

Cobb County Police Department

Policy 6.04

**POLICE CHAPLAIN PROGRAM**

<b>Effective Date:</b> July 20, 2012	
<b>Rescinds:</b> Policy 6.04 (January 9, 2011)	
<b>Related Orders:</b> None	
<b>Issued By:</b> Chief J.R. Houser	<b>Page 1 of 3</b>
The words "he, his, him," which may appear in this policy, are used generically for clarity and ease of reading. These terms are not meant to imply gender and relate to all employees of the Department.	

The employees of the Police Department may, at times, find themselves in need of personal and family counseling or support of a spiritual nature. Law enforcement personnel are confronted with many situations which demoralize personnel and create emotional, mental, and spiritual stressors which may be addressed by Departmental chaplains. The purpose of this policy is to establish the guidelines and organization of the Department Chaplain Program.

**I. DEFINITIONS AND QUALIFICATIONS:**

As used in this policy, the following words and terms shall have the meaning ascribed:

- A. Chaplain Board:** A group made up of Department Associate Chaplains who decides issues and establishes policy for the Police Chaplain Program. The Chaplain Coordinator acts as moderator and all board decisions must be presented to the Chief of Police for final disposition.
- B. Chaplain Coordinator:** A member of the Department selected by the Chief of Police, or his designee, who acts as liaison regarding administrative and support functions of the Police Chaplain Program. The coordinator must be available to effectively handle the requirements of the position as well as perform his daily duties and responsibilities. He will also ensure the response of the Chaplains to critical situations and their participation in the program. The Chaplain Coordinator will also handle the duties of a chaplain as opportunity presents or as required.
- C. Chaplains:** Religious leaders who have at least five years of experience in the ministry, and are selected by a board consisting of the Chaplain Coordinator, at least three members of the Chaplain Board, and/or personnel selected by the Chaplain Board. They must also be recommended by the religious body of which they are a member. Chaplains must receive Chaplain Certification from the Georgia Peace Officers Standards and Training Council whenever the course is offered. A minimum of one Chaplain should be assigned to each precinct.

- D. Department Associate Chaplains:** A group of volunteers who have received formal training or education particular to their religious affiliation, or have been recommended by the religious body of which they are a member. These volunteers are chosen from qualified members of the Department, by a board consisting of the Chaplain Coordinator and at least three board members.

## **II. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHAPLAINS**

- A.** Assist in making notification to families or Department members who have been seriously injured or killed. Additionally, notify the family clergy, if any, as soon as possible after the event.
- B.** Visit sick or injured police personnel in the hospital or home.
- C.** Counsel/be available for employees who are having personal problems, if requested.
- D.** Attend and participate, when requested, in the funerals of active or retired members of the Department.
- E.** Be on call and, if possible, be present at the scene during any major demonstrations or any public functions requiring the presence of a large number of Department personnel.
- F.** Participate in in-service training classes for police personnel.
- G.** Attend Department graduations, promotion activities, award ceremonies, dinners, etc. to offer invocations and benedictions.
- H.** Represent the Department before official bodies and at public functions upon the request of the Chief.
- I.** Be responsible for the organization and development of the spiritual organizations of the Department.
- J.** Be involved in public relations efforts.
- K.** Provide liaison with other religious leaders in the community.
- L.** Make referrals in cases where specialized attention is needed, or in those cases beyond the Chaplain's ability to assist.
- M.** Only sworn members of the Police Chaplain Program are authorized to perform those duties associated with a sworn officer (e.g. – full-custody arrests).

## **III. CHAPLAIN SELECTION**

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- A.** Selections of all chaplains will be based upon qualifications and will not discriminate against race, creed, sex, or national origin. Selection will also be based upon representation of members of the Department and predominant religious faiths as represented in the community.
- B.** All Chaplains will be subjected to a thorough background check to include local, state, and national law enforcement and criminal records.
- C.** Chaplains must complete the application for the position, sign a Position Statement which explains the duties and emphasizes confidentiality, and provide a letter of recommendation from their ecclesiastical body.
- D.** Chaplains will complete an initial interview with the Chaplain Coordinator (or his designee).
- E.** Chaplains will also complete a final interview with the Chaplain Board.

### **IV. CHAPLAIN ACCESS**

- A.** All Chaplains will be issued identification badges and have access to Police Department facilities. All visits to facilities should be coordinated with the shift supervisor or a Department Associate Chaplain.
- B.** All Chaplains will sign a personal waiver form to allow them an opportunity to ride with officers on patrol. This waiver form will be held in file by the Chaplain Coordinator.

### **V. CONFIDENTIALITY**

- A.** Information received by any Chaplain in the course of his duties will be held as confidential and will not be provided to the Police Department unless:
  - 1. The information indicates an officer or other member of the Department may be in personal danger, or
  - 2. The information indicates an officer or other member of the Department may be planning to endanger another person.
- B.** Any information meeting the criteria of the above section will be reported to the Chaplain Coordinator or the Commander of the Internal Affairs Unit.