

Revised and Approved as of February 26, 2009

Connecticut Statewide Honor Guard

Standard Operating Guidelines



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Purpose

The Connecticut Statewide Honor Guard (CTHG) was formed to honor firefighters. We are in existence to bring about consistency and planning assistance to any fire department that has to deal with the sudden loss of a firefighter.

The Guard is a non-discriminating organization comprised of men and women 18 years or older who are regular members, retired members, or life members of a fire service agency in Connecticut. They freely volunteer their time to be prepared to assist their fire service colleagues in their greatest time of need as well as demonstrating the pride of the Honor Guard and traditions of the fire service at public venues.

This goal will be achieved by the continued communication to each member of the CTHG using standard operating guidelines (SOGs) that outline both the attention to detail and level of performance he/she needs to commit to the Honor Guard.

General Policy

We are not to be used in place of an existing honor guard for the purpose of avoiding having to pay for those services of those who presently serve on their respective departments honor guard. We will provide training and guidance to an effected departments honor guard and we continue to stand ready to offer ceremonial assistance when and if requested. There is no higher honor than to honor your own. We stand ready to help you do that with the greatest amount of dignity and respect.

Notification Policy

Downward Communications

The following notification policy will be in effect for the purposes of assigning members of the Connecticut Statewide Honor Guard (CTHG) to specific details.

Once the Command Staff are notified of a request for service, the CTHG membership will be notified. The Command Staff will assign a detail commander who will be responsible for activating the necessary resources from the membership. These notifications shall be done by telephone and/or email to be confirmed with the individuals assigned. If the Detail Commander requests additional assistance, a second request will go out with the specific needs for assistance.

Upward Communications

The following notification policy will be in effect for the purposes of notifying the Commander Staff of a request for service.

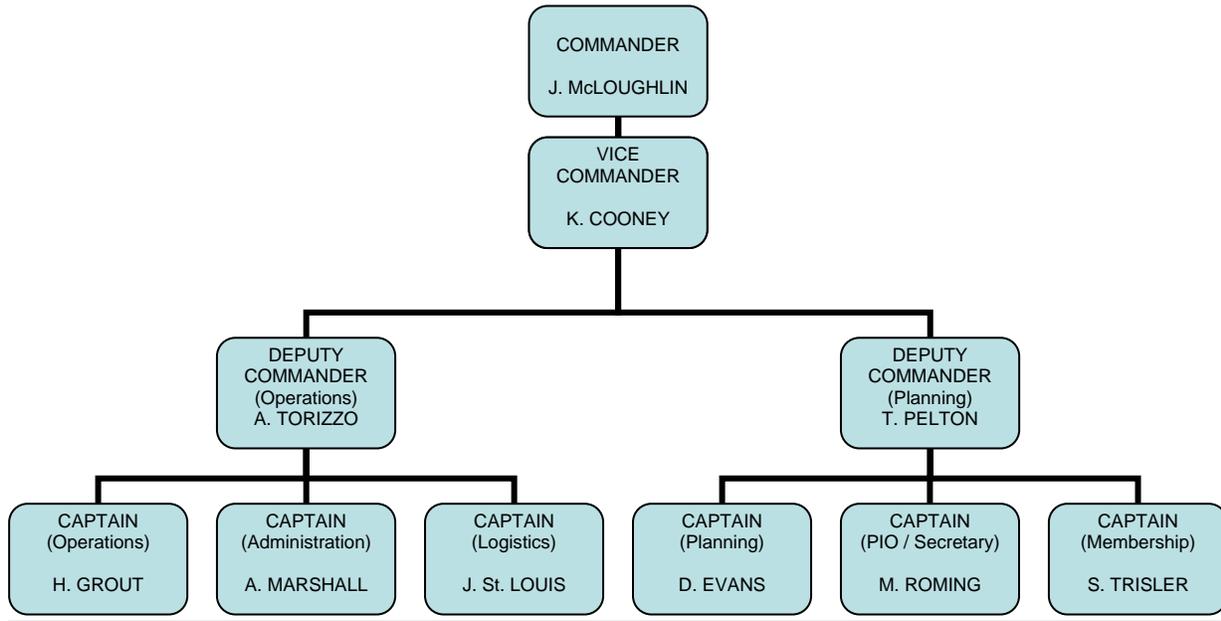
If a member of the Connecticut Statewide Honor Guard is contacted regarding a death of a firefighter and the services of the Statewide Honor Guard are being requested, gather as much information about the situation as possible and forward that information to the Commander or in his/her absence, the Vice-Commander.

