



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
JOINT BASE MYER – HENDERSON HALL
204 LEE AVENUE
FORT MYER, VIRGINIA 22211-1199

IMMH-RS

23 Jan 15

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall Policy Memorandum RS-1, Chapel Weddings

1. REFERENCE. Army Regulation 165-1, 3 Dec 09, Chaplain Activities in the United States Army, Chapter 3-2b (5) and Chapter 12-3h.
2. PURPOSE. To provide policy for Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall (JBM-HH) regarding weddings conducted in the chapels at JBM-HH.
3. APPLICABILITY. This policy applies to all eligible individuals who request chapel weddings at JBM-HH.
4. POLICY.
 - a. Eligibility. Persons authorized to use the chapel for weddings are:
 - (1) Active duty personnel or their children who hold a current DoD issued ID card.
 - (2) Retired military personnel or their children who hold a current DoD issued ID card.
 - (3) Reserve component personnel serving on active duty at the time of the wedding or their children who hold a current DoD issued ID card.
 - (4) On a first come-first served basis, two exceptions per month are authorized for eligible military or retired personnel with children who hold no current ID card. In this situation, the parents are sponsoring the wedding and are accountable for adhering to this policy.
 - (5) Regular attendees of any worship service at JBM-HH who are in possession of a valid DoD-issued ID card are authorized to use the chapel facilities.
 - (6) Roman Catholic applicants. If either the bride or groom is Catholic, the individual must contact the JBM-HH Catholic Chaplain and complete a Pre-Nuptial Investigation form approved by the Catholic Chaplain prior to reserving the chapel for a Catholic wedding. A Roman Catholic application can take several days to process.

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Authorized personnel wishing to have a Catholic wedding on JBM-HH must adhere to the following:

(a) If asking a non JBM-HH priest to perform the wedding, the officiating priest must contact the Judicial Vicar of the Archdiocese for the Military Services (AMS) at 202-719-3603 and the Catholic Chaplain at JBM-HH at 703-696-5688. The Judicial Vicar will approve all the paperwork (Pre-Nuptial Investigation Form, Request for Dispensation, etc.). Forms are available under "Resources" at www.milarch.org.

(b) The non JBM-HH priest must have his Ordinary/Religious Superior send a letter indicating that he is in good standing in his diocese/religious community.

(c) If requirements are met, the Judicial Vicar will send a "Visum" to the Catholic Chaplain at JBM-HH who will then grant the delegation to the visiting priest to perform the wedding.

(d) The Catholic Chaplain at JBM-HH will sign the Record of Marriage and send the record to the AMS.

(e) The Catholic Chaplain at JBM-HH will inform the Churches of Baptism of the marriage.

(f) Catholics who are exceptions to policy must supply their own priest celebrant for the wedding and do all Pre-Marriage Preparation through their home parish. They must have the permission in writing of their local pastor in order to be married on JBM-HH. If a Dispensation or Permission is required, it must be obtained through their home diocese.

(g) A Catholic who has been married civilly and wants a Catholic Church wedding ("Convalidation") must bring a copy of his/her civil marriage certificate to the JBM-HH Catholic Chaplain.

(h) The Army Catholic Chaplain assigned to JBM-HH is available to officiate at weddings for Soldiers and Marines assigned to or residents of JBM-HH. If requested, he will also officiate for Air Force, Navy or Coast Guard applicants who are active, registered members of the JBM-HH Catholic Community. Other applicants in the Air Force, Navy or Coast Guard will be responsible for securing a Catholic Priest from their units or Services.

(i) No chapel will be reserved for Catholic applicants until the Catholic Chaplain at JBM-HH approves the application.

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b. Reservations.

(1) There is no cost to use the chapel by eligible applicants.

(2) All weddings are on a first come-first served basis. "First come" is defined as those applicants that have been deemed eligible IAW paragraph 4a above.

(3) Weddings will not be scheduled on major religious days and observances including the Saturday before Easter, the Saturday after Thanksgiving and the last two Saturdays in December.

(4) Weddings will not be scheduled on National holiday weekends.

(5) Reservations will not be made more than one year in advance.

(6) The Old Post Chapel is available for weddings on Saturdays at 1000, 1130, 1300, and 1430 hours. Weddings will not be scheduled to accommodate reception plans made prior to scheduling one of the chapels.

(7) Chaplains, priests, or pastors are not provided by the JBM-HH Religious Support Office. Call the following number for Chaplain assistance.

