



**PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND
FIRE/EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER**

General Order Number: 01-11	Effective Date: August 12, 2024
Division: Administration and Organization	
Chapter: The Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department Chaplain Corps	
By Order of the County Fire Chief: Tiffany D. Green	Issue Date: August 9, 2024

POLICY

This General Order shall establish the Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department Chaplain Corps and describe the duties of the Fire/EMS Department Chaplains. The Chaplain Corps is designed to provide spiritual support for members of the Fire/EMS Department and the community by remaining constantly alert and sensitive to the needs of the Department and its members.

SCOPE

This General Order applies to all Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department Chaplain Corps members providing chaplaincy and spiritual support service to the members and families of the Fire/EMS Department.

DEFINITIONS

Chaplain – Clergy members who have received training in their own religious practice and are appointed by the Fire Chief or their designee to voluntarily provide members with emotional and spiritual support. A chaplain's primary mission is to offer non-denominational, non-sectarian spiritual aid, comfort, and help to citizens and the members and families of Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department. The Chaplain, through their presence, strengthens the service rendered by the Department to the community and works to achieve a single healing, unifying spirit of respect and support for each other, regardless of one's personal faith or absence thereof.

Chaplain Corps – The Chaplain Corps is a group of qualified and authorized Chaplains serving the Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department by providing comfort and consolation to members of the Department and the community. The Chaplain Corps consists of a Lead Chaplain and a number of other Chaplains to be selected by the Fire Chief. The goal of the Chaplain Corps is to provide spiritual support to the Department 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Critical Incident – A critical incident is defined as an incident on a smaller scale than a disaster that may have a serious impact on personnel. Examples of critical incidents include but are not limited to, serious injury or death of a Fire/EMS Department member or civilian, death of a child, physical and/or psychological threat to rescuers, extremely negative attention from any media or community, any mass casualty incident, or other events that may impact employee's psychological and emotional wellness.

PROCEDURES

I. General Information

A. The Chaplaincy program within the Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department is a

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non-paid position that provides a full range of needs to Fire/EMS Department members, their families, and the community. Though their scope of activity is primarily for the members and family members of those who are associated with the Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department, there may be times when the Chaplains will provide assistance to those outside of the Department.

- B. The Fire/EMS Department Chaplains shall be available on an “ON CALL” basis to provide a wide range of support and encouragement to anyone in the Prince George’s County Fire/EMS Department.
- C. The Chaplains will respond to requests for support as outlined in this General Order.
- D. The Prince George’s County Fire/EMS Department Chaplain Corps will be available to serve all personnel within the Fire/EMS Department. The Prince George’s County Volunteer Fire & Rescue Association (PGCVFRA) Chaplain Corps operates under the direction of the Charter, Constitution, and Bylaws of the PGCVFRA. The PGCVFRA Chaplain Corps will work in concert with the Prince George’s County Fire/EMS Department Chaplain Corps to support the spiritual needs of Department personnel.

II. Qualification and Selection

- A. Individuals interested in applying to participate in the Prince George’s County Fire/EMS Department’s Chaplain Corps shall submit a completed Chaplain Corps Application Form (Attachment #1) along with an updated resume and detailed letter of interest to the Assistant Fire Chief of the Volunteer Services Office.
- B. Individuals selected to join the Fire/EMS Chaplain Corps must be:
 - 1. Ordained, recognized, licensed, or commissioned as a religious leader within their religious community or denomination, having engaged in or retired from ministry as a vocation.
 - 2. In possession of a valid driver’s license.
 - 3. Respected in the local community.
 - 4. Of good moral character.
 - 5. In good physical and mental health.
 - 6. Prepared to serve in crisis zones and stressful situations.
 - 7. Willing to commit the time necessary to develop rapport and relationships with Fire/EMS personnel and minister to them effectively.
 - 8. Able to respect the beliefs and customs of all Fire/EMS Department personnel in a pluralistic religious context.
 - 9. Willing to work with other Chaplains from other faith backgrounds.
 - 10. Willing to submit to a background investigation.
 - 11. Preferably reside in Prince George’s County or be associated or affiliated with a religious institution in Prince George’s County.
- C. The Fire Chief will review the applications and will have the final authority to appoint individuals to the Chaplain Corps.



