



**DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY**  
**HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS**  
**3000 MARINE CORPS PENTAGON**  
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MARINE CORPS ORDER 1730.6F

From: Commandant of the Marine Corps  
To: Distribution List  
  
Subj: RELIGIOUS MINISTRY IN THE MARINE CORPS

Ref: (a) SECNAVINST 1730.7D  
(b) U.S. Navy Regulations, 1990  
(c) SECNAVINST 5351.1 CH-1  
(d) SECNAVINST 1730.9  
(e) SECNAVINST 1730.10  
(f) SECNAVINST 7010.6A  
(g) NTPP 1-05.2  
(h) DOD 5500.07-R  
(i) MCO P5800.16A W/CH 1-7  
(j) NAVPERS 18068-68B  
(k) MCRP 6-12B  
(l) MCO 5380.2  
(m) SECNAVINST 5211.5E  
(n) MCO 1738.1A  
(o) 10 U.S.C. 1789  
(p) MCO 3040.4  
(q) NAVMC 3500.85B  
(r) OPNAVINST 1414.4C  
(s) SECNAVINST 1412.10  
(t) BUPERSINST 1610.10D  
(u) SECNAVINST 1730.8B CH-1  
(v) SECNAV M-5210.1  
(w) 5 U.S.C. 552a

1. Situation. This Order implements reference (a). This is a complete revision and should be reviewed in its entirety.

2. Cancellation. MCO 1730.6E.

3. Mission. To publish policy, responsibilities, and procedures for the delivery of religious ministry in the United States Marine Corps (USMC).

4. Execution

a. Commander's Intent and Concept of Operations

(1) Commander's Intent

(a) To support the constitutional rights of Marines and authorized personnel with regard to religion through command religious programs (CRPs). These programs enhance the resilience of Service Members, civilians, and their families who form the foundation of Marine Corps readiness. The delivery of religious ministry is entrusted to Navy chaplains under the authority of commanders and commanding officers ("commanders").

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(b) In accordance with reference (a) and Articles 0817 and 0820 of reference (b), commanders will develop and strengthen the moral and spiritual well being of the personnel under their command and encourage and support chaplains in the performance of their duties.

(c) Commanders will establish a CRP which will include all religious and chaplain activities in the command. Navy chaplains are the only personnel authorized to supervise CRPs on behalf of commanders. If no chaplain is permanently or temporarily assigned, commanders will identify the religious requirements in their command and seek supervision of the CRP and appropriate religious ministry support from the next higher level of command with a permanently assigned chaplain through appropriate channels.

(d) The Navy Chaplain Corps (CHC), Navy chaplains, Religious Program Specialists (RPs), and the Religious Ministry Team (RMT) defined by this instruction assist commanders in the discharge of their CRP responsibilities.

(e) Uniformed chaplains of the Military Departments are the only chaplains authorized to deliver religious ministry in CRPs. Chaplains from foreign militaries may provide religious ministry in CRPs only when invited by the commander.

(f) Commanders are authorized to use RMTs to support refugees, displaced persons, and others outside the command who are affected by hostilities, disasters, or disruptions to civil authority. RMT support outside the command is limited to basic support of religious needs consistent with pertinent cultural concerns when authorized by the commander.

## (2) Concept of Operations

(a) Chief of Chaplains of the Navy. The Chief of Chaplains is the Director of Religious Ministry for the Department of the Navy. The organization and responsibilities of the Chief of Navy Chaplains are delineated in references (a) and (c).

(b) Chaplain of the Marine Corps. In accordance with reference (a), the Deputy Chief of Navy Chaplains / Chaplain of the Marine Corps (CoMC) is the executive agent for the Chief of Navy Chaplains on matters pertaining to the Marine Corps. The CoMC advises the Commandant of the Marine Corps and his staff on religious matters within the Marine Corps, and on the spiritual, moral, and ethical implications of USMC policies and actions, to include matters related to support, personnel, plans, programs, policy, and facilities within the Marine Corps. The CoMC has oversight of spiritual fitness in the Marine Corps.

(c) The Senior Religious Program Specialist Enlisted Leader. Serves as principal enlisted advisor to the Chaplain of the Marine Corps.

(d) Religious Ministry Team. A RMT is a chaplain-led team consisting of at least one chaplain and one RP. An RMT may be augmented by other personnel as described below.

### (e) Placement of RMT Personnel

1. When permanently attached to a general officer staff, the senior chaplain is assigned as a special staff officer to the commander under

the chief of staff. At all other commands, the permanently attached senior chaplain is assigned as a special staff officer to the commander under the executive officer.

2. When a command has a chaplain temporarily attached, the chaplain serves as a special assistant to the commander.

3. RPs are placed under the chaplain in the command's organizational structure. In circumstances warranting RP placement elsewhere, commanders should consult with the senior supervisory chaplain and senior RP.