Contact names and numbers as well as the name of the effected fire department are critical pieces of information. Details regarding the member who passed away and the timing of the events will also be helpful.

An official contact will then be made with the effected fire department. Once the particulars are sorted out and the services of the Honor Guard have been identified, the downward communications policy will be implemented.

No CTHG member can 'self-deploy' and represent the CTHG.

CTHG Organizational Chart
As of March 19, 2008



Duties of Officers

COMMANDER

The Commander of the Connecticut Statewide Honor Guard is responsible for the overall operation of the organization. The primary mission of the Commander is long range strategic planning and maintaining mission and vision integrity. He/she will promote the role the Connecticut Statewide Honor Guard on the local, statewide, nationwide, and international stage. The Commander will serve as the CAST member on the CT LAST team as well as being the PSOB liaison to LAST. He/She shall promote the group utilizing power point presentations, web site support, public service event days, and promotional materials. The Commander shall see to it that the group has the resources necessary for the successful deployment of personnel and resources to provide planning and ceremonial assistance to fire departments in need. The Commander of the Connecticut Statewide Honor Guard shall seek out opportunities to showcase the group as well as seek financial input in the form of donations/equipment to help offset the operational expenses

The Commander will assist and provide impacted families with LAST Team, survivor benefit and PSOB information.

The Commander reports to the State Fire Administrator

VICE-COMMANDER

The Vice-Commander supports the Commander in his/her role. The Vice Commander is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Honor Guard. This includes serving as the liaison the CFA and CFPC, scheduling and chairing meetings and maintaining order within the Honor Guard. The Vice Commander shall be the primary disseminator of event/funeral information. He/she is responsible to ensure that the CTHG has all the necessary training and equipment to fulfill its mission. He/she will also assure that the membership is consistent in their execution of ceremonial aspects and planning. In the absence of the Commander, a Vice Commander will fulfill the role of Commander.

The Vice-Commander reports to the Commander

DEPUTY COMMANDER – OPERATIONS

The Deputy Commander of Operations is responsible to provide the training and logistics necessary to the affected department(s) to ensure that their ceremonial

activities are crisp and rehearsed. The focus is to have the affected department honor its own firefighter(s). Ceremonial teams would make sure the casket vigils for a wake are rehearsed and organized, color guards are lined up properly, flag folding detail is rehearsed again and again, as well as providing or training a Sergeant-at-Arms at the funeral services. The cemetery service follows a generic format, which allows for individual family wishes to be honored. In the event that a department is just so overwhelmed with all of the activities, a ceremonial team will then provide the services if requested.

The Deputy Commander – Operations reports to the Vice Commander

DEPUTY COMMANDER – PLANNING

The Deputy Commander of Planning is responsible to provide resources and guidance to any department within the state affected by the death of a member. The planning team will continually identify and update resources available throughout the state. The team will break down an event into individual components so as not to leave anything out. The objective of the team is to assist a department throughout the planning stages with a pre-planned guide covering many options. This is a great help when you are also dealing with the emotions and disbelief that surrounds a sudden loss.

The Deputy Commander – Planning reports to the Vice Commander

CAPTAIN – OPERATIONS

The Operations Captain networks with impacted departments, Chaplains, Funeral Directors, Bands and Buglers. He/she oversees in-house training and Event Ceremonies to ensure quality, consistency, and attention to detail of services delivered. The Captain will report on completed events at monthly meeting and comment on what went well and what can be improved upon.

The Captain – Operations reports to the Deputy Commander – Operations

CAPTAIN - ADMINISTRATION

The Administration Captain is a detail oriented individual who acts as a liaison for major events, monitors finances, maintains a record of After Action Reports, and tracks the annual performance of the membership. A summary of after action reports will be reported at monthly meetings.

