

**BY ORDER OF THE  
SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE**

**AIR FORCE POLICY DIRECTIVE 52-1**

**19 DECEMBER 2013**



**Chaplain**

**CHAPLAIN CORPS**

**COMPLIANCE WITH THIS PUBLICATION IS MANDATORY**

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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 is essential for operational success. DoDD 1304.19, *Appointment of Chaplains for the Military Departments*, Section 4.1, requires commanders to provide for the free exercise of religion; chaplains are the commander's resource to accomplish this task and serve "as the principal advisors regarding the impact of religion on military operations." As stated in DoDI 1300.17, *Accommodation of Religious Practices Within the Military Services*, the U.S. Constitution proscribes Congress from enacting any law prohibiting the free exercise of religion. Further, JP 1-05, *Religious Affairs in Joint Operations*, states, chaplains advise the commander and staff on "moral and ethical decision making, and morale and personnel issues, may advise on religious dynamics within the operational area and sometimes may be tasked with certain liaison functions."

This directive implements DoD Instruction (DoDI) 1300.17, *Accommodation of Religious Practices Within the Military Services* and is consistent with the policy in DoD Directive (DoDD) 1304.19, *Appointment of Chaplains for the Military Departments*. This publication is applicable for active duty, Air Reserve Component (ARC) and civilian personnel in fulfilling the mission of the Chaplain Corps. Ensure that all records created as a result of processes prescribed in this publication are maintained in accordance with Air Force Manual (AFMAN) 33-363, *Management of Records* and disposed of in accordance with Air Force Records Information Management System (AFRIMS) Records Disposition Schedule (RDS). Refer recommended changes and conflicts between this and other publications to AF/HCX, 1380 Air Force Pentagon, Room 4D286, Washington, DC 20330-1380, on Air Force Form 847, *Recommendation for*

*Change of Publication;* route AF Forms 847 from the field through the appropriate functional chain of command.

## ***SUMMARY OF CHANGES***

This publication has been substantially revised and must be completely reviewed. Major changes include clarification of the Religious Support Team (RST) terminology, clarification of who is eligible to receive Chaplain Corps services and the relationship of the Chief of Chaplains to the Armed Forces Chaplains Board.

### **1. Overview.**

1.1. 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 is essential for operational success.

1.2. DoDD 1304.19, Section 4.1, requires commanders to provide for the free exercise of religion; chaplains are the commanders' resource to accomplish this task and serve "as the principal advisors to commanders regarding the impact of religion on military operations." As stated in DoDI 1300.17, the U.S. Constitution proscribes Congress from enacting any law prohibiting the free exercise of religion. Further, JP 1-05, *Religious Affairs in Joint Operations*, states, chaplains advise the commander and staff on moral and ethical decision making, morale and personnel issues and religious dynamics within the operational area. Chaplains may also be tasked with certain liaison functions.

### **2. Policy.**

2.1. The Air Force Chaplain Corps provides spiritual care and ensures all Airmen and their families have opportunities to exercise their constitutional right to the free exercise of religion.

2.2. Core Capabilities. The core capabilities of the Chaplain Corps are:

2.2.1. Spiritual Care. Meeting the diverse spiritual needs of Airmen and their families.

2.2.2. Advise Leadership. Inform Air Force leaders on matters related to religious, spiritual, ethical, moral and morale concerns and advocate for the religious and spiritual needs of Airmen and their families.

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

3.1. Secretary of the Air Force (SecAF). Retains ultimate responsibility for all policies related to the Department of the Air Force.

3.2. Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs (SAF/MR). Serves as the agent of the Secretary and provides guidance, direction and oversight for all matters pertaining to the formulation, review and execution of plans, policies and programs addressing religious, ethical and quality of life programs.

3.3. Assistant Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force (VCSAF). Serves as the immediate supervisor of the Chief of Chaplains.

3.4. Chief of Chaplains. Principal advisor for religious matters to the SecAF and Chief of Staff of the Air Force (CSAF) and is responsible for recruiting, organizing, training and equipping Chaplain Corps personnel.

3.4.1. Develops tactical doctrine and guidance providing oversight of Air Force Chaplain Corps echelons to meet the religious and spiritual needs of Air Force members, their dependents and other authorized personnel.

3.4.2. Serves on the Armed Forces Chaplains Board (AFCB) in accordance with DoDI 5120.08, *Armed Forces Chaplains Board*.

3.5. Deputy Chief of Chaplains. Assists the Chief of Chaplains in establishing guidance on all matters pertaining to the religious and spiritual welfare of Air Force personnel and their dependents and directing and maintaining a trained, equipped and professional Chaplain Corps.

3.6. Chaplains.

3.6.1. Chaplains are qualified clergy, who are commissioned as Air Force officers in accordance with Title 10, United States Code, Section 8067(h).

3.6.2. Chaplains must adhere to the requirements of their endorsing religious organizations.

3.6.3. Chaplains lead Religious Support Teams (RSTs)

3.7. Chaplain Assistants.

3.7.1. As non-clergy members of the Air Force Chaplain Corps, chaplain assistants are specifically trained to function in a pluralistic environment in a manner that serves all Airmen.

3.7.2. Chaplain assistants provide the following core capabilities: religious program management, advice to leadership, crisis intervention counseling and unit engagement.

**4. Religious Support Team (RST).** The RST is comprised of one Air Force Chaplain and one Chaplain Assistant at home station and deployed locations. RSTs are assigned and actively engaged in each squadron, advising leadership and providing warrior care that is sensitive to the needs of all Airmen.

**5. Senior Religious Support Team.** The highest ranking Chaplain and Chaplain Assistant determine ministry requirements and lead their RSTs to provide opportunities for worship, spiritual care and unit ministry across their area of responsibility.

ERIC K. FANNING  
Acting Secretary of the Air Force

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

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

DoDD 1304.19, *Appointment of Chaplains for the Military Departments*, 11 June 2004

DoDI 1300.17, *Accommodation of Religious Practices Within the Military Services*, 10 February 2009

DoDI 5120.08, *Armed Forces Chaplains Board*, 20 August 2007

JP 1-05, *Religious Affairs in Joint Operations*, 13 November 2009

***Adopted Forms***

AF Form 847, *Recommendation for Change of Publication*

***Abbreviations and Acronyms***

**AFCB**—Armed Forces Chaplains Board

**AFMAN**—Air Force Manual

**ARC**—Air Reserve Component

**CSAF**—Chief of Staff of the Air Force

**DoDD**—Department of Defense Directive

**DoDI**—Department of Defense Instruction

**DRU**—Direct Reporting Unit

**FOA**—Field Operating Agency

**MAJCOM**—Major Command

**RDS**—Records Disposition Schedule

**RST**—Religious Support Team

**SecAF**—Secretary of the Air Force

**VCSAF**—Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force

***Terms***

**Religious Accommodation**— Chaplain Corps personnel advise and assist commanders and supervisors in facilitating religious accommodation requests. In accordance with DoDI 1300.17, *Accommodation of Religious Practices Within the Military Services*, section 4, “it is DoD policy that requests for accommodation of religious practices should be approved by commanders when accommodation will not have an adverse impact on mission accomplishment, military readiness, unit cohesion, standards or discipline.”