

## **DUTIES OF THE CHAPLAIN**

The below listed duties constitute only a brief summary of what may actually be required.

**Emergency Situations.** The Chaplain will respond when contacted by dispatch or fire department personnel, or at his own discretion, and will report at the scene to the officer in charge. When at a scene, the Chaplain will be under the command authority of the incident commander. The Chaplain will usually respond as follows:

- a. To the scene when:
  1. A working fire of second alarm or greater is in progress.
  2. A critical incident is in progress.
  3. A critical injury or death to 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 the 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 the victim while treatment is underway.
    - (c) The victim or the family requests the services of a chaplain or clergy.
    - (d) The incident commander feels the presence of the 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.
  2. The victim's family needs to be located and notified.
  3. A member of the fire department is the victim.
- c. In addition, the chaplain may also:
  1. Counsel emergency service workers.
  2. Counsel family members of Emergency Service workers.
  3. Make death notifications and casualty calls.
  4. Serve as part of a Critical Incident Management Team.
  5. Serve as liaison with other clergy in the community.
  6. Provide for the spiritual needs of department members and their families.
  7. Offers prayers at special occasions such as recruit graduations and award ceremonies.
  8. Provide an ear to listen and a shoulder to lean on.

9. Coordinate and provide family services in the event of the serious injury or death of an emergency service worker.

### **Follow-Up Actions**

- a. On-the-Scene Duties:
  1. Provide appropriate victim assistance to free operational personnel for firefighting duties.
    - (a) Comfort and counsel
    - (b) Referral to appropriate community agencies for assistance.
    - (c) Help contact persons, insurance agents, family members, etc. In all cases, the Chaplain will find out a victim's church or religious preference and attempt to notify the pastor or church.
  2. Provide appropriate assistance to firefighters engaged in firefighting activities.
    - (a) Watch for signs of physical or emotional stress.
    - (b) Assist in providing firefighter needs (water, rest, etc.)
    - (c) Advise command whenever it is felt that a firefighter or EMS provider is in need of being relieved from emergency operations.
- b. Post-Emergency Duties:
  1. Conduct follow-up to insure victims are receiving necessary assistance.
  2. Insure firefighter's needs are met in the areas of on-the-job injuries, critical incident stress, etc.

### **Routine Duties**

- a. Duties within the fire department.
  1. Visit all stations and shifts.
  2. Visit hospitalized department members and members of their families.
  3. Participate in recruit training as suggested by the training officer.
  4. Be available for helping or counseling members of the department in times of stress or difficulty.
  5. Assist when requested by any division of the department in their programs.
  6. Attend fire department functions.
  7. Conduct or participate in religious services such as weddings, funerals or memorial services, as requested and within the Canonical restrictions of the respective Chaplain's office.
  8. Be a member of the Critical Incident Stress Management Team.
  9. Be on-call on a twenty-four hour a day basis.

- b. Duties outside the 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 or public information needs.
  3. As time permits, and as requested, conduct extended ministry to victims and their families.

## **GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE CHAPLAINCY**

The Chaplain does not replace a member's regular religious leader. Rather, the Chaplain seeks to support the concern of every church for its members who may be in professions with special risks or needs. Moreover, the Chaplain must support the concerns of every member of the department, regardless of his or her nationality, race, sex, or religion. However, it is also important to understand that Chaplains are bound to act only within the Canonical restrictions of their respective faith and office. If one Chaplain's faith restricts him or her from conducting a particular service, that Chaplain will make every effort to contact a resource to try and accommodate the request of the member and their family.

Any communication a person makes to the Chaplain may be kept on a confidential basis, if requested, and will not be released to department members or any other person, subject to the requirements and limitations of local, state and federal statute and Canonical requirements of the Chaplain's office. Any fire personnel may go to the Chaplain without having to notify his or her supervisor or anyone else.

Any fire department officer or member (including administrative staff) who becomes aware of any situation which may need the response of the Chaplain may contact the Chaplain directly. Fire department administration and the Uniformed Fire Officer (UFO) on duty at PTSOC keep current telephone numbers for all Fire Chaplains. Examples of situations where the Chaplain may be contacted include, but are not limited to:

- a. Death, injury or hospitalization of a fire department member.
- b. Death, injury or hospitalization of a fire department member's spouse or child.
- c. Death in a fire department member's close family (i.e.: any family member covered under the department's death leave provisions).