



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY GARRISON, FORT MEADE
OFFICE OF THE INSTALLATION CHAPLAIN
4419 LLEWELLYN & ROBERTS AVENUE, SUITE 5065
FORT GEORGE G. MEADE, MARYLAND 20755-5065

IMME-RS

15 January 2019

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL CONCERNED

SUBJECT: Policy # 5. Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for Fort George G. Meade Chapel Weddings.

1. General Information: A wedding ceremony at Fort George G. Meade, Maryland is a sacred event and should be understood as a religious service of the worshipping community. The Historic Main Post Chapel is one of the finest chapels in the United States Army and the Argonne Hills Chapel Center is spacious for large crowds. It should be understood that military club systems and chapel weddings have no denominational affiliations. Weddings at Fort Meade chapels will not be scheduled to accommodate reception plans. Our goal is to make the chapels easily accessible to as many authorized users as possible. The procedures set out in this document must be followed fully, so please read them carefully. If you have any questions about scheduling your wedding, call (301) 677-6035.

a. Persons Authorized to use the Chapel:

- Active Duty military personnel and their dependents with valid ID card
- Retired military personnel and dependents with valid ID card
- Reserve components personnel on Active Duty

b. Weddings are scheduled on a "first come, first serve" basis. Weddings will not be scheduled on the weekend of a Federal Holidays, or major religious days and observances including: the Saturday before Easter, the Saturday after Thanksgiving, or the last two Saturdays in December.

c. Your requested date and time will be confirmed or denied shortly after the Fort George G. Meade (FGGM) Chapel Scheduler receives your completed wedding application. (See Wedding Application –Enclosure 1).

d. You may contact the Chapel Scheduler at (Commercial): (301) 677-0156 or visit the office at Argonne Hills Chapel Center.

e. Reservations for Weddings will not be accepted until the couple has provided the following supporting documents:

(1) A Chapel Reservation Form signed by a Sponsoring Chaplain. ** A Chaplain or representative must be present even when non-Chaplain Clergy are officiating.

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(2) A copy of a certificate (or memo) validating that pre-marital counseling has been conducted by a Chaplain or the Clergy member conducting the ceremony.

(3) A copy of the ordination certificate of the Clergy conducting the wedding ceremony when Clergy other than Chaplains is officiating.

(4) A Sponsoring Chaplain or representative must be present even when non-Chaplain Clergy are conducting the wedding ceremony.

2. Conducting a Wedding at a Fort George G. Meade Chapel:

a. Wedding Ceremonies are conducted on Saturdays. You may choose from the following time slots: Main Post Chapel: 0900-1200, 1200-1500, or 1500-1800; Argonne Hills Chapel Center: 0900-1200, 1200-1500, or 1500-1800; Cavalry Chapel: 0900-1200 or 1200-1500. You have a three hour limit for set up, ceremony, and clean up.

b. Rehearsals are held on the Friday evening before the wedding in the following time slots: 1700-1800, 1800-1900, or 1900-2000. The purpose of the rehearsal is to practice the sequence of the ceremony; there is no music rehearsal. Rehearsal times are strictly enforced. If you are late, you will lose that portion of your rehearsal time.

c. Due to time constraints and commitments to other functions, it is imperative that rehearsals and ceremonies begin and end on time. On the day of the wedding, the ceremony must begin no later than (NLT) 1 ½ hours into the reserved block of time, and must conclude NLT 1 hour before the reserved block of time. The Chaplain Assistant on duty is authorized to contact the Military Police in order to assure cooperation. The chain(s) of command of all parties involved will be notified in cases of non-compliance.

d. Although there is no charge for the use of the chapel and no fee for the Chaplain performing the ceremony, you may make a donation to the Fort Meade Chapel Tithes and Offering Fund. These funds are used for the various chapel programs that benefit military members and their families.

e. The wedding couple is responsible for ensuring that the chapel facility is cleaned and organized in the same manner in which they found it. This is not the responsibility of the Chaplain Assistant on duty. You must arrange for chapel cleaning or contract with the cleaning team. The cost of a cleaning team is negotiated between the wedding couple and the cleaning team. The chapel staff will check after the wedding to ensure proper clean-up has been completed.

f. Cleaning Checklist: Vacuum carpet in Sanctuary. Empty trash cans. Remove programs from pews. Remove all wedding decorations. Remove all hangers, bags, etc. from latrines and dressing rooms. Place all furniture and flowers back in original setting. All Chapel facilities should be completely returned to the state in which they were found.

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3. Regulations for Facility Use and Care:

- a. The use of flower petals, birdseed, rice, or other confetti is strictly prohibited.
- b. Nothing will be attached to chapel pews, furniture, or walls with pins, nails, tape, wire, or tacks in order to prevent damage to the property. Pew decorations are not allowed except as stated in paragraph 4a.
- c. Candelabras are not allowed. All activities must comply with fire and safety regulations. Only provided altar candles are to be lit. Main Post Chapel Seating Capacity – 200; Argonne Hills Chapel Center – 600; Cavalry Chapel 200.
- d. The throwing of any items is strictly prohibited inside the chapel and on the chapel grounds. The wedding party is responsible for the behavior of their guests.
- e. Wedding receptions will not be held in the chapel facility.
- f. With the exception of communion, the use of alcohol in the chapel or on the chapel grounds before, during, and after the ceremony is strictly prohibited.
- g. Sponsoring Chaplain/Officiating Clergy – You do not have to have a Military Chaplain officiate. However, your wedding must be sponsored by your Unit Chaplain. The role of the Sponsoring Chaplain is one of accountability and the avoidance of confusion. The Sponsoring Chaplain shall be the point of contact between the chapel staff and the matrimonial couple, is required to attend the rehearsal and the wedding ceremony, and must also brief the Fort Meade Deputy Garrison Chaplain regarding wedding planning before the actual event. If you are having a civilian clergy person officiate at your ceremony, he/she must be an ordained minister and you must provide this office with his/her credentials. For all Roman Catholic weddings, regardless of the officiant, the Installation Roman Catholic Priest must be contacted for further details.

