

What Does A Police Chaplain Do?

Chaplain Ron McMurray, B.A., MA.

1. Chaplains support are the support backup that offer spiritual guidance, counseling, and on-scene support for law enforcement, fire personnel, their families, and to the general public.
2. A chaplain should be an ordained minister and in good standing with their spiritual or religious organization, fellowship, or body of churches.
 - Chaplains should also be associated with a national or international organization of chaplains for training in emergency services issues.
 - I am a member of the International Conference of Police Chaplains (ICPC.org). We have at present about 700 chaplains from all over the world in the organization. We meet yearly for training.
 - I am also a member of the Northwest Regional Chaplaincy and we receive yearly training at Cannon Beach, Oregon and other designated locations.
3. Chaplains are primarily concerned about the officers and fire personnel they work with and seek to be a positive influence upon the people they work with.
4. Chaplains are available or on call twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week to respond to any emergency situation where officers think they are needed.
5. Chaplains are trained in handling crisis situations, crisis intervention, and provide guidance, direction, advice and assistance when asked to do so.
6. There is no specific template for the kind of chaplain.
 - Some chaplains are full time pastors of churches and part time chaplains,
 - Some are full time chaplains for police or fire departments,

- Some are police officers and perform chaplain services for their departments,
- Some are reserve deputies or full time deputies,
- Some work for hospital and police agencies at the same time,
- Some work for both police and fire agencies at the same time,
- Some are full time pastors along with being the full time chaplain on call for their department. I have met chaplains in all these categories and they are serving the Lord to the best of their ability.

7. Chaplains are trained how to perform death notifications and know how to comfort the bereaved over the loss of a loved one.

8. Chaplains spend time with the personnel of their agencies to get to know them and open the doors for conversation.

9. Chaplains are trained in Stress Management, Crisis Counseling, Marriage and Family Counseling, and their Biblical background prepares them to help others in these areas.

10. Chaplains refer to Mental Health Agencies or to spiritual leaders for further or long term counseling if needed.

11. The International Conference of Police Chaplains provides a list of functions that chaplains may perform.

- Counsel law enforcement officers and the staff
- Counsel families of law enforcement officers
- Visit sick or injured officers, correction officers, and other personnel.
- Make death notifications

- Provide assistance to victims by rides to hospital, phone calls, staying on scene with family members while the officers investigate, or whatever is needed.
- Teach officers Stress Management, Ethics, Family Life, Pre-retirement classes.
- Serve as the departments Critical Incident Response Team
- Serve on the Critical Incident Stress Debriefing Team (my addition).
- Assist at suicide incidents.
- Serve as a liaison with other members of the clergy.
- Provide for the spiritual needs of prisoners.
- Furnish expert responses to religious questions.
- Offer prayers at special occasions such as recruit graduations, award ceremonies, and dedication of buildings.
- Serve on review boards, award boards, and other committees.
- Deal with transients and the homeless.