

DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES



GENERAL ORDER

100.11



Originating From	Issue Date	Revision Date	Attachments
Administration	03/26/1997	N/A	A

SUBJECT: Fire and Rescue Chaplain Program

APPLICABILITY: All Personnel

POLICY:

The Department recognizes that society in general often acts in accord with spiritual beliefs and previous religious training. Therefore, the Department will solicit the services of local clergy members or other specifically trained individuals, from various faiths, who wish to volunteer their time to the Department in forming and maintaining a Fire & Rescue Chaplain Program.

This procedure identifies the scope of the Fire & Rescue Chaplain Program and how Chaplains can be utilized to offer emotional and spiritual guidance and support to career and volunteer fire and rescue personnel, and civilians requesting such services.

1 ELIGIBILITY

- 1.1 Personnel who participate as members of the Chaplain program shall meet and follow the objectives as identified in the DFRS position description for "Fire & Rescue Chaplain" (Attachment A).
- 1.2 Senior Chaplain
 - 1.2.1 The Fire Chief shall designate the Senior Chaplain who shall coordinate the activities of the Fire and Rescue Chaplain Program.
 - 1.2.2 The Senior Chaplain shall screen applicants to the program and make appropriate recommendations to the Fire Chief
 - 1.2.3 The Senior Chaplain shall serve as the point of contact and shall coordinate the assignment or utilization of other chaplains.
 - 1.2.4 The Senior Chaplain may be contacted directly or via the Bureau of Communications.

2 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 2.1 When acting in an official requested capacity, chaplains should wear departmentally issued uniform clothing or display identification.

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- 2.2 As a part of the official duties as Fire & Rescue Chaplains, chaplains will perform the following tasks when requested:
 - 2.2.1 Act as advisors to the Fire Chief in all matters pertaining to employee morale and religious welfare.
 - 2.2.2 Provide spiritual or emotional guidance or support to members both on and off duty.
 - 2.2.3 Comfort and aid members and their families in the event of a serious injury or death in the family.
 - 2.2.4 Assist officers in making notifications to families of fire and rescue personnel seriously injured or killed.
 - 2.2.5 Assist fire & rescue personnel in making death notifications to citizens when necessary.
 - 2.2.6 Visit sick and injured fire and rescue service personnel at home or in the hospital.
 - 2.2.7 Assist with memorial services, ceremonies, and religious activities.
 - 2.2.8 Provide liaison with other religious leaders in matters which impact the department.
 - 2.2.9 Be on call during any major incidents involving mass casualties, civil disturbances, or when large numbers of fire and rescue service personnel are involved for long periods of time.
 - 2.2.10 Respond to incidents as requested, to offer aid, comfort, and reassurance of faith.
 - 2.3 Fire and Rescue Chaplains shall perform other such duties which may be requested by the Fire Chief, his designee, or a commanding officer.
 - 2.4 Fire and Rescue Chaplains will not interfere with any fire and rescue personnel in the performance of their duties and will conform to all Departmental policies and procedures.
 - 2.5 Fire and Rescue Chaplains will maintain a close relationship with chaplains of the volunteer corporations and interact with them to coordinate chaplain activities within the fire and rescue service.
- 3 Management and notification regarding information concerning sick, injured, births, etc. of members and other note worthy persons.
 - 3.1 The Senior Chaplain will be the primary information manager regarding sick, injured, births, deaths, etc. of members, relatives of members and other note worthy persons.

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- 3.2 Should a member deem it appropriate, he/she may notify the Senior Chaplain of the circumstances addressed in sec. 3.1 when it directly affects them or their families.
- 3.3 When a member gains information referred to in sec. 3.1 regarding another member, the family of another member, or an otherwise note worthy person, and that information is not confidential, the Senior Chaplain should be provided that information.
- 3.4 It will be the responsibility of the Senior Chaplain, when information is received as in sec. 3.3, to verify the information is not confidential and release that information to the department.
- 3.5 The DFRS will provide the Senior Chaplain an avenue for the distribution of the applicable information.

4 EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION OF FIRE AND RESCUE CHAPLAINS

- 4.1 Emergency notification of Fire and Rescue Chaplains will take place in accordance with established policies and procedures.

