

Colorado C.O.P.S. Tip Sheet for a Successful National Police Week

Before you leave

- * Review the week's agenda from start to finish, this will help you prepare for the week both physically and emotionally.
- * Try to connect with someone from your home state, or local C.O.P.S. organization. It's nice to find a familiar face to connect with. If no one from your area is attending, you can connect to your regional C.O.P.S. director by visiting www.nationalcops.org/board.htm or connect to your local chapter at www.nationalcops.org/links.htm
- * Pack clothing for all types of weather. This time of year can bring extremely hot temperatures, rain, and cold weather. Bring a light jacket/sweater, umbrella (can be used to keep you protected from the rain and sun), comfortable shoes, sunglasses, sunscreen, and sunscreen.
- * Many people attending National Police Week wear items that commemorate their fallen officer. Survivors wear t-shirts, bracelets, photo buttons, and tote bags with their officer's picture on them. If you have these items and would like to wear them, don't forget to take them with you.
- * You may also want to pack a collapsible bag or leave room in your suitcase for memorabilia you will want to bring home with you. If children are traveling with you, they will receive a lot of items from stuffed animals to water bottles.
- * Also prior to leaving you might want to take some time to make a montage of pictures. Many survivors leave pictures of their officer and/or family at the wall to share. Make sure you laminate the photos and remember these items will not be returned to you.
- * If you are taking small children, remember to take items to occupy them. There are many long ceremonies and you will spend a lot of time waiting to board the buses.

Arrival

- * If you are a current year survivor, an honor guard will be there to greet you at the airport. Allow them the honor of helping and escorting you.
- * Normally a formal police motorcade escorts the buses from the airport to the hotels. This may bring back memories of the funeral; it may be overwhelming but remember they are doing this to honor you as well as your fallen officer.

C.O.P.S. Conference Workshops

- * The Opening Session is very moving and worth attending.
- * The breakout sessions are much smaller groups and presented for specific groups such as spouses, parents, peers, kids, and co-workers, ect.

- * The rooms can get cool; consider bringing a sweater or light jacket with you.
- * These sessions are the first step in the healing process. You will meet people going through similar emotions. Don't pass this opportunity to help yourself.
- * If your escort officers were involved in the incident that took your officer's life, they may be feeling the effects of grief and guilt. The co-worker sessions are for them; you may want to encourage them to attend.
- * The children sessions are wonderful. They are in safe hands and will have a wonderful time. Please encourage them to enjoy this experience they will not regret it.

Candlelight Vigil

- * The National organizers do an excellent job of moving lots of people using a system of buses but it takes time. It seems that everything moves slowly due to the large number of people involved. Be patient and understanding; everyone is trying their best.
- * The Candlelight Vigil starts in the early afternoon; plan on eating lunch and taking something with you to eat for dinner. There is a fast food restaurant close to the seating; find a seat then send someone from your party to get food.
- * This is where you will see the wall. It is very crowded so be patient. Take your montage of photos so you can set it by your officer's name. If you take single photos, you might want to take masking tape so you can tape the pictures to the wall. Be courteous and don't post anything over someone else's name.
- * There are florist shops in the DC area that will make and deliver wreaths to the memorial for NPW. They usually have the name of the officer on them and will be placed near where the officer's name is engraved.
- * They have NLEOMF commemorative paper for your rubbing but it's easier to take your own pencils or crayons.
- * This is a beautiful ceremony but it's a late night. The buses will be waiting for you when it is over to take you back to your hotel.

The Memorial Service

- * The Memorial Service at the U.S. Capitol is worth attending; there is a lot of waiting and standing. There is seating for the current year's survivors and you will get instructions on where to go, which number bus to take and what you will need to do.
- * This ceremony is "church attire" but consider the shoes you wear. They need to be comfortable and functional. You will walk across a lot of grass, if it rains, you could have a problem with high heels and dress shoes.
- * The representative for the family (widow, parents, whomever the rep is) will walk with the escort officer to place a flower in the wreath.

* The observers don't get seats during the Memorial Ceremony and are usually the last to leave.

* During this ceremony, it is hard to leave until the event is over. If you are not a first year survivor, you might be seated on a grassy area. You may want to bring a blanket to sit on. If it is raining or has rained, your feet will get wet. You may want to bring an extra pair of dry socks.

* Prepare for the weather.

