



VALENCIA COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS STANDARDS

Effective Date: 07/01/2017

Article #: 1.11

Revised Date:

VOLUNTEER CHAPLAIN SERVICE
() POLICY (X) GUIDELINE () DIRECTIVE

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this document is to define the roles and responsibilities, qualifications and training, and utilization of Volunteer Chaplains by Valencia County Fire Department (VCFD).

OPERATING GUIDELINES:

The goal of Valencia County Fire Department (VCFD) is to provide the best support for the citizens of Valencia County during and after an emergency. As part of this support, VCFD has established a Volunteer Chaplain Unit (VCU) whose responsibility it is to provide comfort, counsel, spiritual and emotional support for the citizens of Valencia County in times of need. To provide comfort, counsel, spiritual and emotional support for Valencia County First responders, and watch for signs of physical and/or emotional distress and act appropriately. They may be utilized upon request by Valencia County citizen(s) and/or First Responders who don't already have their own clergy, or their clergy is not available.

PROCEDURE:

I. Volunteer Chaplain must:

- a. Be 18 years of age.
- b. Must have a valid driver's license.
- c. Successful completion of a background check.
- d. Not have a felony arrest history in the previous ten (10) years or a misdemeanor arrest history in the previous five (5) years.
- e. Chaplains need to fill out a volunteer application and be approved by the County Fire Chief so that they are covered by the VFIS Insurance.

II. QUALIFICATIONS/EDUCATION OF VC CHAPLAINS

- a. Must possess a Basic Chaplain Certificate by the Federation of Fire Chaplains (FFC), or International Fellowship of Chaplains (IFOC).
- b. Must have basic Incident Command training: ICS 100, 200, 700 & 800.
- c. Attend "In House" training: "Behind the yellow tape".
- d. Need to have a working phone and shall provide a phone number for communication for functions and call outs.
- e. Must have a duly licensed and insured vehicle.



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- f. Be a person of high moral character
- g. Be able to maintain appropriate confidentiality.

III. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

a. General Guidelines

- i. The Chaplain does not replace the clergy person that may be closely related to the family/individual.
- ii. The Chaplain will be available to all persons regardless of nationality, race, gender, or religion.
- iii. All relations will be strictly confidential and will not be disclosed except as required by state law.
- iv. The Chaplain represents VCFD and will maintain professionalism at all times.
- v. Will abide by all VCFD SOG/SOP.

b. Senior Chaplain

- i. Is appointed to the position of Senior VCFD Chaplain by the County Fire Chief and reports directly to the Fire Chief.
- ii. Volunteers his/her time for the leadership and administration of the VC Chaplain program.
- iii. Is available for the Incident Supervisor/Commander when needed, activated or not or during an emergency incident.
- iv. Should be contacted if no other on-call Lead Chaplain can be contacted within 10 minutes from request.
- v. Is available if any responding VC Chaplain is unclear on how to respond to an event.
- vi. Will respond to large scale incidents requiring multiple chaplains.
- vii. Is to be contacted if the Incident Supervisor/Command has any issues or witnesses any misconduct by any VC Chaplain.
- viii. Serves as a member of good standing with the Valencia County Fire Department and meets all membership requirements of that department.



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- ix. Is familiar with firefighting and EMS procedures, terminology, and equipment that he/she can be an asset to crews on scene and can advise other chaplains how best to assist.
 - x. Has at least three years of chaplain experience
- c. Lead Chaplain
- i. Is appointed by the Senior Chaplain.
 - ii. Works closely with the Senior Chaplain to continue the development and deployment of the program to ensure success.
 - iii. Is capable and comfortable responding as the only chaplain to an event if no other VC Chaplains are available
 - iv. Acts as a point of contact for Central Dispatch during available hours as indicated on Availability Form.
 - v. Calls for additional chaplain(s) to respond to an event when needed
 - vi. Is the point of contact for requests as assigned.
 - vii. Notifies the Senior Chaplain when activated with the following information;
 - 1. Arriving on scene, and clearing the scene and identifies additional responding VC Chaplains.
 - viii. Reports to the Senior Chaplain.
- d. Chaplain
- i. Serves as a liaison between other religious leaders in the community and first responders within Valencia County.
 - ii. Participates fully in VC Chaplain organized activities.
 - iii. Contributes positively to the Department and the community.
 - iv. Can be requested to aid the senior or lead Chaplain with any department function.
 - v. Reports to the Senior Chaplain.



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IV. IDENTIFICATION

- a. Volunteer Chaplain will be:
- b. Assigned an identification number to be used to stream line communication, and identification of the member and their vehicle.
 - i. Will be issued a VCFD ID badge that shall be worn at all times when representing the county or at any county facility.
 - ii. Issued an ID tag for their vehicle that shall be displayed at all times when representing Valencia County. (This does not give permission to response as an emergency vehicle).
 - iii. In proper uniform when representing the county. (See VCFD uniform Policy)
 - iv. Responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of all issued uniforms.

