

**Forest Service Handbook
Service Wide - Washington Office
Washington, DC**

**Forest Service Handbook 1309.19 – Casualty Assistance Handbook
Chapter - Zero Code**

Amendment Number: 1309.19-2024-1

Effective date: January 19, 2024

Duration: This amendment is effective until superseded or removed.

Approved by: Antoine Dixon, Deputy Chief, Business Operations

Date approved: January 12, 2024

Responsible Staff: Emergency Medical Services (EMS), Office of Safety and Occupational Health (OSOH)

Last Change:

Superseded Document(s): 1309.19_zero_code, Amendment 1309.19-2019-1, August 13, 2019, 13 pages

Digest: Following is an explanation of the changes throughout the directive by section.

Section 1309.19: Revises chapter in its entirety. Removes The Department of Agriculture Regulation DR 5160-002 and DR 5160-006.

Section 04.1: Removes all delegation of authority for Approving the use of the Forest Service Honor Guard in a funeral or memorial ceremony honoring employees whose death did not occur while in the performance of their duties.

Establishes the authority for appointing an Investigation team for work-related accidents involving employee fatalities and for other serious accidents is delegated to the Deputy Chief of Business Operations in the role of the Designated Agency Safety and Health Official.

Section 04.21a: Changes section title from “Director, Human Resources Management” to “Director, Office of Safety and Occupational Health” and sets forth responsibilities.

Section 04.21b: Changes section title from “Director, Acquisition Manager” to “Program Manager, Casualty Assistance Program” and sets for re direction.

Removes responsibilities for Director, Acquisition Management.

Guidance documents lack the force and effect of law, unless expressly authorized by statute or incorporated into a contract. USDA may not cite, use, or rely on any guidance that is not available through their guidance portal, except to establish historical facts.

Forest Service Handbook 1309.19 – Casualty Assistance

Chapter - Zero Code

Amendment Number: 1309.19-2024-1

Effective date: January 19, 2024

Section 04.21c: Establishes code, caption, and responsibility for Director, Human Resource Management, previously set-out in 0.421a.

Section 04.21d: Establishes code, caption, and responsibility for Director, Acquisition Management, previously set-out in 0.421b.

Section 04.22: Establishes the responsibility on medical care for employee engaged in hazardous work; that provides direction for the transportation of employees and the approval of emergency premium class travel expenses.

Section 04.24a: Removes direction on the exception request through the Chief to the Secretary of Agriculture for the approval of administrative use of a government aircraft.

Section 04.3: Removes direction for approving the use of government vehicles to transport of non-employees; establishes direction for approving the mobilization of a Care Team or Modified Incident Management Team.

Section 04.3a: Establishes code, caption, and sets forth direction for Regional Casualty Assistance Program Managers.

Section 04.4: Removes responsibilities coordinating and managing death and serious injury response as described in the Continuity of Operations Plan or Critical Incident Response Plan.

Provides direction for approving the use of government motor vehicle to transport non-employees.

Section 05: Updates definitions.

Section 06: Removes Agency Administrator's Guide to Critical Incident Management NWCG Publication PMS 926.

Adds reference on FSM 6900, Emergency Medical Services.

Effective August 13, 2019: Revisions as listed below to FSH 1309.19 Zero Code:

Section 1309.19: This amendment changes the handbook title from "Forest Service Death and Serious Injury Handbook" to "Casualty Assistance Handbook."

Section 01: Incorporates and sets forth the policies, procedures, and responsibilities for the display and use of the flag of the United States of America; the flag of the Secretary of Agriculture; and the flag of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Forest Service Handbook 1309.19 – Casualty Assistance

Chapter - Zero Code

Amendment Number: 1309.19-2024-1

Effective date: January 19, 2024

Section 04: Updates responsibilities of the Chief of the Forest Service, Deputy Chiefs, Regional Foresters, Station and Area Directors, and Unit Line Officers.

