

CHAPLAIN'S MANUAL

York County Fire & EMS Chaplaincy

A Branch of the York County Chiefs' Association

Serving Those Who Serve Others

York County, Maine
York County Chiefs' Association
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Established: December 2018

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2018

MISSION STATEMENT:

Fire Chaplains: A ministry of presence.

VISION:

An effective chaplain (critical support staff) will become part of the very fabric of the department to which he/she is assigned to and will build a strong sense of trust among those whom he/she serves in the department. The types of situations where a fire chaplain will be required to respond, but not limited to, are areas where serious illness, injury, death or mild to significant emotional trauma such as a line of duty death or serious injury notification to a family member within the department or outside is experienced, becoming an essential participant of the critical support staff. The chaplain (CSS), as appointed, acts in a non-denominational means - serving all peoples of all faiths and practices

GOAL:

It is our goal to create a safe place for fire personnel, and their family, to confidently express their concerns, anxieties, and help facilitate the health and well-being of all who we serve. They will be present to assist and intervene in times of emotional, psychological, physical and crisis situation such as fires, fatal automobile accidents, unattended deaths, suicide interventions, PTSD, mental illness, to name a few (as trained).

OVERVIEW OF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITES:

A fire chaplain's ministry takes the form of ministering to/participating in:

- service at the direction of the department's fire chief
- support to the officers and personnel
- support to victims in crisis within the community they serve
- offer spiritual guidance and assistance to meet the life needs of all personnel, volunteers, retirees, their families and members of the community while maintaining strict confidence and discretion
- perform funeral wakes with prayers in delegation for fire personnel (or members)
- perform and/or attend fire department funerals (when necessary and at the discretion of the family desire first, then at the permission of the chiefs/officers)
- if ordained, officiate at weddings (if applicable)
- hospital visits
- assists with Red Cross and similar organizations at time of need
- must complete specialized training such as Chaplain's training program, CSIM training, CPR/First Aid, Line of Duty Death, and any other training which enhance the position of the chaplain
- become a participant member of critical incident stress management (defusing and debriefing)-if trained and qualified
- perform severe injury and death notifications, with the accompaniment of a police officer and/or fire chief
- attend promotional and award ceremonies,

- acts as a non-denominational, non-sectarian and calls for no compromise of either individual beliefs nor conviction
- department representatives-to create a bridge between the department and community/communities that it serves
- ride-along (in uniform when possible) with the fire department companies to build rapport and trust
- department chaplain will supervise and provide guidance to assistant chaplain if additional chaplains are required
- chaplain will be available on an on-call basis.

NOTE: *The appearance and actions of the Fire Chaplain (CSS) reflect the image of the respective departments; therefore, they will adhere to all department policies, procedures and core values.*

SPECIFIC DUTIES OF AN APPOINTED CHAPLAIN *

EMERGENCY SITUTIONS: The Chaplain will respond when contacted by dispatch, the fire chief or incident commander, or at his/her own discretion, and when on scene, will report to the incident commander or a designated officer.

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 (or community member) is reported
4. The incident involves a victim that is a member of a department
5. Whenever an incident commander determines that the services of a Chaplain may be of value in the ongoing emergency operation. This may include:
    a. The victim of family is highly emotional or unstable
    b. Care is needed for the family of a victim while treatment is on the way
    c. The victim or family requests the services of a clergy/chaplain (CSS)
    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 the counsel of a Chaplain
2. The victim's family needs to be located and/or notified
3. A member of the fire department is the victim

FOLLOW UP DUTIES:

a. On-the Scene Duties:

1. Provide appropriate victim assistance to free up operational personnel for firefighting or emergency medical duties
    a. Watch for signs of physical or emotional stress
    b. Provide assistance with displaced families (Red Cross, Rehab Center, meet initial basic needs – food, water, etc.)
    c. The Chaplain will attempt to identify further resources by utilizing case managers and staff at the hospital

d. Assist in making sure that safety is met at the incident parameter and firefighter/ paramedics needs are met

b. Post-Emergency Duties:

1. Conduct follow-up to ensure victims are receiving necessary assistance
2. Ensure firefighters/paramedics 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 department member or death notification to a civilian within the community. This is to be done primarily with a law enforcement officer and/or fire chief
4. In the event of a death, help with funeral planning – notify family, funeral director, gather wishes of the family if member (refer to the protocol of a death of a firefighter)