The Captain – Operations reports to the Deputy Commander – Operations

CAPTAIN - LOGISTICS

The Logistics Captain oversees the status, inventory, and readiness of CTHG equipment and consumable supplies. He/she coordinates the utilization of resources for CTHG overnight deployments and the utilization of CFA vehicles and deployment of the CTHG trailer. The Logistics Captain is also responsible that there is a sufficient inventory of approved CTHG uniform accessories, pins, patches, and letterhead stationary.

The Captain – Logistics reports to the Deputy Commander – Operations.

CAPTAIN - PLANNING

The Planning Captain is a detail oriented individual who is responsible for development and maintenance of planning documents and SOP's. He/she implements schedules, plans and the coordination CTHG events as assigned by the Vice or Deputy Commander(s). The Planning Captain assures that copies of planning documents are available for dissemination to impacted department.

The Captain – Planning reports to the Deputy Commander – Planning

CAPTAIN – PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER (PIO)

The PIO is the face of CTHG to the public. The PIO will be available to work closely with the Detail Commander and / or Command Staff. The PIO is responsible for press releases, marketing, event photography, website as well as maintaining a history of CTHG. He/she is responsible for meeting minutes.

The Captain – PIO reports to the Deputy Commander – Planning

CAPTAIN - MEMBERSHIP

The Membership Captain is responsible for recruitment of new members. He/she shall maintain a roster of current members and assure the timely mailing of new-member packets. The membership Captain will maintain a list of mentors and assign a mentor to new members for a period of one year.

The Captain – Membership reports to the Deputy Commander – Planning.

DETAIL COMMANDER

This position is assigned by the Command Staff or Operations Captain as needed per detail, to direct activities related to a specific request. The Detail Commander is the ranking officer at the detail regardless of who may be

participating. The Detail Commander is responsible for the high performance standards expected of all CTHG members and to assure professionalism in the execution of our mission. He/she is also responsible for the submission of an After Action Report.

Member

A member of the Connecticut Statewide Honor Guard will be expected to work as a team. We cannot and will not tolerate any lack of cooperation among members. You must be able to follow directions from those who are in charge. Any purchases using the statewide honor guard logo needs to be presented to the group through the chain of command.

A member must know basic marching commands and execute these skills prior to participating in an event. A lack of ability reflects poorly on the entire group. Members are expected to arrive at least 1 hour prior to a scheduled event for assignment and familiarization.

- Option One: Arrive 60 minutes before the event in uniform
- Option Two: Arrive 90 minutes before the event out of uniform

If you commit to an event, we are counting on you to fulfill that commitment. You are expected to pay particular attention to your appearance. Remember, you are the example setter, and members of the effected department will be scrutinizing your every move.

Members should also have a thorough and full understanding of the *Statewide Funeral Response Plan* and the resources available through the Honor Guard. They should be prepared to answer any questions with respect to protocols and ensure that they are aware of what a ceremonial team is capable of providing. Keep in mind that we are an information resource to the effected department and THEY make the final decisions on what gets done. Members should be able to seek compromise and focus on solutions when faced with conflicting situations.

The individual membership is the backbone of the organization. To that end, it is important for all members to be trained in the protocols established by the Honor Guard and to present oneself in a professional manner at all CTHG venues.

Participation at Public Service Events

CTHG participation at public service events will be determined and reviewed at each monthly meeting. Members will commit to public service event participation at the monthly meeting, via email or telephone to the Command Staff.

The Command Staff will assign a Detail Commander (DC) for each event.

The Detail Commander is responsible to assure the timely arrival of all CTHG needed equipment and CTHG personnel at presentation venues.

The Detail Commander will provide via email to each member of the detail 72 hours prior to the venue:

1. his/her cell phone number
2. the cell phone number of every member in the detail
3. directions to the venue
4. the time and location where the detail is to meet on site

The detail participants need to acknowledge and confirm receipt of the Detail Commander email via return email or phone and confirm their ability (or inability) to commit to participation.

The arrival time outlined by the Detail Commander will be ***at least*** one hour prior to the scheduled venue to assure sufficient time to examine the setup and practice the presentation.