Section 05: Establishes definitions for “Dignified Transfer,” “Employee,” “Family Member,” and “Hazardous Work.”

Section 06: Incorporates policy references related to death and serious injury management into FSH 6109.12, chapter 30, Injury/Illness Compensation; FSM 5710, Aviation Management; FSM 5350, Procedures; FSM 1650, Media Relations Program; FSH 6509.33, Chapters 300-304, Federal Travel Regulation; and FSH 6509.11k, section 48, Uniform Program.

Forest Service Handbook 1309.19 – Casualty Assistance

Chapter - Zero Code

Amendment Number: 1309.19-2024-1

Effective date: January 19, 2024

Table of Contents

01 - Authority	5
02 - Objective	7
03 - Policy.....	7
04 - Responsibility	8
04.1 - Chief	8
04.2 - Deputy Chiefs.....	9
04.21 - Deputy Chief for Business Operations	9
04.21a – Director, Office of Safety and Occupational Health	9
04.21b - Program Manager, Casualty Assistance Program	10
04.21c - Director, Human Resource Management	10
04.22 - Chief Financial Officer	11
04.22a - Director, Financial Policy	11
04.22b – Director of Budget and Finance	11
04.23 - Deputy Chief for the National Forest System	12
04.23a – Washington Office, Director of Lands and Realty Management	12
04.23b – Washington Office, Director of Engineering	12
04.23c – Washington Office, Director of Recreation, Heritage, and Volunteer Resources	12
04.24 - Deputy Chief for State and Private Forestry.....	12
04.24a - Director, Fire and Aviation Management	12
04.3 - Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry	13
Director, International Institute of Tropical Forestry (IITF) Director, Forest Products	13
Laboratory Director, and Washington Office Staff Directors	13
04.3a – Regional Casualty Assistance Program Managers.....	14
04.4 - Forest Supervisors, District Rangers, Deputy Station and Institute Directors (Unit Line	14
Officers)	14
05 - Definitions.....	15
06 - References.....	17

01 - Authority

1. Title 5, United States Code, section 8133 (5 U.S.C § 8133), Compensation in Case of Death. This Statute provides for compensation in cases where death results from an injury sustained in the performance of duty, in accordance with a prescribed schedule.
2. Title 5, United States Code, section 6328 (5 U.S.C. § 6328), Government Organization of Employees. This Statute authorizes attendance at Federal Firefighters' and Federal Law Enforcement Officers' funerals for employees killed in the line of duty, while acting within the scope of their employment.
3. Title 5, United States Code, section 4503 (5 U.S.C. § 4503), Agency Awards. This Statute allows agency heads to incur necessary expenses for honorary recognition of an employee who performed a special act or service within their official employment. These "necessary expenses" for employee award ceremonies have been defined by the U.S. Comptroller General in the General Accountability Office's publication, Appropriations Law, Volume I, Chapter 4 (<http://www.gao.gov/legal.htm>).
4. Title 48 Code of Federal Regulations, Chapter 1-- Acquisition Regulation System, Federal Acquisition Regulation (48 C.F.R 1). This regulation governs all Forest Service acquisitions of supplies and services.
5. The Department of Agriculture Regulation, DR 5013-6, Government Purchase Cards. This regulation prescribes policies and procedures for use of the purchase card and alternative payment methods – including convenience checks, pre-paid cards, declining balance cards, and cardless accounts – for obtaining supplies and services in accordance with Federal procurement laws.
6. Title 41 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 300 through 304--Public Contracts and Property Management, Federal Travel Regulations (41 C.F.R 300-304). This Regulation implements statutory requirements and policy for employees and others authorized to travel at government expense.
7. Title 5, United States Code, section 8134 (5 U.S.C § 8134), Funeral Expenses. This Statute provides for the payment of certain funeral and burial expenses and for transportation of the body under described conditions.
8. Title 5, United States Code, section 8102a (5 U.S.C § 8102a), Death gratuity for injuries incurred in connection with employee's service with an armed force. This Statute creates a death gratuity for Federal employees and employees of non-appropriated fund instrumentalities by authorizing the United States to pay up to \$100,000 to the survivors and designated beneficiaries of "an employee who dies of injuries incurred in connection with the employee's service with an Armed Force in a contingency operation." The provision became effective on January 28, 2008.

