



FIRE RESCUE

ALBEMARLE COUNTY

STANDARD ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

Subject: Chaplaincy Program

Reference Number: SAP-DEP-037

Effective Date: 1 December 2007

Last Revision Date: N/A

Signature of Approval:

J. Dan Eggleston, Chief

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to establish the procedures and guidelines of a comprehensive chaplaincy program for the Department of Fire Rescue.

Scope:

This policy applies to Albemarle County Fire Rescue stations, organizations, and personnel. This adopted response plan is intended to supplement the existing programs and policies of individual stations. It is not intended to replace station-specific policies; the intent is to provide a framework for providing for chaplaincy programs for stations that do not have existing programs and to enhance and improve existing programs.

Background:

This policy was adopted at the November 2007 meeting of the Albemarle County Fire Rescue Advisory Board.

Definitions:

Chaplain – A member of the clergy who conducts religious services or provides emotional or spiritual support for an institution, individual, organization, or faith-based group.

Policy:

1. Appointment:
 - a. Because of the major risk and constant stresses faced by the fire and rescue personnel in the line of duty, a Chaplain(s) will be appointed to function within the Albemarle County Department of Fire Rescue.
 - b. The Chaplain(s) will be appointed by the Chief.
 - c. Each station may, at their discretion, appoint a station Chaplain(s).
2. Qualifications and Training:
 - a. The individual(s) appointed to the position of Chaplain(s) will be:
 - i. An ordained member of the clergy.
 - ii. In good physical and mental health.
 - iii. Prepared to serve in a crisis situation.
 - iv. Willing to commit the time necessary to effectively relate to Department personnel.
 - b. To the extent possible, the Chaplain(s) will be given the opportunity to meet with members and staff of the department, visit stations, meet with station Chaplain(s), and receive guidance in understanding fire rescue organizations, guidelines, and policies.
 - c. Training will also be provided, if desired, to help him/her protect him/herself and to be able to render assistance to personnel on the emergency scene if called to do so.
 - d. The Chaplain(s) will be encouraged to attend the Basic and Advanced Critical Incident Stress Management programs conducted by the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation.
 - e. The Chaplain(s) may also choose to attend other sources of training specific to emergency services.

3. Uniform Issuance:

- a. After appointment, the Chaplain(s) may be issued the following equipment:
 - i. Class A Uniforms
 - ii. Red helmet with "Chaplain" markings
 - iii. Chaplain's badge and appropriate brass/insignia
 - iv. Business cards
 - v. Other items as deemed necessary

4. Duties:

- a. Visit stations and shifts as needed or appropriate
- b. Visit hospitalized personnel of the department
- c. Counsel or help personnel in times of stress or difficulty
- d. Attend fire rescue functions as able (e.g., graduation, banquets, etc.)
- e. Conduct funeral/memorial services as needed
- f. Provide appropriate victim assistance as needed
- g. Coordinate the services of station Chaplain(s), including contact information and ability to communicate regularly and effectively with station Chaplain(s)
- h. Serve as a resource to provide personnel with faith-specific or needs-specific guidance, comfort, etc.
- i. Provide referrals to appropriate community agencies as needed
- j. Respond to the scene of incidents when requested (rarely; usually limited to line-of-duty-deaths, personnel as victim, etc.)
- k. Others as assigned

5. General Guidelines:

- a. The Chaplain(s) does not replace the home church pastor, but seeks to support the concern of every church for its members who may be in professions with special risks or needs. Moreover, the Chaplain(s) must be for the advantage of every member of the department, regardless of nationality, citizenship, race, gender, religion, faith, sexual orientation, age, ethnicity, or other any other factors.
- b. Any communications a person makes to the Chaplain(s) is on strictly confidential and will not be disclosed unless mutually agreed.
- c. Any personnel may go to the Chaplain(s) without having to notify his or her supervisor or anyone else.