



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
US ARMY INSTALLATION MANAGEMENT COMMAND  
HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY GARRISON, FORT BENNING  
OFFICE OF THE GARRISON CHAPLAIN  
7001 BROCKMAN STREET, BUILDING 102  
FORT BENNING, GEORGIA 31905-4500

REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF:

IMBE-RS (165)

16 April 2012

MEMORANDUM FOR Fort Benning Religious Support Teams

SUBJECT: Annex B, Fort Benning Religious Activities Standing Operating Procedures (Weddings)

1. **REFERENCE:** AR 165-1, Army Chaplain Corps Activities, 3 Dec 09
2. **PURPOSE:** The purpose of this SOP is to establish guidelines and requirements for weddings ceremonies on Fort Benning.
3. **SCOPE:** This guidance applies to Fort Benning Religious Support Teams and persons using Fort Benning Chapels for weddings.
4. **ELIGIBILITY:** The Fort Benning Chapels are available for wedding ceremonies to those in possession of current Military I.D. cards. These include: active duty personnel, National Guard or Reservists who are on active duty orders, widow/widowers with I.D. cards, and retired military personnel. The chapels are also available to immediate Family members (i.e. sons or daughters) of the above mentioned personnel who possess a current/valid official Military I.D. card. Only the Garrison Chaplain or the Deputy Garrison Chaplain for Operations may grant exceptions.
5. **RESERVING THE CHAPEL:**
  - a. Personnel requesting the use of a Fort Benning Chapel for a wedding must thoroughly complete a Wedding Reservation Form and have provided all supporting documents necessary to verify all of the information (see below).
  - b. Supporting documents required are the following: 1.) A copy of Ordination License (when a Civilian Clergy Member is performing the ceremony), 2.) A copy of a certificate of premarital counseling from the Chaplain or Clergy Member conducting the counseling, and 3.) A Chapel Reservation Form signed by both the Sponsoring Chaplain and the Military I.D. holder. These documents must be presented together. Final reservation approval will be granted upon review by the Garrison Chaplain or Deputy Garrison Chaplain for Operations.
  - c. If Military I.D card holder is stationed on Fort Benning and using his/her unit Chaplain, then his/her UMT will provide coverage for the ceremony.
  - d. If Military I.D card holder is using a Civilian Clergy Member, then that particular weekend TIC Chapel Duty Chaplain Assistant will provide coverage.

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6. **SCHEDULING OF WEDDING AND REHEARSAL TIMES:** Weddings at Fort Benning Chapels are scheduled on a *“First Come, First Served”* basis. The exact hour of the wedding and rehearsal will be determined by the chapel schedule requirements. **Personnel may book a wedding NINE months from their desired wedding date based upon Chapel availability.**

a. **Saturday weddings may be scheduled for one of the following times at The Infantry Center Chapel (TIC Chapel): 1100-1330, 1430-1700 and 1800-2030.** Weddings must be completed within allotted time (to include photographs and cleanup).

b. All wedding rehearsals (one hour max) are scheduled the day prior to the ceremony. **The first wedding that has been approved a specific date will be permitted their choice of the times for the rehearsal.**

c. **Due to worship services and the preponderance of activities that normally occur on a Sunday, weddings on Sunday will require an exception to policy granted by the Garrison Chaplain or Deputy Garrison Chaplain for Operations.**

d. **Due to the requirements of both Easter and Christmas, no weddings or rehearsals will be permitted the Friday and Saturday immediately prior to Easter Sunday, nor permitted the weekend preceding the weekend of the First Sunday of Advent.**

e. Wedding and rehearsal times at other Chapel facilities will be scheduled through the Chapel NCOIC and UMT of the Chapel. All Chapel events must be sponsored by a UMT. A member of the UMT may be present during the activity. However, if no member of the UMT is present, then one must follow up with the TIC staff the following Monday for a status report. Any violations of this SOP are the responsibility of the Sponsoring Chaplain to be addressed and corrected with the wedding party as soon as possible.

f. It will be the responsibility of the Sponsoring Chaplain and Chaplain Assistant to ensure that the Chapel is cleaned after use, regardless of Chapel facility being used.

g. Wedding receptions are not permitted in the Chapel annex. It is the responsibility of the couple to make arrangements with either on post facilities (National Infantry Museum, The Benning Conference Center, etc.) or off post facilities for wedding receptions.