Forest Service Handbook 1309.19 – Casualty Assistance

Chapter - Zero Code

Amendment Number: 1309.19-2024-1

Effective date: January 19, 2024

9. Title 42, United States Code, Chapter 46, Subchapter XII (42 U.S.C. 46 subchapter XII), Public Safety Officers' Benefits. This Statute authorizes the Department of Justice to administer a one-time payment to eligible survivors of Public Safety Officers (law enforcement officers, firefighters, and other first responders) who die of, or become permanently and totally disabled as, a direct result of traumatic injuries sustained in the line of duty.

10. Title 31, United States Code, section 3721 (31 U.S.C. § 3721), Claims of personnel of agencies and the District of Columbia government for personal property damage or loss. This Statute authorizes the payment of claims to employees for damage to, or loss of, personal property occurring incident to service.

11. Title 16, United States Code, section 554b (16 U.S.C. § 554b) Medical Care for Employees Engaged in Hazardous Work; Notification and Transportation of employees. This Statute makes Forest Service appropriations available for medical supplies and services and other assistance necessary for the immediate relief of artisans, laborers, and other employees engaged in any hazardous work under the Forest Service, and for expenses of notifying employees of the death or serious illness of close relatives and, in such cases where no public transportation is available, for transporting the employees to a point where public transportation is available.

12. Title 16, United States Code, section 556c (16 U.S.C. § 556c, Reimbursement to Employees for Property Loss from Fire, Flood, or other Casualties). This Statute authorizes the use of Forest Service funds to reimburse employees for property loss from fire, flood or other casualties.

13. Title 32, Code of Federal Regulation Part 185, Defense Support for Civil Authorities (DSCA) (32 CFR 185). This regulation authorizes the Department of Defense Mortuary Affairs division to provide support and transportation for civilian remains in the United States, through Defense Support of Civil Authorities assistance, when such assistance is approved and directed.

14. Title 20, Code of Federal Regulation, Part 10, (20 CFR 10), This regulation provides for the payment of workers' compensation benefits to civilian officers and employees of all branches of the Government of the United States. The regulations in this part describe the rules for filing, processing, and paying claim for benefits under the FECA. Proceedings under the FECA are non-adversarial in nature.

15. The Department of Agriculture Regulation DR 1620-003, Facilities and Space Management. This regulation prescribes the policy for the erection of memorials, permanent plaques, and cornerstones\and the policies, procedures, and responsibilities for the display and use of the flag of the United States of America; the flag of the Secretary of Agriculture; and the flag of the Department of Agriculture..

Forest Service Handbook 1309.19 – Casualty Assistance

Chapter - Zero Code

Amendment Number: 1309.19-2024-1

Effective date: January 19, 2024

16. The Department of Agriculture Regulation DR 4040-430, Employee Performance and Awards. This regulation sets forth the policy and criteria for presenting a post-employment and posthumous honorary award.

17. The Department of Agriculture Regulation DR 1800-001, Incident Preparedness, Response, and Recovery. This regulation describes the incident preparedness, response, and recovery responsibilities of the Department of Agriculture, and designates the Mission Areas, agencies, and staff offices that will carry out these responsibilities at the international, national, state, and county levels. This regulation includes Continuity of Operations (COOP).

18. Comptroller General's Decision B-239887, January 25, 1991, volume 70, page 200 (70 Comp. Gen. 200), Travel – Travel Expenses, Reimbursement, Official Business Determination Civilian Personnel. sets forth that an official representative(s) may be designated and approved, in writing, to travel to and attend the funeral, on official business.

