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**Chaplain**

**PLANNING AND ORGANIZING**

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This instruction implements AFD 52-1, *Chaplain Service*. It directs procedures that ensure the Air Force Chaplain Service is structured and organized to meet mission requirements. Send comments and suggested improvements on AF Form 847, Recommendation for Change of Publication, through channels, to SAF/AAIP, 170 Luke Avenue, Suite 300, Bolling AFB, DC 20032-5113. Any organization may supplement this volume. Major commands (MAJCOM), field operating agencies (FOA), and direct reporting units (DRU) send one copy of their supplement to SAF/AAIP, 170 Luke Avenue, Suite 300, Bolling AFB DC 20332-5113; other commands furnish one copy of each supplement to the next higher headquarters. Ensure that all records created as a result of processes prescribed in this publication are maintained in accordance with AFD 37-1, *Information Management* and AFMAN 37-123, *Management of Records* and disposed of in accordance with the Air Force *Records Disposition Schedule (RDS)* located at <https://webrims.amc.af.mil>

**SUMMARY OF REVISIONS**

**This document is substantially revised and must be completely reviewed.**

This revision clarifies the noncombatant status of the chaplain and the parameters of privileged communication. It outlines: specific noncombatant behavior including the prohibition on carrying arms or ammunition; the required use of the Geneva Conventions armband and noncombatant identity card; guidelines and requirements for military chaplains in service to detainees or prisoners of war. It clarifies the relationship of privileged communication to the obligation of confidentiality and sets an ethical standard for chaplains who receive confidential information. It establishes that only the counselee may release a chaplain from confidentiality with a written release and requires any request for chaplain's testimony or cooperation in investigations to be made through the chaplain's functional chain of command. Storage requirements for protected information (privileged, professional and sensitive communications) are standardized. A standard is established for dereliction of duty and failure to meet standards for noncom-

batant or confidentiality violations. Standardized duty titles are incorporated and become an inspection item.

**1. Chaplain Service Planning and Organizing.** This instruction implements AFD 52-1, *Chaplain Service*.

**2. Chaplain Service Personnel:**

2.1. **Chaplains.** As visible reminders of the Holy, chaplains directly (provide) or indirectly (provide for) support the free exercise of religion for all members of the Military Services, their dependents, and other authorized persons. Chaplains provide spiritual care and ethical leadership. Chaplains do not perform duties incompatible with their faith group tenets, professional role, or noncombatant status. Chaplains will not serve in any military capacity other than those specific duties contained in the 52RX Specialty Code found in AFMAN 36-2105, *Officer Classification*.

2.1.1. **Titles.**

2.1.1.1. Use title and rank (Chaplain, rank name) in official correspondence.

2.1.1.2. Address chaplains as “chaplain” regardless of rank.

2.1.1.3. Chaplains may be addressed by traditional or denominational titles.

2.1.2. **Standardized Duty Titles.** The standardization of duty titles assists Chaplain Service (CS) officer career progression and clearly defines duty distinctions.

2.1.2.1. **Headquarters Air Force (HQ USAF).**

2.1.2.1.1. **Chief of the Chaplain Service.** A chaplain in the grade of major general directly responsible to the CSAF for all USAF CS programs and personnel.

2.1.2.1.2. **Deputy Chief of the Chaplain Service.** A chaplain in the grade of brigadier general assigned as deputy to the Chief of the Chaplain Service.

2.1.2.1.3. **Chief (Insert division name).** A chaplain responsible for a HQ USAF/HC or CSI division.

2.1.2.1.3.1. **Director, Chaplain Service Institute.** A chaplain in the grade of colonel, responsible for directing CS education and training programs. Receives functional guidance from HQ USAF/HC and administrative oversight from HQ AETC/HC. Reports to AU/CPD.

2.1.2.1.3.2. **Chief, CS Resource Board.** A chaplain responsible to HQ USAF/HC Plans & Programs Division Chief for support of the CS.

2.1.2.1.4. **Staff Chaplain (Insert area of responsibility).** A chaplain who performs specific portions of a HQ USAF CS mission. This includes CSI and CS Resource Board chaplains.

