



Seattle Police Department Policy Manual



3.170 – Honoring Fallen Sworn Employees

Original Effective Date: 09/01/2020

Revised Effective Date: 12/01/2023

This policy applies to all department personnel when honoring fallen sworn employees.

3.170-POL

Every year, law enforcement officers are either killed in the line of duty or suffer an on-duty death. Honoring fallen officers is steeped in traditions that include mourning insignia bands and ribbons (as defined in “Definitions” below) to recognize the unique sacrifices that first responders make for their community.

(See also manual section [3.050 – Coordinating Sworn Employee Deaths](#))

1. Definitions

Memorial Ribbon: a looped and crossed blue ribbon or blue and black ribbon.

Mourning Band: a solid band of material measuring approximately one-half inch (1/2”) in width. The mourning band is solid black or black with a thin blue line in the middle.

SPD Mourning Badge: the metal Seattle Police badge that has an enamel black/blue horizontal band across the center of the badge. The officer’s serial number is engraved at the bottom.

SPD Mourning Badge Lapel Pin: the Seattle Police mourning badge lapel pin is a miniature version of the SPD Mourning Badge. It does not have a serial number engraved.

2. The Chief of Police Authorizes Mourning Insignia

The Office of the Chief will authorize mourning insignia and uniform of the day for all services. The Policy & Research Section (PRS) sends an SPDALL email to relay the authorization.

Seattle Police Department Policy Manual

For on-duty deaths, employees display mourning insignia beginning with the Chief's authorization until the interment or memorial service is complete.

For SPD and SFD line-of-duty deaths, employees may choose to keep mourning insignia affixed for 72 hours after the interment or memorial service is complete.

Personnel will not wear mourning insignia for funerals or memorial services where death did not occur on duty or in the line of duty. However, the Chief of Police may authorize mourning insignia in other circumstances on a case-by-case basis.

3. The Department Will Recognize Line-of-Duty Deaths of Seattle Police Officers and Seattle Firefighters

To recognize line-of-duty death of a Seattle Police Officer or Seattle Firefighter, sworn personnel may only display mourning insignia in the following ways:

- Sworn employees may wear the SPD Mourning Badge, or
- Sworn employees may affix the mourning band to their metal or cloth badge in the following manner:
 - The mourning band may not cover the center of the badge so that it does not obscure any number. The mourning band must be worn horizontally above or below the center, even if there is no number on the badge.
 - For cloth and metal badges without any badge number, the mourning band will be placed above the star to not cover it.
- Alterations to the mourning band, such as cutting it to expose the numbers underneath and writing or affixing the officer's serial number on top of the mourning band, are not acceptable.

Exception: This does not apply to mourning badges purchased through the Seattle Police Foundation that already have the serial number displayed.

Parking Enforcement Officers may wear the mourning band on their badge per the sworn guidelines above.

Non-sworn employees may honor their sworn colleagues by displaying a memorial ribbon or SPD Mourning Badge Lapel Pin.

4. The Department May Recognize Law Enforcement Deaths from Other Agencies

Seattle Police Department Policy Manual

At the discretion of the Chief of Police, the department may recognize on-duty or line-of-duty deaths from other law enforcement agencies.

The Office of the Chief will authorize mourning insignia. The mourning insignia is displayed beginning with the Chief's authorization until the interment or memorial service is complete.

The department recognizes that many SPD sworn employees have experience from other departments and law enforcement family members in other locations. If sworn employees have a personal connection to an officer killed in the line of duty, and mourning insignia are not specifically authorized department-wide by the Chief, they may wear mourning insignia until the interment or memorial service is complete.

5. Flags Play an Important Role in Honoring Fallen Sworn Employees

On May 15th of each year, all police facility flags will fly at half-staff in recognition of Peace Officers' Memorial Day.

For the line-of-duty death of a Seattle Police Officer or Seattle Firefighter, all flags at police facilities are lowered to half-staff at the time of death and will remain at that position until 72 hours after the interment or memorial service.

For regional or WA State line-of-duty deaths, flags may be lowered to half-staff at the Chief of Police's discretion.

When the flag is presented or retired by an honor guard, and the command "present arms" is given, all uniformed sworn personnel will render a salute. Plainclothes sworn employees will place their hand over their heart. Officers will maintain the salute until the honor guard gives the command, "order arms."

Sworn employees in uniform, with a uniform hat, will wear their hat for the presentation of colors and during the salute. They may remove their hat after rendering the salute.