

# TRAINING

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The International Conference of Police Chaplains is an organization founded in 1937 to provide support for police chaplains who serve law enforcement communities. Each year the Conference provides both annual and regional training seminars for beginning and experienced law enforcement chaplains. OPD sends one of its chaplains to the ICPC Annual Training Seminar each year. All of the classes required for basic training are offered at this seminar. The levels of credentialing are basic, senior and master. OPD Chaplains have experience varying from 1 to 15 years in law enforcement chaplaincy.

The chaplain program is open to all full-time or retired ministers. A brief form is provided for interested applicants on the inside of this brochure. If you wish you may call Lieutenant Sammy Berzoza and make an appointment to discuss becoming a chaplain.

12 classes are required by ICPC for basic certification. The chaplaincy certifications are offered online.

# COMMENTS OF OFFICERS, STAFF AND CITIZENS

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*“It is nice that the chaplains are there to minister to us through difficult times and to know that there is someone to guide us through a difficult time in our life. To speak to someone who is religious and is there to pray with me and even check up on me to make sure I am okay makes a big difference in my life as well as others around me.” (OPD staff member)*

*“It was comforting to see all the chaplains around during the recent tragedy at the Department.” (OPD officer)*

*“It is nice knowing those guys are there for us.”(Citizen of Odessa)*

*“I was excited about the possibility to serve in another ministry area. I wanted to do more for the people of Odessa, to give back to the people.” (Chaplain)*

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ODESSA POLICE DEPARTMENT  
CHAPLAIN'S PROGRAM

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**The chaplains are committed to supporting the officers and staff of the Odessa Police Department in their mission and serving the citizens of Odessa during times of need.**

## WHAT WE DO

The chaplain program of the Odessa Police department exists to support the officers and staff as they fulfill their mission. These local ministers are able to provide specialized counseling to officers and their families as needed. The chaplains also assist officers in notifying families of the death or serious injuries suffered by a loved one. In such cases they are available to stay with the family until church or family support arrives. They are also available to call out for critical need incidents such as barricaded subjects, civil disasters and other traumatic occurrences.

In addition to Police Chaplaincy training our chaplains are also educated in the field of ministry and have extensive experience working with their respective religious organizations. They are men and women who have chosen to extend their ministry into the community by working closely with the officers and staff of the Odessa Police Department, Odessa Fire Department and other law enforcement agencies. These men and women are available to be called out at all hours of the day and night to assist officers in notifying citizens of family members who are deceased, counsel citizens, or work with distraught families. They provide what some call "Ministry of Presence" bringing peace and comfort, wherever they can, to citizens of Odessa.

## WHO ARE WE?

The Volunteer Police Chaplain Program was created by Chief Alan Stewart in 1986, with the appointment of the late Pastor George Golden of the First Church of God as the Odessa Police Department's first police chaplain.

Under Pastor Jerry Thorpe formerly of Temple Baptist Church, the program began expanding beginning in 1993, and now is among the largest police chaplain programs in Texas and the nation.

The Police Chaplain program is currently under the direction of Lieutenant Sammy Berzoza and is staffed by volunteer chaplains from various church denominations. These chaplains provide a valuable and much appreciated service to the Odessa Police, Sheriff, ECISD Police and Odessa Fire departments, other public safety organizations as well as to the citizens of the community.

Volunteer chaplains receive training in police regulations and procedures to increase their understanding of the police role in society. They may also receive training in conflict resolution and disaster victim's assistance. There are annual and semi-annual training seminars available for those who wish to enhance their skills.

## INTERESTED?



If you are a full time or retired minister in good standings and you are interested in joining the OPD chaplains program please contact Lt. Sammy Berzoza for an application:

**Lt. Sammy Berzoza, Community Relations Division  
(432-335-5726)**

OR

**Mrs. Lydia Pittman  
(432-335-5773)**

You must complete and submit the Chaplain's Program Application at:

**Odessa Police Department  
205 N. Grant  
Odessa, Texas, 79761**

Following the application, you will also be required to complete and pass a background check, complete an interview with the Chief of Police or his designee, and complete a four-hour orientation class before being accepted into the program.

