

ROGUE VALLEY FIRE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION

Document:	Department Chaplain
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Purpose

The Chaplain program is implemented to support a variety of needs that may impact the employees of the department, the families, as well as the citizens served.

The Chaplain

Chaplains may either be a volunteer, paid or contracted member of the department. The department shall maintain a number of chaplains as determined by the Chief. Chaplains shall be ordained, licensed, or endorsed by a recognized religious institution or endorsed by a recognized chaplaincy association and have a minimum of five years of ministry experience. Chaplains' character is to be above reproach and of a good reputation in the local community; able to teach, encourage, and counsel. Chaplain is to be an able communicator who is a relationship builder. Chaplains' conduct shall be in accordance with the calling of a Chaplain and will be responsible for adhering to the rules and regulations established by the department. Chaplains shall serve independently, non-denominationally and without compromise of personally held beliefs and convictions. The Fire Chief or personnel of his designation shall administer the Chaplain program and coordinate the responsibilities of the Chaplains. Chaplains shall complete the Basic Chaplain Academy administered by the Southern Oregon Public Safety Chaplains.

Duties of the Chaplain

Duties of Chaplains shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Maintaining established hours whereby the Chaplains can be contacted via phone, radio, text, or in person. The Chaplaincy services will be on call 24-hours a day, seven days a week and will be available to assist in emergency matters during these times. Chaplains shall be available to be dispatched on scene at the discretion of the on scene Incident Commander.
2. Touring department stations and participating in ride-alongs in an effort to build relationships with department personnel.

3. Responding, as available, to scenes when requested by the Incident Commander to assist in transitional intervention for the customer, acting as a liaison between public service organizations and persons or families with emotional, spiritual, and physical needs. Per each agency directive, Chaplains may respond to incidents, which, by the nature of the call or subsequent radio traffic would benefit from the quick response of a Chaplain. Examples of scenes that could benefit from a Chaplain may include the death of a patient when the immediate family has no local support system, displacement by fire, or a traumatic incident that severely impacts customers directly involved in the event.
4. Providing crisis management and intervention, to fire department members on or off scene, where there is likelihood of emotional trauma. Conducting an informal diffusing of fire department members after a traumatic event to gain information as to any effect it has had, to determine whether the need for a formal defusing or a debriefing is in order. If a formal diffusing or debriefing is appropriate, Chaplains, shall inform the Chief on duty of the findings. Chaplains, as directed, may contact the Southern Oregon Critical Incident Response Team (SOCIRT) to request a formal debriefing or defusing.
5. Participating in formal defusings and debriefings of employees after job related emotionally traumatic events.
6. Providing initial counseling, at employee's request, for other areas that may affect work performance (a first line of defense toward transitioning employees, needing counseling, to appropriate resources for extended support services). All department counseling shall be completely confidential. No oral or written reports will be requested or given to department officers as governed by rules of clergy confidentiality.
7. Educating recruits, attending department promotions, award ceremonies, offering invocations and benedictions.
8. Operating as a liaison between the department and religious leaders of the community.
9. Responding to line of duty serious injury or death of a fire department member. Assisting department officials in coordinating and making notification to families.
10. Acting as a member of the IMT involved in planning an LODD/ADD memorial.
11. Acting on the department's behalf at memorial services of active or retired fire department members, performing memorial services as requested by family

members. At the discretion of each Chaplains, Chaplains may perform weddings for personnel and their families.

Procedure

1. Request for the Chaplain shall be initiated by the Incident Commander through the regional dispatch center. The dispatch center will contact Chaplains and provide pertinent information for the dispatching of the Chaplain to the scene. Chaplains shall stay in contact with the dispatch center by phone or radio, while responding to the scene.
2. The dispatch center will contact the Department Chaplains to respond to the request for Chaplain. If the Department Chaplains are not available, the dispatch center will contact the next available Southern Oregon Public Safety Chaplain to respond. Non Department Chaplains are to refer any needed Chaplain follow up contact, with fire department personnel, to the Department Chaplains.
3. Chaplains shall wear department issued safety clothing, as appropriate, on scene.
4. Whenever possible, the Incident Commander, or his designee, shall brief the Chaplain, by phone or in person.
5. Whenever possible, the Incident Commander, or designee, shall remain on scene, until the Chaplain arrives.
6. Whenever possible, for incidents or events that involve citizen contact, the Incident Commander, or designee, shall introduce the Chaplain.
7. Chaplains will maintain documentation of activities for statistical purposes. Clergy confidentiality shall be maintained according to law and practice.
8. Incident Commanders should give serious consideration to activate a Chaplain to the following types of calls:
 - MVC with serious injuries or death
 - Infant deaths or traumatic events with infants
 - Teenage deaths
 - Suicide
 - School Incidents/Shootings
 - Traumatic events with citizen involvement, such as CPR, Cardiac Arrests, etc.
 - Structure Fires, especially where there is loss of life of family members or animals, serious property damage, displacement needing coordination with Red Cross or other agencies.

- Any other traumatic incident that has a potential to negatively affect emergency personnel

Uniforms and Call Sign

1. Chaplains may be issued a combination of two (2) t-shirts or polo shirts for the first six months of service.
2. After six months of service, the recommended Chaplain uniforms are as follows:
 - Ball Cap
 - Zip Up Sweatshirt
 - Winter Jacket
 - Duty Pants
 - Class B uniform shirt
 - Name Tag
 - Badge
 - Turnout Jacket
 - Structural Helmet
 - Class A Uniform
3. It is recommended that Chaplains are issued a call sign for communication and tracking by dispatch. Special consideration should be given to this since Chaplains will be left on scenes alone and should have a means of quick communication with dispatch.
4. Assignment or access to a portable radio or pager

Uniforms listed are only suggestions. Each agency is to finalize their own Chaplain uniform.