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**Chaplain**

**CHAPLAIN SERVICE**

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As stated in DoDD 1300.17, *Accommodation of Religious Practices Within the Military Services*, a basic principle of our nation is the free exercise of religion. The Air Force places a high value on the rights of its members to observe the tenets of their respective religions. In addition, spiritual health is fundamental to the well being of Air Force personnel and their families and essential for operational success. In accordance with DoDD 1304.19, *Appointment of Chaplains for the Military Departments*, chaplains assist commanders in providing for the free exercise of religion in the context of military service and serve as the principal advisors to commanders regarding the impact of religion on military operations. This directive establishes policy for active duty, Air Reserve Component (ARC), and civilian personnel in fulfilling the mission of the Chaplain Service.

**SUMMARY OF CHANGES**

This revision defines the current mission, strategy, responsibilities and authorities of the Air Force Chaplain Service and identifies its core competencies and core processes. AF Forms 1270 and 1270A have been simplified and incorporated into AFI 52-101, *Chaplain Service Planning and Organizing*. Additionally, the joint concept of Religious Support Teams is included and defined.

**1. Mission.** The Air Force Chaplain Service provides spiritual care and the opportunity for Air Force members, their families, and other authorized personnel to exercise their Constitutional right to the free exercise of religion.

1.1. **Core Competencies.** The essential capabilities of the Chaplain Service for mission accomplishment are spiritual care and advice to Air Force leadership.

1.2. **Core Processes.** The Chaplain Service (1) conducts religious observances, (2) provides pastoral care, and (3) offers advice to leaders on spiritual, ethical, moral, morale, and religious accommodation issues.

**2. Strategy.** The Chaplain Service uses the Global Ministry process to accomplish its mission. Global Ministry is a flexible and responsive process employed at home-based and deployed settings. Chaplain Service teams assess local spiritual and religious needs and identify resources to develop a location-specific plan of spiritual care. Global Ministry requires awareness of, and sensitivity to, the diverse religious needs of Air Force members.

**3. Responsibilities and Authorities.** This directive establishes the following responsibilities and authorities:

3.1. The Chief of Chaplains, HQ USAF/HC, develops functional doctrine and policy and provides oversight of all Air Force Chaplain Service echelons.

3.1.1. The HQ USAF/HC staff provides support to the Chief of Chaplains and advice on issues impacting the Air Force and the Chaplain Service.

3.1.2. The Chaplain Service Council (CSC) is the senior consultative body in support of the Chief of Chaplains and ensures effective communication throughout the Chaplain Service.

3.1.3. The HQ USAF/HC Policy Development Working Group (PDWG) reviews Chaplain Service policy and proposes changes to the Chief of Chaplains.

3.1.4. The HQ USAF/HC Chaplain Service Readiness Working Group (RWG) serves as an advisory body for the Chief of Chaplains and recommends readiness initiatives consistent with Air Force deliberate and crisis action planning.

3.2. Major Command (MAJCOM), Field Operating Agency (FOA), and Direct Reporting Unit (DRU) chaplains, in consultation with their staffs, implement Chaplain Service policies and provide functional oversight of Chaplain Service personnel within their commands. They provide feedback to the Chief of Chaplains and guidance to their wing/installation Chaplain Service personnel.

3.3. Wing/Installation chaplains, in consultation with the chapel NCOIC and other assigned Chaplain Service personnel, design and implement Chaplain Service programs to meet the spiritual and religious needs of assigned Air Force members, their families and other authorized personnel. Wing/Installation chaplains serve as the primary advisors for commanders on religious accommodation issues. They provide feedback to the MAJCOM chaplain and guidance to the Chaplain Service teams they lead.

3.4. Chaplain functions are performed by qualified commissioned Air Force officers designated as chaplains IAW Title 10, United States Code, Section 8067 (h).

3.4.1. Chaplains implement the Global Ministry process by providing religious observances, pastoral care, and offering advice to leadership on spiritual, ethical, moral, morale, and religious accommodation issues.

3.4.2. Consistent with DoD and Air Force policy, chaplains adhere to the requirements of their endorsing religious organizations while providing for the spiritual and religious needs of all Air Force members, their families, and other authorized personnel.

3.5. Chaplain assistants implement the Global Ministry process through support of spiritual ministry primarily in the areas of religious observances and pastoral care. Chaplain assistants are specifically trained to understand religious sensitivities and the pluralistic environment of the Air Force.

3.6. Religious Support Teams (RST) are comprised of at least one chaplain and one chaplain assistant, working together at any echelon.

4. See [Attachment 1](#) for Glossary of References and Supporting Information.

Michael W. Wynne  
Secretary of the Air Force

## Attachment 1

### GLOSSARY OF REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

#### *References*

Title 10, United States Code, *Armed Forces*, Sections 8067(h) & 8581

Department of Defense Directive (DoDD) 1300.17, *Accommodation of Religious Practices Within the Military Services*, February 3, 1988

Department of Defense Directive (DoDD) 1304.19, *Appointment of Chaplains for the Military Departments*, June 11, 2004

Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 1304.28, *Guidance for the Appointment of Chaplains for the Military Departments*, June 11, 2004

JP 1-05, *Religious Support in Joint Operations*, June 9, 2004

AFDD 2-4, *Combat Support Doctrine*

Air Force War and Mobilization Plan (WMP) I, Annex X, *Chaplain*, March 1995

#### *Abbreviations and Acronyms*

**AFDD**—Air Force Doctrine Document

**RST**—Religious Support Team

**WMP**—War and Mobilization Plan

#### *Terms*

**Global Ministry**—At each location where Chaplain Service personnel are assigned, ministry is uniquely shaped by local conditions and the assessed religious and spiritual needs of Air Force members, their families, and other authorized personnel. Global Ministry's primary attributes include flexible, needs-based ministry, sensitivity to the religiously pluralistic environment, and Chaplain Service personnel working together to meet the spiritual and religious needs of people.

**Operational Readiness**—The capability of a unit/formation, ship, weapon system or equipment to perform the missions or functional tasks for which it is organized or designed. May be used in a general sense or to express a level or degree of readiness.

**Religious Accommodation**—Allowing for an individual or group religious practice. It is Air Force policy that we will accommodate free exercise of religion and other personal beliefs, as well as freedom of expression, except as must be limited by compelling military necessity (with such limitations being imposed in the least restrictive manner feasible). Commanders should ensure that requests for religious accommodation are welcomed and dealt with as fairly and consistently as practicable throughout their commands. They should be approved unless approval would have a real, not hypothetical, adverse impact on military readiness, unit cohesion, standards, or discipline. Avoidance of schedule conflicts between official activities and religious observances can enhance unit effectiveness and demonstrate mutual respect.

**Spiritual Health**—A vital component of human wellness. It is that within us which motivates us in life and gives us strength and resiliency. It addresses questions such as meaning, purpose, values, self-worth, dignity, and hope. It promotes healthy interpersonal relationships, responsible living and the ability to respond effectively to stress, hardship, and tragedy. Spiritual health is not synonymous with religious health. An individual's spiritual health may, by personal choice, incorporate religious belief, just as it may be grounded in other concepts such as patriotism or the common good.