PORTSMOUTH, NH POLICE DEPARTMENT
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

P-280
CHAPLAIN PROGRAM

EFFECTIVE DATE: 08-10-01
REMARKS:
REVISIONS: 12-09-07; 12-14-10; 08-26-11; 09-21-16; 04-08-19

I. PURPOSE

To promulgate policies and procedures regarding the establishment of the Chaplain Program for the Portsmouth Police Department.

II. POLICY

A Chaplain Program is hereby established to provide pastoral support to all members of the Portsmouth Police Department, including both sworn and non-sworn, active duty, retired or disabled, and their families.

A. OBJECTIVES: The objectives of the Chaplain Program will include the following:

1. To provide an effective service and ministry to the city and to the Portsmouth Police Department.

2. To serve as a resource for department personnel when dealing with the public in such incidents as accidental deaths, suicides, suicidal subjects, serious accidents, drug and alcohol abuse, and other situations that may arise.

3. To provide upon request, counseling, spiritual guidance, and insight for the personnel of the department and their families.

4. To assist departmental personnel in making death notifications, providing assistance to victims, serve as departmental liaison with other clergy in the community, offer prayers at special occasions, e.g., award ceremonies, etc., serve on boards and committees as requested by the Police commission and/or Chief of Police.

5. Conduct funeral services and other religious ceremonies for department events as requested.

6. Visit sick and injured officers and departmental personnel in home and hospital.

B. CONFIDENTIALITY/PRIVILEGED COMMUNICATIONS:

Unless otherwise requested by those being assisted, all matters of a personal nature discussed with the Chaplain will remain private and confidentiality will be respected. The Chaplain will only discuss officer issues with the Chief after the issue has become an official department matter, and only after the officer has given such consent. The exception to this is when life is threatened or when the officer's fitness for duty is in such a state as to jeopardize themselves, other officers, or the community.

III. PROCEDURE

A. OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES:

1. The Portsmouth Police Department has appointed Chaplains. The current Chaplains are listed by name and phone number in SOP A-119, Duty Assignments.

2. Additional clergy may also be utilized as needed. The Department may create a list of appropriate clergy members who are willing to participate in this program.

3. The police Chaplains shall be permitted to ride with officers in police department vehicles, cross police lines, and observe police operations provided that the officer-in-charge has been notified and approved.

4. The presence of the chaplain may be requested for all police officer involved shootings, violent deaths, and other critical incidents.

5. The decision to request that the Chaplain respond will be made by the Shift Commander.

6. The Chaplain will refer all media/press inquiries to the Shift Commander or the officer designated as the Public Information Officer.

B. IDENTIFICATION:

The Chaplain will be issued a department badge/identification card and appropriately marked departmental windbreaker, which he will have available for identification at any Police Department scene or activity.

C. COMMAND STRUCTURE:

The Police Department Chaplain shall function under the direct operational and functional control of the Chief of Police, who will make all appointments to the Chaplain Program.

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Robert M. Merner, Chief of Police

RMM/dps