(a) Army: 703-696-6635

(b) Navy or Marines: 202-433-2581

(c) Air Force: 301-981-2111

(d) Coast Guard: 202-372-4435

(8) Generally, weddings are in the Old Post Chapel (Building 335); however, the wedding couple may request to have their wedding at the Memorial Chapel (Building 480). When a wedding is at Memorial Chapel, that time slot cannot be reserved at the same time for another wedding at the Old Post Chapel; no double bookings.

(9) The Joint Base Chaplain has the authority to close the chapels on short notice for reasons of health, safety, maintenance or military necessity. If this occurs, applicants will be notified as soon as possible. Couples may request to have their wedding moved to the other chapel at JBM-HH on a space-available basis.

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5. PROCEDURES.

a. Application Process. The application form for weddings is located on the JBM-HH Religious Support Operations website. To access go to www.jbmhh.army.mil/InstallationSupport the click on Chaplains Office. There you will find the wedding application and wedding policy at the bottom of the page.

(1) The application form requires the applicants to endorse that they have read and understand this policy, which is also found at the above website.

(2) Applicants will send applications via fax (703-696-0311), scan and attach in an email to the JBM-HH RSO Administrative Assistant, or deliver them in person to the JBM-HH Religious Support Operations office in the Memorial Chapel.

(3) Reservations are deemed final once eligibility has been determined by the Administrative Assistant (and the Catholic Chaplain in the case of Catholic applicants).

b. Pre-marital counseling. Pre-marital counseling is required for everyone seeking marriage in JBM-HH, and many clergy require pre-marital counseling prior to their officiating at a marriage ceremony. Couples need to understand their clergy's requirements and accomplish them prior to the wedding. Documentation of completed pre-marital counseling will be provided to the JBM-HH RSO Administrative Assistant not later than 7 days prior to the wedding, signed by the counselor. The Joint Base Chaplain reserves the right to cancel any wedding where the pre-marital counseling has not been documented. Couples may choose from the below options for pre-marital counseling.

(1) Counseling conducted by Chaplains is available throughout the National Capital Region (NCR) through unit and command Chaplains. JBM-HH will not provide a counseling chaplain. Fort Belvoir, VA has a Family Life Chaplain who is eligible to conduct scheduled pre-marital counseling. To check availability, call 703-805-2742/2741 or visit <https://www.belvoir.army.mil/mainchapel/FamilyLifeCenter> - click "Marriage Workshop." Accessed 26 September 2014.

(2) Pre-marital counseling is acceptable from any Chaplain or clergy who is in adherence with the couple's faith group.

(3) All Catholics must have Pre-marital counseling, complete a Pre-Marriage Inventory and attend an Engaged Encounter Workshop/Retreat. If one member of the couple has no military background, the couple must be counseled by a couple assigned by the JBM-HH Catholic Chaplain to discuss the unique challenges of marrying someone in the military. If both members come from a military Family, there is no requirement for this additional counseling.

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c. Conducting a wedding at the Old Post Chapel.

(1) The Old Post Chapel is available for weddings on Saturdays at 1000, 1130, 1300, and 1430 hours. There are no exceptions to these times.

(2) No weddings will be scheduled at any other time during the week.

(3) Rehearsals are conducted on Friday evenings, before the scheduled wedding, at 1600, 1700, 1800 or 1900 hours. The purpose of the rehearsal is to practice the sequence of the ceremony only; there is no music rehearsal. Rehearsal times are strictly enforced; if you are late, you will lose your rehearsal time. For weddings scheduled on Sunday (rarely approved), the rehearsal will be scheduled in one of the time-slots on Friday. No Saturday rehearsals will be scheduled.

(4) Weddings will begin and end on time. The combination of the wedding service and photo session will not exceed 55 minutes. The schedule does not permit exceptions.

(5) If no one has arrived for either the rehearsal or the wedding by the start time, the chapel staff will make one courtesy call to confirm arrival. If the rehearsal or service has not begun by 15 minutes after the scheduled start time, that rehearsal or service is canceled. There are no exceptions.

(6) The bride may enter the chapel one hour prior to the wedding in order to dress. Thirty minutes prior to the start of the wedding, you may set flowers and seat guests.

(7) Photographers and video recording are allowed but must not interrupt the sanctity of the religious service. Additional guidelines and requirements will be coordinated with the officiating clergyman prior to the service.

d. Music.

(1) Music at a chapel wedding should reflect the sacredness of the wedding service and follow denominational guidelines and liturgical requirements.

