



## **First Responder Chaplain Association**

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# **The Fire Chaplain**

## **Why Have a Department Chaplain?**

Have you considered using a fire service chaplain to personally assist your personnel in doing their jobs better and meeting the needs of community victims and their families?

## **The ABC's Of Fire Service Chaplaincy**

How do I address the personal needs of my staff and help them become better fire service professionals? If you are in management, you face the problem every week, and the challenge does not seem to go away. If you are a firefighter, then you may be asking, "Whom can I talk to when I feel my life is coming apart at the seams? Who really knows the answers for what I am feeling and thinking? Is there someone who can give me some help with my family? "What does it take?

"Pep talks" don't last too long. Strong exhortation is too risky, and offering bribes is out of the question. Sometimes a counselor may help, but what you really need is a professional resource that is especially oriented to the unique needs, demands, and stresses faced by fire service personnel.

You and your department will profit from the assistance given by a fire service chaplain. The effectiveness of the fire chaplain's service is made through his or her relationship with firefighters, their families, and people in the community. Have you considered using a fire service chaplain to personally assist your personnel in doing their jobs better and meeting the needs of community victims and their families?

## **Who Is A Fire Chaplain?**

A fire chaplain is a minister of Jesus Christ who seeks to meet the life needs of all fire service personnel and their families, who honors all faiths, and who is also able to care for community victims impacted by fire or assisted by fire service personnel.

When we finally boil down our answer to the question "Who is a fire chaplain?" we encounter the truth that can also be applied to firefighters. Who the person is, is defined by what he or she does. The work of the fire chaplain flows out of and, to a significant degree, defines the individual. Similarly, firefighters are defined by the work in which they engage and are committed to doing.

## **Serving the Needs of Fire Service Personnel**

The fire chaplain is not a pastor or a minister in a traditional sense. The fire chaplain ministers to fire service personnel outside the traditional boundaries of the local church and addresses human needs in specialized contexts - in the department, out in the community, or even at the fire scene.

The chaplain is available to come where fire service people live, work, and even play. Yes, the fire chaplain is a proclaimer of hope, a spiritual priest, and in a real sense the firefighter's "pastor on the

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job." The fire chaplain is a leader, liaison, and listener. The chaplain is especially attuned to departmental morale and motivational issues as well as personal integrity and growth.

### **Serving in Two Arenas**

The fire chaplain often must serve the needs of people in two different arenas.

**First**, he or she has a primary duty to help fire personnel by attending to their needs, problems, morale issues, family and marital concerns, as well as spiritual questions. Thus, the fire chaplain keeps his or her focus in-house, within the ranks of firefighters and their families.

**Second**, the chaplain widens the scope of service to another arena of people - the community at large - those families and individuals who are served and protected by the fire service professionals. The fire chaplain may often be called to handle painful situations, crises, and emergencies - at any time, day or night - for a family or individual in the community. Whatever the arena or personal concern, one of the essential qualities that a fire chaplain must possess is the ability to readily adapt to various stressful situations and the fluctuating moods of different people.

### **The Fire Chaplain May Provide the Following Services:**

- ? Provides 24-hour emergency services and intervention when called upon; is always "on call" for the needs of fire personnel
- ? Provides short-term, confidential counseling for departmental personnel and family members and their children
- ? Conducts weddings and funerals for fire service personnel and family members
- ? Gives prayers at department meetings and ceremonies
- ? Edits department newsletter
- ? Visits stations and crews
- ? Coordinates juvenile fire setter intervention program for department
- ? Coordinates employee assistance programs
- ? Coordinates community assistance programs (such as the Red Cross, Salvation Army, community food bank, and community church programs)
- ? Assists department members who are bereaved
- ? Visits the sick and injured
- ? Coordinates pastoral care of fire and EMS victims
- ? Refers department personnel and victims to appropriate church or religious location
- ? Conducts Bible study group for seekers and discipleship training for Christian firefighters
- ? Participates in and/or leads department traumatic incident team
- ? Participates in state association of fire and emergency chaplains
- ? Engages in continuing self-education, training, and upgrading of skills and knowledge
- ? Assists and teaches fire service personnel with training in crisis intervention and stress management



### **Professional Training Available**

The *National Institute of Chaplaincy Studies* (NICS) was launched in early 1993 in the state of Oregon. Currently, on the West Coast, participants can enroll in the NICS Fire Service Chaplaincy courses. These courses equip men and women who are interested in learning how to help with individual and family needs and the spiritual matters of all fire service personnel.

The introductory training is designed to enhance personal sensitivity toward personal and family concerns and to sharpen ministry skills in assisting fire service personnel and community victims. Participants are given specific guidelines for establishing a fire service chaplaincy program in their county or local department.

Right now, many volunteer fire chaplains and career fire chaplains are helping department personnel deal with personal and family concerns. Departments across the country are finding that the services of chaplains are making a difference in morale and job performance.

***Please Contact Us For Further Information.***



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Chaplain Association***

*Serving In Times Of Crisis  
And Spiritual Need*

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