
S.O.P. #: PERSONNEL 14

SUBJECT: FIRE DEPARTMENT CHAPLAIN COORDINATOR

DIVISION: CAREER PERSONNEL

Objective: To provide guidelines for the notification of Chaplain Coordinator and to identify duties and responsibilities.

Section 1: General Operating Procedures (Duties and Responsibilities)

A. Duties and Responsibilities

1. Coordinate all activities and official duties of the Chaplain Program.
2. Be available to all Fire personnel and family for counseling and guidance. The communication will be strictly confidential and will not be released to departmental members or any other person.
3. Assist in any way possible when Fire personnel are seriously injured, ill, or deceased, including visitation in the home or in the hospital.
4. Be available to attend and participate in various departmental social functions of the Fire Department, when appropriate. Conduct memorial and religious activities, when requested, including invocations and benedictions at official County functions.
5. Assist in funeral services of active and retired members of the Fire Department, when necessary.
6. Assist in training programs at the Fire Academy and present lectures, when requested.
7. As directed by the Fire Chief, participate in activities with the Special Olympics, Baltimore Regional Burn Center, Muscular Dystrophy, Baltimore County United Way Program, and any other group in which assistance is needed.
8. Function as a liaison in chaplaincy matters between the Baltimore County Volunteer Firemen's Association and its members.
9. Assist, as requested, in the Fire Department's community and public relations efforts.
10. Set-up and attend monthly chaplains' meetings and discuss mutual problems and programs.
11. Provide liaison with other religious leaders within the community.
12. Respond, when requested, to all major disasters in the County, i.e., bombings, collapsed buildings, explosions, airplane crashes, multi-alarm fires, unusual industrial accidents, and other disasters.

B. The following describes the Fire Department Coordinating Chaplain's functions in more detail.

1. COUNSELING

- a. At the direction of Baltimore County Psychological Services, provides spiritual support for departmental personnel, as prescribed.

- b. At the direction of Baltimore County Substance Abuse Services, maintains a referral list of professionals and institutions so problems can be matched with various specialists.

2. RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

- a. Provide spiritual guidance and counseling for Fire Department personnel and their families, upon request.
- b. Assist Fire Department personnel with religious activities, such as Fellowship of Christian Firefighters.
- c. Be available to perform memorial services, funerals, dedication ceremonies, invocations and all other religious-type ceremonies, upon request.
- d. Be the liaison officer for the County in the International Fellowship of Fire Chaplains and provide information to this group, when necessary.

3. AVAILABILITY

- a. Be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In periods of absence, appoint another chaplain to act as Coordinator to maintain continual service, notifying the Chief's office of who will fill-in.
- b. Be both visible and available to all Fire Department personnel by making periodic visits to all divisions, fire stations, and participating in ride-along programs.
- c. Be available to the Chief of the Fire Department, or his designee, for special assignments concerning aid to Fire personnel at all times, including representing the Chief at special occasions, when necessary.

4. EMERGENCIES

- a. When dispatched, respond to all major incidents for aid to personnel and/or victims.
- b. Be available to assist victims and citizens in obtaining aid from the Red Cross, Salvation Army, and other organizations.
- c. Respond to assist distraught families who have experienced a death or a similar tragedy, when required.
- d. As directed, report to hospitals in case of major injuries of personnel and coordinate the notification of family members.
- e. As directed, contact and work with family members of active Fire personnel who have died as a result of their duties, making sure the family is aware of benefits available to them.

5. FUNCTIONS

- a. Attend various Fire Department functions, such as graduations, station dedications, award ceremonies, and retirements.
- b. Represents the Fire Department, upon request, at various civic and community functions.

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- c. Speak at civic, social, community and church groups.
- d. Serve as a liaison with retired Fire Department personnel, assisting them when needed.
- e. When necessary, visit Fire personnel in their homes, hospitals, etc., checking to see that all personnel are receiving necessary assistance.

6. HOSPITALS AND CLINICS

- a. Frequent and become acquainted with staff and physicians at local hospitals.
- b. If directed, explain to family members the procedures the medical staff is taking to assure the family that their loved one is receiving the best possible care.

C. Administrative Responsibilities for Fire Chaplain Coordinator

- 1. Coordinate the operation of the Fire Department chaplains.
- 2. Be responsible for all administrative work, such as handling mileage sheets, uniforms, assigning details, etc.
- 3. Call and visit fire stations to assess needs of personnel. Assign a chaplain to visit or send a card to those with health problems.
- 4. Dispatch the area chaplain to the scene of serious incidents, such as accidents, suicides, homicides, trapped persons, two-alarm or above fires, violent domestics, drownings, barricades, and hostage situations. If the area chaplain is not available, the Coordinator will respond.
- 5. Speak to recruits at the Fire Academy, or assign a chaplain to do so.
- 6. As directed by Baltimore County Psychological Services, provide support for debriefing team.
- 7. Attend the Executive meetings and Staff meetings, as requested.
- 8. Be responsible for recruiting and training new chaplains, and establish a committee to interview new chaplain applicants.
- 9. Officiate at the monthly Chaplains' meetings and make the meetings a training session.
- 10. Maintain a log and submit weekly reports listing scope of activity and level of services provided (Section 2).
- 11. Maintain budget for Chaplains' Unit.
- 12. Maintain daily contact with the Office of the Fire Chief, or his designee.

Section 2: Chaplain Activity Sheet

- A. The Chaplain's Activity Sheet will consist of those items listed on Appendix A and shall be completed at the end of each tour of duty and on special assignments.

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Section 3: Notification by Administrative Duty Officer

- A. The administrative duty officer shall notify the Fire Department Chaplain Coordinator thru the multi-alarm function pagers.
- B. The Coordinating Chaplain shall be notified of any non-emergency functions at which we request the presence of a chaplain, and make arrangements for someone to be present.
- C. Coordinating Chaplain(s) shall be notified of the following thru multi-alarm function:
 - 1. All fatalities (Fire/10-50 PI, CODE 9);
 - 2. Large hazardous material incidents;
 - 3. Trapped victims;
 - 4. Unusual situations involving major incidents;
 - 5. Second or greater alarms;
 - 6. Any death/hospitalization notice received via CRT printer in Fire Dispatch.

NOTE:A.D.O. personnel shall notify all chaplains of the above incidents which occur in their respective areas.

