Shomrim Handbook Outline
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Based on the 2018 Shomrim Handbook from Adath Jeshurun Congregation, Minnetonka, MN

- Title page
  - Name of handbook
  - Institution
  - Author(s)
  - Date
  - Photo(s)/graphic(s)

- Table of Contents

- Description of what shmirah is and where the custom came from
  - Web site references
  - books
  - Text sources

- Description of the role of the shomer/et

- Who is eligible to become a shomer/et
  - Requirements, if any, regarding Jewish status and/or level of observance
  - Gender
  - Age
  - Requirements, if any, for membership in any particular synagogue and/or any other organization
  - May family and/or friends participate? (and under what circumstances)

- What to expect
  - Approximately how often you can expect to be contacted for a shmirah opportunity
  - Whether the casket will be in the room with the shomer/et
  - Whether the shomer/et may have someone else with them
    - If so, how many people and who may or may not come with them
  - Length of the shift
  - Environment
    - Quality of lighting, especially for reading
    - Adequate HVAC or too hot in the summer and/or too cold at night and/or in the winter
    - Any background music and/or public address system
    - Likelihood of staff or others walking by or entering the room
    - Available seating
    - Art/decorations in the room (non-Jewish funeral homes may have a cross in the room, for instance)
    - Electrical outlets
    - Space heater and/or fan
    - Water cooler
    - Additional candles and matches
    - Pillows and/or footrests
    - Blankets
Resources in the room, such as:
- Death notice and obituary
- Scrapbooks, stories, pictures of the meit/ah
- Tehillim – Hebrew, transliteration, English
- Journal
- Books

What kinds of feelings may come up

Pay: Be explicit if this is being done on a volunteer basis. If not, be clear about:
- Pay rate(s)
- Any deductions
- What happens when the next shomer/et (or the person taking the casket to the funeral) does not show up on time
- Overtime policy
- Does time paid include travel time
- When payment will be made

Instructions
- What to wear
- What to bring
- Special instructions if you’re the first or last shomer/et
- Protocol for transitioning from one shomer/et to another
- Who to contact/what to do if something unexpected happens, such as:
  - Family shows up
  - Family wants to open the casket to see the meit/ah
  - Odors/liquids emanate from the casket
  - Shomer/et who is supposed to arrive at the end of your shift doesn’t come
  - Alarm goes off
- How to act while in the room
- Whether to keep the door(s) and/or window(s) open or closed
- If casket is sometimes in the room with the shomer/et and sometimes not:
  - What is done differently depending on whether the casket is in the room

Logistics
- How you get on the list of people to do shmirah
- How you will be notified when there is a shmirah opportunity
- How you report you are available for a particular shmirah
- Address(es) and phone number(s) of where shmirah will be done, and for each:
  - Driving directions and/or public transportation directions
  - Where to park
    - Cost of parking, if any
    - Hours/days when parking meters or parking lot fees are not applicable
  - Hours/days when the facility is open to the public and when it is closed
  - Where and how to enter the building when the facility is open to the public
  - Where and how to enter the building when the facility is closed to the public
    - Keys/entry codes
    - Alarm codes
  - Location of elevator(s) and any required keys or codes
  - Building map
  - Location in building of where shmirah is done
What resources are provided at each site
- Location of restroom facilities
- Availability of water cooler and/or drinking fountain
- Accessibility

Instructions on how to adjust the room’s heating/cooling, if available

In case of emergency:
- Location of stairwells
- Location of first aid kit
- Location of defibrillator (if any)
- Location of available phone(s) to call out and instructions, if needed
- Location of fire alarms
- Location of fire extinguishers
- Emergency exits
- Who to contact

What, if anything, is different on Shabbat or other holidays?
- Use of electronic devices
- Communications when something unexpected arises

After sitting shmirah
- Resources if you want to talk about the experience
- Who to contact with concerns, suggestions, and/or feedback
- What you can tell others about it, and what you should not tell others

Virtual shmirah
- How to conduct shmirah at home or another remote location
  - Benefits, drawbacks

Blended shmirah
- Combining in-person and virtual

Glossary

List of resources and where to obtain them
- Psalms in Hebrew and/or English
- Related books
- Related Jewish texts
- Related poetry
- Other readings
- Related films/movies
- Related songs
- Related websites