



MAKE IT PURPLE

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT KIT

Fallen First Responder Awareness Month

Make It Purple Employee Engagement Kit

MAKE IT PURPLE: FALLEN FIRST RESPONDER AWARENESS MONTH

In May 2016, the Texas LODD Task Force first launched the Make It Purple: Fallen First Responder Awareness campaign and honor the 100,000 plus first responders that serve the communities of Texas, as well as remember the 300 first responders that have died in the line of duty since 2000.

On April 1, individuals, emergency response agencies, businesses and organizations will be able to access our **Make It Purple** website where they will be able to download resources, sign up for our newsletter, purchase **Make It Purple** items, and learn about this very important campaign. On May 1 and throughout the month of May, these individuals will be invited to show their support by wearing purple and sharing their photos on social media and our website, sign our virtual memorial tribute wall, participate in our awareness contests, including a children's writing contest, and a 'Nominate Your Favorite Hero' program.

The **Make It Purple** campaign marks the only event in Texas that is specifically designed to officially recognize all fallen first responders: police, fire, and EMS and their families as well as to bring awareness to those individuals that continue to serve their communities.

Since 2000, over 300 first responders have lost their lives in the line of duty. Nearly 2,000 deaths have been recorded since 1900 (statistics provided by ODMP, USFA, EMS Memorial). These men and women loved their work and were willing to pay the ultimate sacrifice to protect their communities. They left behind families, friends, and co-workers to grieve and rebuild their lives. To forget the sacrifices that these individuals have made would be a travesty to their memories and the profession in which they served.

For the thousands of individuals that put on the uniform each morning or before each training, the reality that they might not come home is not far from their thoughts. For their loved ones waiting for their safe return, the anxiety can sometimes be crippling. In today's society where law enforcement officers are hunted, fire departments are losing funding, and EMS responders are fighting for better pay, it is important more than ever to show our support and to thank these men and women who serve...many without pay.

By "**Making It Purple**," we hope to raise public awareness about what first responders do for their communities and about those who have given their lives in the line of duty.

This **Make It Purple** Employee Engagement Kit provides you with everything you need to organize a **Dress in Purple Day** event at your workplace. Your event will not only engage and inspire your coworkers and employees, but show your support to the first responders in your community, and helping to fund the Texas LODD Task Force's mission.

On **Dress in Purple Day**, help your organization join the thousands of first responders, families of fallen first responders, communities and others who care about the men and women who protect their communities by wearing purple and getting involved to show your support to firefighters, EMS, and law enforcement officers.



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Similar to breast cancer's pink ribbon, the purple ribbon represents the eternal memory of the first responders whose lives have been lost in the line of duty.

The **Dress in PURPLE Day** program provides your company the chance to engage employees, their families and friends with the information that can show support, compassion, and kindness to local first responders, as well as provide a way to remember those who died.

Benefits to your organization and employees*:

Builds and Enhances Your Brand Image

The Texas LODD Task Force is the leading state advocacy organization dedicated to caring for agencies and families that have been affected by a line of duty death or serious injury. Leveraging the Texas LODD Task Force brand with your own provides significant opportunities to influence brand recognition and consumer behavior.

Aids in Employee Recruitment and Retention

One of the greatest perceived corporate benefits of volunteerism is an elevated ability to recruit and retain top talent.

Boosts Employee Morale

When employees feel good about company-sponsored volunteer programs, they feel good about the company they work for and are more likely to come to work and perform better at their jobs.

Promotes Teamwork/Builds Cohesion Among Coworkers

Corporate volunteer programs provide employees with opportunities to interact with one another in situations that may enhance professional relationships, bring employee teams closer together and teach them how better to work together to complete a common goal or task.

Provides Networking Opportunities for Employees

Corporate-sponsored volunteer events also provide opportunities for employees to network with management, with workers from other departments/businesses they might not normally work with and potentially with key stakeholders such as customers, clients and community leaders.

Helps Attract Customers, Clients and Business Partners

By actively encouraging and supporting employee volunteerism, companies are better able to attract and retain customers, clients and business partners. In short, people want to do business with "good corporate citizens."



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Going PURPLE in the Workplace

There are lots of ways to turn your workplace purple for Dress in Purple Day. This annual event is celebrated the second Thursday in May, which is Fallen First Responder Awareness Month.

In the pages ahead, you'll find ideas and planning suggestions for your Dress in Purple Day awareness and fundraising events. More ideas and resources can be found on the Dress in Purple Day website, www.makeitpurple.org.

Awareness Events

Many of us take our first responders for granted. We may see a fire truck or ambulance responding to a call but we don't think about who is on that apparatus. We may see a police officer grabbing a bite to eat but we might not realize that that meal might be the first he has eaten during his double shift. We may hear about the loss of a first responder but we don't think about the coworkers, friends and family left behind. It's important that we start talking to our own coworkers, friends, and family about the importance of these individuals in our community.

