

 Massachusetts Department of Correction STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE	Effective Date 7/24/2026	Responsible Division Chief of Staff	
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Policy Name STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE TO 103 DOC 229, AWARDS PROGRAM HONOR GUARD	M.G.L. Reference: M.G.L. c. 124, § 1 (c) and (q)		
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PURPOSE: This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) establishes guidelines for the internal administration and training operations of the Honor Guard Unit. The procedures contained herein have been established to supplement, not supersede, Departmental Policy and Procedure, Rules and Regulations, and Orders and Directives. RESPONSIBLE STAFF FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING OF POLICY: Chief of Staff Director of Operational Services CANCELLATION: 103 DOC 229 cancels all previous Departmental and institutional policy statements, bulletins, directives, orders, notices, rules and regulations regarding the administration and training operations, which are inconsistent with 103 DOC 229. SEVERABILITY CLAUSE: If any article, section, subsection, sentence, clause or phrase of 103 DOC 229 is for any reason held to be unconstitutional, contrary to statute, in excess of the authority of the Commissioner or otherwise inoperative, such decision shall not affect the validity of any other article, section, subsection, sentence, clause or phrase of 103 DOC 229.			

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I. MISSION

The mission of the Massachusetts Department of Correction Honor Guard Unit is to render honors to those employees who have given their lives in the line of duty. Respect is also given to those employees who have died off duty, whether active or retired. These highly trained Correction Officers provide a positive image for the Department during high profile ceremonies and events. The Honor Guard Unit provides guidance to other state, local and federal agencies upon request.

II. POLICY

All Honor Guard Unit Members shall be familiar with and comply with the policies and procedures as herein stated and with any additions and/or amendments. This SOP shall be the basis for all Honor Guard Unit Operations. It shall establish, maintain, and support a proficiently trained Honor Guard Unit to represent the Massachusetts Department of Correction by emphasizing dignity, honor and respect during all ceremonies, including but not limited to; rendering honors to fallen active-duty employees of the Massachusetts Department of Correction, active-duty service animals of the Massachusetts Department of Correction, or any active-duty Law Enforcement sworn personnel, or any special event approved by the Commissioner or designee.

III. SELECTION PROCESS

The Commissioner or designee shall appoint the Honor Guard Unit Commander. The Honor Guard Unit Commander shall appoint an Assistant Honor Guard Commander.

- A. The selection process for new Honor Guard Unit Members shall be conducted in accordance with Department Policy and Procedure.

Persons interested in being considered for the Honor Guard Unit shall submit the following:

1. Letter of Interest
 2. Resume;
 3. Attendance Calendar;
 4. Copy of License to Carry (LTC)
 5. Most Recent EPRS and previous two (2) years of EPRS Evaluations; and
 6. Letter(s) of Recommendation
- B. Any Correction Officer I, II, or III eligible to become an Honor Guard Unit Member shall obtain an application from the Honor Guard Unit Commander based upon available posted vacancies. The completed application shall be returned to the Honor Guard Unit Commander. In addition, the Applicant shall meet the following criteria, as determined by the Commissioner or designee:

1. Have been a Massachusetts Department of Correction's Correction Officer I, II, or III for the past thirty-six (36) months by the time of appointment to the Honor Guard Unit. Prior military service or law enforcement experience may be substituted for one (1) year of correctional experience.
 2. Have a cellular phone, valid driver's license, and dependable transportation.
 3. Be able to maintain composure during emotional and difficult times.
 4. Be able to stand at "attention" for long periods of time.
 5. Pass the minimum Department firearms training standards.
 6. Must currently possess or be eligible to obtain a Massachusetts LTC.
- C. A minimum of a three (3) member panel shall review each Applicant.
1. The panel shall first conduct a review of the employee's personnel file to consider the following information:
 - a. Employee Performance Review System (EPRS) evaluations.
 - b. Attendance History
 - c. Disciplinary record
 - d. Commendations
 - e. Military backgrounds
 - f. Training records
 - g. History of Industrial Accidents
 - h. Firearms qualification(s)
- D. Upon successful review of the application and all documents in Section III (C) above, the panel shall conduct an interview, which shall include a practical portion. Following the interview and evaluation, the Honor Guard Unit Commander shall submit, in writing, those recommended for appointment to the Director of Operational Services for final approval.
- E. The Director of Operational Services shall review the Honor Guard Unit Commander's recommendations. The Director of Operational Services shall make the final decision as to the appointment of an Applicant to the Honor Guard Unit.
1. The Director of Operational Services shall not be required to state the reasons for not appointing an Applicant to the Honor Guard Unit. No entry shall be made in the Applicant's personnel file indicating that they were not appointed to the Honor Guard Unit.
- F. The Honor Guard Unit Commander shall ensure that all newly appointed Honor Guard Unit Members receive twenty-four (24) hours of initial training. The initial training shall consist of Basic Honor Guard standards as well as ceremonial procedures. This training will take place on consecutive days within one (1) month of being appointed to the Unit. The Honor Guard Unit's training shall provide the minimum courses for their specific mission:

1. Team Mission Statement Review
2. Command Structure Protocol
3. Drill and Ceremony
4. Flag Folding
5. Casket Rotations
6. Presentation of Colors
7. Honor Guard Request/Activation Procedures
8. Group Movements
9. Uniform Maintenance

IV. RETENTION REQUIREMENTS

- A. Prospective Honor Guard Unit Members shall have military discipline, professionalism and integrity at all times. Members are expected to demonstrate unwavering commitment to excellence, attention to detail and respect for tradition. They must perform their duties with precision and pride while representing the Massachusetts Department of Correction in every ceremony and public appearance.
- B. Selected members must:
 1. Complete one (1) year as a probationary Honor Guard Unit Member;
 2. Participate in all details as requested by the Honor Guard Unit Commander;
 3. Attend mandatory training and be willing to be trained;
 4. Display a high level of proficiency in close order drill and ceremonial protocols.
 5. Always be aware of the high-profile visibility that the Honor Guard Unit brings to the Department and recognize that repeated unavailability has a detrimental effect on the overall competency and ability of the Unit to function cohesively.
- C. The Honor Guard Unit Commander, with consultation with the Director of Operational Services, may, at their discretion, remove a member of the Honor Guard Unit when the member fails to meet any requirement.