02 - Objective

To provide guidance for managing response to a casualty involving an employee, volunteer, intern, Job Corps student, retiree, or contractor or cooperator. It is the intent of the Forest Service to provide immediate assistance and support, consistent with applicable laws and regulations.

The Agency's response, and more specifically, management's response to a casualty will have long-term effects on the affected employee, family members, and co-workers. A lack of support or perceived lack of support may have long-term detrimental effects on the employee and coworkers, negatively impacting their work productivity, workplace communication, and personal lives.

To respond appropriately, Managers must understand what is authorized by law, as well as approved agency procedures, for providing a support structure for personnel, families, ancillary communities, liaison assistance and Critical Incident Stress Management Services (CISM) peer support services.

03 - Policy

All use of agency funds and property under this directive must be in accordance with federal and related department and agency authorities.

All emergency response protocols applied under this directive must adhere to applicable local, State, and federal guidelines.

Forest Service Handbook 1309.19 – Casualty Assistance

Chapter - Zero Code

Amendment Number: 1309.19-2024-1

Effective date: January 19, 2024

This Handbook applies to full and part time employees, volunteers, interns, and Job Corps students, and provides additional guidance to non-Forest Service personnel, such as contractors, cooperators, and retirees.

This document and related contents must be reviewed and updated at least every 2 years by an interdisciplinary group consisting of Financial Policy; Travel Operations; Travel Compliance; Workers' Compensation; Pay and Benefits; Fire and Aviation Management; Law Enforcement; the Office of Safety and Occupational Health; Procurement and Property Services, and any other group deemed necessary.

On the operational end where day to day activities need to be further outlined for employee functions, supplements, reference (FSM 1100, ch. 10) Directive System Structure and Standards may be developed in concert with this directive. Additionally, any supplemental direction created must reference the related directive(s), must be approved by the appropriate staff area Director, and must also outline the key control activities (<https://www.gao.gov/greenbook/overview>) expected of that program/functional area in accordance with the Government Accounting Office Green Book.

Ensure personal and sensitive information resulting from a serious injury or fatality is maintained and properly secured according to the Personally Identifiable Information (PII) guidelines. <https://www.dol.gov/general/ppii>.

04 - Responsibility

04.1 - Chief

The Chief of the Forest Service is responsible for

1. Approving employee attendance to funerals or related ceremonies. This authority is delegated to Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry Director, International Institute of Tropical Forestry (IITF) Director, Forest Products Laboratory Director, and Washington Office Staff Directors, and may be further delegated to Unit Line Officers.
2. Approving activities requiring use of government funds for non-Forest Service personnel, such as contractors, cooperators, and retirees.
3. Approving United States Flag, Flag of the Secretary of Agriculture, and/or the Departmental Flag to be flown at half-staff for a period not to exceed one day, except upon the death of a Forest Service employee while fighting fire or in a law enforcement action, the Chief is delegated the authority to fly the flags at half-staff for three days.
4. Approving the use of the Forest Service Honor Guard in a funeral or memorial ceremony honoring employees whose death did not occur while in the performance of

their duties, employees from other Federal agencies, and non-employees where the interests of the United States Government can be benefited.

5. Appointing an investigation team for work-related accidents involving employee fatalities and for other serious accidents. This authority is delegated to the Deputy Chief of Business Operations in the role of the Designated Agency Safety and Health Official (DASHO). This authority may be further delegated to Regional Foresters and Station, Area, and Institute Directors at the DASHO's discretion.

7. Requesting departmental approval for applicable requests outside the purview of the Forest Service Agency Head, such as the administrative use of a government aircraft to transport employee remains when the cost exceeds that of a common carrier.

04.2 - Deputy Chiefs

04.21 - Deputy Chief for Business Operations

The Deputy Chief for Business Operations is responsible for:

Maintaining day to day quality, continuity, and integrity in Forest Service centralized business operations.

