



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF :

**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY GARRISON, FT BRAGG
2175 REILLY ROAD, STOP A
FORT BRAGG NORTH CAROLINA 28310**

IMSE-BRG-RS

2 January 2010

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL Chaplains and Chaplain Assistants, Fort Bragg, NC
28310

SUBJECT: Standing Operating Procedure (SOP) for Use of Main Post
Chapel (MPC) for Weddings

1. **PURPOSE:** To establish procedures for scheduling rehearsals and weddings at Main Post Chapel (MPC).
2. **APPLICABILITY:** This policy applies to all Fort Bragg chaplains and chaplain assistants, other clergy who officiate at weddings in the Main Post Chapel, and all wedding party members.
3. **ELIGIBILITY AND PRIORITY FOR USE OF MPC FACILITY:** Only the Garrison Chaplain may grant exceptions.
 - a. Active duty service members
 - b. Reserve and National Guard Soldiers with a valid military ID card
 - c. Family members of active duty Soldiers with a valid military ID card
 - d. Retirees or family members of retirees w/valid military ID card
4. **RESERVING THE CHAPEL:**
 - a. Only active duty chaplains may reserve the Fort Bragg Main Post Chapel (MPC) for weddings.
 - b. Active duty chaplains will meet with the couple before consenting to officiate or sponsor the wedding. The chaplain will complete the reservation form and his/her assistant will deliver it to the MPC NCOIC.
 - c. The MPC Noncommissioned Officer in Charge (NCOIC) is responsible for final scheduling of times, dates for rehearsals and wedding ceremonies, after the Officer in Charge (OIC) approves. Other members of the Main Post Chapel staff may make only tentative reservations. The MPC NCOIC is the only one authorized for final scheduling!

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d. The MPC will not be reserved more than six months prior to the wedding date.

5. **SCHEDULING OF WEDDING AND REHEARSAL TIMES:** Weddings are scheduled on a first come basis regarding dates and times.

a. **WEDDINGS WILL NOT BE SCHEDULED DURING HOLIDAY WEEKENDS.**

b. Weddings will only be officiated on Saturdays at the MPC.

c. Weddings will be scheduled for the following times: 0830-1030, break 1030-1100, 1130-1330, break 1330-1400, 1400-1600, break 1600-1630 and 1630-1830. Weddings must be completed within the allotted time span, to include photographs and cleanup. **The time period from 1100-1300 is reserved on the first Saturday of each month to accommodate Catholic Daily Mass. The remaining Saturdays will have all time periods available for reservations.**

d. Weddings must be completed within the allotted time span, to include photographs and cleanup.

e. Wedding rehearsals will be the Friday preceding the Saturday wedding. Rehearsals may be scheduled for 1545-1645, 1700-1800, 1815-1915, and 1930-2030 hours and will not exceed one hour in duration. The first wedding scheduled for a specific date will be permitted their choice of the times for the rehearsal.

f. Couples are required to provide the names of two individuals responsible to work under the direction of the chaplain assistant to clean up the chapel. The chapel will be cleaned and returned to pre-ceremony status.

g. The officiating chaplain must sign the Wedding Request form before approval is authorized and the date scheduled. Wedding applicants must coordinate directly with an individual chaplain or civilian clergy to officiate. If a civilian clergy will officiate, a Ft. Bragg chaplain must sponsor the wedding.

h. For cancellations or rescheduling of the chapel, the couple will notify in writing the chaplain immediately. The Unit Ministry Team (UMT) will notify the NCOIC of the MPC in writing as soon as possible. No telephonic cancellations/rescheduling will take place.

6. **OFFICIATING CLERGY:** Securing a chaplain or minister to perform the wedding is the responsibility of the couple being married. Most often, unit chaplains will perform weddings for their personnel. The Garrison Chaplain's office will not contact chaplains on behalf of the couple to perform their wedding.

