or appointed, as the local union constitution and/or by-laws require, for a definite term. It is usually the same as the term of office of the local president. The constitution and/or by-laws should always define the duties and responsibilities of each standing committee, the quorum of the committee, and whether there are to be ex-officio members (officers of the union who may serve on the committee by virtue of their office).

An example of a standing committee is the Executive Board, whose authority is set forth in the constitution and/or by-laws and whose quorum is also established with the president as Chair of the Board.

Every matter referred to a standing committee must be reported out before the end of the administration of which it is a part. There can be no holding over from one administration to another by any standing committee.

### **SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

Special committees are created for a limited period of time to act on certain matters and continue to exist until their final reports are submitted, unless discharged by vote of the parent body. When a special committee is to be created, the motion to do so must include the method by which the committee is to be selected, the number of members on the committee, and when it shall report.

### **ALL COMMITTEES**

Any committee, whether standing or special, functions in the following manner.

## **MATERIAL DISTRIBUTED TO THE COMMITTEE**

When a motion to refer a matter to a committee has been adopted, all the necessary papers must be given to the committee Chair. The local union secretary is responsible for the transfer of this material. Certainly, the motion referring a matter to the committee, as written in the minutes, should be copied and given to the committee Chair. This is the basis for the committee's authority. If there are letters or any other correspondence relating to the subject referred, they should be included in the transfer of material. Anything which might be helpful to the committee in its work should be given to the Chair. The Chair is responsible for this material, and upon completion of the committee's work the Chair must return the documents to the local union secretary.

## **PLANNING FOR COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

For committee meetings to be effective, they must be planned and an agenda should be prepared in advance. No meeting should be held unless needed. Consequently, the first determination to be made is whether the committee meeting is necessary. Is there business to be considered?

Members of the committee should be consulted in advance as to whether they can attend and the items of business that are anticipated will be on the agenda. Committee meetings can only be held when a quorum is present; therefore, it becomes essential to assure that a quorum will be present.

If a subcommittee was established, the subcommittee Chair should be consulted as to whether he/she will be ready to report. If so, they should be asked to submit written reports.

The agenda will contain at least the following items:

- Reading and adopting the minutes of the previous committee meeting
- Reports of subcommittees
- Unfinished business
- New business

It is the committee Chair's responsibility to prepare and follow the agenda.

## **WHO MAY ATTEND**

Only members of the committee have the right to attend committee meetings. A committee, by majority vote, may invite people who are not committee members to appear before the committee. The committee Chair, without objection from committee members, may also invite others to attend the meeting. The purpose may be to obtain information or to provide an opportunity for members of the local to express their opinions. When the purpose has been achieved, the nonmembers are excused and the committee begins its deliberation.

No non-member of the committee, except employees of the organization, may be present when a committee is deliberating. Even employees may be sent out of the committee room if the committee goes into "executive session." This is a motion which takes a majority vote and is usually done when matters affecting employees will be discussed and voted on.

No member of the local who is not a committee member has the right to attend a committee meeting. They may do so only when invited in the manner described.

Discussion in the committee is confidential and should be held that way until the report of the committee is submitted to the local. Committee members should be asked to refrain from talking about the actions and deliberations until the report is given. The object of the report is to comply with a directive of the membership, and this could be distorted if each committee member gives, in effect, his/her own report of what happened.

## **PROCEDURES IN COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

There are several differences between meetings of the local union itself and meetings of its committees. They are as follow:

- The committee Chair may make motions from the Chair.
- Motions do not require a second in the committee.
- Members may speak as often as they can get recognized. There is much less formality in committee meetings than in meetings of the parent body.
- The committee Chair may participate in debate. In fact, a good Chair is often foremost in debate and does this from the Chair.
- A committee vote may be reconsidered, regardless of the time elapsed, provided the vote to be reconsidered has not been reported to the parent body. The motion to reconsider may be made by any committee member who did not vote with the losing side. This means that one who was absent from the meeting when the original vote was taken and adopted or rejected can make the motion to reconsider. If there is previous notice to the members of the committee, a majority vote is all that is required. Without previous notice, a two-thirds vote is necessary to reconsider in committee.
- Committees may establish subcommittees. Subcommittees must report to the committee, never to the local union meeting.

