

**Fire Rescue Support exists to support fire rescue personnel
before, during and after the call**

Before the Call

Operation Cold Snap



“Everyone’s talking about the weather, but nobody does anything about it.” That may be the old saying, but recently first responders in Marion County decided to do more than just talk.

The frigid temperatures that descended upon Florida early in January left the Salvation Army desperately low of cold weather items such as blankets and coats. And halfway through the month, more freezing nights were on their way.

So, Ocala Fire Rescue, Ocala Police Department, Marion County Fire Rescue and Marion County Sheriff’s Office jumped into action. Operation Cold Snap was the code name of their efforts to resupply the Salvation Army with items to bring relief during the cold.

Several loads of items were collected from the community at fire and police stations throughout the City and County. In the end, the Salvation Army was once again able to assist during the cold nights of winter.

Fire Rescue Solutions

One of the goals of Fire Rescue Support is to be a catalyst and resource for the chaplaincy. That is, we hope to help begin and develop chaplain’s programs throughout the area.

For this reason, Fire Rescue Solutions, the training and consulting arm of Fire Rescue Support, is excited to begin offering its services.

We are looking forward to connecting with fire departments without chaplains who want to explore what the program is all about. We are also available to help fire chaplains take their programs to the next level.

Finally, we’re available to teach Individual and Group Crisis Intervention, Stress Management, and other topics related to the human aspect of the fire service.

Feel free to pass on our contact information to anyone you know who could benefit from the resources of Fire Rescue Solutions.





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During the Call



Fire Rescue Support was on the scene of eighteen emergency calls this month. Among these calls was a tragic accident involving a young man hit and killed by a train. Fire crews had only a little involvement in this call. We did, however, offer to assist train personnel with this situation.



Another call that Fire Rescue Support responded to was a fire at an auto shop on East Highway 40. We were on scene for 3 hours providing a rehab area for fire crews.

After the Call

I just returned from Pittsburg where I attended a training session with the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation. I am now an approved instructor in both Individual and Group Crisis Intervention. These credentials will allow me to prepare others to meet the needs of fire rescue personnel who at times experience the worst that life has to offer.

But this training also helps me in the work I do day-to-day among our firefighters, EMTs, paramedics and telecommunicators. In fact, during the last month, I've used these skills during three separate instances.

First, I responded with Ocala Fire Rescue to the scene of a vehicle accident. A pick up truck crashed into a concrete utility pole. Two victims were pinned in the vehicle. It took crews nearly two and a half hours to extricate them.

In another situation, crews from Marion County Fire Rescue worked a call involving a child who had been abused. Sadly, this child died a few weeks later.

Finally, I responded with the County to a call for a vehicle accident that resulted in the death of a pedestrian. The driver of the vehicle that hit the pedestrian was obviously shaken up.

In each of these situations, people were exposed to unusually challenging events that had the potential to create significant distress and overwhelm their usual coping mechanisms. By applying the lessons of Critical Incident Stress Management, I was able to help them walk through these difficult times.



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The History of the Chaplaincy

Back in the fourth century, as the story goes, a Roman soldier was heading out to battle. On his way, he spotted a beggar on the side the road. Moved with compassion, this soldier cut his cape in half and gave one part of it to the beggar to help him keep warm. The other part became a symbol of caring for others. It was put in a chapel and cared for by chaplains who were tasked with protecting the cape and preserving the idea of caring for others. Today, the fire chaplain continues this tradition of caring within the uniqueness of the fire service profession.

Fire rescue personnel put their lives on the line for their communities every day. The work they do is full of unique challenges like dealing with extreme physical conditions and coping first hand with human tragedy. Often these challenges take a toll on their well-being and put incredible strain on their relationships. In addition, the people that fire rescue personnel serve are many times experiencing the worst day of their lives. As they struggle through their personal tragedies, they are faced with the task of rebuilding and going forward.

It's into this world that the fire chaplain is called.

Before the call is when chaplains invest in fire rescue personnel and their families. Although they spend a great deal of time training and preparing for all they encounter at work, little is invested in what they will encounter beyond the job. Chaplains fill in this gap by providing resources to help those serving in fire rescue be more successful on the job and in life.

During the call is a critical time for both fire rescue personnel and the people they serve. Chaplains are on the front line supporting first responders in the field. Whether the incident is large or small, fire rescue personnel respond to meet the needs of people in the midst of a challenging time. Chaplains are there providing comfort and support.

After the call is when chaplains provide ongoing care and assistance to fire rescue personnel and their families. It's not over once the fire is out, the scene is cleared and everyone is back at the station. Depending on the severity of the call, first responders may need to process what they experienced. But even less significant incidents create difficulties and stress over time. Chaplains will be there today, tomorrow and beyond.

It has been said that the chaplaincy is a ministry of presence. By their presence, fire rescue chaplains bring some peace and comfort as stressful and difficult situations are encountered. The fire chaplain continues the tradition of caring that started hundreds of years ago.



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Thank you!

Thanks for your interest in and partnership with Fire Rescue Support. Because of you, we have the opportunity to support fire rescue personnel before, during and after the call. Visit www.firerescuesupport.com for more information or find us on Facebook (you can simply click on the images below.) And please don't hesitate to contact me if I can be of assistance personally or professionally. You can reach me at 352-425-1643 or joe@firerescuesupport.com.

