



# Lexington County Fire Service

## Standard Operating Procedures Public Safety Chaplains and Trauma Procedures ADM-014

**EFFECTIVE:** September 27, 2007    **ISSUED BY:** Russell R. Rawl, Fire Service Coordinator

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**RECINDS:** All Previous Policies

**SCOPE:** All Lexington County Fire Service Personnel

**PURPOSE:** To assist all of Public Safety in dealing with daily life; to aid in helping cope with tragic Public Safety incidents; and to be available for spiritual uplifting.

### **POLICY:**

#### **Background**

The Lexington County Chaplains Program was established in the fall of 2004. Training commenced in September, 2004 and the first class of seven (7) Chaplains graduated in December, 2004. A policy statement was drafted and approved by the Public Safety Director and the Sheriff in December, 2005.

#### **Organization**

The Sheriff shall appoint a Senior Chaplain who will report to the Assistant Sheriff/Public Safety Director. The Senior Chaplain shall provide direction and support to all other appointed Chaplains. All appointed Chaplains serve at the pleasure of the Sheriff.

#### **Qualifications:**

- All Chaplains are to be ordained or licensed as an approved and experienced representative of their denomination.
- The Office of the Assistant Sheriff/Public Safety, the Senior Chaplain and the Volunteer Coordinator will be responsible for interviewing, selecting and training all Chaplains.

- Chaplains are not law enforcement officers, but duly ordained or licensed as an approved and experienced representative of their denomination. Thus the nature of the Chaplain's responsibility is to assist all sworn officers (Deputies, Firefighters, Emergency Medical personnel, Front Desk personnel, Communications and Correction Officers), civilian employees, and family members upon request, on matters within the Chaplain's realm. The Chaplain is not, in any way, to interfere with an officer in the performance of his/her duties, but be subject to the authority of the officer(s) on the scene.
- Chaplains are volunteers and not employees of Lexington County Public Safety.

**Accessibility of Chaplains:**

- Chaplains will be available 24 hours a day.
- Members of the Lexington County Public Safety Department may ask for the Chaplain by:
  - \* Asking Dispatch to contact on on-duty Chaplain
  - \* By calling the Senior Chaplain
  - \* By calling an individual Chaplain who they personally know
- Chaplains are authorized to visit all offices/facilities of Lexington County Public Safety and have access to all buildings and scenes where the presence of Public Safety employees indicates the requirement or need for the services of a Chaplain.
- When contacted, if the Chaplain is not able to respond, they are to contact the Senior Chaplain or another Chaplain and arrange for coverage. The Chaplain called is to assure that someone will cover the request.

**Duties and Responsibilities of Chaplain:**

- Chaplains shall carry on their person all identification issued by the Sheriff.
- Chaplains will always be appropriately attired for the occasion at hand.
- While on duty, Chaplains shall properly identify themselves, be courteous, and conduct themselves in a manner that is becoming of their role and ministry.
- Chaplains must maintain high spiritual, moral, and ethical standards and demonstrate maturity, emotional stability, and personal flexibility.
- Chaplains must be loyal to the Sheriff and openly support the policies and procedures of Lexington County Public Safety and act in a confidential manner at all times in the execution of their duties.
- All Chaplains will serve on a 24-hour on-call basis for one week approximately every other month. During that week they will be designated as the "Primary On-Call Chaplain". When schedule conflicts occur, the Primary On-Call Chaplain is responsible for arranging substitutes and for notifying Dispatch of the substitution.
- In addition to the on-call duty, each Chaplain is expected to spend ten hours a month in contact with an officer. Examples of how to fulfill this requirement are:
  - \* Ride with a Deputy
  - \* Ride with an EMS Supervisor
  - \* Visit with Firefighters at Fire Stations

- \* Visit the Communications Center
- \* Visit the Detention Center
- \* Attend Roll-Calls
- Attend regularly scheduled Chaplain meetings
- Chaplains are expected to respond and react to requests for assistance. These requests may include, but not be limited to:
  - \* Death notification
  - \* Suicide threats, attempts and completes
  - \* Death of children
  - \* Fatal accidents
  - \* Violent crime against people
  - \* Sex crimes
  - \* Civil disturbances
  - \* Hospital visits
- Counsel officers and families with personal problems. Marriage and family related concerns, stress, and make proper referrals in unique cases that call for more specialized attention.
- Be on call and on the street during major emergency, demonstrations, or public function in the county that requires a large number of Public Safety officers.
- Conduct memorial services. Attend and participate in funerals of active as well as retired members of the Lexington County Public Safety Department.
- Attend training as required.
- Work as liaison with other religious leaders within the community.
- Offer the Invocation and/or the Benediction at departmental functions. These functions will be coordinated by the Senior Chaplain.

**Administration:**

- On a monthly basis, submit a “Chaplain Activity Report” to the Senior Chaplain.
- When called out for an incident, submit a “Chaplain Incident Report” to the Senior Chaplain.

**Special Caution:**

- Always maintain confidentiality. The only time this confidentiality can be broken is when the information received would cause harm or present a threat to the public and/or member of Lexington County Public Safety.
- Initial Death Notification will always be made by the Sheriff. The Chaplain will accompany the Sheriff and provide spiritual support.
- At no time is the Chaplain to usurp the responsibilities of personal clergy.

**Termination of Service:**

- All Chaplains serve at the pleasure of the Sheriff and can be relieved of duty at any time.

- Violation of any of the duties, responsibilities, or ethical standards by a Chaplain, including violations of the law or Lexington County Public Safety policy, is cause for immediate removal from the Chaplain Program.
- Should a Chaplain's volunteer status terminate, for any reason, all issued identification and equipment must be returned to the Senior Chaplain immediately.