



Pennsylvania Fire Chaplain: an occasional Newsletter

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- Is an update on the Pennsylvania Fire Chaplains Network.
- Is a link to an article on the ministry of presence and news of upcoming training opportunities.

FACING THE DREADED EVENT: DEALING WITH A LINE OF DUTY DEATH NOTES FROM THE DELAWARE COUNTY FIREMEN'S ASSOCIATION

None of us wants a member of our company or department to be injured in the line of duty, let alone die in the line of duty. That does not mean it may not happen. As fire chiefs often pre-plan for calls in their first run area, it is good for us as chaplains to pre-plan for a line of duty death. What follows is information for you as a chaplain and does imply that you have to do it all. If your department does not have a plan in place to handle a LODD, you can use this information to help the department make a plan.

The good thing for us as we pre-plan is that we do not have to reinvent the wheel to do this. There are resources to help us prepare for this event. Procedures have already been established to tell us what to do, especially in order to make sure that the family of the member who died receives their benefits under the Public Safety Officers Benefits program. In addition, you and your department do not need to face this eventuality alone. A Line of Duty Death team of people from the Office of the State Fire Commissioner, county emergency services and firefighters is available in Pennsylvania can be called on to help. The purpose of these policies and assistance is to assist the family of the firefighter, the fire department and the local municipality.

When a LODD occurs, the following notifications must be made:

- The family of the firefighter must be notified first.
- The county emergency management agency which will in turn

notify the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency Emergency Operations Center.

- The county coroner must be notified that this is a LODD death. There is a particular autopsy protocol that must be followed.
- The county Critical Incident Stress Debriefing team.

When a LODD occurs the wishes of the family in terms of the type of funeral service must be followed. The company needs the family's permission to conduct an honors funeral service.

It is also important to appoint a public information officer who will gather information about the firefighter, including a picture, be a point of contact for the news media, issue press releases and hold a news conference.

This is only a brief summary of what happens after a LODD. More information is available from these sources:

[Office of the State Fire Commissioner LODD Resources](#)

[Pennsylvania LODD Benefits](#)

[Public Safety Officers Death Benefits](#)

[Fire Hero Learning Network - Taking Care of our Own](#) (requires registration at the Fire Hero Learning Network site)

[National Fallen Firefighters Foundation](#) (Information about the Taking Care of our Own class and LAST (Local Assistance State Teams) in the event of an LODD.

THE PENNSYLVANIA FIRE CHAPLAIN NETWORK

Have you joined the Pennsylvania Fire Chaplain Network yet? It's free. Ten of your colleagues have joined; it is time for you to join them. To join access the web site for the Network [The Pennsylvania Fire Chaplain Network](#). Here you will find the application for membership, a way to contact me, links to other resources and the newsletter. Remember, joining this year is free.

Who are the members of the Network? Our members are mostly clergy, though there are a couple lay chaplains in the group. Two are Christian and Missionary Alliance, two are Presbyterians (of one kind or another), three are United Church of Christ and one each Lutheran and Nazarene and two non-denominational.

One of our members, Kraig Morris, finds that being a chaplain is giving him a new understanding of what it means to be a Christian. He is getting to know the members of the company and non-members, as well as about the fire service and what it means to be a first responder. Kraig is retired from the Army Reserve. In addition to what he learned there, he has had training in domestic violence, basic survival and rescue and first aid/CPR. He says it is awesome to

be a part of something bigger than he is. Like some chaplains, he wears two hats in his company: chaplain and fire police.

Training Opportunities

[Emotional and Spiritual Care in Disasters](#). May 23 and 24, 2016 in Hermitage, PA

[Essentials of Fire Chaplaincy/Responding to Community Violence](#). June 2-4, 2016, New Brunswick, NJ.

[Federation of Fire Chaplains 2016 Conference](#), October 16-20, 2016, Perrysburg, OH.

Online Training

<https://www.fireherolearningnetwork.com>. Three classes offered through this website that would be of interest to chaplains are: Curbside Manner: Stress First Aid for the Street, Stress First Aid for Fire and EMS Personnel and Taking Care of Our Own (How to respond to LODD). These classes are free, though it is necessary to register on the website.

News From the Field

Chaplain Theodore Garro of the Corry Fire Department announces two upcoming events:

- July 9, 2016 at the Corry VFW, the second annual "Firefighter, Police and Military Appreciation Day" from 11:30 AM to 1 PM. There will be free hot dogs and drinks. The event is an opportunity for the citizens of Corry to thank firefighters, police and service members, as well as to raise funds for gas cards for the volunteer firefighters.
- September 11, 2016 at the Corry VFW, a ceremony to commemorate the 15th anniversary of 9/11. The service is at 3 PM. Community leaders, members of the Corry Fire Department, police and VFW will participate.

Events

[Fire Expo 2016](#) will be held in Harrisburg at the Farm Show Complex from May 20 to May 22, 2016. This year, John Long, Jr. a firefighter and fire chaplain from Anne Arundel County, Maryland will have a booth for the Federation of Fire Chaplains. There will be a representative from the Pennsylvania Fire Chaplains Network there on the 21st and 22d. If you attend the Expo, drop on by.

The Ministry of Presence

One of the important things that a chaplain does is be present to those to whom he ministers. This is recognized even by fire officers. *Fire Engineering* had a good article on the practice in 2014. [The Ministry of Presence](#).

We're on Facebook

Thirty nine people have liked the Pennsylvania Fire Chaplains Network Face Book page. Check out the page to see what I post that I think is of interest to fire chaplains.

Share Your Story

Every chaplain has a story about how they became a chaplain, about the challenges of being a fire department chaplain, about how God has used them. We can all profit from these stories by being encouraged, by learning, by realizing that we are not alone. Consider this an invitation to write for this newsletter so you don't have to read only what I think is important. Tell us about training you've had or training you know about. Share whatever you think will be good for other chaplains.

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