

# Duties of a Chaplain

## EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

The Chaplain will maintain and carry the Chaplain Cell phone in order to receive emergency calls from the department. The Chaplain is on-call 24/7. When a Chaplain is needed, duty officer/dispatch will call the Duty Officer who will then contact the Chaplain.

A Chaplain who answers a call as a Firefighter or as an EMT must remain in that position on the scene. Those chaplains cannot step away from their original call and act as a chaplain. Their first responsibility is to their original position as called to the scene. If a debriefing is needed, a chaplain who was not part of the scene must be called to do the debriefing.

The Chaplain will respond when contacted by the Duty Officer, the Fire Chief or Incident Commander, or at his/her own discretion, and will report to the Incident Commander on the scene. When at a scene, the Chaplain will be under the command authority of the officer in charge (Incident Commander).

The Chaplain will respond as follows:

A. To the scene when:

1. A working occupied structure fire is reported
2. A critical incident is in progress
3. A critical injury or death of a firefighter is reported
4. The incident involves a victim that is a member of a department member's family
5. Whenever the incident commander determines that the services of a Chaplain may be of value in the ongoing emergency operation. This may include situations where:
  - a. The victim or family is highly emotional or unstable
  - b. Care is needed for the family of a victim while treatment is underway
  - c. The victim or the family requests the services of a chaplain/clergy
  - d. The incident commander feels the presence of a Chaplain would be of benefit to the victim or to department personnel.

B. To the hospital when:

1. The incident commander or paramedic providing treatment determines that the victim or family may need support or counsel of the Chaplain
  2. The victim's family needs to be located and notified
  3. A member of the fire department is the victim
- C. To the department families when a death is experienced, including the scene (as needed), to the funeral, and to follow up with bereavement
- D. Wildfire/wild land fires: Visits to department personal deployed to wildfire areas for moral building and support as needed and as directed by the authorizing Chief

The Chaplain may be requested to assist with the following types of incidents and special events, as requested by the different law enforcement and emergency service agencies

- Assist at accident and emergency situations involving serious injury or death at homes, construction sites, motor vehicle accidents, fires, drowning, searches, natural and man-made disasters.
- Delivery of death notices.
- Line of Duty Deaths.
- Conduct memorial services.
- Conduct Weddings or Funerals for members and their families as requested (if the Chaplain is a licensed or ordained minister).
- Attend and participate in funerals of active, retired members and the families of emergency service agencies: Fire, Rescue, EMS and Law Enforcement.
- Child abuse situations.
- Sexual assaults.
- Provide assistance to victims of crisis situations.
- Lost child.
- Hostage situations.
- Attempted or actual suicides.
- Family disturbances.
- Hospital calls to Emergency Service Agencies and family members as needed or requested.

- Liaison with hospitals and clinics.
- Participate in and/or leads Critical Incident Stress Management Team and Debriefings.
- Provides short-term, confidential counseling of Emergency Service personnel and family members and their children.
- Provide Biblical answers to spiritual questions when requested.
- Conduct Bible study groups for seekers and discipleship training when requested.
- Provide educational instruction in the areas of death, stress management, ethics, family life, victim response and introduce new members of the different agencies to the chaplaincy program.
- Enhance public relations.
- Attend department graduations, award ceremonies, dinners, social events, department dedications and offer invocations and benedictions.
- Serve as a liaison with other clergy/agencies/dept chaplains in the community.
- Provide a listening ear.
- Serve as a ready resource for any emergency service agency.
- The Chaplain is next to the pulse of the Department. It is a job that is demanding, confidential, trusting, and needed for the lives of the Department staff and their families.

## FOLLOW-UP DUTIES

### A. On-the-Scene Duties:

1. Provide appropriate victim assistance to free operational personnel for fire fighting or emergency medical duties;
  - a. Watch for signs of physical or emotional stress
  - b. Assist in providing firefighting rehab needs (water, rest, etc.)
  - c. Advise command whenever it is felt that a firefighter or paramedic is in need of being relieved from operations.

### B. Post-Emergency Duties:

1. Conduct follow-up to ensure victims are receiving necessary assistance

2. Ensure that firefighters' needs are met in the area of on-the-job injuries, critical incident stress, etc.
3. Notify families when a death or critical injury has occurred to a member. This notification will be done in person with an accompanying uniformed fire officer or law enforcement officer.
4. Department Funeral Guidelines, for detailed responsibilities of Chaplain at time of death of a firefighter, contact the Fire Chief or IC. May work with other agencies during a LODD while working through the proper chain of command of those agencies
5. Will assist with funeral services (as requested) and provide family consolation and guidance in event of death of a department member.
6. Conduct debriefings with the department as needed
7. Bereavement program, active and on-going

## ROUTINE DUTIES

### A. Duties within the fire department

1. Visit all stations and shifts within the department
2. Visit hospitalized department members and families
3. Participate in recruit training as suggested by training officer
4. Be available to help or counsel members in time of stress
5. Assist when requested by any division of the department in their programs, as available.
6. Attend fire department functions as requested by the Chief
7. Conduct funeral/memorial services as needed or when requested
8. Be a trained member of the Critical Incident Stress Debriefing Team
9. Participate in parades, wakes, memorial services and other special Projects, including Native American celebrations as determined by the District Chief or his/her designee.
10. Participate in county, state, regional and/or national chaplain organizations as the opportunities arise.

11. Be on-call on a twenty-four a day basis
12. Prepare and monitor reports, maintain Chaplain Files and implementing modifications in chaplain operations as needed
13. Sr. County Chaplain receives and review assistant chaplain applications and forward to appropriate Deputy Chief and Chief
14. County Chaplain will supervise and provide guidance to assistant chaplains.

B. Duties outside the fire department

1. Represent and interpret fire department goals and concerns to the churches and religious institutions of the community
2. Assist when requested with public events and public information needs
3. As time permits, and as requested, conduct extended ministry to victims and their families.