How will your company put its individual stamp on raising awareness for fallen first responders and their loved one? That's where your spirit and creativity come in. Think big. Go bold. Help make this the year we turn Texas purple and show our first responders our support.

Here are some suggestions:

- Decorate your company's window space with flyers and support materials.
- Light your building's lobby in purple lights. We often see buildings lit in pink for breast cancer awareness in October, so let's bring purple to our buildings in May!
- Make a visible statement at your desk, or in high traffic areas of the office with flyers, stickers and donation forms.
- Distribute Dress in Purple Day emails, flyers, program stickers and colon cancer fact sheets to your coworkers.
- Ask coworkers to show their support by wearing purple.
- Distribute buttons and stickers to employees.
- Hold a contest for the most creative or craziest blue outfits.

Hold an orientation or lunch and learn:

- Invite a local first responder to speak briefly about their work, safety, or to give a demonstration.
- Give your own presentation using our Awareness Speaker Kit.
- Ask a staff member with a personal connection to a first responder to speak.
- Have a training on company policies on safety
- Include articles about local first responders, or feature information about a fallen first responder in the company newsletter and on the website.



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Planning Your Event

Dress in Purple Day will be here before you know it. That's why it's important to plan ahead.

Before you finalize your plans, make sure to ask for any special permission that you may need.

Don't forget to visit www.makeitpurple.org for resources and free downloadable materials to help you make your event a big success.

This general to-do list will help you get started:

- Start the buzz EARLY. Send out a "Save the Date" email.
- Get your leaders involved. Find an officer or manager to champion your work – the more senior, the better. Present them with a list of options for engaging employees and supporting Dress in Purple Day at the workplace.
- Encourage participation. Invite staff to a meeting to introduce them to the Dress in Purple Day program. Go over how they can help organize and participate in the awareness and fundraising events. You can use our Speaker's and Pin Up Kits, which you can edit for your purposes. Form a committee of key players, perhaps other first responders and their families.
- Promote from within. Hang flyers in the office and include mentions on message boards, the company newsletter, social media or website. Be sure to use the resources on www.makeitpurple.org.
- If you're planning a fundraiser, help raise money for the Task Force by setting up a Peer-to-Peer to campaign (see our website), collect donations in your office or station, help locate sponsors for Fallen First Responder Awareness Month.
- Plan ahead for speakers, such as local first responders, families of first responders who'll share their stories and provide
- Print out guides, flyers and other free resources to hand out at the event.
- Take an shift, station, or office photo to show your participation in the Dress in Purple Day program. Visit www.makeitpurple.org to submit your photo. Your company could be featured on our website and social media pages!



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Publicizing Your Company's Participation

To generate added awareness about your organization's **Dress in Purple Day** participation, it's important to promote your event within the organization and to the outside media. Here are just a few ways you can spread the word. Visit <http://www.makeitpurple.org> for these free resources:

Keep employees up-to-date on your event activities and fundraising goals via:

- Employee emails
- E-Newsletter
- Company website
- Paycheck inserts
- Staff meetings

Get the community involved in your efforts:

- Updates and postings on company website
- Facebook and Twitter posts

Reach out to the local media:

You can also consider contacting your local newspaper, radio or TV station.

- Send a t-shirt or button (available for purchase on the Make It Purple website) with a note about your event to the editors of local newspapers. Encourage them to wear purple clothing and the button during the week of your event to show their support of Fallen First Responder Awareness Month and **Dress in Purple Day**.
 - Follow-up with the media and send them pictures that you have taken from the event.



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Suggested Timeline and Checklist

Be sure to start this process early, at least four to six weeks before you want to begin your fundraising and awareness events.

This timeline and checklist will help keep you organized and on-schedule:

- 6 weeks before Get management approval
- 5 weeks before Organize staff meeting and form committee
- 4 weeks before Decide on which event(s) to participate in
- 4 weeks before Assign tasks to committee members
- 4 weeks before Establish rewards program
- 3 weeks before Email staff about National **Dress in Purple Day**
- 3 weeks before Invite speakers
- 3 weeks before Download, print and order resources from www.makeitpurple.com
- 3 weeks before Research and compile a list of local print and broadcast media outlets
- 3 weeks before Distribute flyers internally
- 3 weeks before Create newsletter
- 3 weeks before Add information to company's website
- 2 weeks before Create online fundraising page
- 2 weeks before Create/update Facebook page
- 1-2 weeks before Send out Twitter posts
- 1 week before Send out reminder email to staff
- 1 week before Hang flyers in office
- 1 week before Insert mini flyers with paychecks
- 1 week before Send out final notice email to all staff
- Day after Submit funds raised online or mail-in donation form
- Day after Send pictures and stories to the Texas LODD Task Force
- Day after Post photos on company website



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Tips for a Successful Event

To help you ensure that your **Dress in Purple Day** events are successful, here are some components that you should incorporate into your event planning:

- Visit the **Dress in Purple Day** website at www.makeitpurple.org for ideas, tools free downloads and resources.
- Ask for permission and get senior management involved.
- Recruit a team.
- Use the suggested timeline and plan ahead.
- Create an online fundraising page.
- Publicize and promote your events.
- Reward employee participation.
- Be creative and have fun!



