

HONORING THE SERVICE OF DHS CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES WHO HAVE DIED

I. Purpose

A. This Directive establishes the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) human capital policy, responsibilities, and requirements regarding honoring the service of employees who are employed at DHS at the time of their death, including furnishing a United States (U.S.) flag to beneficiaries of eligible employees under the Civilian Service Recognition Act of 2011.

B. This Directive does not include information on granting non-monetary honorary awards (e.g., plaques, medals, pins, and certificates). DHS Directive and Instruction 255-01, "Honorary Awards," provides the Department's policies for granting honorary awards. In addition, this Directive does not include information on federal survivor benefits and payments. The employee's servicing human resources office is responsible for providing that information.

II. Scope

A. This Directive applies throughout DHS, unless exempted by federal statutory or regulatory authority, or as otherwise indicated herein.

B. This Directive does not cover the uniformed military members of the United States Coast Guard.

III. Authorities

A. Public Law 112-73, "Civilian Service Recognition Act of 2011," December 20, 2011 (Title 5, United States Code, 5570 note)

B. Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), [Part 550, Subpart O, "Flag Recognition Benefit for Fallen Federal Civilian Employees"](#)

C. DHS Delegation 03000, "Delegation for Human Capital and Human Resources"

D. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), Guide to Processing Personnel Actions, [Chapter 31, "Separations by Other than Retirement"](#)

IV. Responsibilities

A. The **DHS Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO)** establishes Departmental policy and guidance related to honoring the service of employees who are employed at DHS at the time of their death.

B. The **Heads of DHS Components:**

1. Establish Component policy and procedures for honoring the service of employees who are employed at their Component at the time of their death;

2. Serve as the authorized agency official within their Component for the purposes of administering the Flag Recognition Benefit for Fallen Federal Civilian Employees (Section III.B. and [Appendix A](#)) including:

- a. Furnishing a U.S. flag to a beneficiary of an eligible employee.
- b. Establishing procedures for procuring and furnishing a flag.
- c. Reaching out to survivors of known eligible employees to provide information and offer assistance on obtaining a flag.

C. The **Executive Director, Headquarters Human Resources Management and Services** assumes the responsibilities listed under the Section IV.B for Support Components, with the exception of the National Protection and Programs Directorate (NPPD), Office of Inspector General (OIG), and Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers (FLETC).

D. The **Component Heads of NPPD, OIG, and FLETC** assume the responsibilities listed under section IV.C for their respective Support Component.

V. Policy and Requirements

A. It is DHS policy to honor the service of employees who are employed at DHS at the time of their death.

B. Plans and procedures established to honor the services of DHS employees who have died (per Section IV.B.1.) include, but are not limited to:

1. **Issue a Letter of Condolence:** Component Heads send a letter or card of condolence to the employee's beneficiary. The Secretary or Deputy Secretary may choose to send the letter of condolence to the beneficiary of a deceased DHS employee.
2. **Identify Point of Contact:** The Component notifies the beneficiary of the name, telephone number, and email address of the individual designated to assist the beneficiary with employment-related programs and questions.
3. **Flag Recognition Benefit for Fallen Federal Civilian Employees**
 - a. **Furnish a Flag of the United States:** Component Heads furnish a U.S. flag to the beneficiary of an eligible civilian employee who dies of injuries incurred in connection with his or her employment with the Federal Government suffered as a result of a criminal act, an act of terrorism, a natural disaster, or other circumstance as determined by the President (Sections III.B. and IV.B.2., and [Appendix A](#)).
 - b. **Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Wall of Honor Memorial:** OPM uses the criteria established for the Flag Recognition Benefit for Fallen Federal Civilian Employees to determine inclusion on the OPM [Wall of Honor Memorial](#). When the established criteria appear to be met, Components process a Personnel Action using Nature of Action 354, "Death in the Line of Duty" (Section III.D., Table 31-B. Documenting Separations Other than Resignations and Retirements, Rule 64).

C. Terms used in this Directive can be found in [Appendix A: Definitions](#).

VI. Questions

Address any questions or concerns regarding this Directive to the Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer.



Claire M. Grady
Under Secretary for Management

15 APR 2018

Date

Appendix A: Definitions

For the purpose of administering the Flag Recognition Benefit for Fallen Federal Civilian Employees, the following terms have the meanings given in the regulation cited in Section III.B. The definitions are summarized below; however, if discrepancies occur, the regulatory definitions prevail.

A. **Beneficiary**: (5 CFR §§ 550.1503 and 550.1505) means the eligible person who may request the flag in the following the order of precedence:

1. The widow or widower;
2. If none, to a child (including step, foster, or adopted child), according to age (i.e., oldest to youngest);
3. If none, to a parent (including step, foster, or adoptive parent);
4. If none, to a sibling (including step, half, or adopted sibling), according to age; (i.e., oldest to youngest);
5. If none, to any individual related by blood or close family affiliation.

B. **Eligible employee**: (5 CFR §§ 550.1503 and 550.1504) an individual who:

1. Was an employee of the agency at the time of death; and
2. Died of injuries incurred in connection with such individual's employment with the Federal Government suffered as a result of—
 - a. A criminal act;
 - b. An act of terrorism;
 - c. A natural disaster; or
 - d. Other circumstances, as determined by the President.
3. An authorized agency official may not furnish a flag when the death is the result of—
 - a. Unlawful or negligent action of the employee;
 - b. Willful misconduct of the employee; or
 - c. Activities unrelated to the employee's status as a Federal employee.

Appendix A: Definitions

C. **Flag**: (5 CFR §550.1503) means a standard United States flag that is at least 3 feet by 5 feet.