## **SUBCOMMITTEES**

Subcommittees consist of members of the committee and are appointed by the Chair of the committee, who designates the subcommittee Chair. The committee Chair may name himself/herself to a subcommittee.

There is also a secretary of each subcommittee who is appointed by the subcommittee Chair.

It is the responsibility of the subcommittee secretary to provide a brief record of the actions of the subcommittee in simple minutes which are read only at meetings of the subcommittee. The secretary also prepares, with the approval of the subcommittee Chair, the report to the committee.

The subcommittee Chair has the duty of keeping the committee Chair informed of the work being done by the subcommittee and to notify the committee chairman, in advance, when its

report will be ready. When the report is to be presented, the subcommittee Chair reads it and moves its adoption. The committee then debates, amends, etc. When the committee accepts a report of one of its subcommittees, this becomes action of the committee and is included in the committee minutes and report to the local union.

It is the responsibility of the committee secretary to provide the subcommittee Chair with the papers which will be required by the subcommittee in its work. The subcommittee Chair is responsible for these papers and must return them on completion of the subcommittee's work and the submission of its report.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

(All Committee Reports Should be In Writing)

The committee report should be signed by all those who are in favor of the report, although the Chair may be authorized, by vote of the committee, to sign the report. When this is done, the Chair signs his/her name with "Chair" under it.

Under the agenda heading "Reports of Committees" the reporting member obtains recognition and reports. As stated, the committee Chair usually reports, but in his/her absence or if the Chair does not want to do so, another committee member may report.

After reading the report, the committee Chair moves its adoption. When a report contains recommendations, they should be placed at the end of the report and acted on separately. Each recommendation is open to debate, amendment, etc., as in the case with other motions.

If a committee reports against a motion, the form used is "the committee reports unfavorably upon this motion." The Chair would state the motion, "the question is on the acceptance of the motion (adoption of the resolution), the recommendation of the committee to the contrary notwithstanding." Alternatively, the committee may simply bring in a report that recommends "rejection" of the motion. In this case, the Chair would say "The committee recommends rejection of the motion; the question is on the committee recommendation. Those in favor of rejection say "aye;" those opposed say "no."

If a committee reports a resolution or motion with amendments, the committee Chair first reads the motion as referred to the committee, then the amendments offered by the committee. The presiding officer states the question on the adoption of any committee amendments. After debate, a vote is taken on each amendment separately.

It is in order to offer amendments to the committee amendments. There cannot be amendments of amendments made from the floor when a committee amendment is before the meeting.

If a committee reports a motion with a substitute, the Chair states the question on the substitute as "The committee recommends substituting the following motion for the motion referred to it." The vote is first taken on the substitute. If this carries, no vote is taken on the original motion referred to the committee. If the substitute is lost, the Chair immediately states the motion as referred to the committee.

## **COMMITTEE FAILING TO REPORT**

If a committee does not function, or fails or refuses to submit a report, the local union meeting can discharge the committee. The motion to discharge is necessary because once a matter has been given to a committee it cannot be brought before the membership meeting until the committee reports.

The motion to be made is "I move to discharge the \_\_\_\_\_ committee from further consideration of \_\_\_\_\_." (Name the committee and specify the motion involved.)

It takes a two-thirds vote to discharge a committee unless advance notice is given. If there has been a notice, a majority vote can discharge. "Notice" means the usual method of notifying members of a meeting, which may be posting on bulletin boards, sending written notice or whatever method is used.

## **EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS**

When the by-laws provide for certain officers to be members ex-officio of a committee, they have all the rights of any other committee member. They may vote, debate and serve on subcommittees. There is no difference between an ex-officio member of a committee and any other member of that committee except as to how he/she becomes a member, which is because he/she holds an office.

Ex-officio members are counted in determining the presence of a quorum. The only exception is when the president of the local union is an ex-officio member of all committees. In this event, he/she may attend any meeting of any committee as a member but he/she is not required to do so. Under these conditions, the president is not counted in a committee quorum.

## **MINORITY VIEWS**

If a majority of the committee votes for its report but the minority desires to express their opinions and tries to have it accepted by the membership, they may do so through "minority views." The procedure is as follows:

When the committee report has been submitted and is open for debate, a member of the committee minority will obtain recognition and read the minority views. The committee member can then move "that the minority views be substituted for the committee report." Debate then will be on both the original committee report and the minority views.