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a. Only licensed or ordained clergy will conduct weddings on Fort Bragg.

b. Unit chaplains normally will officiate for members of the assigned unit. The couple may contact any chaplain of their particular faith group or one with whom they have a pastoral relationship.

c. Civilian clergy are authorized to conduct weddings at the MPC. The unit chaplain must still act as the sponsor and will reserve the chapel. Civilian clergy will be asked to provide proof of ordination or license.

d. When a Fort Bragg Chaplain consents to officiate or sponsor a wedding at the MPC, his/her chaplain assistant will provide chaplain assistant coverage.

e. The sponsoring chaplain is responsible to officiate the ceremony or sponsor clergy to officiate. Once the date is approved, and the time is scheduled, changes to the schedule or officiating clergy is the responsibility of the sponsoring chaplain.

f. For chaplains not assigned a chaplain assistant, contact the Main Post NCOIC to receive chaplain assistant support.

g. The Garrison Chaplain is not authorized to direct chaplains to conduct weddings. Since weddings performed by chaplains are religious ceremonies, all denominational requirements must be met before a chaplain performs a wedding. Coordinate with officiating clergy as early as possible to meet required counseling and religious marital classes.

h. The State of North Carolina is the licensing authority for all weddings performed on Fort Bragg. A valid, current license will be presented to the chaplain/clergy person performing the wedding prior to the wedding service.

7. **MUSIC:** If music is desired, it is the responsibility of the couple to make the arrangements. The only individuals authorized to play the organ and piano at the MPC are those under contract with the Garrison Chaplain's Office. Remuneration for the musician(s) is the responsibility of the couple. A list of contracted organists and pianists is available from the MPC NCOIC.

8. **PHYSICAL ARRANGEMENT AND DECORATIONS:** The wedding party must understand that the primary purpose of the chapel is to support worship services. Worship service requirements will always take priority.

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a. Chapel furnishings are not to be moved. This includes flags, furniture, and any seasonal decorations.

b. The public address system (microphones, cassette tape deck, CD system, etc.) will only be operated by the chaplain assistant providing coverage for the wedding.

c. Flowers and other decorations are permitted. The couple is responsible to provide those items. Nothing may be taped or tacked or screwed to the pews or any other furnishings. Only silk flowers may be strewn on the carpet.

d. The following equipment is available: altar candles, kneeler, sabers, unity candle holders, and candelabras. The only candles provided by the MPC are the altar candles. All other candles are the responsibility of the wedding couple and must be dripless candles. These items are for use only at the MPC and will not be signed-out for use anywhere else. There are **NO EXCEPTIONS**.

e. The MPC Annex will not be used for receptions or any other wedding activities. The MPC Annex may be used as a staging area for the wedding party and changing rooms. If used, the Annex will be cleaned as part of the MPC cleanup by the designated individuals under the guidance of the chaplain assistant.

f. MPC will not provide personnel or the facilities for care of children during a wedding or the rehearsal.

g. With the exception of sacramental wine, no alcoholic beverages will be permitted in or around the MPC.

h. In the interest of safety; rice, confetti, birdseed, flower petals, or similar items will not be used in or around the MPC, Annex, front walkways and parking lots. The members of the wedding party are responsible to inform guests of these requirements and to enforce this policy.

i. When there is a wedding in the follow-on time slot, the wedding party and guests must depart the area of the chapel on schedule in order to open the parking area for the next wedding.

9. **PHOTOGRAPHERS:** Photographers are encouraged to consult in advance with the officiating clergy regarding his/her desires. The wedding is a religious service and unrestrained picture taking can be distracting to the occasion. Stationary video recording is permitted.

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10. **FEES:** Military chaplains and chaplain assistants will neither solicit nor accept fees or honoraria for conducting or supporting weddings in military chapels. There are no fees for the use of a chapel facility. The couple may contribute to the Fort Bragg Chaplains Tithes and Offering Fund, if desired. If a contribution is made, the chaplain assistant who is working the wedding will use standard procedures for counting and safeguarding an offering. It is preferred that the contribution be delivered to the Chaplain's Funds Office or placed in the offering plate at the MPC during a scheduled worship service.

11. The proponent for this SOP is the Garrison Chaplain. Users are invited to send comments and suggestions on DA Form 2028, Recommended Changes to Publications and Blank Forms, directed to HQ, Garrison Commander, ATTN: IMSE-BRG-RS, Fort Bragg, North Carolina 28310-5000.

3 Encl

1. List of Organists
2. Application
3. Cleaning Checklist

DAVID P. HILLIS
Chaplain (COL) USA
Garrison Chaplain