



General Guidelines for the Chaplaincy

EMS chaplains offer non-denominational, non-sectarian spiritual aid, comfort, spiritual, emotional, and psychological support to emergency medical service providers/Departments and their families, especially during traumatic events such as a provider's loss of life. Their purpose includes offering counseling, assisting with grief, and being available 24/7 to help responders cope with the stresses of their job.

State and district chaplains are appointed in accordance constitutions and bylaws. Chaplains do not have to be clergy; in fact, most are not. A chaplain should demonstrate spiritual maturity and be committed to the office. Otherwise, he or she will not be able to provide the spiritual counsel needed by the commander and members alike.

A candidate for chaplain should:

- Be a caring person with a strong desire to help others.
- Have a positive attitude about himself or herself, spiritual matters, and the Association.
- Be Aware of their influence on others; chaplains should be proud of their office and determined to do a good job.
- Willing to serve where there's a need. A chaplain has a responsibility to all and cannot be selective in their service. Death, illness, family problems, and other concerns seldom occur at the chaplain's convenience.
- Expect to adjust your schedule accordingly.
- Value confidentiality. Never reveal what you've learned or discussed in a private setting while serving as a chaplain and spiritual adviser. To do so risks an immediate loss of integrity.
- Seek to be neutral when helping settle disputes.
- Seek to be a model in moral and ethical matters. Failure to meet expectations or standards of conduct reflects negatively on the Association.
- It is helpful but not necessary to be an experienced public speaker.
- A chaplain may read prayers and other comments relative to the once, or rely on notes

A chaplain's job is as large and diverse as one is willing to make it. The following outline is not definitive, but as a district or State chaplain, you are expected to:

- Be present at all Legion events.
- A chaplain's presence sends a message that each activity or event is significant, whether or not you have a particular role to play.
- Provide prayer. Specifically, the chaplain gives the invocation and benediction at meetings, as well as the memorial prayer at a provider's final services. Sadly, many think this is the chaplain's total work. Record and report to the Association Commander every

time you lead or participate in memorial services, dedications, installations, initiations, and funerals.

- You may also be required to report visits to ill or hospitalized members.
- Visit the ill, bereaved, shut-ins, disabled, and prospective members.
- Send cards and make telephone calls as needed.
- Organize and promote a Religious Emphasis Week sometime during the year

Purpose of EMS Chaplains

EMS chaplains provide essential spiritual, emotional, and psychological support to emergency medical service (EMS) personnel. Their primary roles include:

- **Crisis Support:** They assist EMS providers during traumatic incidents, offering counseling and comfort in times of grief or stress.
- **Availability:** Chaplains are on call 24/7, ready to respond to emergencies, including the death or injury of a responder.
- **Community Connection:** They help connect responders and their families with local religious communities, respecting individual beliefs.

Guidelines for EMS Chaplains

Qualifications

- **Endorsement:** Chaplains should be endorsed by a recognized religious organization.
- **Experience:** Typically, candidates should complete our course for chaplains (can be online).
- **Background Check:** A clean criminal record is essential for trust and safety.

Responsibilities

- **Emotional Care:** Provide grief counseling and support for personal and professional issues faced by EMS staff.
- **Crisis Intervention:** Offer immediate support following critical incidents, helping staff process their experiences.
- **Team Collaboration:** Work alongside EMS teams, participating in drills and training to build rapport and trust.

Operational Practices

- **Proactive Engagement:** Chaplains should regularly interact with EMS personnel to foster relationships, making it easier for staff to seek help when needed.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Be aware of and respect the diverse backgrounds and beliefs of EMS personnel and their families.
- **Confidentiality:** Maintain strict confidentiality.

These guidelines ensure that EMS chaplains effectively support their teams, helping to mitigate the emotional toll of their challenging work.

Grief Ministry

This team helps people work through the pain of losing a loved one through individual meetings and group sessions. We also plan to provide an annual Memorial Service for those who have experienced this type of grief during the past year.

Code of Ethics

All professions and associations have an obligation to articulate their basic values, ethical principles, and ethical standards.