When debate is finished, the vote is taken on substituting the minority views for the committee report. If a majority votes that way, the report is dropped in favor of the minority views which then become the committee report.

## **COMMITTEE MINUTES**

The secretary of a committee is appointed by the committee Chair. The secretary's job is to keep a brief record of what is done in committee meetings, as well as preparing the committee report, with the approval of the Chair.

Committee minutes are to be read only at committee meetings, never at meetings of the parent body. However, there may be recommendations from the committee to the local union or there may be a report of progress. The recommendations are read by the Chair of the committee or the reporting member, and a motion made for their adoption. If there is only a report of progress, no motion is made and no action is taken.

# **SAMPLE LOCAL UNION CONSTITUTION AND/OR BY-LAWS**

## **ARTICLE 1: NAME**

### **SECTION 1: LOCAL NUMBER AND NAME**

The number of this organization shall be Local number: \_\_\_\_\_

The name of this organization shall be:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_, International Association of Fire Fighters.

### **SECTION 2: DEFINITIONS**

References in this Constitution and/or by-laws to "Local" or "Local union" shall refer to the Local as set forth in Section 1 above, and references to "Association" or "International" shall refer to the International Association of Fire Fighters.

### **SECTION 3: COMPLIANCE**

This Local Union, its officers, representatives, and members shall recognize, observe, and be bound by the provisions of the Constitution and/or by-laws of the International Association and the interpretations rendered by the International's General President, the resolutions, and decisions and directives of the Executive Board of officers of the Association, when made in conformity with the authority granted by the Constitution and/or by-laws of the Association, and the resolutions adopted and policies established by the delegates at conventions. Article XIII of the Constitution and/or by-laws of the Association is recognized as providing the basic rules governing this Local.

## **ARTICLE 2: JURISDICTION**

"Jurisdiction shall be as follows: All full-time, paid employees engaged in fire fighting, emergency medical or rescue service activities, or related services."

## **ARTICLE 3: MEMBERSHIP**

### **SECTION 1: ACTIVE**

Any person of good moral character who, at the time of making application is engaged in service within the jurisdiction of this Local, as given in Article 2, is eligible for active membership.

Anyone eligible for membership in this Local shall not be refused membership or, upon acceptance, be discriminated against because of race, color, gender, sexual orientation, creed, national origin, or by reason of disability.

### **SECTION 2: HONORARY**

For meritorious service to the Local, or for distinguished public service, persons may be elected honorary members by a majority vote. Honorary members shall not pay initiation fees, dues or other charges and shall have no voice or vote in the Local. Such membership may be revoked for cause.



**SECTION 3: RETIREE <sup>1</sup>**

Members who have retired from this Local or have otherwise withdrawn as members in good standing may be allowed to return to this Local within \_\_\_\_\_ as active-retired members.

**SECTION 4: MAINTENANCE OF GOOD STANDING**

Membership in good standing includes any person who has fulfilled the requirements for membership in this Local and who has not voluntarily withdrawn, become ineligible for continued membership or been suspended or expelled as provided in the Constitution and/or by-laws of the International Association of Fire Fighters or the Constitution of this Local.

**SECTION 5: SEPARATION**

When any member in good standing is separated from the fire service, the Local Union may allow said member to retain active membership or in lieu thereof, upon request of said member, shall issue a withdrawal card. The Local Union may issue withdrawal cards only to those members who leave the fire service or EMS in good standing or who are precluded by law or Local ordinance or contractually from maintaining union membership by virtue of their fire department position. A former member holding a valid withdrawal card will not be charged a reinstatement fee upon reentry into the organization. A member who is duly elected as an officer of the International Association of Fire Fighters, or elected or appointed as a representative of or to an affiliated labor organization, shall retain his/her active membership in this Local.

**SECTION 6: DELINQUENT MEMBERS**

Members who fail to pay their monthly dues or assessments by the fifteenth (15th) day following the month such dues are payable shall be notified by the Local officer whose duty it is, that they are delinquent and will be automatically suspended and lose their good standing if payment is not made within sixty (60) days following such notification. Delinquent and suspended members are not entitled to a voice or to vote in the Local or in the affairs of the International.

