

City of Johns Creek Police Department

<i>Subject:</i>	Departmental Chaplain Services; Death Notifications	<i>Number:</i>	03-15
<i>Reference:</i>	See also “Employee Assistance Program”	<i>Amends:</i>	
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PURPOSE:

To provide the framework for the Department’s Chaplaincy Program including the duties and responsibilities of the chaplains and the selection and training of chaplains.

POLICY: (03-15)

Recognizing the great personal demands and sacrifices that a law enforcement career places on an employee and their families and the special needs which result from this environment, the Chaplaincy Program will be available to render ethical and moral support, encouragement, and other assistance to all employees, as well as to assist departmental personnel in their service to the citizens of the community.

Scope:

This policy and procedure is applicable to all departmental personnel.

PROCEDURES:

Organization (03-15-01)

The Support Services Division Major will be responsible for the overall operation of the Department’s Chaplaincy Program.

The Chief of Police shall appoint a Chaplain who will serve as the program coordinator and will report directly to the Support Services Division Major. The program coordinator shall assist the Support Services Division Major in coordinating the Chaplaincy Program.

Chaplaincy Program Coordinator—Duties and Responsibilities (03-15-02)

The Support Services Division Major will be responsible for the overall coordination and activities of the Chaplaincy Program. The program coordinator shall assist the Support Services Division Major in the following duties and responsibilities:

- A. To recruit volunteer chaplains and monitor the application and screening.

- B. To make recommendations to the Chief of Police regarding the appointment of Police Chaplains.
- C. To maintain a roster of all Police Chaplains and develop an on-call roster that will be submitted to Chatt Comm that will include all telephone numbers.
- D. To prepare and submit quarterly reports concerning any aspect of the Chaplaincy program as requested by the Chief of Police.
- E. To ensure that appropriate training is developed and made available to all Departmental Chaplains.

Police Chaplains—Duties and Responsibilities (03-15-03)

Chaplains will be appointed by the Chief of Police based on recommendation of the Support Services Division Major and the Chaplaincy Program Coordinator. Police Chaplains will have the following duties and responsibilities.

- A. To serve the spiritual needs of employees, their families, retirees and citizens in times of need.
- B. To assist in making notifications to families of Department employees who have been seriously injured or killed and respond to the hospital.
- C. Assist Department personnel in making death and serious injury notifications to the families of citizens in accordance with section 3-15-04 of this policy.
- D. To visit sick and injured Department employees at home or in the hospital.
- E. To comfort and counsel with families of deceased or terminally ill members of the Department.
- F. To participate in religious services for deceased employees of the Department, when requested by family members.
- G. To attend and participate (when requested) in the funerals of active or retired members of the Department and their immediate family members.
- H. To participate in training classes as required or directed by the Chaplaincy Program Coordinator and Training Division.
- I. To attend Department graduations, promotion activities, award ceremonies, dinners, social events, etc. to offer invocations and benedictions.
- J. To spend time periodically, or as directed by the Support Services Division Major with Department personnel during the performance of their duties.
- K. To attend roll calls and visit different elements of the Department periodically to inform employees of availability of Chaplaincy Program services.
- L. To counsel with officers and other employees/retirees having personal problems at the employee's/retiree's request.
- M. To be willing to enter into training courses to enhance his or her effectiveness.
- N. To make referrals in cases where specialized attention is needed or in those cases beyond the chaplain's ability to assist.

Police Chaplain – Guidelines (03-15-04)

Chaplains are not sworn officers and shall not possess arrest powers and shall not interfere with any officer in the performance of his/her duty. This may include (but is not limited to) incidents involving highly volatile religious or social protests where a police response or possible action may be called for. Such interference may be grounds for dismissal as a chaplain and could result in criminal prosecution. Other than ministerial duties, or as observers during ride-alongs, members should only perform those departmental duties or functions for which they have received proper training.

Chaplains shall be familiar with and conform to the rules and regulations, including communication procedures, established by the Department.

Chaplains responding to call-outs must obey all traffic laws and operate their vehicle in a safe and prudent manner.

Chaplains will provide contact numbers to Chatt Comm dispatch center. Chaplains who are unavailable to respond to an incident/situation will notify dispatch, and the Chaplaincy Program Coordinator.

Upon arrival at the scene of an incident/situation the Chaplain will report to the Incident Commander or ranking supervisor.

Chaplains will not release any information to the news media, insurance agencies, or attorneys regarding cases the chaplains are involved in. All information acquired in the role of chaplain will be held in confidence.

Chaplains will not publicly criticize the actions of officers, the Department, fellow chaplains or Department policies.

Death Notifications (03-15-05)

In the field of law enforcement, nothing requires more sensitivity, tact and diplomacy than the unpleasant task of delivering the notification that one's loved one has unexpectedly died. It is usually more traumatic to the recipient if the death is by accident or other tragic incident. There is usually denial of the message, blame or anger at the messenger, at times rage, and occasionally there are unpredictable events which may occur. After the immediate reaction, there is shock, confusion, sudden awareness of the loss, and depression.

Our responsibility exceeds the mere delivery of the notification and requires, many times, we stand by while friends, neighbors, family, or other of the recipient's immediate support members gather to render comfort and support.

While it is the responsibility of the assigned officer to provide the notification, the function of the chaplain is to provide the protracted efforts of the department as indicated above. The department or more specifically, the chaplain should assist in making the necessary telephone calls to gather that support network for the recipient(s), and attend the immediate needs of those present, including spiritual needs, etc. Once there is some stabilization at the locale, the officer should return to his/her duties. The chaplain may be required to remain on scene for some time.

