

Chaplain Job Description

The _____ Fire Department shall maintain a Chaplain Program. A Chaplain may be either a full, part time paid or volunteer of the Department. The department shall maintain a number of chaplains as determined by the Chief. The Chaplain's position is a volunteer position. He or she must be mature individuals with a sound moral and spiritual background. It is the responsibility of the Chaplain's office to provide guidance and counseling to all members of the Department, upon request. The guidance and counseling may be in matters of spiritual, personal, family, job, or other nature. The Chaplain is to maintain regular established working hours whereby he/she can be contacted by phone, radio, pager, or in person. The Chaplain is on call 24 hours each day, seven days a week, and is available to assist in emergency matters during these times. The Chaplain is also available in situations whereby the possibility of injury to personnel is high, such as large structure fires, natural disasters, attempted suicides, riots, demonstrations, homeland security issues, etc. The Chaplain is to act as a resource person in matters where a specialist is required or needed. The Chaplain may be called upon to serve in situation where other agencies, Fire Department or EMS Service may not have a Chaplain and require this specialized service.

The Chaplain's office will come under the direct control and supervision of the Chief. All person(s) serving as chaplain will receive a letter on stationary from the chief designating them as an official chaplain. Based on the provisions of KRE 505 RELIGIOUS PRIVILEGE, a privileged communication/expectation of privacy shall exist in communications between members of the Fire Department and the Chaplain. By definition, a communication is "confidential" if made privately and not intended for further disclosure except to other persons present in furtherance of the purpose of the communication.

Standard Operating Guidelines For
Injured Personnel

I. Purpose

The Chaplain shall be present when notification is made to families of personnel that have been injured or killed in the line of duty.

II. Guidelines

- A. Notify family members in person **(no phone notifications)**.
- B. Have other Department personnel present, if possible.
 - 1. Individual's supervisor if possible.
 - 2. Working companions, if supervisor is not available.
- C. Provide transportation for family members to hospital, if necessary.
 - 1. Make sure the attending physician is aware of family's presence and location.
 - 2. Stay with the family until relatives, physician, or close friend arrives to assist.
- D. If personnel are killed or die of natural causes, we are to make any arrangements the family needs assistance with. This includes but not limited to the following:
 - 1. Contact funeral home.
 - 2. Make calls to notify out of town family members.
 - 3. Notify family Minister.
 - 4. Be available to assist in other matters upon request.
 - 5. Be with family during visitation.
 - 6. Make contact with family; on a regular basis.
 - 7. Assist family with probate court matters, or will probate.

Standard Operating Guidelines For
Personnel in Hospital

I. Purpose

Respond to the hospital in the event personnel from the Sheriff Department are injured or killed. We are to assist hospital personnel during these times to prevent interference from Department personnel and news media as well.

II. Guidelines

- A. Remain with the injured individual; periodically inform awaiting personnel and family of the status of the situation. The purpose of this is to reduce the number of people in the room where the patient is receiving treatment and also in the hallways of the facility.
- B. Assist hospital staff when requested.
 - 1. Provide information on patient, if capable.
 - 2. Assist with patient's personal effects.
 - 3. Notify individuals of patient's condition on request from attending physician.
- C. Remain with patient until released, or assigned to a room within the facility.
- D. Leave information with the hospital where you can be reached in the event they need to contact you.

Standard Operating Guidelines For:
Confined Personnel

I. Purpose

When an individual is confined due to illness or injury, the days seem long and it is easy to get depressed. One thing that has proven helpful is to see a familiar face or hear a familiar voice realizing that your friends and working companions have not forgotten about you. This is positive reinforcement that we do care about them and are interested and concerned in their well being.

II. Guidelines

- A. Make a personal visit at least once each week, if possible more than once.
- B. Make phone contact during the week when you are unable to visit.
- C. Assist, if necessary, to assure the family's needs are taken care of.
 - 1. Transportation to and from doctor's office or hospital.
 - 2. Pick up medication(s).
 - 3. Bring paycheck or other job related information by their location, home or hospital.
 - 4. Acquire assistance for work around the house if necessary.
 - 5. Provide assistance in areas that they might need from you.