In the event a detail participation member is suddenly unable to participate and/or is delayed in arriving at the venue in a timely fashion, the member will immediately contact the Detail Commander via cell phone and in the event delayed member fails to make contact with the Detail Commander, he/she shall attempt to call each member of the detail until contact is made and the delayed arrival information is communicated to the Detail Commander.

Military Bearing and Appearance

The CTHG is a para-military organization whose core value is that proper military bearing is expected at all times. Members of the Honor Guard take pride in their personal appearance and maintain attention to detail with their uniforms. It is required that ones appearance and uniform will be clean and neat at all times, hair, beards, and moustaches neatly trimmed, and shoes polished and shined.

The Detail Commander has the authority to restrict or eliminate the performance of any detail members based upon his/her attitude, appearance, lack of professionalism, lack of training, present state of cognitive function, failure to

report to the detail as assigned, or if a member should demonstrate behavior unbecoming as a member of the Honor Guard and whose actions may reflect poorly on the Honor Guard as a unit.

Participation At Funerals

The level of CTHG participation at funerals will be at the discretion of the requesting fire department. The full spectrum of CTHG services will be made available and the Commander will confirm the specific planning, resources, education, and level of support desired.

Performance Expectation

To maintain our professionalism, each member is required to attend at least four meetings on an annual basis. In the event this performance level is not achieved, the member will be contacted by a member of the Command Staff to explore their interest in remaining a member of the Honor Guard.

Further, each member is required to participate in at least three public service events or funerals on an annual basis. In the event this performance level is not achieved, the member will be contacted by a member of the Command Staff to explore their interest in remaining a member of the Honor Guard.

Each member is expected to self-fund all personal expenses related to being a member of the Honor Guard including uniforms, uniform accessories, transportation, training, and other activities sanctioned by the Honor Guard.

Disciplinary Action Policy

Taking disciplinary action against a CTHG member is a very serious event and one never to be taken lightly. While the desired outcome is to never have to evoke the need for disciplinary action, our professionalism and esprit de corps' supports having such a mechanism in place and known to all members.

The Detail Commander or any member assigned to the detail has the option to inform the CTHG Commander of any unprofessional behavior, and if both parties concur, the issue will be referred to the Disciplinary Action Committee for further action. If the CTHG Commander is the alleged offender, the Detail Commander or unit member will forward their concerns to the Vice Commander.

Disciplinary action outcomes may include no action taken, being assigned extra work details, being suspended from CTHG meetings and events for a prescribed period of time, being asked to resign, and being terminated as a member of the CTHG.

Disciplinary Action Committee (DAC)

The DAC will be comprised of any three Captains.

The DAC shall have the power to investigate any grievance, breach of discipline, breach of conduct or failure to perform any CTHG duty or responsibility. Charges preferred against any member of the organization shall be in writing, the original of which shall be sent to the CTHG Commander with a duplicate copy being sent to the alleged offender.

The DAC will meet with both the member making the allegations and the alleged offender to review the incident in detail and will meet within seven calendar days once the Commander receives the allegation. Both the member making the allegations and the alleged offender has the option of bringing two additional CTHG members to the DAC meeting to support their position. All proceedings at the DAC meeting are to remain strictly confidential. The DAC will render its opinion within seven calendar days following the meeting for further disciplinary action to the Commander for immediate implementation. The outcome of the DAC meeting will be presented at the next monthly meeting of the Honor Guard.

Appeal Process

If a member of the CTHG feels that he/she has been unfairly disciplined by the DAC, he/she can request an appeal in writing to the Commander. The request of appeal must occur within seven calendar days from when the DAC made their ruling. The Commander will acknowledge receipt of the appeal request to the accused, and shall call for a meeting of the Appeal Board within seven calendar

days of receipt of the request for appeal. The Appeal Board will be comprised of three Command Staff members.

If any members of the Command Staff are either the person making the allegations and the alleged offender, the Appeal Board will be comprised of three members primarily of the Command Staff not involved and a sufficient number of Captains that do not participate as part of the DAC.