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III. Structure and Operation

- A. Members of the Chaplain Corps serve the Fire/EMS Department on a voluntary basis. Members of the Chaplain Corps will select one member to act as Lead Chaplain and will forward this recommendation to the Fire Chief for approval.
- B. The Lead Chaplain will report to the Assistant Fire Chief of the Volunteer Services Office and will be tasked with organizing the Chaplain Corps, coordinating assignments and duties, and adding and replacing members of the Chaplain Corps as necessary, under the approval of the Fire Chief.
- C. Based on the identified need, the Fire Chief shall modify the size and scope of the Chaplain Corps program and select additional Chaplains or replacement Chaplains.

RESPONSIBILITIES

I. Duties of the Fire/EMS Chaplain Corps:

- A. General Duties and Responsibilities
 - 1. Be available when called upon to provide spiritual guidance to Fire/EMS Department personnel. At least one Chaplain should be available at all times – 24-hours a day, 7 days a week.
 - 2. Provide confidential support for members of the Fire/EMS Department, their families, and the community at large upon request or after potentially traumatic incidents.
 - 3. Work in tandem with the members of the Employee/Volunteer Assistance Program (EAP/VAP), and the Peer Support Team to provide spiritual counseling and encouragement to the members of the Fire/EMS Department.
- B. Emergency Situations
 - 1. Chaplains may be requested to proceed to the scene of an emergency by the on-scene Incident Commander, the Fire Chief, or their designee.
 - 2. Chaplains are not to respond to emergency scenes with lights or sirens.
 - 3. Upon arrival on scene, Chaplains should report to the Incident Commander or EAP/VAP Team representative for specific instructions.
 - 4. Chaplains serve in a support role, not an operational role, and should refrain from engaging in operations.
 - 4. The "ON CALL" Fire/EMS Department Chaplain will be automatically notified by group page to all of the following incidents:
 - a. Death/serious injury/illness to a Department member.
 - b. Death/serious injury/illness to a Department member's family member.
 - c. Any incident with serious injuries or fatalities.
 - d. All second alarm fires or greater.
 - e. Fire/EMS Department vehicle accident with serious injuries or death.
 - f. Anytime the EAP/VAP Team is called.



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5. Provide assistance to firefighters and the families of firefighters, as well as civilian victims and families of victims.
6. Provide appropriate victim assistance, to include comfort and counsel, referrals for assistance following an emergency incident, and/or assistance in contacting family members.
7. Provide appropriate assistance to Fire/EMS Department members engaged in service provisions, to include watching for signs of physical or emotional stress.
8. Firefighters from mutual aid departments should be offered the same chaplaincy services as the Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department members while operating at emergency scenes. However, any follow-up or additional contact should be made through that organization's Chaplain.

C. Line of Duty Injuries or Deaths

1. Chaplains shall report to the hospital when the Incident Commander determines that a Fire/EMS Department member is the victim of an incident and their family may need support or counsel, or when a victim's family needs to be located and notified.
2. Chaplains shall liaise with hospitals and assist families of injured firefighters in understanding what is taking place and provide emotional and spiritual support.
3. Conduct or assist in the organization of funerals. Support and console the firefighter's family and children. Send condolences at the time of death of a Fire/EMS Department member and offer assistance if needed.
4. Visitation at hospitals, places of work, or private homes to provide support and assistance to sick and injured members. The Chaplain acts as a representative of the Fire/EMS Department to show support and concern for the welfare of Department personnel and family members.

D. Other Departmental Responsibilities and Activities

1. Remain visible at Fire/EMS Department activities and events to further relationships with firefighters and EMS providers.
2. Visit all stations and shifts on an as-needed basis.
3. Remain available for helping or counseling members of the Department in times of stress or difficulty.
4. Assist when requested by any Command of the Department in their programming and operations.
5. Give invocation, dedicatory prayer, or benediction at Fire/EMS Department functions.
6. Promote communication with firefighters by organizing and hosting a quarterly or annual prayer breakfast or similar events.
7. Maintain contact with the union representative for retired firefighters and be prepared to assist retirees as well.
8. Work with the Employee and Volunteer Assistant Program (EAP/VAP) Team in accordance with General Order 08-03 and attend relevant training.
9. Participate in training as required by the Fire Chief to become familiar with operations.
10. Fire/EMS Chaplains will not be required to perform duties that are contrary to their personal convictions and beliefs or their religion's or denomination's



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- E. The Chaplain may also be reached 24 hours a day by contacting the Fire/EMS Watch Office at 301-583-2200.
- F. Confidentiality
 - 1. All information communicated to the Chaplains will be recognized as confidential and privileged information in accordance with legal and ethical requirements.
 - 2. Each Chaplain will treat each contact with the utmost level of confidentiality. Unauthorized disclosure of information concerning specific incidents or member involvement in such incidents learned as a result of the Chaplaincy Program involvement shall not occur unless such disclosure is required by exigent circumstances or permission is received from the involved party or parties.
 - 3. Employees receiving Chaplaincy Program services shall be advised as to the limits of this confidentiality prior to any discussion.