**ARTICLE 4: MEETINGS**

**SECTION 1: TIME AND PLACE**

Regular meetings of the Local shall be held on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of each month at \_\_\_\_\_.

**SECTION 2: SPECIAL MEETINGS**

Special meetings may be called by vote of a majority of the Executive Board. All members in good standing shall be notified of such special meeting at least seven (7) days prior to the same. The notice shall state the business to be considered at such meeting, and no other business than that stated in the notice shall be in order at such meeting.

**SECTION 3: QUORUM**

The quorum for any meeting of this Local, either regular or special, shall be \_\_\_\_\_ members in good standing.

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<sup>1</sup> If you are implementing this section a specific time period must be inserted in the blank space. The time period is left to the discretion of the Local. If this section is not being implemented then it should be crossed out.

## **SECTION 4: RIGHTS OF MEMBERS**

Every member in good standing shall have the right to attend any meeting and to participate in such meeting in accordance with the recognized rules set forth in the manual of parliamentary procedure adopted by this Local. Members shall conduct themselves in such a manner as to not interfere with the legal or contractual obligations of the International or this Local.

## **SECTION 5: RULES FOR MEETINGS<sup>2</sup>**

The rules contained in \_\_\_\_\_ shall govern the meetings of this Local in all cases not in conflict with this Constitution and/or by-laws, or the Constitution and/or by-laws of the International, or interpretations of these documents

## **ARTICLE 5: OFFICERS AND ELECTIONS**

### **SECTION 1: NUMBER AND TITLES**

The officers of this Local shall consist of a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer and \_\_\_\_\_ members of the Executive Board, who shall hold office for \_\_\_\_\_ years, and until the election and installation of their successors, unless removed from office as provided in the Constitution and/or by-laws of the International or this Constitution and/or by-laws. The offices of Secretary and Treasurer may be held by the same individual.

### **SECTION 2: ELIGIBILITY FOR OFFICE**

Any member in good standing shall be eligible to be a candidate for office in this Local.

### **SECTION 3: RIGHTS OF CANDIDATES**

Every candidate for office shall have the right to request distribution of campaign literature, by mail or otherwise, to all members in good standing, at the candidate's own personal expense. "A candidate for office" includes a candidate for membership on the Executive Board. There shall be no discrimination in favor of or against any candidate with regard to the use of membership lists.

### **SECTION 4: USE OF FUNDS PROHIBITED IN ELECTIONS**

No funds received by this Local through initiation fees, dues, or assessments or otherwise, shall be contributed or applied to promote the candidacy of any person in election of officers.

This section does not prevent the expenditure from Local funds for notices, factual statements of issues and other necessary expenses to conduct elections so long as they do not involve promotion of any candidate.

### **SECTION 5: METHOD OF NOMINATION AND ELECTION**

Each member in good standing shall be given at least fifteen (15) days advance notice, in writing, of the date, time and place at which nominations shall be made, and at least fifteen (15) days advance notice, in writing, sent by mail to the last known address of the member, of the date, time and place at which elections shall be held.<sup>3</sup> Any member in good standing may nominate eligible members for office.

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<sup>2</sup> Pursuant to Resolution No. 14 adopted at the 2002 IAFF Convention, local unions have the option of using either Atwood's Rules for Meetings or Robert's Rules of Order.

<sup>3</sup> Although the requirement that notice of elections be sent by mail is not directly applicable to unions consisting solely of public sector employees, this requirement, which arises from federal law governing private sector unions,

Elections shall be by secret ballot; write-in voting shall not be permitted.<sup>4</sup> If there is only one candidate for a given office, such candidate shall be declared elected. There shall be no voting by proxy in the election of Local officers. The candidate receiving a majority of the ballots cast shall be declared elected. If no candidate receives a majority of the ballots cast, there shall be a run-off election between the two candidates who received the most votes. If the final ballot of any officer election results in a tie between the candidates, the winning candidate for office shall be selected by the drawing of lots in the presence of both candidates.<sup>5</sup>

#### **SECTION 6: ELECTIONS COMMITTEE**

The President shall appoint an Elections Committee which shall be responsible for distributing and tabulating the ballots. Each candidate for office shall be entitled to appoint one observer who shall be permitted to witness the manner of distribution and casting of ballots and attend the meeting of the Elections Committee at which the votes are tabulated.