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**7. OFFICIATING MINISTERS: Securing a Chaplain or Minister to perform the wedding is the responsibility of the couple being married. The Chapel office will not contact Chaplains on behalf of the couple to perform the wedding.**

a. Only licensed or ordained Clergy will conduct weddings on Fort Benning.

b. While adhering to their denominational standards and conscience, the unit Chaplains normally will officiate for members of their units. 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 on post. 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 Sponsoring Chaplain consents to officiate at a wedding, his/her Chaplain Assistant will provide coverage. For Chaplains not assigned a Chaplain Assistant, they will contact the Garrison Chaplain NCOIC to receive Chaplain Assistant support for the wedding.

**8. PREMARITAL COUNSELING:** Premarital counseling is required of all couples that wish to get married on Fort Benning. Premarital counseling can be done through the Family Life Center or by the officiating Clergy. It is the responsibility of the couple to arrange this and complete the Chaplain/Clergy counseling requirements.

**9. MUSIC:** If music is desired, it is the responsibility of the couple to make this arrangement with their Sponsoring Chaplain or the couple should check with the Chapel NCOIC. The public address system (microphones, cassette tape deck, CD system, etc.) is available for the wedding but will be operated by a Chaplain Assistant. Upon request, a list of approved and authorized musicians (pianists and organists) will be provided to the wedding couple. **Only approved and authorized organists who are on the list are authorized to play the chapel organ.** However, other pianists selected by the wedding party may utilize the piano for the wedding.

**10. PHYSICAL ARRANGEMENT 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 Fort Benning:

a. **Chapel furnishings are not to be moved.** With the exception of the lectern and the two pastoral chairs, chapel furnishings are not to be moved! This includes flags, choir loft furniture, ecclesiastical items, baptismal font and any seasonal decorations. Flowers and other decorations are permitted.

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b. **Nothing may be taped or tacked to the pews, altar rail or any part of the Chapel.** Only silk flowers may be strewn on the carpet. There is limited dressing space available in the chapel, and the rooms which are available are not air-conditioned. The Chapel does not have cooling fans. The Fellowship Hall is available for dressing and wedding party preparation.

c. The following equipment is available: kneelers, sabres and candelabra. **The Chapel does not furnish candles or unity candle holders.** Drip-less candles must be used and will be supplied by wedding party.

d. **Rice, confetti, or birdseed will not be used inside or outside the Chapel.**

e. **A minimum of two individuals must be identified with contact information that will be responsible for cleanup of the Chapel after the wedding. This requirement is waived if proof of a contracted cleaner is provided.**

f. No animals of any kind will be allowed to be a part of the wedding ceremony, thus all animals are prohibited from the Chapel during the wedding ceremony (except Seeing Eye dogs, etc).

11. **FEES:** There are no fees for the use of a Chapel facility. However, there may be fees associated with the use of musicians, florists, cleaners, wedding planners, and photographers. It is the responsibility of the couple to make appropriate arrangements to negotiate with the persons providing such services.

12. **RECEPTIONS:** No receptions may be scheduled in any Chapel facility.

13. **NURSERY:** No Chapel will provide personnel or the facilities for the care of children during a wedding.

14. **KEYS:** Chapel keys are maintained and signed for through the Chapel NCOIC. Keys will only be signed out to a Chaplain Assistant working a specific wedding.

15. **PROPONENT:** The proponent for this regulation is the Garrison Chaplain's Office. Users are invited to send comments and suggestions on the Interactive Customer Evaluation (ICE) <http://www.whs.mil/hrd/abouthrd/ice.cfm>.



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