II. Uniforms

- A. Each Chaplain Corps member shall wear the appropriate issued uniform as outlined in General Order 10-01, *Career and Volunteer Uniforms*.
 - 1. A Class A Uniform shall be worn on formal occasions, as specified in General Order 10-01.
 - 2. A Department-issued polo shirt with insignia and name embroidered shall be worn during station visits or while attending community events.

III. Training

- A. All Chaplain Corps members shall participate in and complete a training regimen outlined by the Fire Chief or their designee which addresses topics including general fire service tradition and culture, Departmental history, daily station life, Department operations, and Departmental General Orders.
- B. Chaplain Corps Members are encouraged to participate in ride-a-longs to learn about Departmental operations and responses.
- C. Chaplains must be trained and familiar with Fire Department funeral protocol.
- D. Complete training through the Federation of Fire Chaplains (FFC), such as Basic Fire Chaplain Certificate, Advanced Fire Chaplain Certificate, as well as other FFC Advance Courses as applicable. Other certifications may be substituted upon approval of the Fire Chief.

IV. Chaplaincy Terms

- A. Chaplains will serve four (4) year terms once selected by the Fire Chief. At the end of the four (4) year term, if the Chaplain is still interested in serving the program, they shall



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write a letter to the County Fire Chief through the Coordinator of the Chaplaincy Corps, expressing interest in serving another term. The County Fire Chief or designee will make a final determination on whether additional terms will be permitted.

V. Termination

- A. Failure to abide by established policies and procedures, failure to honor a member's privacy, failure to practice good professional ethics, or for any other reason deemed appropriate by the County Fire Chief, may result in the termination of a member of the Chaplain Corps.
- B. Failure to regularly and actively participate within the Chaplain Corps may result in termination of the member.
- C. Any complaints regarding a Chaplain's performance shall be forwarded to the Coordinator of the Chaplaincy Program, and at their discretion, forwarded to the Fire Chief.

REFERENCES

N/A

FORMS / ATTACHMENTS

Attachment #1 – Chaplain Corps Application Form



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND FIRE/EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Chaplain Corps Member Application Include Resume and Letter of Interest as Attachments

Applicant Information

Full Name: _____ Date: _____
Last Name First Name M.I.

Address: _____
Street Address Apartment/Unit #

_____ *City State Zip Code*

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Religious Organization Affiliation

Religious Affiliation and Denomination: _____

Church Affiliation: _____

May we contact the leadership of your religious organization as a reference? YES NO

If yes, please provide their name and contact information:

Name (Including Title): _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Church/Organization Name: _____

Address: _____
Street Address Apartment/Unit #

_____ *City State Zip Code*

Education

High School: _____ Address: _____

From: _____ To: _____ Did you graduate? YES NO Diploma: _____

College: _____ Address: _____

From: _____ To: _____ Did you graduate? YES NO Degree: _____

Other: _____ Address: _____

From: _____ To: _____ Did you graduate? YES NO Degree: _____



Previous Employment

Company: _____ Job Title: _____

Address: _____

Street Address

Apartment/Unit #

City

State

Zip Code

Supervisor: _____ Phone: _____

From: _____ To: _____ Reason for Leaving: _____

May we contact your previous supervisor for a reference? YES NO

Military Service

Branch: _____ From: _____ To: _____

Rank at Discharge: _____ Type of Discharge: _____

If other than honorable, explain: _____

References

Please list two professional references.

Full Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Company: _____

Address: _____

Full Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Company: _____

Address: _____

Disclaimer and Signature

I certify that my answers are true and complete to the best of my knowledge.

If this application leads to a selection for this position, I understand that false or misleading information in my application or interview may result in my disqualification or release from the position.

Signature: _____ Date: _____