04.21a – Director, Office of Safety and Occupational Health

The Director of the Office of Safety and Occupational Health (OSOH) is responsible for:

1. Reporting to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) on death and serious injury incidents within the established guidelines set forth in Title 29 Code of Federal Regulations part 1904, Recording and Reporting Occupational Injuries and Illnesses.
2. Applying relevant accident investigation provisions under the authority of Title 29 Code of Federal Regulations part 1960.29, Accident Investigations.
3. Applying relevant provisions under the FSM 6700, chapter 30, Accident Reporting, and Investigation.
4. Liaising between the DASHO and the Safety Manager from the affected unit on matters of incident safety reporting and investigations.
5. Facilitating and directing the Coordinated Response Protocol (CRP) team for the DASHO when the CRP team is activated.

04.21b - Program Manager, Casualty Assistance Program

The National Casualty Assistance Program Manager is responsible for:

1. Providing overall national leadership of Casualty Assistance Program (CAP) by delivering both short- and long- term strategic planning, development, review, and revision of national policies, including protocols, training, data collection, standards of care, quality assurance and improvements.
2. Facilitating executive-level approvals, such as, but not limited to, flags at half-staff, administrative use of a government aircraft to transport employee remains, use of Forest Service Honor Guard, emergency premium class travel, erection of permanent memorials and plaques, as needed.
3. Liaising between agency stakeholders, including the Director of Human Resource Management, the Director of Safety and Occupational Health, the Employee Assistance Program Manager, the Director of Fire and Aviation, and others on issues of mutual interests.
4. Providing, through subject matter expertise, assistance, and guidance to Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry Director, International Institute of Tropical Forestry (IITF) Director, Forest Products Laboratory Director, and the Washington Office Staff Directors on policy and legal matters regarding CAP.
5. Assisting Regional CAP Managers in developing casualty assistance programs, including standard operating procedures, pre-incident education, and training of official agency liaisons and CISM peers.
6. Ensuring Regional CAP Managers participate in the Coordinated Response Protocol (CRP) events, as directed by the DASHO.
7. Collecting CAP data for use in identifying trends in CAP, quality improvement, and casualty prevention planning.

04.21c - Director, Human Resource Management

The Director of Human Resource Management (HRM) is responsible for:

1. Coordinating with the Department of Labor Office of Workers' Compensation Program (DOLOWCP) to provide information required to file an employee workers' compensation claim.
2. Serving as an injured employees' point-of-contact for advice and coordination with DOLOWCP.

Forest Service Handbook 1309.19 – Casualty Assistance

Chapter - Zero Code

Amendment Number: 1309.19-2024-1

Effective date: January 19, 2024

3. Assisting employees or designated representatives with the workers' compensation claims process.
4. Providing information on all available benefits to the employee or designated representative.
5. Processing employment-related benefits to surviving family members.
6. Coordinating with Director of Budget and Finance to disburse death-related benefit payments.

04.22 - Chief Financial Officer

The Chief Financial Officer is responsible for:

1. Prescribing policy, systems, and related procedures to ensure proper financial management practices in addressing casualty actions.
2. Approving use of appropriated funds to pay for family members' travel and per diem expenses that exceed more than one round trip and/or more than 30 calendar days.
3. Approving payment of specific medical supplies, services, and other immediate relief for employees in accordance with 16 U.S.C. § 554b, Medical care for employees engaged in hazardous work; notification and transportation of employees, only when the employee was engaged in hazardous work when the incident occurred.
4. Approving emergency premium class travel expenses incurred as a result of an illness or injury of an employee while the employee was in a travel status away from their official duty station in the United States, or while performing official duties outside the continental United States or in transit to or from the temporary duty station.

04.22a - Director, Financial Policy

The Director of Financial Policy is responsible for providing policy interpretation for appropriations fund use and travel associated with casualty expenses, as necessary. The Director is also responsible for communicating and facilitating Chief Financial Officer requests for approval.