2.1.2.2. **MAJCOM.**

2.1.2.2.1. **Command Chaplain.** A chaplain in the grade of colonel responsible to a MAJCOM/CC for the CS programs and personnel of a specific USAF MAJCOM.

2.1.2.2.2. **Deputy Command Chaplain.** May be used in MAJCOMs with at least two authorized O-6 positions.

2.1.2.2.3. **Chief (Insert division name).** A chaplain, responsible for a HQ USAF CS Division.

2.1.2.2.4. **Staff Chaplain (Insert area of responsibility).** A chaplain who performs specific portions of a HQ USAF CS mission.

2.1.2.3. **DRU.**

2.1.2.3.1. **11th Wing.** Same as Wing Chaplain.

2.1.2.3.2. **United States Air Force Academy.** Same as FOA.

2.1.2.4. **FOA. Air Intelligence Agency; Air National Guard; Air Reserve Personnel Center, DPAH. (List not inclusive)**

2.1.2.4.1. **Senior Staff Chaplain.** A chaplain responsible for the Chaplain Service programs and personnel of an AF FOA

2.1.2.4.2. **Chief (Insert division name).** A chaplain, responsible for a HQ USAF CS Division

2.1.2.4.3. **Staff Chaplain (Insert area of responsibility).** A chaplain who performs specific portions of a HQ USAF CS.

2.1.2.5. **Wing.**

2.1.2.5.1. **Wing Chaplain.** A chaplain responsible to the Wing/CC for all CS programs and personnel of a specific USAF wing.

2.1.2.5.2. **Deputy Wing Chaplain.** In situations where the Wing Chaplain is in the grade of colonel or (colonel select) and a lieutenant colonel is designated as Deputy Wing Chaplain.

2.1.2.5.3. **Senior (Insert area of responsibility) Chaplain.** A chaplain (grade of Major or above) responsible for a major CS wing program (e.g., faith group, unit ministries, hospital, flight line, etc.) and supervises at least one active duty chaplain within that same program area of responsibility.

2.1.2.5.4. **Chaplain.** A chaplain responsible to the Wing Chaplain for CS ministries.

2.1.2.5.5. **Special Assistant to the Wing Chaplain.** A chaplain designated "Special Assistant to the Wing Chaplain." MAJCOM/HC approval is required.

2.1.2.6. **Base/Installation.**

2.1.2.6.1. **Base/Installation Chaplain.** The chaplain responsible for the CS ministry at a base/installation.

2.1.2.6.2. **Chaplain.** A chaplain responsible to the base/installation chaplain for CS ministry.

2.1.3. **Noncombatant Status.** Chaplains are noncombatants and will not be placed in any duty status that compromises their status as noncombatants.

2.1.3.1. Chaplains do not and will not bear arms. Chaplains do not transport or carry weapons and/or ammunition under any circumstance. Chaplains must also avoid engaging in other traditional combatant activities, e.g., assisting in planning military actions, conveying military intelligence, and directing response to hostile fire, etc.

2.1.3.2. In training exercises, deployments, and combat environments chaplains wear the Geneva Conventions brassard (armband) and carry the Geneva Conventions Identity Card (DD Form 1934) to identify themselves as noncombatants. Chaplains are issued the “Geneva Conventions Identity Card for Medical and Religious Personnel Who Serve In or Accompany the Armed Forces.”

2.1.3.2.1. The Geneva Conventions brassard is a water-resistant white armband, 4 inches in width and 17-20 inches in length. Out of respect for the neutrality of the Swiss nation under whose auspices the Geneva Conventions were initiated, the armband bears on its exposed side a single red cross, 3 inches in height and width. On the interior side, the armband bears the seal of the issuing authority, “The United States Air Force Chaplain Service.” The brassard is worn on the left sleeve of the outer garment, with the bottom edge of the brassard approximately 2 inches above the elbow with the Red Cross facing away from the body.

