


POLICY 412.0	VOLUNTEER CHAPLAIN PROGRAM	
	REVISED: 09/01, 09/05, 10/09, 01/14	RELATED POLICIES: VOLUNTEER CHAPLAIN PROGRAM SOP
	CFA STANDARDS: 6.01, 6.03, 6.04	REVIEWED: 10/01, 09/05, 10/09, 01/14

A. PURPOSE

Fort Lauderdale Police Department chaplains are skilled and committed to ministering to all people regardless of their religious beliefs and shall always respect the beliefs of those whom they serve.

In recognition of the cultural and religious diversity within the City of Fort Lauderdale, a Volunteer Chaplain Program will be established to administer spiritual guidance and support to Fort Lauderdale Police Department personnel and their families. Volunteer Chaplains may also serve the citizens of the City of Fort Lauderdale by assisting police personnel in stressful situations involving trauma, serious injury or death. The police chaplain is duly ordained and appointed as an approved and experienced member of the clergy.

Police Department members are often confronted with situations that demoralize and create emotional, mental and spiritual burdens. These burdens affect the police employees who dealt with the incidents, their families as well as the citizens involved. Police officers and police employees often need to express their frustration and problems to someone who fully understands the circumstances surrounding their duties, without fear of repercussions.

1. Police chaplains are in a unique position to listen to a police employee’s problems with empathy and offer advice, counseling, and assistance when appropriate. In accordance with section 90.505 of Fla. Statutes, when functioning in the performance of counseling duties, the communications between the chaplain and the counseled are privileged, and the chaplain may not be compelled to disclose the issues discussed. Officers then have the assurance that the details of their conversations with a police chaplain will not be reported to anyone. (See Confidentiality section H for exceptions and further information)
2. The goal of the Volunteer Police Chaplain Program is to provide 24 hours a day response and assistance to the Fort Lauderdale Police Department and its employees. A police chaplain may be called to respond whenever there is an incident involving trauma to a police employee or others in order to bring comfort and consolation to the emotionally distraught.
3. The services of a police chaplain may be requested by any Police Department employee for any incident where such services might be deemed helpful. Chaplains are also encouraged to routinely participate in ride-alongs, attend staff meetings and briefings and participate in Department training as possible.

Interaction with department members at special and social events and functions is encouraged.

4. This policy applies to all Police Department employees. The use of the term “chaplain” or “police chaplain” refers to members of the Fort Lauderdale Police Department Volunteer Police Chaplain Program.

B. PROCEDURE

1. The Volunteer Chaplain Program is established and directed by the Chief of Police or a designee. Upon request of any employee of the Police Department, a chaplain may be contacted to assist with the needs of that employee or their family. Any Chaplain may be contacted in a variety of ways, including but not limited to:
 - a. Directly by any employee
 - b. Via Communications Center (who will maintain a current list of all Chaplains)
 - c. A supervisor

C. AUTHORITY

1. A police chaplain is considered a staff member of the Department. The Chaplain functions as a non-sworn staff assistant to the Chief of Police or his/her designee and comes under the authority of the Chief of Police. Unless certified by the State of Florida as a police officer and employed as such by the Fort Lauderdale Police Department. Fort Lauderdale Police Department chaplains, by virtue of the chaplaincy, are not sworn law enforcement officers and have no law enforcement powers.
2. The police chaplain is authorized to ride with any Fort Lauderdale Police Officer and is authorized to visit all police facilities and offices of the agency, and have access, as possible and approved by the on-scene ranking Officer, to all buildings and scenes where the presence of law enforcement officers indicates the requirement or need for the Chaplain's services or presence.
3. Police chaplains will carry proper identification issued by the Department and, when on duty, properly identify themselves in a manner becoming the ministry.

D. AFFILIATION

A list of Volunteer Police Chaplain Program members and their religious affiliations will be made available to all personnel of the Fort Lauderdale Police Department and a copy maintained in the Communications Division for call-out related purposes.

E. ORGANIZATION

The Police Chaplain Program shall be headed by the Senior Chaplain and Chief's designated liaison and shall be staffed with as many police chaplains as necessary to accomplish the objectives of the Chaplain Program

F. NOTIFICATIONS

1. Emergency Notifications and/or Call Outs: The Chaplain Corps will be immediately notified and/or called out for the following:
 - a. The death of any Police Department employee or their immediate family
 - b. Any serious injury to an officer or immediate family member
 - c. Any officer involved shooting Response as directed by commander of scene
 - d. Any traumatic event, crime scene, fire or automobile accident Include in non-emergency notifications
 - e. Any suicide or attempted suicide by an officer or a member of the officer's immediate family.
2. Non-emergency notifications
 - a. Citywide alerts
 - b. Homeland Security alerts
 - c. Large events (Air & Sea Show, Boat Parade, Las Olas Festivals, etc.)
 - d. Graduations, promotions, awards presented to any Police personnel
 - e. Births, anniversaries or other important family events
 - f. Baptism, Communion, Bar mitzvah, Bat mitzvah or other significant spiritual event
 - g. Any Police Department sponsored event

G. SERVICES

1. Services offered by Fort Lauderdale Police Department Chaplains may include:
 - a. Making death notifications - Assisting Department employees in making notification to families of officers or citizens who have received serious injury, or upon death.
 - b. Visiting or otherwise maintaining contact with sick or injured police personnel or their families.

- c. Providing counseling services for law enforcement officers, their families and other department personnel if requested.
- d. Providing sources of emotional and spiritual encouragement, which may include devotionals, classes on marriage, parenting, finances, etc.
- e. Assisting Department employees as a referral source in handling domestic situations, family disputes, etc.
- f. Assisting Department employees in the development and implementation of programs to address problems or needs in the community.
- g. Conducting and/or participating in religious services for deceased Department employees when requested by the family.
- h. Attending funerals of deceased Department employees.
- i. Serving as a mediator between citizens and the Department or its various components and units.
- j. Attending and providing invocations/benedictions at department functions such as award ceremonies, graduations, etc.
- k. Representing the Department before official gatherings.
- l. Serving as part of the Department's Crisis Response Team.
- m. Furnishing expert responses to religious questions.
- n. Being on call during any major disturbance, event or demonstration in the city requiring the presence of a large number of police officers.
- o. Providing a liaison for the city with other religious leaders in the community.
- p. Making presentations for the Police Academy, the Community Police Forum (formerly known as the Citizen's Police Academy), Briefing, New Employees or other requested events.
- q. Providing other services as requested such as baptisms, weddings and funerals.

H. CONFIDENTIALITY:

- 1. In accordance with Section 90.505 Florida Statute, when functioning in the performance of counseling duties, the communications between a chaplain and the counseled are privileged, and a chaplain may not be compelled to disclose what has been heard.

2. Confidentiality of chaplain services to Police Department personnel is a matter of extreme sensitivity and importance to the Chaplain Program and the administration of the Department.
3. Florida law does not prohibit testimony by a chaplain with knowledge of relevant admissible facts. Example: A chaplain may testify regarding a public incident they have witnessed while acting in the role of chaplain (not related to 1 & 2 above).
4. It is the policy of the Fort Lauderdale Police Department that all Department personnel confiding in a police chaplain will be covered by the confidentiality privilege.