

DEPARTMENT CHAPLAIN PROGRAM	Related Policies: EAP
<i>This policy is for internal use only and does not enlarge an employee's civil liability in any way. The policy should not be construed as creating a higher duty of care, in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party civil claims against employees. A violation of this policy, if proven, can only be the basis of a complaint by this agency for non-judicial administrative action in accordance with the laws governing employee discipline.</i>	
Applicable Statutes:	
New Mexico Law Enforcement Professional Standards Council and/or CALEA Standard:	

- I. **Purpose:** The purpose for this directive is to provide guidance to Chaplains and to Department personnel regarding the parameters of the Chaplain program.
- II. **Policy:** The Montpelier Police Department (MPD) understands the vital role of religious and spiritual guidance for some personnel who may need such counseling and assistance for comfort for themselves and for their families, as well as members of the public requesting spiritual guidance and comfort during crisis events. As such, MPD recognizes a need for to offer a voluntary Chaplaincy which is: secular in purpose, neither promotes nor inhibits religion, and does not foster excessive entanglement between government and religion¹. Therefore, it is the policy of MPD to address those needs in part through the establishment of an Interfaith-based Chaplain Program.
- III. **Applicability:** This General Order applies to all MPD employees and Chaplains and supersedes all prior versions.
- IV. **Definitions:**
 - A. **Police Chaplain:** For purposes of this policy, Police Chaplains are duly ordained and appointed as approved and experienced leaders of different faiths whose primary responsibilities for this department are to assist, upon request, MPD personnel and their families, and members of the public in crisis in matters within the Chaplain's realm.
 - B. **Chaplain Coordinator:** For purpose of this policy, the Chaplain Coordinator is a Chaplain selected by the Department Chaplains who acts as a liaison with the department. The Chaplain Coordinator, or designee, coordinates with the Chief of Police, designee, and/or executive staff.
 - C. **Chaplain Steering Committee:** For purpose of this policy, the Chaplain Steering Committee is a group of Chaplains selected by the Department Chaplains to assist in

¹ Based on Lemon V. Kurtzman

setting policies and provides guidance on current issues affecting the program. The Chaplain Steering Committee also interviews Chaplain applicants and recommends them for approval to the Chief of Police.

- D. Master Schedule: For purpose of this policy, a monthly schedule will be provided to all participating Chaplains, MPD and Dispatch.
- E. Clergy-Penitent Privilege: For purposes of this policy, Clergy-penitent privilege is the right of the clergy to refuse to divulge confidential information received from a person during confession or similar exchanges: the right to refuse to divulge information obtained in a confidential relationship.

V. Qualifications and Qualities:

A candidate for law enforcement Chaplain shall meet the following requirements:

1. Be an ordained/lay/spiritual leader in good standing with a recognized religious denomination or group.
2. Show compassion, understanding, and be skilled in ministry and pastoral care.
3. Maintain high standards with regard to moral and ethical standards. Chaplains must not have been arrested or convicted of criminal offenses which may call into question moral turpitude as they would adversely affect a Chaplain's credibility and therefore the ability to effectively serve as a Chaplain.
4. Hold in strictest confidence all matters of a personal and private nature.
5. Be willing and available to respond to any and all situations where a Chaplain's presence is requested.
6. Manifest a broad base of experience and professional ministry, emotional stability, and personal flexibility.
7. Be tactful and considerate in approaching all people, regardless of race, sex, creed, orientation, identification or religion.
8. Be willing to become involved in training programs that enhance personal efficiency in meeting and dealing with people in crises. A Chaplain should be familiar with community medical, psychiatric, and other helping resources in the local area.
9. Must accept and cooperate with the rules, regulations, and procedures of the City of Montpelier and the Montpelier Police Department.

VI. Selection Process

The following should be considered when selecting a law enforcement Chaplain:

1. Any Chaplain or the Chief of Police may make a recommendation for appointment;
2. All candidates must provide verification that they meet all standards and requirements of their respective religious organizations and all standards and qualifications listed herein;
3. An oral interview shall be conducted by the Chaplain Steering Committee and the Chief of Police so to determine a potential;
4. Successfully pass law enforcement background checks and National Sex Offenders Registry screening;
5. Upon successful clearance, Chaplains will be approved by the Chief of Police (or a designee) and will be given an identification card;
6. All identification or uniform items given to Chaplains remain the property of the City of Montpelier and shall be returned upon withdrawal from the program. Any badge or identification cards are to be used solely for official business. These items are not to be used for personal use or personal gain. Any misuse of the badge or identification card can lead to dismissal from the Chaplain program;
7. Police chaplains may terminate their relationship with the program at any time;
8. The Chief of Police may terminate the department's relationship with a Chaplain if the Chaplain failed to practice good professional, ethical, and moral standards which bring discredit to the program and the Montpelier Police Department.

