

	STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE State Form 39870(R/S-06)	Reference Number EWS-003
	Subject Wellness Section Chaplain Program - Utilization and Function	
	Special Instructions Replaces ENF-040 dated January 15, 2015	Effective Date December 10, 2025

I. PURPOSE

Establish guidelines for the organization, function, and utilization of the Department Staff Chaplain's Office.

II. POLICY

Recognizing the great personal demands and sacrifices a police career sometimes places on the Department's personnel and their families, the Department Chaplain's Office shall always be available to facilitate or provide human care, emotional and spiritual support. Service as a chaplain is subject to the approval of the Superintendent.

III. DEFINITIONS

A. CHAPLAIN'S OFFICE – Consists of the Department Staff Chaplain, volunteer chaplains, and their department-related ministries.

B. DEPARTMENT STAFF CHAPLAIN – Salaried, full-time employee in charge of the Chaplain's Office at General Headquarters.

C. VOLUNTEER CHAPLAINS – Non-salaried part-time volunteers under the immediate supervision of the Department Staff Chaplain and assigned to a particular District.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. The Chaplain's Office* shall be under the control and direction of the Wellness Section (WS).

*NOTE – The Department does not endorse any faith, but allows chaplains from various denominations to volunteer to assist department members. The use of the chaplain service is voluntary and the assignment of a chaplain should not be seen as an endorsement of the chaplain's religion.

1. The Department Staff Chaplain and volunteer chaplains shall be appointed by the Superintendent. A reasonable denominational balance shall be considered in these appointments.

2. Each volunteer chaplain shall be an ordained clergy of a respective denomination or local church and meet one of the following educational and /or experience requirements:

a. Hold a Master of Divinity degree from an accredited institution of higher education or an equivalent degree in theology or similar, psychology, sociology or philosophy, at the discretion of the Superintendent;

b. A bachelor's degree in theology or similar, psychology, sociology or philosophy from an accredited institution of higher education, then acceptance of three (3) years experience in full-time active ministry, at the discretion of the Superintendent; or

c. A minimum of five (5) years' experience in full-time active ministry, at the discretion of the Superintendent.

3. The Department Staff Chaplain shall be responsible for the operations of the Chaplain's Office that includes, but is not limited to:

- a. Supervising volunteer chaplains;
- b. Establishing and coordinating volunteer chaplains' work assignments;
- c. Programming, development and implementation of the Department's Chaplain Program;
- d. Assisting the WS Commander and WS Coordinator in the management and deployment of the Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Team;
- e. Maintaining compliance by volunteer chaplains with Department regulations and procedures; and
- f. Reviewing and maintaining volunteer chaplains' activity reports, when required.

4. The Department Staff Chaplain shall not be assigned geographic or functional areas of responsibility but shall be responsive to the Department's needs in all Districts. Volunteer chaplains shall assist the Department Staff Chaplain in their respective Districts, when needed.

B. Function – The Department Staff Chaplain and all of the volunteer chaplains are ministers of a faith community with a primary goal of developing a program within the Department and community that will serve as a source of spiritual support and human care for all employees, retirees and their families. Their responses and activities must be predicated on this premise.

1. The Department Staff Chaplain shall recruit and screen potential volunteer chaplains and, after consultation with the appropriate District Commander, make a recommendation to the Superintendent and the Deputy Superintendent of the Support Services Bureau.

2. Special programs, with the Superintendent's approval, may be developed and implemented in areas of:

- a. Family counseling;
- b. Coping with job stress; and
- c. Other personal concerns, whether of an emotional or spiritual nature.

3. Chaplains shall serve as emotional and spiritual support to employees and their families when called upon and be responsive to various needs such as, but not limited to:

- a. Funerals;
- b. Serious illness and death;
- c. Other personal tragedies; and
- d. Assist in death notification, if needed.

4. Chaplains shall serve as a liaison with clergy and/or counselors of employees, when to do so would be in the best interest of the employees and/or the employees' families.

5. Although the Department Staff Chaplain and volunteer chaplains are responsible for acting on the authority of the Wellness Section at the direction of the Superintendent, they are not commanders or supervisors and shall function only as traditional police chaplains in their official contacts with Department employees.

C. Utilization – The Chaplain’s Office shall be available and sensitive to the needs of all Department employees and their families.

1. Employees are urged to contact the Chaplain’s Office, whenever needed.

- a. The Department Staff Chaplain may be contacted directly, through the Employee Wellness Unit, or, if appropriate, volunteer chaplains may be contacted through their respective Districts;
- b. Normal Department command and communication channels need not be followed; and
- c. Appointments should be made in advance during normal working hours, unless there is an emergency.

D. Confidentiality:

1. Conversations and information disclosed to a department chaplain(s) *may be* considered privileged communications if the requirements of Ind. Code 34-36-3-1 are met.

2. Chaplains should discuss privilege/confidentiality of communications with employees prior to engaging any guidance/advisement. To include:

- a. Advising if their religion does not recognize confidential communications or in what situations it may or may not.
- b. That privilege may be waived by the employee; and
- c. That privilege may be waived if the conversation is not private, such as having a discussion with a group.

3. The Department shall consider communications made to a department chaplain as confidential and will not request the employee or chaplain disclose those communications, unless required to do so by law.

4. However, disclosure may be legally mandated if:

- a. There is a threat to harm oneself or another;
- b. There is evidence of elder or child abuse; or
- c. Any other legally required disclosure is met.

5. Any breach or violation of confidentiality by a chaplain may result in removal from the chaplain program, disciplinary action from the department, and/or legal action in accordance with state law.

6. Department chaplains shall receive training on confidentiality by the Department.

E. It is not the intent of the Indiana State Police Chaplain Program to eliminate or intervene in a disciplinary action against an employee, but rather to assist the employee in working with a problem; thereby retaining experienced personnel and helping create better job performance.

F. This procedure is to be used in conjunction with all relevant Department regulations, rules, policies, and procedures.