



Administrative Office

April 30, 2019

To: Newspaper Media

Re: Funeral Escorts

From: Chief Ralph Dawe

As of 4/24/2019, the Scottsboro Police Department's regular procedure for funeral escorts has been scaled back until further notice. The Scottsboro Police Department intends to use one patrol officer to assist the funeral precession through its first major intersection upon exiting the facility. This change is due to manpower shortages and increased traffic causing the inability to provide safe funeral escorts.

SPD conducts approximately 300 funeral escorts per year. The problem arises when we are already shorthanded with four (4) patrol officer openings and current shift officers calling in sick or scheduled to be off. A couple more officers may be leaving in the near future for retirement or other employment opportunities.

Often, there are 3 to 4 funeral escorts per day while other emergency calls are still coming in that require immediate Police assistance. The Police Department averages 30 calls per day between the hours of 8AM-5PM. Then, we are faced with the decision of leaving the planned escort or conducting it with fewer officers causing a safety hazard. This makes it very difficult to safely conduct a funeral escort and risk injury to the precession participants, other motorists and patrol officers.

The funeral precession destination determines the amount of officers that must be assigned to that escort. It takes at least 4 officers, and at most 6 officers, to safely conduct a funeral escort here in our City. Other considerations include school traffic areas and high traffic periods such as weekday afternoons. We regret to suspend the traditional escort service that the Police Department has provided for many years; however, we must keep safety as our top priority. We are committed to serving the community in the most productive and safest way possible.