VII. Procedures:

- A.** MPD recognizes clergy-penitent privilege as a rule of evidence forbidding judicial or disciplinary inquiry into certain personal and privileged communications between Chaplains and MPD personnel. Neither the City of Montpelier nor MPD shall ask or mandate Chaplains for any information on personnel for the purposes of administrative or criminal procedures with respect to provisions outlined in state or federal statutes. Chaplains shall be familiar with state evidentiary laws and rules pertaining to the limits of the clergy-penitent privilege and shall inform department members when it appears reasonably likely that the member is discussing matters that are not subject to the clergy-penitent privilege. In such cases, the Chaplain should consider referring the member to a non-department counseling resource.
- B.** There is no requirement for counseling certification for Chaplains. Chaplains provide spiritual and emotional support to personnel upon request and will refer personnel to professional counseling services as deemed appropriate.
- C.** It is MPD's goal to have Chaplains available at all times so to assist department personnel when requested. It is understood the Chaplain program is a voluntary civilian position and there may be times when a Chaplain cannot commit to being

available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. For this purpose, MPD will have a two-tiered Chaplain program.

Tier One: Tier one Chaplains shall agree to actively participate in all facets of the Chaplain program. Tier one Chaplains are asked to participate in ride-alongs and be subject to call-outs per the Chaplain program schedule.

Tier Two: Tier two Chaplains are Chaplains who, due to time or other restrictions, cannot commit to a call-out schedule; however, still agree to participate in special events, critical incidents, and other related activities. The role and responsibilities of tier two Chaplains will be defined by the Chaplain Steering Committee.

- D.** Chaplains will be provided with uniform items and identification which readily identify them as Department Police Chaplains. Chaplains may elect to wear their uniforms at any time while on-call, when representing MPD, or when acting in any official capacity as a Chaplain to include ride-alongs, call-outs and Department or City functions or events related to the Department's activities which may include, but are not limited to, City Commission meetings, meetings with the department members and/or the general public, community presentations, training or conferences. Chaplains are required to wear body armor while on ride-alongs.
- E.** The Chaplain's responsibility is to assist MPD personnel and their families, upon request, in matters within the Chaplain's realm. The Chaplain shall not, in any way, interfere with an officer in the performance of his/her duty. Police Chaplains have no police powers. While Chaplains are not City employees, they may be issued uniforms, badges and credentials that readily identify them. Typical Chaplain responses include: incidents of on-duty deaths or injuries, visiting sick or injured personnel or family members at their home or hospital when requested, participate in funeral or memorial services for active or retired personnel or to assist family in funeral arrangements, assist personnel in providing death or serious injury notifications, assist victims of major accidents at the scene or at a hospital, and participation in department functions (promotions, award ceremonies, dinners and social events).
- F.** The Chaplain Coordinator and Department Chaplains shall meet on a regular basis to discuss pertinent issues to the program. The frequency and time of those meetings is to be determined by the Chaplain Coordinator.
- G.** Requests for a Police Chaplain can be made either by department members or their families or by their peers or supervisors. The Chaplain schedules will be posted in common areas of the department as well as in Dispatch. MPD personnel should also consider requesting Chaplains to respond to a traumatic scene so to provide comfort to victims, witnesses, or those in emotional distress. Chaplains may decline to respond depending on whether they believe their services would be beneficial at that time, or whether an individual refuses Chaplain assistance. Some examples of call out situations are officer injury or death, death notifications, SIDS deaths, suicides, homicides, major disasters, major injury vehicle accidents, and fires. MPD considers itself as a mutual-aid agency and, as such, participates in Mutual-Aid Response

Protocol meaning MPD will always offer assistance and resources to peer agencies when possible. MPD may request Chaplain assistance for other emergency service agencies depending on Chaplain availability.

VIII. Training:

The Department will provide training for Chaplains. Training topics may include stress management, death notifications, post-traumatic stress syndrome, burnout for officers and Chaplains, legal liability and confidentiality, ethics, responding to crisis situations, the law enforcement family, substance abuse, suicide, officer injury or death, and sensitivity and diversity, as approved by the Chief of Police or designee.

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