2.1.4. **Chaplains in a Combat Environment.** Chaplains will refrain from all activities that could be interpreted as combatant behavior or that could compromise the noncombatant status of other chaplains in the field. Display the Geneva Conventions emblem outside the chapel facility.

2.1.5. **Non-compliance with noncombatant status.** Violations of the chaplain’s obligations as a noncombatant constitute a dereliction of duty as well as a failure to meet Air Force standards with resulting consequences. This does not exclude any actions that may be taken against a chaplain under the provisions of the Uniformed Code of Military Justice (UCMJ).

2.1.6. **Troop Commanders.** Chaplains do not serve as troop commanders.

2.1.7. **Courts Martial.** Chaplains do not serve as court members.

2.1.7.1. Any request for a chaplain to testify at official investigations, proceedings and/or courts martial will be elevated through the chaplain’s functional chain of command.

2.1.7.1.1. Chaplains are to exercise extreme caution when appearing as a witness in any official proceedings, including courts-martial. The requirements outlined in Paragraphs **4.1**, **4.1.1**, and **4.1.2** below are to be followed diligently.

2.1.8. **Summary Court Officer on Death of a chaplain.** At the death of a chaplain, the commander appoints only a chaplain to carry out the responsibilities of a summary court officer to safeguard the confidentiality of professional communications (Title 10 U.S.C. 9712 (b), AFI 34-244).

2.1.9. **Military Chaplains in service to detainees or Enemy Prisoners of War (EPW).** The requirements of the Geneva Conventions are to be followed diligently in the spiritual care of detainees and EPWs.

2.1.9.1. The senior chaplain is to brief the commander on his/her obligation to provide for religious needs of detainees or EPW.

2.1.9.2. Military chaplains assist and support retained ministers and substitute ministers in

facilitating the requirements and needs of these ministers in the spiritual care of detainees and/or EPWs.

2.1.9.2.1. “Retained” ministers are those who have been detained with EPW or taken with other detainees in custody. Military chaplains will facilitate and expedite the requirements and needs of these retained ministers in the spiritual care of detainees and/or EPWs.

2.1.9.2.2. “Substitute” ministers are used when EPWs or detainees do not have the assistance of a retained minister of their particular faith-group. It is the obligation of the installation commander to secure substitute ministers according to the procedures outlined in Article 37, “Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War August 12, 1949 (Geneva Convention III)”. The military chaplain facilitates the procedures the commander must follow to secure such substitute ministers.

2.1.9.3. The military chaplain normally will not serve as a substitute minister to detainees or EPW, except in the case of emergency or special circumstance. He/she acts as an advisor to the commander and as a liaison with retained ministers or substitute ministers among the detainees and/or EPW.

2.2. **Chaplain Assistants.** As a visible reminder of the Holy, chaplain assistants are assigned at all levels of command to provide comprehensive ministry support. The chaplain assistant specialty description is specified in AFMAN 36-2108, *Airman Classification*. Chaplain assistants are trained and tasked to provide mission essential ministry support during training exercises, deployments, and combat environments.

2.2.1. **Chaplain Assistant Duty Restrictions.** Chaplain assistants are exempt from details or duties that impede Chaplain Service mission accomplishment.

2.2.2. **Combatant Status.** Chaplain assistants are combatants and are responsible for providing security for chaplains.

2.3. **Resource Personnel.** The wing chaplain (or chaplain-in-charge) authorizes and directs qualified resource personnel to provide for religious program needs assigned chaplain service personnel cannot meet. The wing chaplain (or chaplain-in-charge) develops performance agreements with all resource personnel and reviews needs, qualifications, and performance agreements annually.

2.3.1. **Auxiliary Chaplains.** Auxiliary Chaplains must meet the same educational requirements as Air Force chaplains and be approved in writing by their religious bodies. Exceptions must be approved in writing by MAJCOM/HC and kept on file.

2.3.2. **Air Reserve Components (ARC).** ARC members do not wear the uniform, receive credit points, or earn military pay while serving as paid resource persons.

2.3.3. **Special Resource Personnel.** The Wing chaplain (or chaplain-in-charge) authorizes qualified resource personnel to perform a program, religious service, rite, or support function for specific documented needs.