#### **SECTION 7: BALLOTS PRESERVED**

The ballots and all other records of an election shall be preserved by the Secretary for one year following such election.

#### **SECTION 8: VACANCIES IN OFFICE**

When an office becomes vacant by reason of death, resignation, or removal of the incumbent, the Executive Board shall elect a successor by majority vote, no later than thirty days from the date the office is vacated.

### **ARTICLE 6: DUTIES OF OFFICERS**

#### **SECTION 1: LOCAL PRESIDENT**

It shall be the duty of the President to preside at all meetings of the Local and at meetings of the Executive Board. He/she shall be the executive head of the Local. He/she shall be a member ex-officio of all committees. He/she shall appoint such committees as may be provided for in this Constitution and/or by-laws and such special committees as may be authorized by the Local. Together with the Treasurer, he/she shall sign all orders and checks lawfully and properly drawn. He/she shall enforce strict observance of the Constitution and/or by-laws of the International as this document relates to the Local, and the Constitution and/or by-laws of the Local and shall have the final authority, subject only to internal appeal to the International pursuant to Article XVIII of the IAFF Constitution and By-Laws, to decide questions of parliamentary rules and questions involving interpretation of this Constitution and/or by-laws. He/she shall have general supervision of the activities of the other officers and the Chair of committees.

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would apply to a local's election of delegates to the IAFF Convention, and to the election of local officers who serve as delegates to IAFF Conventions by virtue of their office.

<sup>4</sup> Article XIII, Section 11 of the IAFF Constitution states that a local may not allow for write-in candidacies for its local officers unless it specifically provides for the same in its Constitution and/or by-laws. If your local wishes to provide for write-in candidacies, it may do so, but you should alter the model language in the first sentence of this paragraph to reflect this intent, and delete the second sentence of this paragraph.

<sup>5</sup> Article XIII, Section 11 of the IAFF Constitution encourages affiliates to adopt a fair, reasonable and legally acceptable provision in their by-laws to govern the resolution of tie votes. In the absence of such a provision, affiliates will be required to resolve tie votes by the method set forth in this Sample Constitution.

The President shall discharge on behalf of the Local such duties as may be imposed upon him/her by applicable law including the execution and filing of any reports to Federal or State authorities, and he/she shall cause the Local to maintain such records as the law requires them to be kept, in support of reports it files.

The President, by virtue of his/her election, shall be a delegate of this Local to the convention of the International.

## **SECTION 2: LOCAL VICE PRESIDENT**

The Vice President shall assist the President in such a manner as the President may determine. In the absence of the President he/she shall preside at meetings of the Local and of the Executive Board. If the office of President becomes vacant, the Vice President shall be acting President until the office of President is filled by election by the Executive Board.

## **SECTION 3: LOCAL SECRETARY**

The Secretary shall have custody of all documents, records, books and papers belonging to the Local, except as may be otherwise provided by this Constitution and/or by-laws. He/she shall keep an accurate record of the meetings of the Local and of the Executive Board, of which he/she shall be the Secretary. He/she shall attest all official documents with his/her signature and the seal of the Local. He/she shall conduct the correspondence of the Local promptly. He/she shall maintain the official list of members in good standing, which shall be kept accurately and on a current basis.

The Secretary shall discharge on behalf of the Local such duties as may be imposed upon him/her by applicable law including the execution and filing of any reports to Federal or State authorities, and he/she shall cause to be maintained by the Local such records as the law requires to be kept in support of reports filed by it.

## **SECTION 4: LOCAL TREASURER**

The Treasurer shall receive all monies due the Local, from whatsoever source, and shall disburse the same only by voucher signed by the President in conformity with a vote of the Local. Such disbursement shall be by check, which shall also be signed by the President. He/she shall maintain and keep current a record of members with their dues payments, assessments and all financial transactions promptly and accurately entered. He/she shall be prepared to exhibit receipts and vouchers upon the audit of his/her books. He/she shall forward the annual audit of the Local to the International General Secretary-Treasurer, over the seal of the Local.

