

Fire Department Chaplain's for Federal Fire Service Agencies

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Fire department chaplains are quite common within municipal departments but are not often seen within Federal/ Department of Defense (DOD) fire departments. Chaplain's can provide a limitless range of support and encouragement to Fire and Emergency Services teams and their families. The emotional and spiritual support provided by chaplains can contribute significantly to team and an individual's resiliency. They can be imbedded within peer support and crisis intervention teams as additional subject matter experts. They assist teams dealing with stress and grief for both personal and fire service-related situations. Chaplains provide positive impact to enhance departmental ceremonies as well as memorial services. They support fire service leadership in visiting agency members at home and hospitals after injuries, long term illness, or other personal matters. Chaplains lead educational and community outreach programs to foster positive working relationships. Much like peer support services, Chaplains maintain strict confidentiality and provide an avenue for firefighters and EMS providers to discuss challenges with persons of trust. With all the benefits its hard to believe that they are sparsely utilized for federal fire departments.

I had the pleasure of interviewing my agency's Chaplain and his responses below are valuable and it is my pleasure to share:

Question: What is your favorite part about being a fire service Chaplain?

Answer: Being readily available at any given time for support of the members or their family. Being prompt is one of the most important aspects.

Questions: Do you find any difference service as a fire service Chaplain for a Federal Fire & Emergency Services Department vs being a Chaplain for a municipality fire department?

Answer: Chaplains fit all molds; My primary mission as a Chaplain is to offer non-denominational and non-secular spiritual assistance to anyone in need. Chaplains give help to citizens as well as first responders and their families no matter where they are from. We are here for support on and off the battlefield.

Question: Are there any tips you would give to DOD departments without a current chaplain?

Answer: Get one! You would be surprised at the positive outcome for the members of your team! We are a listening ear and a great way to vent for any team members who may need it. We can be of assistance on emergency responses, firehouses, and often times to team members when off-duty. Take advantage of the help, we can respond to high stress scenes and are trained to lower stress levels.

Question: Where can DOD fire departments look for Chaplains?

Answer: Reach out to local departments that have one; most will be happy to offer their services and help another department.

Dwayne Frost is 21-year military Veteran. He was ordained in 2013 as a Baptist _Preacher and has served as the Prince Georges County Fire & Rescue Department Chaplain since 2014. Dwayne Frost and his wife Fontella Frost have served as active chaplains for Fort Belvoir Fire and Emergency Services since 2015. Dwayne and Fontella both are certified firefighters as well and have a broad understanding of the fire service.

For DOD fire service agencies looking to bring in or develop a chaplain program within their organizations, The IAFC provides an exceptional guide titled “Developing a Successful Fire Chaplain Service in Your Fire Department”. Installations may also be able to access resources from their military chaplains.



Chaplain Dwayne Frost providing an invocation at an award ceremony.



Chaplains Dwayne and Fontella Frost providing services at a local award ceremony.