
Chaplains

333.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy establishes the guidelines for St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office chaplains to provide counseling or emotional support to members of the Office, their families and members of the public.

333.2 POLICY

The St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office shall ensure that office chaplains are properly appointed, trained and supervised to carry out their responsibilities without financial compensation.

333.3 ELIGIBILITY

Requirements for participation as a chaplain for the Office may include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Being above reproach, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, be free from addiction to alcohol or other drugs, and excessive debt.
- (b) Managing their households, families and personal affairs well.
- (c) Having a good reputation in the community.
- (d) Successful completion of an appropriate level background investigation.
- (e) Possession of a valid driver's license.

The Sheriff may apply exceptions for eligibility based on organizational needs and the qualifications of the individual.

333.4 RECRUITMENT, SELECTION AND APPOINTMENT

The St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office shall endeavor to recruit and appoint only those applicants who meet the high ethical, moral and professional standards set forth by this office.

All applicants shall be required to meet and pass the same pre-employment procedures as office personnel before appointment.

333.4.1 RECRUITMENT

Chaplains should be recruited on a continuous and ongoing basis consistent with office policy on equal opportunity and non-discriminatory employment. A primary qualification for participation in the application process should be an interest in and an ability to assist the Office in serving the public. Chaplain candidates are encouraged to participate in ride-alongs with office members before and during the selection process.

333.4.2 SELECTION AND APPOINTMENT

Chaplain candidates shall successfully complete the following process prior to appointment as a chaplain:

- (a) Submit the appropriate written application.
- (b) Include a recommendation from their employer or volunteer program.

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- (c) Interview with the Sheriff and the chaplain coordinator.
- (d) Successfully complete an appropriate-level background investigation.
- (e) Complete an appropriate probationary period as designated by the Sheriff.

Chaplains are volunteers and serve at the discretion of the Sheriff. Chaplains shall have no property interest in continued appointment. However, if a chaplain is removed for alleged misconduct, the chaplain will be afforded an opportunity solely to clear his/her name through a hearing, which shall be limited to a single appearance before the Sheriff or the authorized designee.

333.5 IDENTIFICATION

As representatives of the Office, chaplains are responsible for presenting a professional image to the community. Chaplains shall dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of their duties. Necessary safety equipment will be provided for each chaplain. Identification symbols worn by chaplains shall be different and distinct from those worn by deputies through the inclusion of "Chaplain" and not reflect any religious affiliation.

Chaplains will be issued St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office identification cards which must be carried at all times while on-duty. The identification cards will be the standard St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office identification cards with the exception that "Chaplain" will be indicated on the cards. Chaplains shall be required to return any issued office property at the termination of service.

Chaplains shall conform to all appearance standards of this office.

333.6 CHAPLAIN COORDINATOR

The Sheriff shall delegate certain responsibilities to a chaplain coordinator. The coordinator shall be appointed by and directly responsible to the Special Operations Division Captain or the authorized designee.

The chaplain coordinator shall serve as the liaison between the chaplains and the Sheriff. The function of the coordinator is to provide a central coordinating point for effective chaplain management within the Office, and to direct and assist efforts to jointly provide more productive chaplain services. Under the general direction of the Sheriff or the authorized designee, chaplains shall report to the chaplain coordinator and/or Shift Supervisor.

The chaplain coordinator may appoint a senior chaplain or other designee to assist in the coordination of chaplains and their activities.

The responsibilities of the coordinator or the authorized designee may include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Recruiting, selecting and training qualified chaplains.
- (b) Conducting chaplain meetings.
- (c) Establishing and maintaining a chaplain callout roster.

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- (d) Maintaining records for each chaplain.
- (e) Tracking and evaluating the contribution of chaplains.
- (f) Maintaining a record of chaplain schedules and work hours.
- (g) Completing and disseminating, as appropriate, all necessary paperwork and information.
- (h) Planning periodic recognition events.
- (i) Maintaining liaison with other agency chaplain coordinators.

An evaluation of the overall use of chaplains will be conducted on an annual basis by the coordinator.

333.7 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Chaplains assist the Office, its members and the community, as needed. Chaplains may be assigned within the Office as needed. Chaplains should be placed only in assignments or programs that are consistent with their knowledge, skills, abilities and the needs of the Office.

All chaplains will be assigned to duties by the chaplain coordinator or the authorized designee.

Chaplains may not proselytize or attempt to recruit members of the Office or the public into a religious affiliation while representing themselves as a chaplain with this office unless the receiving person has solicited spiritual guidance or teaching. If there is any question as to the receiving person's intent, chaplains should verify that the person is desirous of spiritual counseling or guidance before engaging in such discussion.

