

POLICY 14

CHAPLAINCY MANUAL

WISCONSIN EMS HONOR GUARD ASSOCIATION, INC.



1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish the structure, expectations, and ethical standards of the Wisconsin EMS Honor Guard (WIEMSHG) Chaplaincy Program.

The Chaplaincy exists to provide **non-denominational spiritual, emotional, and moral support** to members, their families, and the EMS community, particularly during times of crisis, grief, and line-of-duty death (LODD).

2. AUTHORITY AND APPOINTMENT

- Chaplains are appointed in accordance with WIEMSHG bylaws.
- Chaplains may serve at the **State or District level**.
- Chaplains are appointed by the **State Commander or designee**.

Eligibility:

- Clergy status is **not required**, but candidates must demonstrate:
 - Spiritual maturity
 - Emotional intelligence
 - Commitment to service
 - Complete the required online courses by the commander
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3. MISSION AND ROLE

The mission of the Chaplaincy is to:

- Provide **24/7 crisis support** to EMS personnel
- Offer **grief counseling and emotional support**
- Assist during **funerals, memorials, and ceremonies**
- Support **responder wellness and resilience**
- Serve as a **trusted, confidential resource**

Chaplains serve all members **regardless of faith, belief system, or background**.

4. CORE RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Crisis and Emotional Support

- Respond to critical incidents, including LODD events
- Provide immediate and ongoing emotional care
- Assist members and families coping with trauma, stress, or loss

B. Ceremonial Duties

- Deliver:
 - Invocations
 - Benedictions
 - Memorial prayers
- Participate in funerals, dedications, and official ceremonies

C. Member Support

- Visit:
 - Ill or injured members
 - Bereaved families
 - Members in need of support
- Maintain regular contact through calls, messages, or cards



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D. Documentation and Reporting

- Maintain records of:
 - Member contacts (as appropriate)
 - Event participation
- Report activities to the **State Commander or designee**

E. Organizational Engagement

- Attend official WIEMSHG events when possible
- Participate in training, drills, and team integration
- Promote chaplaincy awareness within the organization

5. PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Required Qualities

Chaplains shall:

- Demonstrate compassion and empathy
- Maintain a positive and professional demeanor
- Be flexible and available as needed
- Exercise sound judgment in sensitive situations
- Represent the Association with integrity

Confidentiality

- All personal communications are **strictly confidential**
- Disclosure is only permitted:
 - With consent
 - When required by law
 - When there is imminent risk of harm

Neutrality

- Chaplains must remain **neutral in internal conflicts**
- Shall not take sides or engage in organizational disputes

6. QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING

Chaplains should meet the following standards:

- Completion of a **recognized chaplain training program** (preferred or required by policy)
- Background check with no disqualifying offenses
- Demonstrated understanding of:
 - Crisis intervention
 - Grief support
 - Cultural sensitivity

Ongoing Development:

- Continued education and training are encouraged
- Participation in exercises and team training is expected

7. OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

A. Availability

- Chaplains should be reasonably available for response
- A rotation or shared coverage model may be implemented

B. Proactive Engagement

- Build relationships with members before crises occur
- Maintain visibility within the organization



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C. Cultural and Religious Sensitivity

- Respect all beliefs, including non-religious perspectives
 - Do not impose personal beliefs or engage in proselytizing
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8. GRIEF MINISTRY PROGRAM

The Chaplaincy may coordinate a Grief Ministry program to:

- Provide individual and group grief support
 - Assist families following loss
 - Coordinate an **annual memorial service**
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9. CODE OF ETHICS

Chaplains shall adhere to the following core ethical principles:

A. Dignity and Respect

- Treat all individuals with dignity regardless of background

B. Competence

- Operate within the training and scope of practice
- Accurately represent qualifications

C. Integrity

- Act honestly and responsibly at all times

D. Professional Boundaries

- Maintain appropriate relationships
- Avoid conflicts of interest

E. Non-Discrimination

- Provide care without bias or prejudice

F. Confidentiality

- Protect all private information

G. Prohibited Conduct

The following are strictly prohibited:

- Proselytizing or imposing beliefs
 - Harassment or discrimination
 - Exploitation of relationships
 - Misrepresentation of credentials
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10. COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC SPEAKING

- Chaplains may use prepared notes or written prayers
 - Public speaking experience is encouraged but not required
 - Authenticity and sincerity are prioritized over presentation style
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11. FUNERAL AND MEMORIAL SUPPORT

Chaplains play a key role in:

- Supporting families during funeral planning
- Delivering prayers and messages
- Assisting command staff during LODD services

Chaplains shall coordinate with command staff and follow all **Honor Guard ceremonial protocols**.

APPENDIX A – EULOGY PREPARATION GUIDELINES

Key Principles

- A eulogy is written for the **family and loved ones**



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- Focus on the individual's **life, character, and legacy**

Preparation Steps

1. Research

- Gather biographical details
- Speak with family and colleagues
- Collect meaningful stories

2. Organization

- Develop a theme
- Arrange content logically

3. Delivery

- Express condolences
- Acknowledge family members
- Share personal or collected stories
- Keep tone respectful and supportive

4. Best Practices

- Practice delivery
- Be prepared for emotional moments
- Have a backup speaker if needed
- Provide a written copy to the family

12. ENFORCEMENT

Failure to adhere to this policy may result in:

- Removal from chaplain duties
- Disciplinary action in accordance with WIEMSHG bylaws