- A. Notification of death or serious injury of departmental personnel – Refer to Policy 03-18 for full details.
- B. Death notification to members of the community (non-personnel):

The chaplain, accompanying an officer, shall assist in the notification of death of a family member of the citizens of the community. The officer has the responsibility

for the notification and should have as much information as possible concerning the circumstances surrounding the death. Once the event is stabilized, the officer should return to his/her duties. The chaplain will remain in attendance with the family until a support network has arrived to assist the family, should provide any necessary assistance and direction the family may require (arrangements, etc.), and should contact the family's clergy if the family agrees.

The chaplain(s) shall be on call and available for response 24 hours per day in these matters. The department's communication center will contact the chaplain at the direction of the duty patrol supervisor. When possible, the medical condition of the recipient(s) should be obtained and, if practical or necessary, Fire/Rescue should be on stand-by.

Employee Duties and Responsibilities (03-15-06)

- A. All employees will cooperate with and support the chaplains in the performance of their duties.
- B. Employees may seek the support and guidance of any Chaplain in the program for professional or personal problems at any time in confidence. Supervisory approval is not needed.
- C. Supervisors may refer subordinates in need of assistance to the Chaplaincy Program in addition to or in lieu of the Employee Assistance Program. The decision to participate in the program is voluntary and ultimately rests with the employee.

Qualifications (03-15-07)

Applicants for Chaplain will meet, and if appointed maintain, the following qualifications:

- A. Applicants will be regularly ordained members of the clergy of his/her own religious denomination for the last two (2) years.
- B. Applicants, who are not members of the Department, must be endorsed by their religious organization and remain in good standing with his or her religious denomination.
- C. Applicants must be employed in an active pastoral ministry as their principal vocation and on staff of a religious organization. Applicants must have been employed as such for the two years prior to application. If the applicant is retired, he or she must not be pursuing another full time vocation outside of active ministry.
- D. Applicants must possess good moral character and a broad base of experience, emotional stability and excellent interpersonal communication skills.
- E. Applicants must be free from any physical, emotional, or mental conditions that might adversely affect their exercising their duties of a police chaplain.
- F. Applicants will meet other qualifications established by the Chief of Police, in cooperation with the Support Services Division Major and the Chaplaincy Program Coordinator.
- G. The Chief of Police shall be the final authority in appointing or deactivating police chaplains.

Selection Process (03-15-08)

The selection process for a Chaplain is critical to the success of the program. Chaplains will be volunteers from a variety of religious dominations in the community.

Interested parties will be required to complete an application. Additionally, candidates will be required to submit to a background check which will include a criminal history check, driving history check, references, and any other procedure deemed necessary by the Chief of Police.

Upon completion of the selection process, the Support Services Division Major and the program coordinator will make recommendations to the Chief of Police for appointment to the Department. The Chief of Police is the final authority for selecting or removing all police chaplains.

Training (03-15-09)

The Training Division and the program coordinator will be responsible for coordinating and providing training to all chaplains. All training records shall be maintained in accordance with training record department policies and procedures.

Equipment (03-15-10)

Chaplains will be issued equipment and supplies as directed by the Chief of Police. Chaplains are not authorized to carry a firearm in the performance of their duties, unless he/she is certified as a Peace Officer under the rules and regulations of the Peace Officers Standards and Training Council and even then must be approved by the Chief of Police.

Compensation (03-15-11)

All non-employee Chaplains who volunteer their services will serve without pay.

Chaplains will be covered by the City's volunteer policy up to the limits of the policy. The City assumes no liability for the professional acts or omissions made by members of the Chaplaincy while performing services for The City of Johns Creek.

Chaplains may be granted reimbursement for mileage in the performance of their duties for The City of Johns Creek. The mileage rate will be the approved rate for The City of Johns Creek employees in effect at the time. Reimbursement requests will be made on the forms provided by the Department.

Chaplains who are off-duty Police Officers and perform Chaplain duties beyond their regular duties will not be granted overtime or compensatory time.

On-duty employees assigned to their regular duties and who are also chaplains may be needed on occasion to perform the duties of a Chaplain. When this occurs the employee will notify his immediate supervisor for approval.

Confidentiality (03-15-12)

An enormous effort must be made by the chaplain to establish trust when dealing with departmental personnel for the program to be successful and effective. Confidentiality and the protected "privilege" of a minister and penitent is the cornerstone of that trust and shall prevail in all matters.

OCGA 24-9-22 provides: Every communication made by any person professing religious faith, seeking spiritual comfort, or seeking counseling to any Protestant Minister, any Priest of the Roman Catholic Faith, any Priest of the Greek Orthodox Catholic Faith, any Jewish Rabbi, or to any Christian or Jewish Minister, by any name called, shall be deemed privileged. No Minister, Priest or Rabbi shall disclose any privileged communication made to him by any person, nor shall such Minister, Priest or Rabbi be compelled to testify regarding said communication in any court.

The departmental chaplains shall hold in strictest confidence those conversations with personnel of the department. The department shall have no authority to compel the chaplain to reveal any information containing confidential and privileged conversations obtained by said chaplain, including information stemming from an ongoing criminal investigation.

Certain communications between employees and their clergy are not privileged. These may include, but not necessarily be limited to, child molestation, child abuse, etc. The “penitent” *should* be advised by the chaplain before consultations; however this policy shall serve as notice of this exception to officers and employees of this department.

Credentials (03-15-13)

When on duty or performing duties in the capacity of departmental chaplain, the chaplain shall properly identify themselves in a manner becoming this ministry, and shall carry with them the proper identification issued by this department.