(2) The JBM-HH Ceremonial Organists listed below are available to perform on the historic pipe organ or piano. They are contracted individually and may be reached for guidance and for consultation about musical options for your service. It is the responsibility of the couple or family to pay the organist.

Dr. Randall Sheets 703-696-3384
randall.k.sheets.civ@mail.mil

Mr. Glendon Frank 703-696-7668
glendon.r.frank.civ@mail.mil

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(3) If you wish to bring your own organist, he or she must be approved by one of the JBM-HH ceremonial organists listed above in order to play the organ. There is no exception.

(4) Other music options. A piano is available in the chapel at no charge. Some couples choose to buy wedding music CD's and bring their own CD player. The chapel has excellent acoustics, and this may be an inexpensive and satisfactory option for some. Please check with officiating minister.

e. Clergy availability.

(1) Within the National Capitol Region, each branch of the Armed Forces provides wedding coverage for its own personnel. The unit/organization Chaplain will arrange to perform the ceremony. As the wedding services conducted in the chapel are services of worship, only ordained clergy may perform chapel weddings. Judges, Justices of the Peace (JP), or other state certified non-religious agents are not allowed (e.g., non-clergy family members, friends, etc.)

(2) The Commonwealth of Virginia requires all clergy, to include military Chaplains, to be certified by the court to conduct weddings and sign the marriage license. "A minister of any religious denomination must be authorized by a circuit court to celebrate the rites of matrimony. To obtain such authorization, the minister must produce proof of his ordination and regular communion with the religious society of which he is a reputed member." (http://www.vdh.state.va.us/vital_records/marry.htm, accessed 26 September 2014). Valid Virginia certification of clergy must be presented to the Administrative Assistant 30 days prior to the ceremony.

(3) Although the marriage will be on federal property, all marriage laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia apply. See the web link immediately above.

(4) It is not necessarily the responsibility of the clergy to choreograph the ceremony. Be sure to ask specific questions about the services provided, including the rehearsal information.

f. Rules for chapel use and care.

(1) Pew decorations and aisle runners are not allowed.

(2) Candelabras are not allowed. Only provided altar candles are to be lit.

(3) The Old Post Chapel seats 208 people maximum.

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(4) Throwing any items (rice, bird seed, etc.) is prohibited inside the chapel or on chapel grounds. The wedding party is responsible for the behavior of their guests.

(5) Receiving lines and wedding receptions will not be held in the chapel facility.

(6) Except for use during communion, no alcohol is permitted in the chapel or on chapel grounds before and after the ceremony.

(7) Furniture in any room in the chapel, to include the sanctuary, will not be rearranged.

(8) Additional items available from the chapel: two candle holders with candles for the altar, kneelers, white silk flower arrangements for the altar and side shelves, a dressing room for the bride, six sabers, and a piano.

(9) Items not available: dressing room for the groom and others, fresh flowers, photographer, babysitting service or nursery, and facilities or supplies for reception.

(10) Due to fire codes, all aisles are to be clear of chairs, musical instruments and decorations. Candles may be used on the altar only.

(11) The chapel must be left in the same condition as it was found. No exceptions. The wedding party/family is responsible to clean-up the chapel, lounge and the bride's room. This must be completed immediately after the bride is finished. The wedding party must provide a set-up and clean-up team with names on their chapel application, to ensure cleanliness for other weddings and religious services within the chapel. All personal items must be removed from the lounge and bride's room before your wedding gets started. If the chapel is left in unacceptable condition, the military sponsor will be contacted with appropriate action.

(12) Sabers. The JBM-HH Chaplain's office issues ceremonial sabers for use by eligible applicants on request on a first come-first served basis. Availability of the sabers will be determined upon the completion of the application process. Eligible applicants must coordinate with the Memorial Chapel NCOIC in order to sign for these items using the DA Form 3161, Hand Receipt. No sabers will be issued for use off of Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall.

g. Requests for exceptions to policy will be sent through the Joint Base Chaplain, to the Joint Base Commander. Address of exception requests: THRU Joint Base Chaplain, 101 McNair Rd, Fort Myer, VA 22211; TO Commander, Headquarters Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, 204 Lee Avenue, Fort Myer, VA 22211-1199.

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6. PROPONENT. Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall Chaplain's Office is the proponent for this policy. POC is the Joint Base Chaplain at 703-696-3532 or fax 703-696-0311.



MICHAEL D. HENDERSON
COL, AR
Commanding

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