

JOHNSON COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

GUIDELINE #2004-005

CHAPLAINCY

OBJECTIVE:

To provide for the full range of fire department personnel needs through the establishment of a comprehensive chaplaincy program within the Johnson County Fire Protection District.

APPOINTMENT:

- 1.1 Because of the major risks and constant stresses faced by fire service personnel in the line of duty, a chaplain or chaplains will be appointed to function within the Johnson County Fire Protection District.
- 1.2 The Chaplain will be appointed by the Fire Chief with final approval by the Board of Directors.

QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING:

- 2.1 The individual or individuals appointed to the position of Fire District Chaplain will be:
 - a. An ordained member of the clergy or a lay person with a strong background and education in spiritual care.
 - b. In good physical health.
 - c. Interested in the fire service.
 - d. Prepared to serve in a crisis zone.
 - e. Willing to commit the time necessary to make the ministry effective.
 - f. Committed to learn the skills necessary to effectively relate to and minister to firefighters and EMS personnel.
- 2.2 To the extent possible, the Chaplain will be given the opportunity to meet with members and staff of the District, visit the stations and receive guidance in understanding fire district organizations and procedures. Training will also be provided to help the Chaplain protect himself and to be able to render proper help to assist members on the emergency scene.

DUTIES OF THE CHAPLAIN:

The below listed duties constitute only a brief summary of what may actually be required in any situation that may be encountered. The Chaplain must remain constantly alert and sensitive to needs and the means he must employ to meet those needs.

- 3.1 Emergency situations. The Chaplain may respond when contacted by dispatch or Fire District personnel or at his own discretion and will report at the scene to the officer in charge. When at the scene, the Chaplain will be under the command authority of the officer in charge. The Chaplain may respond as follows:
- a. To the scene when:
 - 1. 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) A critical incident is in progress.
 - (b) A critical injury or death to a fire fighter is reported.
 - (c) The incident involves a victim that is a member of a District member's family.
 - (d) The victim or family is highly emotional or unstable.
 - (e) Care is needed for the family of the victim while treatment is underway.
 - (f) The victim or the family requests the services of a chaplain or clergy.
 - (g) The incident commander feels the presence of the Chaplain would be of benefit to the victim or to District personnel.
 - b. To the hospital when:
 - 1. Notified by the incident commander.
 - 2. A member of the District is the victim.
 - 3. A family member of District personnel is the victim.
 - 4. Specifically requested.

3.2 Follow-up actions:

a. On-the-scene duties:

1. Provide appropriate victim assistance to free operational personnel for fire fighting 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 attempt to find out a victim's church or religious preference and attempt to notify the pastor or church.
2. Provide appropriate assistance to fire fighters engaged in fire fighting activities.
 - (a) Watch for signs of physical or emotional stress.
 - (b) Assist in providing fire fighting needs (water, rest, etc.)
 - (c) Advise command whenever it is felt that a fire fighter 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.

3.3 Routine duties:

a. Duties within the Fire District:

1. Visit all stations.
2. Visit hospitalized department members and members of their families.
3. Be available for helping and initial counseling for members of the District in times of stress or difficulty.
4. Assist when requested by any division of the District in their programs.
5. Attend Fire District functions.
6. Assist with funeral/memorial services as needed and requested.
7. Be a member of the Critical Incident Stress Debriefing team if established.

b. Duties outside the Fire District.

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

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE CHAPLAINCY

- 4.1 The Chaplain does not replace the home church pastor, but seeks to support the concern every church has for its members who may be in professions with special risks or needs. Moreover, the Chaplain must be for the advantage of every member of the department, regardless of his or her nationality, race, sex or religion.
- 4.2 Any communications a person makes to the Chaplain is on a strictly confidential basis and will not be released to District members or any other person. Any fire personnel may go to the Chaplain without having to notify his or her supervisor or anyone else.
- 4.3 Any Fire District officer or member (including administrative staff) who is or becomes aware of any situation which may need the response of the Chaplain may contact the Chaplain directly, except when operating at an incident scene. Fire District administration will keep current telephone numbers for the Chaplain. The Chaplain may also be contacted through Fire District administration if desirable. Examples of situations where the Chaplain may be contacted include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Death, injury to, or hospitalization of a Fire District member.
 - b. Death, injury to, or hospitalization of a Fire District member's spouse or child.
 - c. Death in a Fire District member's close family.