

Dashboard Reporting for Chaplains

1. Why we report
2. What to report
3. How to report

Why? Unfortunately, the Chaplaincy is not a priority of the organization. Things like membership and political action take the lead. That's understandable, but the concern is that we are being viewed as just ceremonial. In other words, the sum total of our duties are to say prayers at meetings. In reality, this is only a small part of what we do. With religious affiliation and participation continuing to decline in our country we are naturally moving down the list of priorities. The military, as a whole, is going through the same thing. My military chaplain friends have told me how they are spending more and more time having to justify their existence. And so it is for us too.

If we don't let people know what we are doing they may never know. Most of what we do is behind the scenes and very few know about it. This isn't an issue of blowing our own horn but advocating and promoting the chaplaincy.

Reporting our work gets noticed and gets credited on the VFW reporting dashboards. It is reported as Community Service and Veterans Assistance. This reporting benefits your post, district, and department.

What we achieve through dashboard reporting is demonstrating the value of the chaplaincy to the organization.

What to report and what not to report

Your mileage, your time, and any expenses; visitations, memorial services, meeting with members to counsel, comfort, or assist; community events; any kind of service you perform *provided* it's in the service to veterans and/or you are representing the VFW. There are other forms of community service such as church volunteer work or other organizations or just being a helpful friend or citizen, but unless you are representing the VFW it doesn't count.

That's a good validation of the importance of wearing VFW identifying clothing when you serve the community representing the VFW.

A regular meal at your post or a party at your post does not count as community service. It must be in the service of others besides post functions. When in doubt ask.

For District or Department chaplains this can include post visits.

Reportable examples:

Attending or conducting funeral services

Meeting for counseling outside of post functions

Home & hospital visits

Community events representing VFW

Not Reportable Examples:

Post meetings or conventions

Serving friend of family member

Service for other organizations or church

Attending a veteran's event if not representing VFW

How to report

Most of your chaplain duties don't fit the options given, so you will mostly use "other". Just a brief description of what you did. Please include the word "chaplain" in your write up so they know it's the chaplain as opposed to another member.

"Member" you can make one entry for an event involving many members. You don't all have to file a separate report.

Do not write names in the report. Confidentiality is a must! Sharing medical information is a violation of HIPPA and could get you into legal trouble. And remember your keeping information confidential is paramount to your effectiveness as a chaplain.

Enter your reports ASAP. Reports will only appear on the dashboard once they are approved by the Department officer in charge of your dashboard.