4. Other members of the RMT are organized under the chaplain.

(f) Chaplain. Pursuant to references (a) and (c) through (e), a chaplain is a religious leader endorsed by a religious organization (RO), commissioned as a Naval officer, and authorized by the Chief of Chaplains to deliver religious ministry in the Department of the Navy (DON). Pursuant to article 1063 of reference (b), chaplains are noncombatants. They are not authorized to obtain weapon qualifications or warfare qualifications or to bear arms in the performance of their duties. Chaplains do not participate in activities that compromise their status as noncombatants or violate the tenets of their RO. In accordance with reference (d), Chaplains protect confidential communications. Chaplains are also responsible to:

1. Assess command religious ministry requirements, develop the CRP to meet identified religious ministry requirements, and manage all religious ministry in the command.

2. Advise the commander on CRP matters, to include manpower, personnel, professional development, and facility requirements.

3. Develop and maintain competencies to effectively deliver religious ministry as defined in reference (a): provide according to the manner and form of the chaplain's RO, facilitate to meet the religious needs of those of other ROs, care for all, and, in accordance with reference (e), advise those served.

4. Prepare and execute budgets of appropriated funds to support the CRP. Manage the Religious Offering Fund in accordance with reference (f).

5. Supervise RMT personnel. Support their professional development. Consult with higher echelon RPs or chief petty officers in the development, evaluation, and mentoring of enlisted RMT personnel.

6. Advise on religious elements in command functions such as changes of command, retirements, promotions, and memorial ceremonies or services, providing or facilitating as appropriate.

7. Plan, coordinate, and deliver religious ministry across command lines, as authorized by commanders. Examples of cooperative ministry include assisting other commands with RO-specific ministry, standing RMT Duty as described in reference (g), and delivering ministry following mass casualty events.

8. Deliver religious ministry in combined, joint, and multinational exercises and operations when directed by the commander and in accordance with reference (e).

9. Comply with restrictions regarding outside employment and honoraria contained in references (h) and (i).

(g) Supervisory Chaplain. A supervisory chaplain is the senior chaplain assigned to a command with more than one chaplain or who is responsible for supervising RMTs assigned to subordinate commands. In addition to the responsibilities of a chaplain listed above, supervisory chaplains:

1. Manage RMT personnel to ensure the most effective and efficient delivery of religious ministry.

2. Supervise and assist RMT personnel in developing professional knowledge, skills, abilities, experience, and behaviors. Ensure RMTs are properly trained in accordance with religious ministry policy, doctrine, and mission-specific requirements.

3. Provide advice and assistance to commanders of subordinate units to establish and maintain CRPs per this Order.

4. Advise subordinate commanders on fitness, evaluation, and other performance reports for RMT personnel.

5. Submit reports to their commander, higher echelon commanders, and senior supervisory chaplains as required.

(h) Senior Supervisory Chaplain. The senior supervisory chaplain is the senior chaplain assigned to a Marine Force, Marine Expeditionary Force, Major Subordinate Command, Marine Corps Combat Development Command, or Marine Corps Installation Command. In addition to the responsibilities of chaplains and supervisory chaplains listed above, senior supervisory chaplains:

1. Advise commanders on the standards for the delivery of religious ministry to include the requirements for manpower, manning, equipping, training, reporting, mentoring, certification, and inspection.

2. Supervise and assist subordinate RMTs in meeting religious ministry requirements and standards through assist visits, inspections, and other appropriate means to ensure efficiency and effectiveness.

3. Plan and coordinate with other senior supervisory chaplains for the delivery of religious ministry, RMT Duty, and periodic area-wide RMT training.

4. Plan to meet the identified religious ministry requirements of all subordinate commands and units, including those without permanently assigned RMTs; document the plan to meet these religious ministry requirements; and regularly inform commanders regarding execution, to include assessment of the RMTs responsible for their CRPs.

5. Monitor the contracts of Contract Religious Service Providers (CRSP) of subordinate commands for proper and consistent fulfillment of religious requirements, according to standards generated by the office of the Chaplain of the Marine Corps. Provide status reports on contracts to the Chaplain of the Marine Corps as requested.

6. Receive periodic and ad hoc reports from commanders and RMTs of subordinate units as required to supervise the delivery of religious ministry.

7. Submit required reports to higher echelon commanders and their chaplains.

(i) Religious Program Specialist. The RP is the chaplain's primary enlisted assistant for managing and executing the CRP. RPs:

1. Support the chaplain's religious, administrative, and supervisory responsibilities.

2. Are combatants and provide force protection and individual security for non-combatant chaplains in operational environments.