Standard Operating Guidelines For:
Counseling

I. Guidelines

This is a service that we are attempting to provide our personnel upon request. The type of counseling varies. They include, but are not limited to, personal, job related, children and family. One essential element is that all counseling conducted is to be kept in the strictest confidence.

II. Guidelines *(There are some basic guidelines that one can follow and they are):*

- A. Listen carefully to the situation.
- B. Analyze the situation and determine if you are capable of assisting them.
- C. Make referral to another counselor or agency if you feel you are not capable of handling the situation.
- D. Always make counseling one on one, unless you are conducting marriage or pre-marital counseling.
- E. If a spouse is seeking counseling on his/her own, conduct the meeting in your office, or in a public place. Only on special occasions should you go to Department member's home to meet with the spouse.
- F. Suggest possible reading material relating to the specific situation with which you are dealing.
- G. If possible, provide individual with helpful ideas, material and resources.

Standard Operating Guidelines For:
Various Services

I. Purpose

Many requests are received throughout the year for the Chaplain to conduct funeral and memorial services, as well as weddings. Each service is going to be conducted differently, in that each one will have different requests. We receive the request due to having this position, and individuals desiring that the organization for which one dedicated his/her time and service be involved in the service.

II. Guidelines

- A. Memorial services are conducted in a manner that will commemorate the deceased. Since this service is done without the deceased being present, it is usually handled less formally than a funeral service.
- B. Funeral services for on duty personnel should include the following:
 - 1. Determine if the honor guard is requested. If so, then coordinate with the family to select individuals to serve as the honor guard.
 - 2. Determine if a casket guard is requested. If so, then coordinate with the family to select individuals to serve as the casket guard then contact the appropriate supervisor to make the request for personnel to stand guard. The post will be determined by the number of persons used as casket guard but not longer than 30 minutes in length per person. Uniform will be regular class A uniform with hat and white gloves.
 - 3. Coordinate the order of service with the wishes of the family involved.
 - 4. Assure the procession to the cemetery has been coordinated by the shift supervisor.
 - 5. Keep funeral director informed of all functions during the service.

6. If an American flag is involved, assure that the flag is properly folded and presented to the family. Presentation to the family is usually done by the Chief.
7. Return to the funeral home with the family and determine if any further assistance can be given, at that time.
8. Accompany family to the home if necessary.
9. Make follow-up visit approximately two days after the funeral to assist with other matters such as insurance, social security, death notification, etc., if necessary.

C. Weddings

1. These services are conducted according to the desires of the couple being married.
2. Requires two pre-marital counseling sessions to discuss various aspects of marriage.
3. Make yourself available for further counseling at a later time if the need should develop.

NOTE: *All services conducted by the Chaplain's office are to be done in a non-Denominational nature.*

Standard Operating Guidelines For:
The Honor Guard of the _____ Fire Department

I. Purpose

When involved in a memorial service or funeral service, one needs the assistance of an honor guard unit. This unit will serve strictly at the request of the Chaplain's Office and will only be activated as need arises. It will be comprised of volunteers within the Department.

II. Guidelines

A. It is the responsibility of the Chaplain's Office to coordinate the duties of the Honor Guard Unit.

1. The Honor Guard Unit will be a purely voluntary group selected from within the ranks of the Department.
2. Select one person to be the unit supervisor (preferably one that has been in the military and is familiar with the honor guard function*).
3. Select six individuals, including supervisor to stand Honor Guard.
4. Select two additional personnel to act as flag folding unit.

B. The honor guard will wear white gloves (provided by the Chaplain's Office).

* In lieu of military experience the person participating in the honor guard must receive training in drill and ceremony procedures.

