

# The Role and Requirements of a Chaplain in Motor Sport



## Preamble

*For Motor Sport Categories, Tracks and or Clubs Considering MRM Chaplaincy*

Chaplains have been serving motorsport in Australia for the last 30 years.

This service is always without charge or expectation of reward. The Chaplain's role is honorary and each Chaplain must meet his own expenses.

We serve because of our love of the sport and our desire to bring God's grace and mercy to the people who participate in it.

## What does a Chaplain do at a race meeting?

A motorsport Chaplain attends a motorsport event as a pastoral care person ("people carer") to be available for any personal or administrative matter that is deemed helpful for the running of the event. This may be with race team members, race officials on track, support staff, or others.

A motorsport Chaplain operates under the direction of the Secretary of the Meeting and the Clerk of Course for approval to be at the event and to move around the complex of track as needed.

Each and every conversation or pastoral care matter is strictly confidential with the person involved and the Chaplain is under no demand to report the details of any such conversations with any other staff or administration. However, where Race Secretary or Clerk of Course calls the Chaplain to meet with a designated official, a report on that person's ability to function for the event may be discussed.

### 1. The Role

- a) To mingle with staff and officials, competitors, their families and pit crews, with a view to serving them in any need, and to be available to them in a pastoral care role. This role often requires:
  - i) private conversations at motorsport events;
  - ii) the provision of self-help material for further reference;
  - iii) follow up after the meeting either by phone or in person. This part of the Chaplain's role is ongoing and is conducted without fanfare on every day of every meeting. Conversations from one meeting tend to carry over to the next meeting and new conversations begin at every meeting.
- b) These conversations are confidential, sometimes even emotional, and often it is helpful if they take place in private away from public view. Many times these conversations are related to critical incidents from previous events, ongoing assistance with difficult personal issues, personal/family matters (which are often related to consistent volunteering at

events), or referrals from a Senior Marshall to help the person carry out his/her assigned duties at the circuit on the day.

- c) To be available to any official, competitor, their family, friends and pit crew if they have been injured or affected as a result of an incident. To be able to fulfil this role the chaplain needs to:
- d) be in contact by radio with race control and to receive and respond to any communication, although there may be circumstances when phone contact may be more appropriate to avoid alarming others on the network;

## 2. Operation

- a) "listen in" on the radio to the general communication so that he is aware of what is happening at all times;
- b) be informed that a person is being taken to the medical centre or, as is now sometimes the case, going to be transported directly from the circuit to a hospital;
- c) have access to the medical centre;
- d) be informed of and familiar with the medical codes in use from time to time;
- e) have his role in the matter recognised. This part of the Chaplain's role extends to caring for those connected with anyone receiving medical treatment and facilitating the orderly release to them of information from the senior medical officer on duty. If injuries are suspected to be severe or life threatening, it is preferred that a private facility be made available if practicable;
- f) To carry out his role under the delegated authority of the Secretary of the Meeting and the Clerk of the Course at each event, and to be generally available to their direction;
- g) Should there be a specific role described for the Chaplain in the Critical/Major Incident Plan at the circuit, to be informed of that role and to be engaged in it as required.

# Protocol for Chaplains following incidents. With Drivers, Officials and others

## On race day

Chaplain visits Medical Centre as individual is brought in for assessment. If/when family members of team members also get to the medical centre, the Chaplain/s chat with them for contact information, and to ease stress while being assessed. Where the incident is determined to be serious, then the Chaplain will discuss details of getting to a hospital, and/or seek a quieter place for support and counsel (if a close place is available, often this is done outside the medical centre, as at Bathurst.)

If a hospital visit is necessary, the Chaplain/s will, depending on seriousness of diagnosis, travel to a hospital, and may transport family members with him. If diagnosis is routine, then the

Chaplain will notify family/person/team members that he will visit the hospital at the completion of race day. Condition of person relayed event management via medical officer.

### Following the completion of the race day

The Chaplain, having contact details of person involved, will make calls to hospital/s, to visit with individual, family, etc. Further visits/phone calls follow until person is discharged from hospital and returns to their home.

If the series chaplain returns to his home from away location, then the local MRM-SCA chaplain in the event location will do same follow up, as part of the Chaplaincy network, reporting progress to series Chaplain.

Most often, the Chaplain, along with medical personnel may recommend the person visit their local GP when returning home. The Chaplain, if sensing that further emotional/psychological treatment is necessary, will recommend that the person visit their local GP for a referral to a professional counsellor for further help and treatment.

Along with the Chaplain's role and movements, for officials who are Motorsport Australia members, the senior marshals also keep contact with individuals involved in an incident, and Motorsport Australia office personnel may also do the same for some time following the incident.

Submitted by:

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(on behalf of 5 chaplains consulting group)

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