2.4. **Reporting Death and Illness of Chaplain Service Personnel.** Wing chaplains (or chaplains-in-charge) at all levels report to the next functional level the death, hospitalization or resulting convalescence, or serious illness of Chaplain Service personnel and their family members. Reports are made within 24 hours.

2.5. **Chapel Organizations.** Wing chaplains (or chaplains-in-charge), working with their staffs and advisory groups, establish and support organizations to enhance the Chaplain Service mission. These organizations are a part of the Chaplain Service program. They are not private organizations and do not require charters.

3. **Religious Observance.** The Chaplain Service is responsible for religious observances on Air Force bases, installations, and sites.

3.1. **Religious Accommodation.** The Chaplain Service accommodates requests for chaplain services and/or support for religious practices unless the specific accommodation is logistically impossible, or contrary to good order and discipline prohibited by law or policy. If a specific request is denied, Chaplain Service members remain responsible for pursuing alternative means for accommodation.

3.2. **Religious Services.**

3.2.1. **Religious Holy Days.** Chaplains perform or provide Holy Day observances and advise commanders, first sergeants, and other military and civilian leaders regarding these observances.

3.2.2. **Worship.** The wing chaplain (or chaplain-in-charge) and staff, plan, schedule and implement worship opportunities in response to local need assessments, religious requirements, staff capabilities, and available resources.

3.2.2.1. Chaplains will conduct services that are within the scope of their personal faith tenets and religious convictions.

3.2.2.2. Chaplains will lead worship services that target a broad population possessing common beliefs and desiring a specific style of worship. The terms "liturgical," "traditional," "contemporary," "gospel," "praise," "evangelical," or "charismatic" are used to identify exclusively chaplain-led worship of a particular style designed to meet the needs inclusive of several denominations and/or a broad population. Chaplain leadership ensures attentiveness to needs and sensitivity to the diversity of those attending these worship services. Services must be advertised and promoted by style, character, and doctrinal content.

3.2.2.3. Where there is a need for worship the assigned chaplains cannot provide, the Chaplain Service staff will be augmented with qualified and capable personnel. The following is the process to obtain worship leaders:

3.2.2.3.1. Non-chaplain worship leaders must provide letters of certification from a religious organization recognized by the Armed Forces Chaplains Board (AFCB). (c.f., DODD 1304.19 and DODDI 1304.28).

3.2.2.3.2. In those instances where someone other than a chaplain is authorized to conduct worship, the wing chaplain (or chaplain-in-charge) will:

3.2.2.3.2.1. Fully brief the worship leader in writing on requirements, restrictions, prohibitions, and expectations. The wing chaplain and worship leader will sign this document. Maintain this documentation and certification of the worship leader in official files.

#### 4. Pastoral Care.

4.1. **Privileged Communication.** The privilege of total confidentiality in communications with a chaplain is an essential component of the chaplain's ministry. Privileged communication is protected communication. It is any communication given to a chaplain in trust by an individual, to include Enemy Prisoners of War (EPW), if such communication is made either as a formal act of religion or as a matter of conscience.

4.1.1. **Obligation to confidentiality.** The privilege of confidentiality belongs to the individual counselee. From the counselee's right to privileged communication flows the chaplain's obligation to maintain confidentiality.

4.1.1.1. The "Code of Ethics for Chaplains of the Armed Services" affirms that all chaplains will hold in confidence any privileged communication received during the conduct of his/her ministry. The manual for Courts-Martial further affirms the absolute character of such privileged communication within the context of judicial proceedings and investigations.

4.1.1.2. The privilege against disclosure belongs to the counselee. The privilege extends beyond the death of the counselee and may not be waived by anyone.

4.1.2. **Release from privileged communication.** Under no circumstances may a chaplain disclose privileged communication revealed in the practices of his/her ministry without the individual counselee's informed, written consent. The counselee's written consent must be signed, dated, and witnessed by a disinterested third party.

4.1.2.1. A release from privileged communication is inapplicable to cases where a chaplain is bound by the requirements of sacramental confession.