V. DETERMINING THE NEED FOR A VOLUNTEER CHAPLAIN

- a. When the possibility of injury to personnel is high such as but not limited to structure fires, natural disasters, attempted suicide, suicides, and other such emergencies.
- b. Injury or death of a firefighter/citizen or a member of their family is reported.
- c. Any incident that the Incident commander deems necessary.
- d. Emergency scene or event to assist citizens and/or First Responders.
- e. The on scene crew shall inquire first with the family or individual to see if they have family clergy or are in need of a Chaplain.
 - i. If the deceased was a Hospice patient, the hospice staff should provide a Hospice Chaplain and the VC Chaplain should not respond.

VI. REQUESTING A CHAPLAIN

- a. The on-scene Incident Commander or Duty Officer crew will contact dispatch to request the Chaplain.
- b. Chaplain may be requested by Central Dispatch, Law Enforcement, a Fire Department Officer (paid or volunteer), EMS Agency, Office of the Medical Investigator, or by another Chaplain.
- c. Dispatch will contact the Lead or Senior Chaplain and will supply them with the address and a brief over view of the call.
- d. The Lead or Senior Chaplain will contact and assign a Chaplain for response.
- e. All Chaplains will give an ETA of their time frame for responding to dispatch.



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VII. **ARRIVING ON SCENE:**

- a. Vehicles are to be placed out of the pathways of any emergency vehicle, but in a safe and close location to the scene.
- b. The Lead or Senior Chaplain shall advise dispatch by phone or radio and report on scene. All other VC Chaplains shall report to the Lead Chaplain.
- c. The Lead or Senior Chaplain will check in with the Incident Commander or Officer in Charge to insure their safety and accountability while on scene.
- d. While on scene all VC Chaplains will utilize proper chain of command.
- e. Responding team members will document to the Senior Chaplain with the following information:
 - i. identification number
 - ii. response Information (R)
 - iii. arrival time (A)
 - iv. Clear scene time (C)

VIII. **SCENE SAFETY:**

- a. No chaplain shall ever be on a scene without a first responder or government agency present.
- b. When the last government agency representative leaves the scene, the chaplain must also leave the scene.
- c. At any time, if you feel unsafe you may decline the call. However, you need to inform the Incident Commander that you feel unsafe about the call and why. You must also notify the Senior Chaplain of the incident as soon as you are assured of your safety.
- d. Anything that constitutes threats made towards personnel on the scene must be reported to Law Enforcement, the Incident Command and the Fire Chief.
- e. If the scene becomes unsafe, you are to leave the scene immediately and advise the incident commander.



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IX. POST EVENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. Upon clearing scene, the Lead or Senior Chaplain will contact dispatch by radio or phone that they are clearing scene, and request a CAD number.
- b. Team members will notify the Senior Chaplain upon completion of the call.
- c. Any required documentation will be completed as soon as possible after the call.
- d. If the scene was disturbing to a VC Chaplain, a debriefing can be called at any time by contacting the Senior Chaplain.

X. DOCUMENTATION

- a. The Senior Chaplain will maintain records on each VC Chaplain to include the following:
 - i. Training
 - ii. Call log
 - iii. Meetings attended
 - iv. Disciplinary or corrective action taken.
- b. Field notes shall be kept for personal reference and a log of times of when the VC Chaplain was called out.
- c. The information that is required for each call is the following:
 - i. Date
 - ii. Address/location
 - iii. Times of call out
 - iv. Time of completion of call
 - v. Chaplains' names or Man numbers
 - vi. CAD Number (if available)
- d. Call log will be turned in by the end of each month to the Senior Chaplain via e-mail at davidmadara@rocketmail.com



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Chaplain Fire Department Availability

Name: _____ Cell Phone: _____ Other: _____

Address: _____ Email: _____

Credentialing Agency: _____

Work: _____ Hobbies: _____

I want to respond to ___ Fire/Medical ___ Deaths ___ Death Notifications ___ Other: _____

Please list pertinent certifications on the back of this form (ICS, CISM, Seminars and Trainings)

Best way for dispatch to reach you: _____

Estimated availability each day (example – Monday 0000-0700, 1800-2359)

Sunday: _____

Monday: _____

Tuesday: _____

Wednesday: _____

Thursday: _____

Friday: _____

Saturday: _____

Other pertinent information or considerations: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____



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Valencia County Fire Department Chaplain Call Form

Chaplain Name: _____

Date of Call: _____ Time of Dispatch: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Nature of Call: _____

Requested by: _____ Additional Chaplains: _____

Time on Scene: _____ Time Cleared Scene: _____

CAD # _____

Questions or Concerns for Lead or Senior Chaplain: _____

Valencia County Fire Department Chaplain Call Form

Chaplain Name: _____

Date of Call: _____ Time of Dispatch: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Nature of Call: _____

Requested by: _____ Additional Chaplains: _____

Time on Scene: _____ Time Cleared Scene: _____

CAD # _____

Questions or Concerns for Lead or Senior Chaplain: _____