The Closing Session

* The closing session and wind down picnic are a great time to have fun, sit, relax, and reflect on the week. This is a great time to exchange information and make connections before heading home. You might consider carrying a printed information card or business card to exchange with friends.

General

* Try to go see the memorial wall again before you leave. It is very crowded and covered with mementos during the ceremonies. Usually at the end of the week there are fewer people and the wall has a very different feel. It is much quieter, peaceful, serene and a better time to reflect and remember.

* If you have a digital or video camera, you should bring it with you. There are many things to capture as memories. Bring extra batteries and learn to operate the camera prior to your visit.

* If you are driving to D.C., plan for heavy traffic. It is highly recommended to utilize the organized buses or the metro for travel during NPW.

* These are very long days with many emotions. Don't try to crowd too much into your schedule. If you plan to do extra sightseeing, plan to do it after Police Week. This is your week to honor your officer, utilize it to do just that.

* If you need help, ask. There are plenty of people willing and able to help you. Most of these officers are volunteering their own time to help you.

* If you are in a large group, make plans how to connect. The observers will be sent to a different area from the current year. Have a way to communicate and leave messages. It is very hard to hear cell phones and they are disruptive at the events if not silenced or turned off.

* The Law Enforcement Memorial Store has many items you can buy. There will be a t-shirt with a roll call of that year's officers. C.O.P.S. also has a gift shop set up at the host hotel for items to purchase.

* As a survivor these events are about honoring your fallen officer as well as honoring you. Take pride in that and allow it to happen. Helping you helps them in the healing process.

- * Accept your recognition with grace and dignity. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity and you should prepare yourself and be open to it.
- * Don't blow off the C.O.P.S. sessions. You will be tired but as honoring as the memorials are, the sessions are just as important to you and your family. You deserve to live again. These sessions will put you on the right track.

Once Home

- * After you return from NPW you will probably experience a delayed sense of grief and feel overwhelmed. You might experience an emotional low. Be prepared and make arrangements to have people available to reach out to. Maybe you have a "C.O.P.S. Buddy", a close friend, or a family member who can be there for you.
- * If you are not already involved with your local C.O.P.S Chapter, consider getting involved.

Police Officers Attending National Police Week

- * While at NPW you will have a chance to meet and connect with officers from around the country and the globe. Bring patches, pins, hats, business cards to trade and pass out to survivors.
- * Survivors have told us they are more comfortable approaching an officer in uniform. They don't want to disturb you but if you are in uniform they feel you are working and more likely to help.
- * You should try and seek out other people, especially survivors from your state. They might not be comfortable approaching you and it's up to you to take the lead. If we are all truly "family" then we need to take the leadership role and be good hosts and escorts.
- * Check with your airline well in advance to determine their regulations for transporting your weapon. They are all different and it might save you a bunch of headaches to check the rules early.
- * Take your Class A Uniform with hat and don't forget a badge shroud. You might also consider bringing a uniform coat or rain slicker with hat cover in case of rain.
- * If you are in uniform, and you are encouraged to wear your uniform as much as possible. Remember you might be asked for directions so be prepared with information about the event, hotels, the area, and transportation. Many links can be found at the National Memorial Fund's Website at <http://www.nleomf.org/programs/policeweek/> check out the link labeled "Visiting Washington D.C."
- * Plan using the Metro Subway System to get around it is very effective. You can find information about the Metro at www.wmata.com. Check out the Visitor's Kit with pocket guide and map here: http://www.wmata.com/getting_around/visito_info/visitorskit.cfm and the metro subway Interactive Map is here: <http://www.wmata.com/rail/maps/map.cfm>

- * You will do a lot of walking and a lot of standing and waiting. Take your most comfortable shoes and if you don't have them, get some that you can wear with your Class A's
- * If you want to be more relaxed, you could take a soft uniform or embroidered polo shirt. This will let you be more casual and yet still identify you and the agency you represent.
- * Take a backpack to carry snacks, water, rain gear, and the things you purchase at the events.
- * You might want to visit the memorial wall before the Candlelight Vigil to orient yourself. The evening ceremonies are very crowded and confusing. Again, you will be asked for help, directions, or information.
- * Prepare yourself for the emotion of the vigil. It will get to the most hardened of officers and with a tremendous sense of grief and loss. It's supposed to do that, that's why everyone is there but don't think you are immune to the effects of grief.