04.22b – Director of Budget and Finance

The Director of Budget and Finance is responsible for:

1. Providing customer service support to agency representatives in coordinating invitational family travel arrangements.

2. Processing benefit payments in coordination with the Director of Human Resource Management.

3. Processing repayment of death-related expenses, as appropriate.

04.23 - Deputy Chief for the National Forest System

04.23a – Washington Office, Director of Lands and Realty Management

It is the responsibility of the Washington Office, Director of Lands and Realty Management to provide guidance, determination, and recommendation of land use and land designation categories, as set forth in the FSM 5400, chapter 50 National Forest System Modification, when reviewing proposals for the erection of memorials, plaques, interpretative sites, and cornerstones on National Forest System lands or facilities in remembrance of Forest Service fallen employees.

04.23b – Washington Office, Director of Engineering

It is the responsibility of the Washington Office, Director of Engineering to provide guidance on the standard signage for Forest Service interpretative sites, as set forth in the FSM chapter 7160 Signs and Posters, when reviewing proposals for the erection of memorials, plaques, interpretative sites, and cornerstones on National Forest System lands or facilities.

04.23c – Washington Office, Director of Recreation, Heritage, and Volunteer Resources

It is the responsibility of the Washington Office, Director of Recreation, Heritage, and Volunteer Resources to provide guidance on methods for implementing and updating the landscape aesthetics and scenery management related to the erection of memorials, plaques, interpretative sites, and cornerstones on recreation sites on National Forest System lands or facilities.

04.24 - Deputy Chief for State and Private Forestry

04.24a - Director, Fire and Aviation Management

The Director of Fire and Aviation Management is responsible for:

1. Determining availability and reasonableness of the administrative use of government aircrafts, including the transportation of non-federal travelers and employee remains.
2. Assisting unit Line Officers in determining cost estimates for the administrative use of the government aircraft in accordance with General Services Administration regulations, United States Government Aircraft Cost Accounting Guide.

Forest Service Handbook 1309.19 – Casualty Assistance

Chapter - Zero Code

Amendment Number: 1309.19-2024-1

Effective date: January 19, 2024

3. Working with the national CAP Manager to determine and validate cost estimates for common carrier transportation of employee remains.
4. Approving the administrative use of a government aircraft to transport employee remains when cost does not exceed common carrier cost.
5. Facilitating requests to the Department of Agriculture Office of General Counsel for the administrative use of a government aircraft to transport non-government persons.

04.3 - Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry Director, International Institute of Tropical Forestry (IITF) Director, Forest Products Laboratory Director, and Washington Office Staff Directors

Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry Director, International Institute of Tropical Forestry (IITF) Director, Forest Products Laboratory Director, and Washington Office Staff Directors are responsible for:

1. Ensuring employees are available to provide casualty assistance to the affected unit and responding to their needs and requests, or providing other functions, as required.
2. Approving and being fully aware of the number of Federal resources to be devoted to a funeral or related memorial ceremony, and the effective and efficient use of employee's official time, property, and government funds.
3. Authorizing official time for employee(s) to attend funerals and/or related ceremonies at government expense.
4. Approving the use of the Forest Service Honor Guard in a funeral or memorial ceremony honoring Forest Service employees whose death occurred while in the performance of the official duties.
5. Approving a family's request to return property to a destination other than the employee's official duty station or place of residence.
6. Approving use of appropriated funds to pay for family travel and per diem expenses up to 30 calendar days and one round trip flight.
7. Processing payment of death-related expenses, as appropriate.
8. Providing copies of all related bills paid by the Agency to both the Chief Financial Office and Budget and Finance Miscellaneous Payments staff (for financial files), and Human Resource Management Workers' Compensation specialist (to send to the DOLOWCP).
9. Ensuring applicable upward reporting requirements are met.

