

CHAPTER 1
POLICY
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CHAPTER 1

POLICY

1. DEPARTMENTAL AUTHORITY. The Volunteer Chaplain Program (VCP) is administered by the Employee Health and Wellness Section (EHWS), which oversees operations, strategic development, and coordination with Executive Management. The program provides statewide support through Division-level coordination, volunteer leadership, and standardized training. The VCP is comprised of the EHWS commander, VCP coordinator, Statewide Liaison Chaplain, Division Lead Chaplains, and Volunteer Area Chaplains.

2. POLICY.

a. The VCP shall be composed solely of volunteers from accredited chaplaincy programs. Chaplains must possess an ecclesiastical certification in good standing and a minimum of two years of ministry or counseling experience.

b. Applicants shall complete a sensitive position background investigation and meet all departmental requirements as referenced in Chapter 3, Personnel and Administrative Procedures.

c. Participation in the VCP does not replace any required critical incident stress debriefings (CISDs).

d. The program is not a substitute for professional counseling.

e. Use of Chaplain services is voluntary.

f. All Chaplains shall sign and adhere to the CHP 561, Chaplain Code of Conduct.

g. Departmental employees shall not serve as Chaplains within this program.

h. The Department's VCP shall be open to all eligible Chaplains and shall not discriminate against anyone because of race, sex, color, religion, national origin, political affiliation, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, or disability.

i. All Chaplains shall abide by the contents of HPM 10.3, Personnel Transactions Manual, Chapter 14, Inconsistent and Incompatible Activities. With regard to paragraph 17 in Annex A of Chapter 14, Chaplains are not restricted from having a financial interest in an activity regulated by the Department. However, the volunteer will not be permitted to engage in any activity for this Department that

would create a conflict of interest between their business entity and their assigned duties.

j. Communication between departmental members and Chaplains are privileged and protected under Sections 917 and 1030–1034 of the California Evidence Code. Chaplains shall maintain clergy-penitent privilege except where legally required.

3. OBJECTIVES.

a. The California Highway Patrol VCP provides spiritual and emotional support to departmental personnel.

b. The program enhances officer wellness, promotes resilience, and functions as a supplemental wellness resource under the oversight of EHWS.

c. Chaplains serve employees of all backgrounds without proselytizing or imposing personal beliefs.

d. The program provides statewide support through Division-level coordination, volunteer leadership, and standardized training.