*sections taken from the Federation of Fire Chaplains

STANDARD REQUIREMENTS TO FULFILL AND PERFORM THE ROLE AS CHAPLAIN

Each fire departments vary significantly, however, some of the basic requirements to becoming a fire chaplain include:

- experience in ministry,
- appointment by Bishop or church body
- a criminal background check/a clean criminal record
- must be ecclesiastically certified (ordained) or minimally endorsed and/or licensed by a recognized religious body, and in good standings.
- in good physical health and willing to participate in necessary training events
- to be prepared in training and education and to serve people in crisis situations
- to have the desire to be an effective Chaplain, to be willing to commit the time necessary to making the ministry successful
- if a department seeks a lay chaplain, that individual should be affiliated with a major denomination and be required to attend all basic/ intermediate chaplain training programs, and is highly encouraged to attend all volunteer/call force department training.

THE ASSIGNED FIRE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSIBILITY

In the event that a Fire Chaplain is injured while performing departmental duties, he/she will be covered by the department's worker's compensation insurance for medical treatment and medical billing, if applicable.

Chaplain's Provisions:

- department membership assigned to call division
- city email account should be issued as well as department business cards
- department issued pager and radio
- clothing: firefighter's protective clothing, Class A and B uniform, department badge

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CONSTITUTIONAL GUIDELINE: (according to the Federation of Fire Chaplains)

The chaplaincy program must operate under the following constitutional guidelines:

1. The Chaplaincy program will operate in a non-denominational setting, as stated in the case of Lemon vs Kurtzman, 403 U.S.
2. To be compliant, the Program must adhere to the following guidelines:
    a. The program must reflect a clearly secular legislative purpose
    b. The primary effect of the program must neither advance nor inhibit any type of religion
    c. The program must not result in the "excessive entanglement" of government and religion

AVAILABLE RESOURCE:

There are additional resources that may be taken into consideration to helping victims from disaster or stress

American Red Cross® Fire Relief
National Disaster Dispatch Center: 1-855-891-7325 then they would dispatch to the local area requesting assistance
Local General Assistance within your city or town
Disaster Distress Helpline (for victims) 1-800-985-5990 or text "TalkWithUs" to 66746

POSSIBLE MEMBERSHIPS for Fire Chaplains

- Associated Membership with the Maine Fire Chief Association
- Membership Federation of Fire Chaplains
- Membership support Maine LAST team
- Membership Support National Fallen Firefighters

Fire Chaplain Resources:

Federation of Fire Chaplains
Website: www.firechaplains.org

Essentials of Fire Chaplaincy | Emergency Ministries
Website: https://emergencychaplain.org/essentials-of-fire-chaplaincy

And Introductory to Fire Chaplancy: MCFC
http://massfirechaplains.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Introduction_to_Fire_Chaplaincy.pdf

Line of Duty Death information Resources from the Fallen Firefighters Foundation
Website: www.firehero.org

Information about spiritual care in times of disaster can be found in a Southern Baptist training manual:
http://www.namb.net/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=8589979047

Chaplain Resource Books:

First Responder Chaplains: Spiritual Caregivers
A Call To Save: The Memoir of a Fire Chaplain by Thomas J. Harrington
Abcs of Fire Service Chaplaincy by James Devine
Chaplaincy: A Ministry of Presence by Matt Sanders
Introduction to Fire Service Chaplaincy by James D Devine
Vital Principles for Effective 21st Century Fire Chaplains-Book I by James Divine
Unbidden: Memories of a Fire Chaplain by Pastor Warren Wurzburger
Look at the Bereavement Trauma and Emergency Crisis Response from the American Academy of Experts in Traumatic Stress.

https://grievingbehindthebadgeblog.net/2014/05/27/emergency-responders-addiction-sweeney/

About the Author: *Peggy Sweeney is the founder and president of The Sweeney Alliance, a retired mortician, and a bereavement educator. She has developed and taught countless workshops for coping with grief and trauma including the Grieving Behind the Badge program for emergency response professionals and is the editor of the Grieving Behind the Badge newsletter. She is certified in Bereavement Trauma and Emergency Crisis Response from the American Academy of Experts in Traumatic Stress. Peggy is a former member of the Comfort (TX) Volunteer Fire Department and a former EMT-B. She is the recipient of the 2014 Firefighter of the Year award by her department. You may contact Peggy atpeggy@sweeneyalliance.org.*

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