

FLORIDA NATIONAL CEMETERY HONOR GUARD GUIDELINES

Rendering military funeral honors to our veterans is a long standing tradition and our final tribute acknowledging the personal sacrifice of the brave men and women who have defended our nation. By working together we will succeed in showing the respect and gratitude of the Nation to the family of each veteran. To meet this mutual goal, we ask that every honor guard member follow these guidelines.

1. **Scheduling:** Committal services are intended to be no more than 15 to 20 minutes in length and this time is shared by the family, clergy and honor team. Plan your services to allow at least an hour between services. Due to the volume of services, trying to accommodate each family in a timely manner, and to avoid families waiting, your group may be asked to move to another shelter – please allow time for this relocation when scheduling. Confirm the date and time of the committal service with the funeral director.
2. **No Solicitations** - Please be reminded that military honors organizations should be aware that the acceptance of or solicitation for a donation for the rendering of military funeral honors at a National Cemetery is strictly prohibited.
3. **Funeral Military Honors** – Funeral military honors should only consist of the core elements: the folding of the United States flag; presentation of the flag to the veteran's family; playing of taps; and a rifle salute. If the detail does not have a bugler member, a recorded version of Taps may be used – either the digital taps player at the shelter or the ceremonial bugle. For the safety of the visitors and staff, we ask that the rifle detail stand at or near the service flags when rendering honors. This brief ceremony typically is completed within 10 minutes.
4. **Chaplain Services** - On occasion, the family may request that a Chaplain affiliated with the military honor detail provide a brief religious service. This may include a reading from scriptures or brief prayer. If the family provides their own clergy, the honor detail does not need to provide this service.
4. **Check In** – Plan to arrive ½ hour prior to your scheduled service. When arriving at the cemetery, one vehicle of the honor guard group should stop briefly to allow one member of the honor team to register their group at the booth. All other vehicles should proceed directly to the honor guard room facility and await a call from the booth attendant for shelter assignment.
5. **Honor Guard Facilities:** Restroom facilities are available for the team members in the furnished honor guard room. Smoking is not permitted in the

Honor Guard room or at the committal shelter. Parking is available at the Honor Guard facility. Members should not park their cars or other vehicles in the entrance lanes of the cemetery or in front of the administration building as it prohibits visitors and family members from gaining access to information about their loved ones gravesites and the location of other family members attending services.

6. Honor & Dignity: Members of Military honor teams should always present a professional demeanor, not only in dress but in behavior as well. Members should be aware that loud and boisterous noises and disturbances detract from the sacred atmosphere of this cemetery that is considered a national shrine to our nation's veterans.

7. Flexibility: We ask for your understanding and flexibility in assignments to shelters. Our first consideration is to the families.

The services you provide are valuable and provide a lasting memory for the family members and are greatly appreciated by them and the members of the cemetery staff.