



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
US ARMY INSTALLATION MANAGEMENT COMMAND
HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY GARRISON, FORT BENNING
RELIGIOUS SUPPORT OFFICE
7030 LINCOLN AVENUE, BLDG. 974
FORT BENNING, GEORGIA 31905-5000

AMIM-BEG-CH

23 March 2021

MEMORANDUM FOR Fort Benning (FBGA) Unit Ministry Team (UMT)

SUBJECT: Annex N, **WEDDINGS**, FBGA Religious Support (RS) Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

1. References.

- a. AR Army Regulation 5-9, Area Support Responsibilities, 16 October 1998
- b. AR 165-1, Army Chaplain Corps Activities, 23 June 2015
- c. DA Pamphlet 165-18, Chaplaincy Resources Management, 21 January 2000
- d. FM 1-05, Religious Support, 5 Oct 2012

2. Purpose. To establish guidelines and requirements for wedding ceremonies in FBGA chapels.

3. Scope. This guidance applies to all FBGA UMTs and persons authorized to use FBGA chapels for weddings.

4. Eligibility.

a. FBGA chapels host religious weddings for military personnel currently assigned to Fort Benning and their adult dependents in the Defense Enrollments Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS). Due to inherently limited resources available to FBGA Soldiers' Religious Support (chapel facilities, UMT personnel, time slots for other RS programs, etc.) and the restrictive nature of reservations for weddings and rehearsals, only requests from active duty Soldiers will be approved.

b. Weddings on FBGA are governed by the laws of the United States and the State of Georgia. Requests that do not meet those requirements will not be approved.

5. Reserving the Chapel. Soldiers requesting the use of a FBGA chapel for a wedding must complete a "Wedding Reservation" form and provide the following supporting documentation:

- a. A copy of the applicants DoD identification card.

b. A copy of the Officiant's ordination credentials (if Civilian clergy is performing the ceremony).

c. A signed "Chapel Reservation" form from the sponsoring chaplain and DoD identification card holder.

6. Scheduling. Under no circumstance will weddings be performed on Sundays.

a. Weddings at FBGA chapels are scheduled on a "first come – first served" basis.

b. All wedding guidelines will be determined by the applicant's desired chapel SOP.

c. Wedding rehearsals.

i. All wedding rehearsals are limited to one hour on the day prior to the wedding ceremony.

ii. If there are two weddings on the same date, the first approved wedding scheduled will have choice of rehearsal time.

7. Officiants.

a. It is the responsibility of the applicant to secure an approved officiant. The chapel nor the Religious Support Office (RSO) will not contact/secure an officiant on the behalf of the applicant.

b. Only licensed officiants will conduct weddings on FBGA.

c. Approved Civilian clergy/officiants are authorized to conduct wedding on FBGA. Approval is granted from the RSO.

d. While the applicants unit chaplain may officiate weddings for their Soldiers, they are not Justices of the Peace. Couples desiring to be married by a chaplain on FBGA must understand that all chaplains must adhere to the beliefs and practices of their denominational endorsers standards as well as their own conscience. Couples may contact any chaplain of their particular faith group or one with whom they have a pastoral relationship IOT request said chaplain as an officiant.

8. Religious Affairs Specialist (RAS) Support.

a. A RAS will support all weddings in chapels on FGBA.

b. When a chaplain on FBGA consents to sponsor or officiate a wedding on FBGA, his/hers RAS will provide support.

c. Chaplains not assigned a RAS will contact the Garrison Non-commissioned Officer (NCOIC) for RAS support for their wedding.

d. RASs will refer to the reserved chapel Wedding SOP for opening, closing, and cleaning procedures.

9. Premarital Counseling.

a. Premarital counseling is required for all wedding ceremonies performed on FBGA by a FBGA chaplain.

b. The premarital counseling will be performed by the officiating FBGA chaplain, or by the Family Life Chaplain.

c. The couple is responsible to arrange this and complete the officiating chaplain's counseling requirement prior to the wedding ceremony.

10. Music and Sound.

a. If music is desired, it is the responsibility of the couple to coordinate all music with their sponsoring chaplain.

b. Sound system components (microphones, CD system, etc.) are available for the ceremony. The chapel's sound system will only be operated by the RAS.

c. A list of musicians (pianists, organists) will be provided by the RSO. Only approved organists are authorized to play/use the TIC organ.

11. Physical Arrangements and Decorations. The wedding party must understand that the primary purpose of the chapel is to support worship services. While the chapel staff will make every effort to assist with wedding plans, worship service requirements will always take priority. The following are standards pertaining to all chapel facilities on the FBGA installation:

a. Chapel Furnishings. Chapel furnishings may be moved only under the supervision of the sponsoring chaplain or RAS. Nothing may be taped or tacked to the pews.

b. Fellowship Hall. The Fellowship Hall will not be used for receptions or childcare.

c. Keys. FBGA chapel keys are maintained and signed for through the chapel NCOIC only to the RAS supporting the ceremony.

d. Equipment Available.

i. Kneelers.

ii. Sabers (maintained at Main Post Chapel). Sabers reservation are on a “first come – first served” basis.

iii. Candelabras.

e. Candles. **ONLY drip-less candels will be used.**

i. The chapel does not furnish candles or unity candle holders.

ii. Drip-less candles must be used and will be supplied by the wedding party. If wax from candles is on the carpet or pews following the service, the married couple will be responsible for professional clean up fees.

f. Flowers. Flowers are permitted for decorations. Only silk flowers may be strewn on the carpet.

g. Changing Rooms. There is limited dressing space available.

h. No rice, confetti, or birdseed will be used inside or outside any FBGA chapel.

i. Clean up.

i. The chaplain sponsor is responsible for ensuring that clean up of facility is accomplished appropriately. It is the sponsoring chaplain to designate responsibility of clean up.

ii. A minimum of two individuals will be identified by the sponsoring chaplain for clean up. This requirement is waived if proof of a contracted cleaner is provided.

j. Animals. All animals except licensed service dogs are prohibited from entering any FBGA chapel.

k. Alcohol. Alcohol is prohibited in all FBGA chapel facilities except wine used for the sole purpose of Holy Communion.

12. Fees. There are no fees for the use of a FBGA chapel facility. However, there may be fees associated with the use of musicians, florist, cleaners, wedding planners, photographers, etc. coordinated through the couple being married.

13. Receptions. Receptions will not be held in any FBGA chapel facilities.

14. Childcare. Childcare nor childcare facilities will not be provided in any FBGA chapel facility.

15. Proponent. The proponent for this SOP is the FBGA Garrison Chaplain @ (706) 325-6812.

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SUBJECT: Annex B, **Staff Duty Chaplain (SDCH)**, FBGA RS SOP

16. This Wedding SOP supersedes previous Wedding SOPs and policies.

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Garrison Chaplain