3. Advise chaplains and command enlisted leadership on matters pertaining to the CRP and the morale and well-being of the command's personnel and families.

4. Perform other primary responsibilities and qualifications as outlined in references (a), (c), and (j).

(j) Chaplain Assistant (CA). A CA is a member of the unit assigned by the commander to assist the chaplain when required RP manning is not available, or to augment the RMT. CAs should have a primary or secondary military occupational specialty 0111, Administrative Clerk, when feasible. CAs have the same responsibilities as RPs.

(k) Lay Leader. A lay leader is a uniformed service member appointed by the commander pursuant to, and authorized to perform duties in accordance with, reference (k), and to support CRPs in operational environments, isolated, or unique settings.

(l) Contract Religious Service Provider (CRSP). A CRSP is a civilian authorized by a specific RO and contracted on a non-personal-services basis using approved competitive procedures.

1. CRSPs are only authorized to provide religious services, as defined in reference (a), specific to their RO to meet the identified religious requirements for persons of the same RO. CRSPs are not chaplains and will not use the title of "Chaplain" in the performance of contracted duties. CRSPs will not be assigned any other chaplain responsibilities outlined in this Order.

2. A contract based on a Performance Work Statement (PWS) will specify the CRSP's duties. The command, in consultation with a Navy chaplain, will develop the PWS. This chaplain will assist in monitoring the CRSP's performance and report to the senior supervisory chaplain, via the commander, regarding the conditions of the contract.

3. CRSPs cannot receive confidential communications in accordance with reference (d), and must abide by their RO and/or state regulations.

(m) Support Personnel

1. Support personnel are civilian employees and contractors approved by the commander to support the CRP, or are uniformed service members, other than chaplains, RPs, and CAs, assigned to the RMT.

2. Support personnel are not authorized to function as chaplains. Contractors will only deliver services as stipulated by their contracts and PSW. Civilian employees will only deliver services based on their statement of work.

3. Uniformed support personnel may serve as lay leaders in accordance with this Order.

4. Support personnel will comply with references (l) and (m).

(n) Volunteers. Volunteers are Service members and civilians approved by the commander to support the CRP on a voluntary basis. Volunteers will comply with references (l) and (m).

(o) Religious Ministry Team Tasks. RMTs support the CRP through religious ministry team tasks. RMT tasks are aligned to the CHC's core capabilities as defined in reference (a): provide, facilitate, care, and advise.

1. Provide. Tasks associated with this capability include, but are not limited to:

a. Public worship as defined in reference (a).

b. Preparing and performing rites, sacraments, ordinances, funerals, memorial services, and other religious events.

c. Religious education and training.

d. Religious and/or spiritual direction.

e. Religious retreats, faith-based life skills classes, relationship enhancement and marriage training, and fellowship programs.

2. Facilitate. Tasks associated with this capability include, but are not limited to:

a. Identify the religious requirements by conducting a religious needs assessment.

b. Analyze the results of the assessment and offer the commander necessary information needed to design the CRP.

c. Publish information about religious ministry opportunities offered in the command, in other commands, and in the local civilian community. The information will identify the RO of the presiding

religious provider or lay leader and will be published consistent with local directives regarding the dissemination of information.

d. Organize, manage, and supervise the lay leader program and administration of volunteers.

e. Assist personnel in their religious practices and observances.

(1) Assist personnel in identifying and articulating their religious needs.

(2) Identify resources to meet religious needs.

(3) Assist personnel in availing themselves of opportunities for religious expression.

f. When authorized, make opportunities available for religious offerings in accordance with reference (f).

3. Care. Tasks associated with this capability include, but are not limited to:

a. Advise, counsel, and comfort, remaining respectful of the one served while maintaining dignity and professionalism throughout. Cultivate collaborative relationships with other helping agencies, make appropriate referrals for those who cannot be directly assisted by the RMT or who need more specialized care. Conduct follow-up to verify continuity of care for those referred.

b. Visit workspaces, hospitals, confinement facilities, residences, and other locations.

c. Deliver training on subjects such as spiritual fitness, marriage and relationship enhancement, moral and ethical concerns, core values, character development, and life skills.

d. Deliver and/or support training on matters impacting command personnel including but not limited to: adjustment to military life, combat and operational stress, deployment related issues, and prevention and response efforts related to suicide, sexual assault, substance abuse, and domestic violence.

e. Use Chaplain Religious Enrichment Development Operation retreats in accordance with reference (n). Commanders are authorized to fund chaplain-led retreats for Service members and their immediate family members pursuant to reference (o).

f. Promote community service programs and similar outreach programs.

g. Support Casualty Assistance Call Officers in carrying out their official duties in accordance with reference (p).