04.3a – Regional Casualty Assistance Program Managers

Regional Casualty Assistance Program Coordinators are responsible for:

1. Implementing national policies, procedures, and standards for casualty assistance and developing short- and long- range plans to achieve goals and objectives of the regional program that are consistent with the governing laws and regulations.
2. Serving as the program authority and subject matter expert to Regional Foresters, Station Directors, International Institute of Tropical Forestry (IITF) Director, Forest Products Laboratory Director, and Unit Line Officers on all matters related to casualty assistance.
3. Providing regional leadership, management, coordination, training, and oversight of all facets of casualty assistance and response, including Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) peer support, assignment of official Family and Hospital agency liaisons and Care Team leads, and Honors assistance.
4. Ensuring trained liaisons and peers are enrolled in the Incident Qualification and Certification System.
5. Working with the Regional and Station Safety Managers to establish Critical Incident Response Plans for local units.
6. Adhering to the direction of the DASHO, Director of Safety and Occupational Health, and the Coordinated Response Protocol Team Lead for any incident that falls under the purview of a CRP Team.
7. Collecting, analyzing, and reporting data and feedback to the national CAP Manager quarterly in order to identify opportunities for program improvement and assessment of training and personnel needs.
8. Retaining all documentation in accordance with FSH 6209.11 Records Management Handbook, chapter 40, File Designations and Disposition.
9. Restricting access to all documents containing PII.

04.4 - Forest Supervisors, District Rangers, Deputy Station and Institute Directors (Unit Line Officers)

Forest Supervisors, District Rangers, Deputy Station, and Institute Directors are responsible for:

1. Understanding what is authorized by law as well as approved procedures for providing a support structure for casualty assistance.

Forest Service Handbook 1309.19 – Casualty Assistance

Chapter - Zero Code

Amendment Number: 1309.19-2024-1

Effective date: January 19, 2024

3. Approving key employees to serve as official agency liaisons, such as a Family Liaison, a Hospital Liaison, Escorts, or other support functions as required.
4. Approving the use of government motor vehicles to transport non-employees.
5. Ensuring all applicable upward reporting requirements are met.
6. Retaining all documentation in accordance with FSH 6209.11, Records Management Handbook, chapter 40, File Designations and Disposition.
7. Restricting access to all documents containing PII.

05 - Definitions

The following are definitions of terms as they are used in the context of this Handbook.

Casualty. A catastrophic or traumatic injury or illness, or loss of human life.

Common Carrier. A private-sector supplier of air, rail, ground, or bus transportation.

Contractor: A private person who, under a mutually binding legal contract with the Forest Service, provides supplies or services to the Forest Service.

Cooperator. State or local agency or person who, under agreement with the Forest Service, provides assistance or services to the Forest Service.

Critical Incident. Any event that has an impact sufficient to overwhelm the usually effective coping skills of an individual or group.

Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Peer Support. A method of helping first responders and others who have been involved in critical incidents that leave them emotionally and/or physically affected by those incidents. CISM Peer Support is a process that enables trained peers to help their peers understand the reactions that might occur after an event.

Death Gratuity. A payment made to the family's designated representative, based on the order of precedence according to law, when employees die from an injury sustained in the line of duty. The employing agency is authorized to pay up to \$10,000 taxable death gratuity payment to the recipient.

Dignified Transfer. The dignified preparation and transportation of employee remains by common carrier, hearse, or other means, or a combination thereof, from the temporary duty station to the employee's residence, official station, or other place of interment.

Forest Service Handbook 1309.19 – Casualty Assistance

Chapter - Zero Code

Amendment Number: 1309.19-2024-1

Effective date: January 19, 2024

Employee. The term “employee” means full and part time Forest Service employees, including volunteers, Job Corps students, and those Administratively Determined (AD).

Family Member. Individuals related by blood or affinity, whose close association with the employee is the equivalent of a family relationship.