The primary mission of spiritual care is to enhance human well-being by providing care to people in physical, mental, spiritual, emotional, or social need in diverse settings. "Persons" is used inclusively to refer to individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

A historic and defining feature of spiritual care is the profession's focus on individual spiritual wellbeing, as well as on spiritual wellbeing within a social context of participation in community and society. Fundamental to spiritual care is attention to the issues of spiritual strength and distress that create, contribute to, and address challenges and joys in living, as it is essential to each person's experience of health, wholeness, and meaning in life.

Care professionals and providers seek to enhance persons' capacity to identify and utilize their spiritual, religious, and existential strengths, assist in accommodating practices when appropriate, and provide resources. They also seek to promote and advocate for the responsiveness of health care and other organizations, communities, and social institutions in acknowledging and incorporating the spiritual dimension of persons in the services they provide.

The mission of the profession of spiritual care is rooted in a set of core values that form the foundation of a chaplain's or other spiritual care provider's unique purpose, perspective, and contributions to human well-being.

Dignity of and respect for the person

Spiritual care professionals and providers are sensitive to spiritual, religious, existential, cultural, ethnic, racial, sexual orientation, and other expressions of diversity and affirm the dignity and value of each individual. Spiritual care providers strive to eliminate discrimination in all its forms and expressions.

Competence

Spiritual care professionals and providers who incorporate spiritual care into their practice are informed by professional education, knowledge, training, and demonstration of competence. They practice within their scope of practice and continually develop and enhance their professional expertise.

Integrity

Spiritual care professionals and providers behave in a trustworthy manner. They act honestly and responsibly both individually and as members of the organizations with which they are affiliated and employed.

Importance of human relationships

Spiritual care professionals and providers understand that relationships between and among people are important to personal and communal strength, support, and growth. They seek to engage people as partners in providing spiritual care to address their challenges, joys, and needs. They seek to resolve conflicts and promote effective communication and understanding.

Ethical Standards for Members

Spiritual care professionals and providers understand persons to be any clients, patients, counselees, members of a faith/spiritual/cultural community, family members, staff, or students to whom they provide spiritual care. Spiritual care professionals and providers uphold the following standards of professional ethics:

- a. Speak and act in ways that honor the dignity and value of every individual.
- b. Represent their competencies, education, training, and experience relevant to their practice in an accurate manner and provide services only within the boundaries of their certification or credentials. No professional identification, degrees, certification, or credentialing should be used that is false, misleading, fraudulent, or deceptive. Specialized services, techniques, or interventions should only be represented and engaged in if the spiritual care professional or provider has the appropriate education, training, or supervised experience.
- c. Respect and promote the rights of persons to self-determination and assist them in their efforts to identify and clarify their goals. Spiritual care professionals and providers promote the best interests of the person and foster strength, integrity, and healing. Spiritual care professionals and providers have a duty to at times limit a person's right to self-determination when, in their professional judgement, the person's actions or potential actions pose a serious, foreseeable, and imminent risk to themselves or others, for example, when a person has abused a child or has threatened to harm self or others.
- d. Demonstrate respect for the spiritual, religious, existential, and cultural values of those they serve and do not impose their own personal values and beliefs on those served. Proselytizing is strictly prohibited by any spiritual care professional or provider.
- e. Understand culture and its function in human behavior, community, and society, recognizing the strengths that exist in all cultures. Spiritual care professionals and providers should have a knowledge base in cultural competence, particularly regarding the persons they serve, and demonstrate sensitivity to that culture and to differences among people and cultural groups. This includes, but is not limited to, race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual identity, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religious, spiritual, existential or no belief system, immigration status, mental or physical disability, and social indicators such as literacy, homelessness, incarceration, or income level.
- f. Provide services and care to persons only in the context of a professional-based relationship. Spiritual care professionals and providers should use clear and understandable language to inform clients of the purpose of the services, limits to services, the person's right to refuse, and provide opportunities for persons to ask questions in order to experience informed consent. When clients have difficulty understanding the primary language of the setting, spiritual care professionals and providers should take steps to ensure comprehension, including arranging a qualified interpreter whenever possible. When a person lacks the capacity to provide informed consent for spiritual care services, permission should be obtained from an appropriate surrogate caregiver to ensure that the third-party acts in a manner consistent with the person's wishes and interests.