4. Additional Information:

- a. Items Available: Altar furnishings, altar candleholders and unity candle stands. The wedding party must provide flowers, and other decorations. All candles used should be drip-less. Flowers for Sunday worship services are usually placed in the chapel on Friday and must remain in the chapel. With prior permission from the Chaplain Assistant on duty, you may move the chapel flowers during your ceremony. However, all flowers brought into the chapel for the wedding must be removed after the wedding. You must also return chapel flowers to their original location. Flowers and ribbons may be tied to the pews. Do not use tacks or tape on the pews.
- b. Items Not Available: Dressing area for bride, groom, and others. Fresh flowers. Photographer. Baby-sitting service or nursery area. Facilities or supplies for reception. Printing Services

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c. Security Measures are in Place at Fort George G. Meade. Under Force Protection Condition (FPCON) A, B, and C, access to the Installation for non-military ID card holders (in order to attend a wedding rehearsal and a wedding) is permitted. However, under FPCON D, non-military ID card holders will NOT be allowed access to the Installation. This means that these individuals will not be able to participate in your wedding during FPCON D. In any situation, entry through the gates may take up to an hour or longer because of unforeseen difficulties or random vehicle inspections at the checkpoints. Please coordinate directly with the VCC for guest access.

d. Garrison Reduced Operations: As with any military facility, the chapel may be subject to closure on short notice for reasons of health, safety, unforeseen facility upgrade, maintenance, inclement weather, or military necessity. If this occurs you will be notified. Should this happen, you may request that the Garrison Chaplain have your wedding moved to another chapel.

e. Marriage License. You must present a valid marriage license from the State of Maryland to the chaplain prior to the ceremony. There is a 48-hour waiting period between the time the application is made and the time the license is issued. The license may be used anytime up to six months from the issue date, but may only be used in Ann Arundel County. You may get your license from the County Court House, Room 106, Church Circle, Annapolis, Maryland 21401, (410) 222-1434/1435. Call for the licensing fees and further information.

Note: Any waivers or exceptions to policies or procedures established by these Standard Operating procedures (SOP) must be requested in writing. The approval authority is the Fort George G. Meade Garrison Chaplain.

///original signed///
STEPHEN PRATEL SR.
Chaplain (LTC) U.S. Army
Garrison Chaplain

Enclosures:

1. Wedding Application Form
2. Wedding Checklist

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CHAPEL WEDDING APPLICATION

(Please fill out completely)

Wedding Party:

Active___ Reserve___ Rank _____ Retiree___ DOD Civilian___ Dependent ___ Chapel Attendee ___
If Chapel Attendee, Which Chapel Service Do You Attend? _____

Bride's Name _____ Faith Preference _____
Home Address _____
Email Address _____ Military Unit _____
Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

Groom's Name _____ Faith Preference _____
Home Address _____
Email Address _____ Military Unit _____
Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

Chapel Preference: Main Post Chapel (125)___ Argonne Hills (500) ___ Cavalry Chapel (150) ___

Date/Time Preference:

Rehearsal Date _____ Time _____
Wedding Date _____ Time _____

Officiating Chaplain or Clergy: _

Name _____ Military ___ Civilian ___
Address _____
Work Phone _____ Home Phone _____
*Date Installation Chaplain Approved Civilian Clergy _____

Catholic Couples:

Canonical Investigation Reviewed by: _____ Date _____

Cleaning Team Contact:

*Name _____ Phone _____

Statement of Agreement:

We have completely read and fully understand the memorandum on wedding requirements and procedures. We also understand that until all the requested information above is provided, our wedding rehearsal and ceremony are only tentatively scheduled on the events calendar.

Signatures:

Bride _____ Date _____
Groom _____ Date _____
*Sponsoring Chaplain _____ Date _____
Officiating Chaplain or Clergy _____ Date _____
Calendar Scheduler _____ Date _____

(Revised – 8 May 2019)

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WEDDING CHECKLIST

INFORMATION REQUESTED	RESPONSE
WEDDING DATE	
REHEARSAL DATE	
CIVIL CEREMONY – YES/NO	
CHAPEL PREFERENCE	
PERSONAL INFORMATION	
FULL NAMES (Groom & Bride)	
BRANCH OF SERVICE/STATUS	
HOME ADDRESS	
CELL PHONE NUMBER	
WORK PHONE NUMBER	
E-MAIL ADDRESS	
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	
APPLICATION TURNED IN AND APPROVED	
OFFICIATING/SPONSORING CHAPLAIN	
PRE-MARITAL COUNSELING CERTIFICATION	
COURT DOCUMENTS TO CHAPLAIN	
VISITORS CONTROL FORM/GUESTS (as needed)	
CLEANING TEAM CONTRACT	
ORGANIST/PIANIST	

(Revised – 8 May 2019)