## **SECTION 5: LOCAL EXECUTIVE BOARD**

The Executive Board shall consist of the President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer, and members who are elected at the annual meeting. It shall be the duty of the Executive Board to exercise general supervision and control of the invested funds and property of the Local. It shall have the authority to act in the name of the Local during intervals between meetings, such acts being subject to confirmation by the membership at the next regular meetings of the Local. It shall provide for an annual audit of the Treasurer's books. It shall meet at the call of the President or on call signed by a majority of its members. A majority shall constitute a quorum.

## **SECTION 6: BONDING**

All officers and employees of the Local who handle funds or property of the Local shall be bonded in such amounts as may be required by the Board of Trustees and the International

General Secretary-Treasurer, in compliance with applicable law. The expense of the first \$5,000 of Bond shall be borne by the International. If additional bond is necessary, the Local shall pay the additional premium. The Local shall have sufficient bond to cover at least ten (10%) percent of its current liquid assets.

## **ARTICLE 7: DELEGATES AND ALTERNATES TO INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS**

### **SECTION 1: DELEGATES**

If, in accordance with Article IV, Section 2 of the International Constitution and By-Laws, this Local is entitled to Delegates in addition to the President, they shall be elected by secret ballot of the members in good standing.

### **SECTION 2: ALTERNATES**

Alternates to conventions shall be elected by secret ballot of the members in good standing. The credentials of delegates and alternates must certify to this method of election.

## **ARTICLE 8: INITIATION FEES, DUES AND ASSESSMENTS**

### **SECTION 1: INITIATION FEES**

Initiation fees shall be paid in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_. Ten (\$10.00) dollars of this amount shall be submitted to the IAFF.

### **SECTION 2: DUES**

Dues shall be \$\_\_\_\_\_ each month.

### **SECTION 3: ASSESSMENTS**

Assessments may be made only in the following manner: Each member in good standing shall be notified in writing at least thirty (30) days in advance of the date on which the vote for an assessment is to occur. The proposed assessment shall become effective upon a majority vote of the members in good standing, by secret ballot at a general or special meeting.

### **SECTION 4: INCREASES IN RATES**

Increases in rates of initiation fees, reinstatement fees or dues shall require notice of such proposed increase to be given to the members in good standing at least thirty (30) days in advance of the date on which the vote for such increase is to occur. The proposed increase shall become effective upon a majority vote of the members in good standing, by secret ballot at a general or special meeting.

### **SECTION 5: REINSTATEMENT FEES**

Reinstatement fees shall be \$\_\_\_\_\_, plus all back dues and assessments. Ten (\$10.00) dollars of this amount shall be submitted to the IAFF.

## **ARTICLE 9: MISCONDUCT, TRIALS AND APPEALS**

### **SECTION 1: MISCONDUCT AND TRIALS**

Any member charged with misconduct as defined in Article XV of the International's Constitution and By-Laws shall be served with written specific charges as required by Article XVI of the International Constitution and be given a reasonable time to prepare his/her defense and afforded a hearing as provided in Article XVII of the International Constitution.

## **SECTION 2: APPEALS**

Appeals may be made in accordance with Article XVIII of the International's Constitution and By-Laws. Such appeal must be filed with the International General President of this Association within thirty (30) days of the action to be appealed.

## **ARTICLE 10: AUDIT**

The books and accounts of this Local shall be audited annually, and the last such report of audit shall be forwarded to the International's General Secretary-Treasurer with the seal of the Local within one hundred and eighty (180) days of the close of the Local's fiscal year, and shall include an accurate accounting of all employees within the Local Union's Fire Department.

## **ARTICLE 11: AMENDMENTS**

### **SECTION 1: PROPOSED AMENDMENTS**

This Constitution and/or by-laws made under its provisions may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote (except for changes in dues and assessments, and initiation and reinstatement fees, which shall require a majority vote, as provided in Article 8, Sections 3 and 4) at a regular meeting, provided that each member in good standing is notified in writing of the proposed amendment at least fifteen (15) days in advance of the meeting at which the vote will be taken.

### **SECTION 2: ADOPTED AMENDMENTS**

A proposed amendment to this Constitution, or any By-Laws made under its provisions, shall be submitted for approval to the International's General President prior to its printing, or issuance, after it has first been adopted by the membership.