5 INCIDENT COMMANDERS

- 5.1 Incident Commanders are encouraged to request a Fire and Rescue Chaplain at critical incident scenes when assessing staffing and support needs.
- 5.2 Incident Commanders should also consider the use of Fire and Rescue Chaplains in the post-incident situations to assist fire and rescue personnel and citizens in dealing with stress and emotional reactions.
- 5.3 Incident Commanders may request Fire and Rescue Chaplains to respond to an incident scene, command post, or fire station by contacting the Communications Bureau of Communications and requesting the on-call chaplain.
- 5.4 Incident commanders are encouraged to request a Fire and Rescue Chaplain to assist with notification of next of kin in cases of unexpected death, seriously injured or ill persons whose death may be imminent, seriously injured children, or missing persons.
- 5.5 Incident Commanders are encouraged to notify the Senior Chaplain whenever any fire or rescue personnel receive any type of significant injury.

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6 OFFICE OF THE FIRE CHIEF OF FIRE AND RESCUE

- 6.1 The responsibility of the Fire and Rescue Chaplain Program rests with the Fire Chief of Fire and Rescue.
- 6.2 The Fire Chief shall select clergy members or other specifically trained individuals to serve in the Fire and Rescue Chaplain Program based on established criteria.
- 6.3 Based on the identified need, the Fire Chief shall modify the size and scope of the program and select additional chaplains or replacement chaplains.
- 6.4 The Fire Chief's staff shall post the names, addresses and telephone numbers and further information on all chaplains.
- 6.5 The Fire Chief's staff shall provide credentials and equipment specifically required by the chaplains to carry out their services.
- 6.6 The Fire Chief's staff shall coordinate all necessary orientation and training for Fire and Rescue Chaplains.

7 IMPLEMENTATION

- 7.1 During the incident situations, the highest ranking officer may initiate the request for a chaplain to respond where needed.
- 7.2 Request for on-call chaplain assistance will be directed to the Bureau of Communications.
- 7.3 Fire and Rescue Services personnel desiring personal or family counseling are encouraged to make appointments with the chaplain of their choice or through the Howard County Employee Assistance Program.

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8 CONFIDENTIALITY

- 8.1 Contact between fire and rescue personnel and the fire and rescue chaplain shall remain confidential. Fire and Rescue Chaplains are restricted from releasing any confidential or Departmental information, or speaking to the media or insurance representatives. All information secured is maintained in the strictest confidence.

Approved:



Joseph A. Herr
Fire Chief

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FIRE AND RESCUE CHAPLAIN

Attachment A

GENERAL DEFINITION

This is specialized support work with both fire and rescue service personnel, and their families; and with civilians involved in crisis situations as a result of fire, medical, or other traumatic emergencies.

Chaplains are considered as staff assistants to the Fire Chief.

TYPICAL EXAMPLES OF WORK

-Counsels with fire and rescue personnel or staff personnel during times of personal or professional crisis. This may include family tensions, job stress, or any number of other situations.

-Is available when fire or rescue personnel desire advice from “pastoral” rather than a “departmental” perspective.

- Visits fire stations on an informal basis
- Assists with death notifications when necessary
- Provides wedding and funeral services when necessary
- Visits sick and injured personnel in hospitals
- Provides invocations, benedictions, and speaks at events as requested
- Attends appropriate fire service meetings
- Files confidential reports on responses or cases handled

REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILL, AND ABILITIES

- Develop and maintain a basic knowledge of the duties of fire and rescue personnel.
- Ability to keep abreast of new procedures
- Ability to perform physically when performing in all kinds of weather
- Ability to understand and carry out written and oral instructions
- Ability to learn to drive emergency vehicles when required

MINIMUM EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

Graduation from an accredited high school or General Educational Development Certificate approved by Maryland Board of Education.

Certification of satisfactory training for chaplaincy services, certification of completion of minimum two-day Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) training and a minimum age of 21 prior to appointment.

REQUIRED LICENSES, CERTIFICATES AND/OR REGISTRATION

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Must be duly ordained and/or appointed as a representative of his/her denomination or faith.

Must be in possession of a valid Maryland driver's license.

WORKING CONDITIONS

May be exposed to hazardous working conditions and inclement weather in performing assigned duties.

Established: 3/26/07