4.1.3. **Professional Information.** Information received or collected by a chaplain in performing his/her ministry or in fulfilling the requirements of his/her faith-group is considered privileged communication.

4.1.4. **Sensitive Information.** Sensitive information is any non-privileged communications that would be an inappropriate subject for general dissemination to a third party (e.g., attendance at substance abuse clinics, treatment by counselors, prior arrests). Sensitive information will be protected and handled confidentially by all chapel staff.

4.1.5. **Protected Information Files.** Chaplains' notes from privileged communication are to be clearly marked "Confidential: Privileged Communication" and distinguished in the chaplain's personal files from professional information and sensitive information. Protected information files shall be properly secured and safeguarded protecting them from inadvertent disclosure. When privileged or sensitive information is stored in digital form, the digital media must not reside permanently on government computers.

4.1.6. **Chapel Staff and Privileged Communication.** Persons assisting clergy, e.g., chaplain assistants and secretaries must avoid receiving privileged communications and should never receive privileged communications voluntarily. Every effort must be made to insure that persons seeking spiritual advice or counseling disclose privileged information only to chaplains.

4.1.7. **Privileged Communication between Chaplain Supervisors and Subordinates.** Chaplain supervisors are to avoid entering into privileged communication with subordinates on their

staff. Staff members are encouraged to exercise this privilege with a chaplain outside their chain of command when such communication is needed.

**4.1.8. Violation of Privileged Communication.** Actions inconsistent with the policies/standards outlined above will constitute a failure to meet Air Force standards and may result in administrative or Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) action as set forth in AFI 52-102, para 7.2.

**4.1.9. Incompatible Taskings.** Commanders will not require a chaplain to serve in a capacity in which the chaplain may later be called upon to reveal privileged or sensitive information.

**4.1.10. Official and Private File Systems.** Privileged communication, professional communications and sensitive information files are the personal files of the individual (counselor) chaplain. These files are not to be maintained in any system of records that may be subject to the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. § 552. Chaplains will personally dispose of them and ensure their destruction through a secure means (e.g. shredder). Chaplains must secure and safeguard file copies (paper, computer files, message storage devices, and all forms of electronic media) containing privileged communications and sensitive information.

**4.2. Death Notifications:** Chaplains are members of the notification team. They provide pastoral care and support for both next-of-kin and death notification team members.

**4.3. Religious Education Curricula.** Wing/Base/Installation chaplains, in consultation with their staffs, approve curricula for religious education to meet the assessed needs of religious communities. Curricula will not denigrate any religious group.

**4.4. Religious Literature.** Wing/Base/Installation chaplains, in consultation with their staffs, approve the display and distribution of religious literature to inform and educate the base population. Literature will not denigrate any religious group.

**5. Advising Leadership.** CS personnel advise military leaders in all matters pertaining to religious conviction and expression, and the accommodation of practices arising from religious faith, ethical decision-making, and moral reasoning. CS personnel at all echelons will provide to leaders:

5.1. Advice consistent with their role as visible reminders of the Holy.

5.2. Analysis of religious demographics and associated requirements.

5.3. Frequent updates on the spiritual health of the community and opportunities for religious expression.

5.4. Advice regarding public prayer, memorials, prayer at official functions and meetings, visits by ecclesiastical endorsing agencies, and relations with civilian religious leaders and communities.

**6. Cultural Diversity.** The CS values diversity. Diversity makes us stronger, innovative, vibrant and more effective. Leadership at all echelons will demonstrate and foster respect for all.

**7. Chaplain Service Sustainment.** Chaplain Service sustainment is realized by successfully achieving global ministry strategies.

**7.1. Air Force Form 1270 and 1270a:** Global ministry strategies are measured, and become a matter of record, at all levels using AF Form 1270, Chaplain Service Satisfaction Surveys, and AF Form 1270a, Chaplain Service Statistical Report. See [Table 1](#).