## **FUNERAL PROTOCOL**

The following protocol is to assist IAFF local affiliates in the event of a line-of-duty death of a member. The information is provided solely for assistance purposes. Each individual affiliate should evaluate its local conditions and utilize, amend or change these recommendations accordingly.

### **LOCAL NOTIFICATION**

After the notification of a death of a member, the chief of the department should immediately inform union office/officials and the fire department chaplain.

The fire department should be informed that the local union official(s) wish to accompany those department officials who are dispatched to notify next of kin. After the family has been officially notified, the fire department and the local union should notify all on-duty members.

### **NOTIFICATION TO IAFF**

In the event of a line-of-duty death, the local union must notify the IAFF District Vice President and the IAFF and be prepared to supply the following information.

- Member's full name
- Member's age at death
- Member's rank
- Member's Social Security Number (US) or Social Insurance Number (CAN)
- IAFF membership number
- Date of death
- Cause of death (if known)
- Name/Address/Telephone number of spouse (married); parents (single) or next of kin.
- Names/Ages of children
- Local union number, President, Address/Telephone number
- Local union officer serving as PSOB contact
- Name/Address/Telephone number of mayor/local jurisdiction official
- Name/Address/Telephone number of fire chief
- Name of fire department
- Funeral arrangements (dates, times, and locations)

### **PLANNING**

The local union president must immediately appoint an individual with the sole responsibility of acting on behalf of the local union in the planning for the deceased member's funeral.

In order for the local union to be fully prepared, the following initial information must be gathered from the deceased's family as soon as possible. A union/department member should be immediately assigned as a family contact to assist the family and serve as the liaison between the family and those in the department planning the funeral.

- Do they want funeral with full department honors?
- Do they want a religious funeral? If so, what place of worship?
- Who is their choice of priest, minister, rabbi, or other religious representative?
- Where is the funeral home?

- Who is the funeral director?

If the family requests a departmental funeral, the funeral director should be so notified. The funeral director makes arrangements with the church, cemetery, etc. The union/department should make arrangements for the funeral director to receive the deceased's uniform in the event of a departmental funeral or if requested by family.

A list of pallbearers must be obtained from the family. Honor guard members should be selected, usually chosen from house and company members, and scheduled to stand at the casket during the viewing at the funeral home. For the funeral service, honor guard and ushers should be selected.

Arrangements must begin immediately on site selection for the memorial service (if planned) and for collation (reception) following the funeral/memorial service. Vendors should be immediately solicited for assistance.

The local union must determine the availability of the following:

- white gloves
- union pins
- badge covers
- bunting (fire stations/union hall)

Determine whether church cards (last alarm) are desired and arrange with a printer for production (if cards are to be printed). This must be done immediately to allow for printing time.

Secure space from local hotel(s). Remember that fire fighters from throughout the International may attend the funeral. Select one hotel as a primary base for International officers who may attend the funeral (e.g., in multiple line-of-duty death incidents).

## **POLICE DEPARTMENT LIAISON**

Request that the police department send out on police blotter the announcement of line-of-duty deaths with as much detail as possible, including funeral arrangements, department and union address, and the local union representative responsible for the funeral home's phone number.

Request that the police provide a detail in a marked car at the deceased's house during the entire funeral period.

Request that the police have a representative at any planning meeting. They can assist with logistical coordination including traffic, crowd control, out-of-town fire fighters, parking, etc.

## **THE FUNERAL**

For line-of-duty departmental funerals the following protocol should be arranged:

The funeral director has the primary responsibility of assisting the family, including bringing them into the funeral site and seating. The Department should select Chief-in-Charge for directing and coordinating fire department and fire fighter involvement in the funeral.



The Honor Guard should post colors prior to the funeral service. The Honor Guard should be posted outside the funeral site on both sides of the entrance. Department personnel, union officials, fire fighters and civic delegates should line up with the honor guard to the street. The family passes between the ranks. In all instances, family should enter ahead of any dignitaries. Ushers should keep the front right part of the room open for members and delegates. After the body is greeted, all march in and are seated in the following fashion:

- Fire chief
- Union president
- International principal officer(s)
- Local union officials
- Deceased's company
- Delegation of department's chief officers
- Members of department
- Members of other fire departments

All remain standing until all firefighting delegations are in place.