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Fallen First Responder Awareness Month Statistics and FAQ

When is Dress in Purple Day?

Dress in Purple Day is celebrated each year on the second Thursday of May. In 2016, the Annual Dress in Purple Day will be on Thursday, May 12. If that day doesn't work for you, don't worry! You can hold a Dress in Purple Day event any time in May!

What is it?

The Texas LODD Task Force first launched the Dress in Purple Day program in 2016 to bring state-wide attention to the sacrifices made by first responders, especially those who give their lives in the line of duty, and to celebrate the courage of those families affected by line of duty injuries and loss. It is our goal for first responder agencies, their families and friends, communities, individuals, businesses and community groups across the State of Texas to participate in Dress in Purple Day by wearing purple and encouraging others to do the same. By "going purple," we hope to raise public awareness, support and to show compassion to our first responders that put their lives on the lines each and every day. Get involved!

Who is the Texas LODD Task Force?

The Texas LODD Task Force was created in 2000 out of the need to assist departments suffering from a line of duty death and to provide support for those family members left to deal with such a tragic loss. We've now grown to become the leading LODD response and care agency in the State of Texas. Our vision is to 'Remember the Survivors, So That We Never Forget the Fallen.' With that vision in front of us, we're working tirelessly to educate the public about the work that these fearless public servants do, what it means when we lose one of them in the line of duty, and how we can support their families as they rebuild. We are doing this by providing at-need assistance, long-term care for families, education, and support services to agencies and families in the areas of prevention and pre-planning.

How did Dress in Purple Day start?

It all began when Texas LODD Task Force founder, Wendy Norris, realized that more awareness and support needed to be given to families and agencies of the fallen. After a line of duty death, survivors can feel so alone and forgotten and it was her dream to ensure that these families and those brave public servants were never forgotten. She also wanted to tell the story of these individuals, because each one of them left behind a legacy that needs to be shared. A person that is willing to be critically injured or to even die in the line of duty, for a complete stranger, is an individual that needs to be recognized. Make It Purple and Dress in Purple Day not only remembers those who have fallen but also celebrates the heroes that carry on.



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Why Purple?

Similar to breast cancer's pink ribbon, the nationally-recognized purple and black bunting represents the eternal memory of the first responders whose lives have been lost in the line of duty. Purple and black bunting is commonly used for memorial services of fallen fire, police, and EMS members.

Why Participate?

TO HONOR AND REMEMBER THE FALLEN

There are many brave individuals who have decided to serve their communities by protecting them through law enforcement, fire protection, and emergency medical care. These brave men and women put their lives on the line every day in order to protect the citizens in their communities. All too often their lives are cut short by making the ultimate sacrifice. Too many families and loved ones have been left to deal with the tragic outcome of a life cut short. While we never want to forget the sacrifices that have been made, we want to dedicate a month where we purposefully honor those lives lost and their families and friends that they have left behind.

TO CELEBRATE THE MEN & WOMEN WHO ARE DEDICATED TO SERVE

Being willing to lay your life down for another human being is an act that defies rational and yet there are thousands of men and women throughout the State of Texas who make that choice every day. They know that there is possibility that they might not come home at the end of their shift and yet they choose to wear that uniform. We want to show them honor, respect, and gratitude for making the choice to protect us, sometimes without a paycheck.

TO SHOW SUPPORT TO THE FAMILIES

It's not just a life that has been lost, when a public servant dies in the line of duty. A family is torn apart by the devastation of a loss and it can take years for them to rebuild their new normal. Every day there is a wife, a mother, a father, a child, a sibling that wakes up without their loved one. And each day there is a wife, a mother, a father, a child, a sibling that hopes that their loved one will return safely. The life of a public servant's family member can be difficult and isolating, especially after a loss. We want to show these heroes behind the badge that we care about them and acknowledge the sacrifices that they make as well.

Who can I contact if I have more questions about the Fallen First Responder Awareness Month and the Dress in Purple Day program?

Wendy Norris

President, Texas LODD Task Force

wendy@texasloddtaskforce.com

832-647-6770



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Resources

Use our free materials to promote your organization's Dress in Purple Day activities. These resources will help you when you are planning your event or raising awareness for Fallen First Responder Awareness Month. Download logos, flyers and other sample materials at www.makeitpurple.org.

Check out our [online store](https://www.zazzle.com/make_it_purple) for more awareness materials and merchandise:
https://www.zazzle.com/make_it_purple .

Texas LODD Task Force
PO Box 925
Friendswood, TX 77546
www.texasloddtaskforce.com

To Contact:
Texas LODD Task Force: 832-757-1499
info@texasloddtaskforce.com

If you wish to donate to the Texas LODD Task Force and to support our mission, please visit our [Donate](#) page.



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