**Table 1. Chaplain Service Sustainment (Evaluations) Timeline.**

<i>SUSTAINMENT EVALUATION TIMELINE</i>	
<b>MONTH</b>	<b>AF Form 1270 ACTION</b>
January	MAJCOM/FOA/DRU/HC submit compiled annual AF Form 1270a to AF/HC -Non-Deployed Locations -Deployed Locations
February	
March	1. Wing chaplains (or chaplains-in-charge) collect data on AF Task Listings Tasks 2. Wing chaplains (or chaplains-in-charge) collect data to calculate Planning, Programming, and Budget data
April	
May	
June	
July	
August	
September	
October	1. Wing chaplains (or chaplains-in-charge) distribute Customer Satisfaction Surveys -Leadership -Unit Personnel -Parishioners 2. Wing chaplains (or chaplains-in-charge) collect data on AF Task Listings
November	1. Wing chaplains (or chaplains-in-charge) tabulate Customer Satisfaction Surveys 2. Wing chaplains (or chaplains-in-charge) conduct and tabulate Mission Function Surveys
December	Wing chaplains (or chaplains-in-charge) complete AF Form 1270 and submit results per MAJCOM/FOA/DRU/HC requirements

7.1.1. All levels (HQ USAF/HC, MAJCOM/FOA/DRU, and Wing) compile and consolidate annual AF Form 1270a (RCS: HAF-HCX(M)0401). AF Form 1270a data will be used for reporting statistics; Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System (PPBS) purposes; and evaluating needs to achieve global ministry strategies.

7.1.2. Deployed chaplains and chaplain assistants complete Sections II and V of AF Form 1270a ("hours spent" only) and forward them to permanently assigned MAJCOM/FOA/DRU. Only the senior chaplain for the deployed period will complete section VI. MAJCOM/FOA/DRU will compile and consolidate deployed AF Form 1270a annually, and submit them with non-deployed AF Form 1270a.

**8. Form Prescribed.** AF Form 1270, Chaplain Service Satisfaction Surveys, and AF Form 1270a, Chaplain Service Statistical Report.

LORRAINE K. POTTER, Chaplain, Major General, USAF  
Chief of the Chaplain Service

**Attachment 1****GLOSSARY OF REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION*****References***

AFI 34-244, Disposition of Personal Property and Effects

AFI 38-101, Air Force Organization

AFMAN 36-2105, Officer Classification

AFMAN 36-2108, Airman Classification

AFMAN 37-123, Records of Management

AFPD 37-1, Air Force Information Management

AFPD 52-1, Chaplain Service

United States Code, Title 10, Sec 9712, Disposition of effects of deceased persons by summary court-martial

***Abbreviations and Acronyms***

**AFI**—Air Force Instruction

**AFMAN**—Air Force Manual

**AFCB**—Armed Forces Chaplains Board

**AFPD**—Air Force Policy Directive

**ARC**—Air Reserve Component

**CS**—Chaplain Service

**DRU**—Direct Reporting Unit

**DPAH**—Directorate of Personnel Actions, Chaplain Service

**FOA**—Field Operating Agency

**MAJCOM**—Major Command

**PPBS**—Planning, Programming and Budgeting System

**RCS**—Reports Control Symbol

**USC**—United States Code

***Terms***

**NOTE:** The purpose of this glossary is to help the reader understand the terms used in this publication. It is not intended to encompass all pertinent terms.

**Auxiliaries**—Clergy meeting educational requirements equivalent to Air Force chaplains who, with the approval of their religious bodies, are authorized by a Wing chaplain (or chaplain-in-charge) to provide spiritual care.

**Base**—A locality from which operations are projected or supported.

**Chaplain Assistants**—Enlisted support members of the Chaplain Service with Air Force Specialty Code 5R0 whose description is specified in AFMAN 36-2108.

**Holy Days**—Occasions of special religious significance during which worship, rites, sacraments, or other religious observances are required and/or conducted.

**Religious Demographics**—Data collected to determine religious program needs at a given location. May address various population groups (i.e. national, regional, military, base, deployed site, etc.) from the perspective of religious affiliations, requirements, accommodations and practices.

**Supervise(s)**—indicates responsibility as the individual(s) rating official, as well as direct supervisory responsibility.