At conclusion of the service, ushers will direct the firefighting delegation to the street where they resume their original places, facing the front door, under the direction of the Chief-in-Charge. Pallbearers then proceed outside with the body followed by family and other mourners. The Chief-in-Charge gives the command for salute as the body is brought outside and placed in the hearse.

After services, the funeral director assembles the procession. The Chief-in-Charge directs all fire fighter personnel, preceded by colors, to march ahead of the procession to a designated pass-in-review position. If desired, a designated fire house could be chosen for a pass-in-review. The fire house should have apparatus on the apron, with all on-duty personnel at attention and bells tolling as the procession passes. At this time, the pass-in-review procession proceeds to the cemetery.

## **COMMITTAL**

The Chief-in-Charge is responsible for assembling fire fighters at the grave site. It should immediately be determined how many mourners the cemetery and/or grave site area can accommodate. Committal is usually for family and close friends. Apparatus can be detailed to the cemetery gates with fire fighters in full dress.

Arrangements can be made for the bugler to play TAPS and a sole bagpiper for playing Amazing Grace, or other appropriate hymn. Local musicians unions or schools can usually provide these individuals if unavailable within the fire or police departments.

Dismissal from grave site is generally followed by a reception.

## **PERIOD OF MOURNING AND HONOR**

After notification of a line-of-duty death is completed, flags at all the jurisdiction's properties (government center, fire stations, schools, etc.) should be lowered to half-staff in honor of the fallen fire fighter.

Flags at the jurisdiction's properties should remain at half-staff from the date of death through the day of committal.

Flags at fire stations and the union hall should remain at half-staff for a period of 30 days. Funeral bunting, if used, should also remain on fire stations and the union hall for 30 days.

After notification of a line-of-duty death is completed, badge covers should be placed across the face of each member's badge. Badge covers should remain for 30 days.

## **BELL CEREMONY AND PRAYER**

The ringing of the bell and the Fire Fighter's Prayer are two traditions of the fire service which reflect respect and honor to those who gave their lives to their duty. The ringing of the bell represents the end of the emergency and the return to quarters, and is usually three rings of the bell, three times.

Both are provided below for local adoption.

### **BELL CEREMONY**

"The men and women of today's fire service are confronted with a more dangerous work environment than ever before. We are forced to continually change our strategies and tactics to accomplish our tasks.

Our methods may change, but our goals remain the same as they were in the past, to save lives and to protect property, sometimes at a terrible cost. This is what we do; this is our chosen profession; this is the tradition of the fire fighter.

The fire service of today is ever changing, but is steeped in traditions 200 years old. One such tradition is the sound of a bell.

In the past, as fire fighters began their tour of duty, it was the bell that signaled the beginning of that day's shift. Throughout the day and night, each alarm was sounded by a bell, which summoned these brave souls to fight fires and to place their lives in jeopardy for the good of their fellow citizen. And when the fire was out and the alarm had come to an end, it was the bell that signaled to all the completion of that call. When a fire fighter had died in the line of duty, paying the supreme sacrifice, it was the mournful toll of the bell that solemnly announced a comrade's passing.

We utilize these traditions as symbols, which reflect honor and respect on those who have given so much and who have served so well. To symbolize the devotion that these brave souls had for their duty, a special signal of three rings, three times each, represents the end of our comrade's duties and that they will be returning to quarters. And so, to those who have

selflessly given their lives for the good of their fellow man, their tasks completed, their duties well done, to our comrades, their last alarm, they are going home.”

### **FIRE FIGHTER’S PRAYER**

When I am called to duty, God  
Wherever flames may rage  
Give me strength to save a life  
Whatever be its age.

Let me embrace a little child  
Before it is too late  
Or save an older person from  
The horror of that fate.

Enable me to be alert  
And hear the weakest shout,  
And quickly and efficiently  
To put the fire out.

I want to fill my calling  
To give the best in me,  
To guard my friend and neighbor  
And protect their property.

And, if, according to your will,  
While on duty I must answer death’s call;  
Bless with your protecting hand  
My family, one and all.





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