Federal Employees’ Compensation Act (FECA) Death Gratuity. Under an amendment to FECA, up to \$100,000 may be paid by OWCP to survivors of “an employee who dies of injuries incurred in connection with the employee’s service with an Armed Force in a contingency operation.” This one-time death gratuity is disbursed to survivors in a specific order of precedence set forth in the statute. The FECA death gratuity is taxable income to the recipient.

Funeral/Interment. An organized event to honor and memorialize a deceased employee, which may or may not include worship or religious services. A funeral is directed by the family.

Hazardous Work. Safety and health hazards in a work project or activity that have the potential to cause serious injury, illness, or death to personnel and damage to property or material as documented in a Job Hazard Analysis or Risk Assessment and in accordance with FSM 6700, Safety and Health Program.

Honor Guard. A ceremonial guard turned out to greet a distinguished person(s) or accompany a casket at interment funeral, escort and/or facilitate the dignified transportation of employee remains, or perform at other events.

Line of Duty Death. As determined by the Department of Labor (DOL), a death of an employee that occurs as a direct and proximate result of personal injury or illness sustained in the performance of official duties or in travel status, acting within the scope of his/her employment. A death is “not in the line of duty” when the circumstances do not conform to this definition or to the ruling of DOL.

Memorial Ceremony. An organized event to honor and memorialize a deceased employee or non-employee. A memorial ceremony is directed by the Forest Service and may include representation from family representatives of the deceased employee or non-employee.

Non-employee. A person who at the time of death was not an employee of the Forest Service. Contractors, cooperators, and retirees are considered non-employees.

Occupational Disease. A condition produced in the work environment over a period longer than one workday or shift. It may result from systemic infection, repeated stress or strain, exposure to toxins, poisons, or fumes, or other continuing conditions of the work environment.

Forest Service Handbook 1309.19 – Casualty Assistance

Chapter - Zero Code

Amendment Number: 1309.19-2024-1

Effective date: January 19, 2024

Posthumous Award. A flag in an engraved flag case presented as a posthumous honorary award to the next of kin of an employee lost in the line of duty, or an individual in a contractor, collaborator, or volunteer capacity, lost while providing mission support service to the Department of Agriculture. an award granted to deceased employees or designated representative when the contribution recognized by the award was made during their employment with the Forest Service.

Public Safety Officers' Benefit. The authority provides death and education benefits to survivors of fallen Public Safety Officers (law enforcement officers, firefighters, and other first responders), and benefits to officers disabled by traumatic experiences and catastrophically injured in the line of duty. Benefits also extend to Public Safety Officers who die by suicide.

Traumatic Injury or Illness. A wound, or other condition of the body caused by external force, including stress or strain. The injury must be identifiable by time and place of occurrence and member of the body affected; it must be caused by a specific event or incident or series of events or incidents within a single workday or work shift.

06 - References

This Handbook reflects policy direction and guidance related to casualty assistance and management from the following Agency Handbooks and Manuals:

1. FSH 1309.13, Forest Service Honor Guard Handbook.
2. FSH 5109.34, Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook (NWCG Handbook 2).
3. FSH 6109.11, Pay Administration, Attendance, and Leave Handbook.
4. FSH 6109.12, Employment and Benefits Handbook, chapter 30, Injury/Illness Compensation.
5. FSH 6509.11k, Service-wide Finance and Accounting Handbook, chapter 40, section 48, Uniform Program.
6. FSH 6509.33, chapters 300-304, Federal Travel Regulation.
7. FSH 6709.11, Health and Safety Code Handbook.
8. FSM 1600, chapter 1650, Press, Radio, and Television.
9. FSM 5300, chapter 5350, Procedures.
10. FSM 5700, chapter 5710, Administration.

Forest Service Handbook 1309.19 – Casualty Assistance

Chapter - Zero Code

Amendment Number: 1309.19-2024-1

Effective date: January 19, 2024

11. FSM 6700, chapter 6730, Accident Reporting and Investigation.
12. FSM 6900, Emergency Medical Services.