Standard Operating Guidelines For:
Recruit Officer Interview

I. Purpose

New recruits will be interviewed by the Chaplain to acquaint them with the Chaplain Program and services offered. The Chaplain will let them know he/she is here to assist them and their families during the time they will be involved in Recruit Training, and to let them know some of the changes that they may encounter in their lives due to this training and preparation for this kind of service.

II. Guidelines

A. Give introductory talk.

1. Give them a preview of what to expect in the coming weeks.
2. Advise how they can get in touch with the Chaplain if a family problem arises, or, if they need any assistance.
3. Advise how they can talk with the Chaplain if they have a personal issue they would like to discuss.
4. Advise them of the confidentiality of conversations with the Chaplain.

B. Conduct instruction on response to command personnel.

C. Gather information concerning family.

Standard Operating Guidelines for:
Families of Recruits

I. Purpose

The purpose is to acquaint the family with the department as well as the Chaplaincy Program.

- A. Orient the families in the structure of the Fire Department
- B. Explain various functions of the Department.
- C. Explain the function of the Chaplain's Program
- D. Explain some of the changes their family members will possibly undergo once they begin their service with the Department. Some of these are:
 - 1. Increased paranoia;
 - 2. More introverted;
 - 3. Change in interests;
 - 4. Change in types of friends;
 - 5. Loss of friendship that they presently have; and
 - 6. Pessimistic outlook.
- E. Explain course of action or personnel they can contact if unforeseen situations arise in their personal lives.
- F. Make them familiar with some of the equipment that their family member might or will be involved with, such as:
 - 1. Code 3 vehicle operation;
 - 2. On-Call status;
 - 3. Clothing and protective gear.
- G. Review attitude changes emergency personnel can undergo.
- H. Explain the increased demands that will be placed upon their family members.

- I. Explain the importance of making adjustments.

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Standard Operating Guidelines For:
Death Notification

I. Purpose

This is a function that is usually conducted by the coroner's office, however, there are times when they cannot perform this duty and the Chaplain may be requested to assist.

II. Guidelines

A. Ascertain as much information as possible concerning the deceased.

This includes:

1. Cause of death;
2. Age;
3. If the death was sudden or expected;
4. Sickness;
5. Locations of various family members;
6. Religious affiliation;
7. Coordination with local Minister, Pastor or Clergy.
8. Ask either their minister or a minister of like faith to assist you in making the notification.

B. Do not deliver the message by phone; always in person.

C. Introduce yourself as the Chaplain from the _____ Fire Department.

D. Introduce anyone else with you by their title as well.

E. Advise the individual(s) that "we have received information concerning (insert deceased's name).

F. Attempt to get them asking questions concerning the deceased individual.

This seems to lessen the shock and helps them to realize the situation.

G. Assist by having other family members come and remain with the

person(s) or call their physician, if necessary.

- H. When you leave give them your business card with contact information and let them know you are available to assist them in any way.

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Standard Operating Guidelines For:
Representing the _____ Fire Department

I. Purpose

The Chaplain may be called upon to represent the Department in community meetings, clubs, ministerial meetings, etc. and is a good public relations tool.

Golden Rule #1 Remember you are representing the chief. Never say or do anything to embarrass the department. Never say or comment about anything that you are not 100% certain you are conveying the wishes of the Chief. If you are not sure don't comment!

II. Guidelines

- A. Present yourself with the idea that your appearance and actions will reflect on the entire Department.
- B. Wear the Uniform (if applicable) as much as possible.
- C. Serve on various community boards when asked.
- D. Become a member of the local ministerial association.
- E. Speak at various civic organizations and functions. (Golden Rule #1)
- F. During these meetings, attempt to bridge any gaps (false assumptions) concerning the local ministers or other community leaders and the Department. Rumors develop within the community, and this is an opportunity to dispel some of the false ones. (Golden Rule #1)
- G. Always attend meetings with a small speech or talk prepared, in the event you are asked to speak on the spur of the moment. (Golden Rule #1)