Chaplains may not accept gratuities for any service, or any subsequent actions or follow-up contacts that were provided while functioning as a chaplain for the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office.

333.7.1 COMPLIANCE

Chaplains are volunteer members of the Office, and except as otherwise specified within this policy, are required to comply with the Volunteers Policy and other applicable policies.

333.7.2 OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

- (a) Chaplains will be available 24 hours a day to assist in emergencies.
- (b) In circumstances where the presence of the chaplain is deemed appropriate, the duty officer may notify the chaplain to request response and assistance.
- (c) Chaplains shall be permitted to ride with deputies during any shift and observe St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office operations, provided the Shift Supervisor has been notified and has approved the activity.
- (d) Chaplains shall not be evaluators of members of the Office.
- (e) In responding to incidents, a chaplain shall never function as a deputy. Chaplains are not sworn officers and have no arrest powers or law enforcement authority.

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- (f) Generally, the chaplain will not be called to respond to incidents in progress. In the event the chaplain is responding to an in-progress call for service, chaplains may be required to stand-by in a secure area until the situation has been deemed safe.
- (g) Chaplains shall serve only within the jurisdiction of the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office unless otherwise authorized by the Sheriff or the authorized designee.
- (h) Each chaplain shall have access to current office member rosters, addresses, telephone numbers, duty assignments and other information that may assist in his/her duties. Such information will be considered confidential and each chaplain will exercise appropriate security measures to prevent distribution of the data.

333.7.3 ASSISTING OFFICE MEMBERS

The responsibilities of a chaplain related to office members include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Assisting in making notification to families of members who have been seriously injured or killed and, after notification, responding to the hospital or home of the member.
- (b) Visiting sick or injured members in the hospital or at home.
- (c) Attending and participating, when requested, in funerals of active or retired members.
- (d) Serving as a resource for members when dealing with the public in incidents, such as accidental deaths, suicides, suicidal subjects, serious accidents, drug and alcohol abuse and other such situations that may arise.
- (e) Providing counseling and support for members and their families.
- (f) Being alert to the needs of members and their families.

For procedures related to Assisting Sheriff's Office Members, see the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office LE Procedures Manual: [Death Notifications](#)

333.7.4 ASSISTING THE OFFICE

The responsibilities of a chaplain related to the Office include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Responding to natural and accidental deaths, suicides and attempted suicides, family disturbances and any other incident that in the judgment of the Shift Supervisor or supervisor aids in accomplishing the mission of the Office.
- (b) Responding to all major disasters, such as natural disasters, bombings and similar critical incidents.
- (c) Being on-call and, if possible, on-duty during major demonstrations or any public function that requires the presence of a large number of office members.
- (d) Attending office and academy graduations, ceremonies and social events and offering invocations and benedictions, as requested.
- (e) Participating in in-service training classes.
- (f) Willingness to train others to enhance the effectiveness of the Office.

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333.7.5 ASSISTING THE COMMUNITY

The duties of a chaplain related to the community include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Familiarity with the role of law enforcement in the community.
- (b) Providing an additional link between the community, other chaplain coordinators and the Office.
- (c) Providing liaison with various civic, business and religious organizations.
- (d) Promptly facilitating requests for representatives or leaders of various denominations.
- (e) Assisting the community in any other function as needed or requested.
- (f) Making referrals in cases where specialized attention is needed or in cases that are beyond the chaplain's ability to assist.

333.7.6 CHAPLAIN MEETINGS

All chaplains are required to attend scheduled meetings. Any absences must be satisfactorily explained to the chaplain coordinator.

333.8 PRIVILEGED COMMUNICATIONS

No person who provides chaplain services to members of the Office may work or volunteer for the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office in any capacity other than that of chaplain.

Office chaplains shall be familiar with state evidentiary laws and rules pertaining to the limits of the clergy-penitent, psychotherapist-patient and other potentially applicable privileges and shall inform members when it appears reasonably likely that the member is discussing matters that are not subject to the privileged communications. In such cases, the chaplain should consider referring the member to a non-office counseling resource.

No chaplain shall provide counsel to or receive confidential communications from any St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office member concerning an incident personally witnessed by the chaplain or concerning an incident involving the chaplain.

333.9 TRAINING

The Office will establish a minimum number of training hours and standards for office chaplains. The training, as approved by the Training Coordinator, may include:

- Stress management
- Death notifications
- Symptoms of post-traumatic stress
- Burnout for members of law enforcement and chaplains
- Legal liability and confidentiality
- Ethics

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- Responding to crisis situations
- The law enforcement family
- Substance abuse
- Suicide
- Deputy injury or death
- Sensitivity and diversity
- Office staff funeral protocol
- Critical Incident