The Appeal Board will meet only with the member making the allegations and the accused to review the merits of the case and discipline imposed. The Appeal Board has the authority to uphold the ruling of the DAC, apply a lesser punishment, or apply a more severe punishment. The Appeal Board will make their ruling within three calendar days of the meeting and all rulings of the Appeal Board are final.

Uniforms

Option 1- The CTHG Class A Uniform

Our professional image begins with uniforms that are clean, crisp, and consistent.

The CTHG Class A uniform is comprised of the approved:

- White cap with a gold band for Commanders, Vice Commanders, and Deputy Commanders
- Blue cap with a gold band for Captains and below
- Gold CTHG cap badge
- Gold CTHG uniform badge
- CTHG Single breasted blue uniform coat with CT state seal gold buttons with CTHG patches on each shoulder
- CTHG approved Fallen firefighters pin on the right lapel
- CTHG approved Flag pin on the left lapel
- CTHG approved Folded Flag Pin for sanctioned honor academy graduates. The pin is centered over the name plate.
- CTHG approved gold name plate
- CTHG approved gold fire department name plate attachment (optional)
- CTHG blue uniform pants with the narrow blue pin stripe
- CTHG blue uniform ascot
- CTHG blue uniform braid on the left shoulder
- CTHG approved two inch wide white belt with polished brass buckle
- CTHG approved 'London fog' type outerwear

Members will provide their own pants belt and shined or patent leather black plain toed shoes.

The Detail Commander is authorized to request the removal of any uniform adornments that he/she feels does not comply with this mandate.

Any additional adornments to the CTHG uniform or any purchases using the CTHG logo need to be presented to the membership for their approval through the chain of command.

Uniforms

Option 2- Use of Departmental Class A Uniform

Our professional image begins with uniforms that are clean, crisp, and well maintained.

In conjunction with his/her departmental Class A uniform, the member agrees to purchase and modify their uniform as follows using the following CTHG approved:

- CTHG blue uniform ascot
- CTHG blue uniform braid on the left shoulder
- Two inch white belt with polished buckle in silver or gold aligned with the button color of the departmental uniform
- CTHG approved Fallen firefighters pin on the right lapel
- CTHG approved Flag pin on the left lapel
- CTHG approved Folded Flag Pin for sanctioned honor academy graduates. The pin is centered over the name plate.
- CTHG approved 'London fog' type outerwear

Members will provide their own pants belt and shined or patent leather black plain toed shoes.

Metals and citations that best represent the highest traditions of the fire service are authorized on departmental Class A uniforms with the understanding that they be affixed in an organized and professional manner.

The Detail Commander is authorized to request the removal of any uniform devices that he/she feels does not comply with this mandate.

Class B Uniform

The approved CTHG Class B uniform shall be comprised of the following:

- CTHG sanctioned grey polo shirt with the CTHG logo
- Station wear/BDU/EMS pants in dark blue or navy
- Dark blue or navy mock turtleneck sweater with CTHG lettering for cold weather
- Polished or patent leather black shoes or boots
- CTHG approved ball cap
- CTHG approved 'London fog' type outerwear
- CTHG approved windbreaker or jacket

All gear is to be maintained and worn in a professional manner.

Uniform Accessories

Class A Uniform – Modified

At CTHG events that entail attending a banquet or dinner event and after the conclusion of CTHG participation, CTHG members may modify their Class A uniform during dinner. The modification includes removal of the two inch white guard belt and the uniform ascot.

The wearing of a white collared dress shirt with a black tie is approved.

OTHER

Sun glasses – sunglasses are not permitted. If you own a pair of prescription glasses with the lenses that automatically darken, they are permitted. Note: the preferable option is for the member to obtain a pair of glasses with clear lenses.

Earrings – posts and studs are permitted. All other visible body piercing jewelry that dangles is not authorized.

Cell Phones/Pagers/PDAs –cell phones, pagers, PDAs and all related electronic devices ***must*** be placed in vibrate or silent mode immediately upon arrival at a CTHG presentation venue. Only the Detail Commander may leave his/her cell phone in active status upon arrival and it ***must*** be placed in vibrate or silent mode immediately before step off.