- g. Respect a person's right to privacy and confidentiality. Spiritual care professionals and providers should not solicit private information from persons unless it is essential to conducting a spiritual care assessment, screening, evaluation, or research. Once private information is shared, confidentiality standards apply. Appropriate confidential information may be disclosed to other members of the professional team within the setting of care, according to organizational policies in documentation and creation of a plan of care. Respect the person's confidentiality when communicating with family members or significant others except when disclosure is required for necessary treatment, granted by the person's permission, or for the safety of any person as required by law. The confidentiality of persons should be safeguarded when using materials for educational purposes or written publication.
- h. Maintain relationships with persons on a professional basis only. Spiritual care professionals and providers should not take unfair advantage of any relationship or exploit others to further their own personal, religious, political, or business interests. They should engage in appropriate physical contact with persons only after setting clear, culturally sensitive, and appropriate boundaries that govern such contact.
- i. Sexual harassment actions, both physical and verbal including misconduct, harassment, or assault, of persons by spiritual care professionals and providers is strictly prohibited by spiritual care professionals and providers.
- j. Use of derogatory language and actions by spiritual care professionals or providers to or about persons, their beliefs, or any aspect of their culture, either by verbal or written means, is strictly prohibited by spiritual care professionals and providers. Included is any kind of language or actions that are forms of harassment, coercion, intimidation, or otherwise abusive. Accurate and respectful language should be used in all communication to and about persons.
- k. Any conflicts of interest or appearance of conflicting interest(s) should be avoided or corrected. Spiritual care professionals and providers should not take unfair advantage of any professional relationship to exploit others to further their personal, religious/spiritual, political, or business interests.

APPENDIX 1

SUGGESTIONS ON PREPARING A EULOGY.

Preparing a eulogy can be stressful and time-consuming; it is a tough task. You want your remarks to be both comforting and respectful. A eulogy is for the living, most importantly for family and close friends.

Research

1. Get the key facts—age, nickname, names of family members and closest friends, timeline of key events in the person's life, personal and professional accomplishments, honors and awards received.
2. Ask friends and family members for stories that illustrate how they want to remember their loved one. If you use one of these stories, remember to acknowledge the source. For example, "Jim's daughters told me..." or "Ann's father reminded me that ..."

3. Include information about the firefighter's character and personality. What was the firefighter proudest of in his or her life? For what would he or she want to be remembered?
4. If you knew the firefighter, include personal anecdotes and memories.
5. If you did not know the firefighter personally, say that! Speak with people who did, especially those who shared years of friendship and memories. Organize
6. You may want to use a theme to tie your presentation together. For example, "Jack loved adventure," or "In everything he did, Don reached out to help other people."
7. It may help to put your ideas on note cards and then arrange them in a logical order for your presentation Draft
8. Begin by expressing your condolences and the department's sense of loss.
9. Acknowledge family members, including spouse or significant other, children, parents, siblings, and close friends.
10. Focus on the person's life, not the circumstances that led to the death.
11. Include funny stories. Even in the midst of deep grief, it is important to smile. And remember to mention the source of the story.
12. If appropriate, include a statement of support from the department. Acknowledge the department member serving as the family's liaison.

Only promise what you can deliver.

1. Have a printed copy of the final eulogy ready for the family and others who may want a copy.
 - a. Review your remarks carefully before the service. If you are nervous about speaking in front of other people, practice speaking in front of someone you trust to give you honest, supportive feedback.
 - b. It is okay to show emotion!
 - c. Have a backup plan so someone else can take over if you cannot finish speaking.
 - d. Be prepared to adjust your planned remarks. Before you speak, another person may use some of the same stories or information. Acknowledge this or have other stories ready.
 - e. Above all, remember not everyone is a great orator. However, families will remember your sincerity and kindness forever.

Reference Materials: These resources may also help you write and deliver a eulogy.

Funerals with Love [link to: www.funeralswithlove.com/eulogy.htm]

Suggestions for structuring, writing, and delivering a eulogy; a downloadable book is available for a fee, Grief Loss & Recovery [link to: www.grieflossrecovery.com/grief-articles/martin01.html]