

CHAPTER 15

17 IN THIS VOLUME

The Procession Out.

CHURCH EXIT PLAN COORDINATOR

The exit is the moment the service transitions from stillness to movement — and the place where the most preventable chaos in a police funeral tends to happen.

Thousands of uniformed officers, a grieving family, the casket, the clergy, the flowers, and the dignitaries all leave the same building through a small number of doors in a precise order that must be honored. The Church Exit Plan Coordinator designs that order, assigns ushers to each exit, briefs the Master of Ceremonies, and makes sure the casket and family are out of the building with dignity before the motorcade begins.

Use all your doors. A building with four exits that only uses one will take an hour to empty. A building with four exits that uses all four will empty in fifteen minutes with more dignity.

PRACTICAL GUIDANCE – FROM AGENCIES WHO HAVE DONE THIS

- 01 **Decide before the service, not during.** Whether the casket goes out with the recessional or after the sanctuary empties is a family decision made days earlier.
- 02 **Use all your doors.** A building with four exits that only uses one will take an hour to empty.
- 03 **The press line is not negotiable.** Reporters and photographers will respect a firm, politely-enforced boundary.
- 04 **Signal the motorcade at the exact right moment.** Start too early and the family stands waiting; start too late and the motorcade bunches.
- 05 **Keep the flower van where it needs to be.** Arrangements move out immediately so the sanctuary can be cleaned for the next service.
- 06 **End the service where the family wants to be.** The family's car steps from the door, idling, with their escort ready.
- 07 **Walk the exit, twice.** Once during walk-through, once alone the morning of.

MODERN CONSIDERATIONS • 2026

- **Livestream exit coverage.** Camera position respectful of family faces; archived for the family.
- **Drone overflight.** FAA TFR or agency drone; ground spotters for unauthorized drones.
- **Phone / photo discipline.** Printed on program, reminded by MC, enforced by ushers.
- **Digital door-assignment app.** Each usher's phone shows their door, group, exit-order number.
- **Encrypted messenger signal.** Usher supervisor receives go-signal from lead motor when motorcade is formed.

TURN THE PAGE FOR THE CHECKLIST →

CHECKLIST 15 • HONORING THE FALLEN

Church Exit Plan Coordinator checklist.

A working one-page reference. Begin at first assignment; complete through service close.

PRE-SERVICE DECISIONS

- | | |
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| ☐ Master of Ceremonies announces exit instructions — confirmed. | ☐ Casket escorted out at conclusion of ceremonies — confirmed. |
| ☐ Recessional music selected and AV cued. | ☐ Bells / bagpipes outside main entrance — coordinated. |
| ☐ Family approves exit plan in writing. | ☐ Livestream coverage of the exit — family decision. |

EXIT PROCESSION ORDER

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Agency Honor Guard. | ☐ Clergy. |
| ☐ Casket with pallbearers. | ☐ Honorary pallbearers (if used). |
| ☐ Immediate family. | ☐ Extended family. |
| ☐ Agency command / Chief's office. | ☐ VIPs & dignitaries to alternate exit. |
| ☐ Outside agency honor guards to alternate exit. | ☐ Law-enforcement attendees to alternate exit. |
| ☐ Community attendees to alternate exit. | ☐ Press / media released last. |

USHERS' EXIT RESPONSIBILITIES

- | | |
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| ☐ Direct specific groups to specific exits. | ☐ Keep unauthorized people from joining family procession. |
| ☐ Keep aisles closed that are not in use. | ☐ Keep area outside church clear for casket and family. |
| ☐ Assist taking flower arrangements to flower van. | ☐ Assist cleaning up signs, programs, trash. |
| ☐ Enforce no-photography on the family during exit. | ☐ Hold the press line at the marked boundary. |
| ☐ Signal motor lieutenant when family vehicle is ready. | |