4. Advise. This capability includes extensive and varied advisement to personnel throughout the chain of command and their families. Chaplains respect the dignity of those served, are integrated into the

command, and protect the confidentiality (as defined in reference (d)) of those they counsel. A thorough and systematic discussion of advisement can be found in references (a), (c), and (e). These references should be carefully consulted. Advice may pertain to:

a. Religion, spirituality, spiritual fitness, religious accommodation, and the resolution of religious, moral and ethical decision making.

b. Command climate.

c. Punishment, discipline, and the potential for rehabilitation.

d. Interaction with civilian religious leaders, religion and culture, community relations, and community service projects.

e. Humanitarian and civic assistance, disaster response, defense support of civil authorities, and mass casualty events.

f. Conscientious objection applications or reassignment/separation for humanitarian and hardship reasons.

b. Subordinate Element Missions

(1) Chaplain of the Marine Corps will:

(a) Establish and publish a charter for the Religious Ministry Operational Advisory Group (RMOAG).

(b) Appoint members to the RMOAG.

(2) Commanders will:

(a) Assess the religious ministry requirements in the command and provide a CRP in accordance with this Order. Commanders will maintain the CRP with logistical support, equipment, furnishings, facilities, budgeting activities, and appropriated funds consistent with other personnel programs.

(b) Provide the chaplain with direct access to the commander.

(c) Provide the RMT with dedicated work spaces that are readily accessible by personnel and adequate to meet the requirement for private access to a chaplain, pursuant to reference (d). RMT spaces will have at least one private office with a window in the door.

(d) Provide adequate administrative support for chaplains assigned without RP support. If the chaplain's assignment exceeds 30 days, a part-time CA should be appointed in writing by the supported command and will be trained in and covered by the rules of confidential communication pursuant to reference (d).

(e) Support chaplains and RPs in maintaining the qualifications required to perform their duties. Appropriated funds, to include funds for travel, are authorized to support such training. Qualifications are maintained through:

1. RO-required training programs and spiritual formation events for chaplains.

2. Navy-required training programs, Naval Chaplaincy School and Center leadership courses, and CHC professional development and training courses and workshops.

3. Area-wide RMT training.

(f) Identify RMTs as first responders in emergency response plans. Training for these contingencies is required.

(g) Submit CRP reports as required.

(h) Assign only appropriate collateral duties for chaplains and RPs in accordance with references (a), (c), and (j).

(i) Require RPs assigned to operational Marine Forces to qualify with Table of Organization and Equipment weapon and complete the qualifications to become Enlisted Fleet Marine Force Warfare Specialists in accordance with references (q) and (r). As required, qualify RPs to operate government motor vehicle(s) in accordance with reference (q).

(j) Support chaplains assigned to the operational Marine Forces in completing the qualifications for designation as a Fleet Marine Force Qualified Officer in accordance with reference (s).

(k) Evaluate the performance of chaplains and RPs in accordance with reference (t).

1. Navy Reserve (NR) USMC Religious Support (RELSUP) unit Officers in Charge (OICs) will be the reporting senior for NR RELSUP chaplains and RPs.

2. In the event a reserve component chaplain's or RP's performance is not directly observable by the RELSUP OIC, the commanding officer or delegated reporting senior observing their performance may submit a concurrent report or Performance Information Memorandum pursuant to Chapter 4 of reference (t).

c. Special Matters

(1) When making decisions or taking actions on religious matters affecting the command, Marine Corps, or Navy as a whole, including matters not specifically addressed in this Order, commanders will consult higher echelon policy and seek advice from a senior supervisory Navy chaplain and Marine Corps legal counsel.

(2) Requests for waivers of policy to accommodate religious practices are addressed in reference (u).

5. Administration and Logistics

a. Forward recommendations or questions concerning the contents of this Order to the Chaplain of the Marine Corps via the appropriate chain of command for resolution.

b. Records created as a result of this Order will be managed according to National Archives and Records Administration approved dispositions pursuant to reference (v) to ensure proper maintenance, use, accessibility, and preservation.

c. Privacy Act. Any misuse or unauthorized disclosure of Personally Identifiable Information (PII) may result in both civil and criminal penalties. The DON recognizes that the privacy of an individual is a personal and fundamental right that shall be respected and protected. The DON's need to collect, use, maintain, or disseminate PII about individuals for purposes of discharging its statutory responsibilities will be balanced against the individuals' right to be protected against unwarranted invasion of privacy. All collection, use, maintenance, or dissemination of PII will be in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974, as amended (reference (w)) and implemented in accordance with reference (m).

6. Command and Signal

a. Command. This Order is applicable to the Marine Corps Total Force.

b. Signal. This Order is effective the date signed.

  
JAMES B. LASTER  
Director, Marine Corps Staff

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