V. DEPLOYMENT PROCEDURES

- A. Upon approval of the Director of Operational Services or designee, Honor Guard Unit Members shall be deployed:
 1. Immediately following the death of an employee who lost their life “in the line of duty.” The Director of Operational Services shall notify the Honor Guard Unit Commander. The Honor Guard Unit Commander shall immediately deploy a minimum of two (2) members of the Honor Guard Unit to the location of the deceased member. The deployed members will provide honors and oversee the movement/transport of the fallen member.

The Honor Guard Unit will remain with the deceased until burial or relieved by the Commissioner or designee.

2. In support of the family and to render honors to a retiree's funeral services.
3. For the services for an employee of another public safety agency who lost their life "in the line of duty", at the direction of the Director of Operational Services, a minimum of two (2) members shall represent the Department. This includes public safety agencies across the Country.

B. All approved events will be filled at the operational needs of the Department.

VI. DRILL AND CEREMONY UNIT COMPONENTS

The Honor Guard Unit Members are specifically trained Department employees to include a Bagpiper and a Vocalist.

A. Positions and Duties

1. Honor Guard Unit Commander: The Honor Guard Unit Commander is responsible for overall administration and operation of the Honor Guard. The Honor Guard Unit Commander shall report directly to the Commissioner or designee.
2. Honor Guard Unit Assistant Commander: The Honor Guard Unit Assistant Commander shall be appointed by the Honor Guard Unit Commander. The Honor Guard Unit Assistant Commander shall be second in command and shall assume the duties of the Honor Guard Unit Commander in their absence.
3. Honor Guard Unit Armorer/Supply Officer: The Honor Guard Unit Armorer/Supply Officer shall be responsible for the supervision of all issued equipment, quarterly inspections and procurement of new equipment. Their specific duties ensure that equipment is in proper working order and individual and unit inventories are completed.
4. Honor Guard Unit Team Members: As directed by the Honor Guard Unit Commander.

B. Minimum Mandatory Training

To maintain the necessary skills required to be proficient in all Drill and Ceremonial disciplines, minimum yearly training shall be required and conducted bimonthly. No less than six (6), eight (8) hour training days per calendar year shall be required unless excused by the Honor Guard Commander.

1. Training shall include but is not limited to:

- a. Color Guard;
- b. Casket watch;
- c. Casket and urn movements;
- d. Flag folding;
- e. Wreath laying procedures;
- f. General close order drill, and
- g. Uniform Inspections

C. Drill and Ceremonial Unit Equipment

- 1. Three (3) sets of adjustable poles with (American Flag, Commonwealth Flag, POW and DOC Flag).
- 2. Two (2) sets of rifles, two (2) rifles per set.
- 3. Two (2) flag stands.
- 4. Two (2) sets of four (4) flag jocks.
- 5. At least two (2) vehicles (one (1) from North and one (1) from the South), with sufficient blue lights, will be secured for each detail.
- 6. When earned, the Honor Guard pin shall be issued by Honor Guard Unit Commander and worn on the Honor Guard Uniform and may also be worn on the Class A uniform. It shall be worn centered, above the top edge of the right breast pocket and over the whistle chain. The pin will be worn above any other pin on the same side. Those Honor Guard Unit Members who do not remain in good standing, as determined by the Honor Guard Unit Commander, shall no longer be authorized to wear the pin, and immediately remove it from their uniform. The pin shall be returned to the Honor Guard Unit Commander.

D. Duty Uniform

- 1. The duty uniform shall be determined by the Honor Guard Unit Commander and has a direct correlation to the ceremony/event the team is requested for or participating in. Uniforms will be inspected by the Officer in Charge before each ceremony/event, and any defects will be corrected prior to deployment.
- 2. An approved alternative uniform shall be worn while participating in training days. When authorized, the alternative uniform shall be worn when commuting to and from services for law enforcement personnel and other authorized events.

3. Honor Guard Issued Uniform shall include:
- a. Crush Cover with Hat Badge
 - b. Campaign Cover with three (3) piece hat strap, acorns, hat badge (Stratton Straw S40DB-NB) Self forming
 - c. Hat Trap Cover Brim Press
 - d. Honor Guard Patches
 - e. Blouse
 - f. State Seal Collar Pins (screw back full color)
 - g. Whistle Chain
 - h. Whistle Hook
 - i. Whistle
 - j. Honor Guard Badge
 - k. American Flag Pin
 - l. NLEM Honor Guard Pin
 - m. Blue and White Braid shoulder Cord Nickle Tip
 - n. Cross Strap with D-Rings
 - o. Sam Brown Belt 2 Stitch
 - p. Holster, Mag Pouch, Cuff Case
 - q. Pants
 - r. Boots
 - s. Parade Gloves (sure grip)
 - t. Raincoat
 - u. Khaki Boots
 - v. Khaki Belt
 - w. 5.11 Khaki Pants
 - x. Department Issued Firearm
 - y. Winter Coat
 - z. Windbreaker
 - aa. Two (2) T-shirts
 - bb. Two (2) Polo Shirts