



Striving Towards Excellence

Philippians 3:14

Are Your Children and Youth Protected?

Creating a Sexual Misconduct Prevention Policy

Keeping the children and youth in our ministries safe is a top concern for many churches, but knowing where to start can be overwhelming. One way to provide a safe environment is to develop an affective Sexual Misconduct Prevention Policy. The following are several steps your church can take to keep your children and youth safe.

- 1. Screen all Employees and Volunteers** – Running background and reference checks is an important first step to preventing misconduct. All employees should have a screening on file as should any volunteer who will be working with children. Screenings, however, can only be done after written consent is obtained. Anyone unwilling to give consent should not be employed nor allowed to volunteer with youth.
- 2. Create Organizational Policies and Procedures** – Another step that every ministry should take - and is required by all of our insurance companies - is to develop a Sexual Misconduct Prevention Policy. This policy should cover the screening process, expectations of those working with children, duration a person must attend the church before allowed to volunteer, and a procedure for processing reported or suspected misconduct.
- 3. Educate Staff, Parents, and Children** – All employees and volunteers should be trained prior to working with children and periodically after that. Organization policies can be communicated to parents as well as to the children.
- 4. Develop the Best Program for Your Organization** – Each ministry is different and a one-size fits all approach doesn't work for preventing sexual misconduct. It is a good idea to consult with a local attorney, learn state laws, and connect with a local agency dedicated to stopping sexual abuse.

For further help in completing the above steps and for an editable sample policy, see the included Child Safety booklet, pages 16-34, and the SMC Sample.

A NOTE FROM CHUPP AGENCY

This agency newsletter may be a bit uncomfortable, but there are few things that can impact an individual, family, or church family more than the abuse of a child. With staff who have had their immediate families and home congregations effected by child sexual abuse, our agency truly understands the importance of this subject. Such an incident can be a life-altering, foundation-shaking challenge that takes significant time and effort to overcome. All of us at Chupp Insurance take the matter very seriously.

While we may not be able to prevent all abuse, it is our firm belief that the best course of action is a thorough and thoughtful plan of prevention paired with proper procedures for reporting abuse. Though it is not a pleasant subject, it is necessary that we give the matter appropriate care and concern. I think of Mark 9:42 and our Biblical mandate to not cause our "little ones.... to stumble."

Together let's do our best to create safe environments in which our children can develop a life-long love for our Heavenly Father.

Rodney Chupp, CIC



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PROTECTING YOUR PEOPLE

E-mail Address Request

Do we have correct e-mail addresses for your ministry contacts? Send them to audra@chuppinsurance.com so we can keep you informed and up to date with news you need to know.

Sex Offenders in the Church

The likelihood of a sex offender entering your ministry is high with more than a half million registered in the United States. For that reason, it's important to consider how your ministry will respond to a known sex offender in your midst. The following are three steps to help you create a plan before the situation arises.

- 1. Learn Local Laws** – Research local laws and ordinances regarding registered sex offenders to make sure your guidelines fall within the limits of the law. For instance, some laws prohibit sex offenders from being any place where children congregate, such as a church.
- 2. Formulate a Plan** – This plan should address how a registered sex offender can be involved in your ministry. There are four main plans to consider:
 - a. Allow unfettered access to programs and facilities.
 - b. Exclude the individual from the congregation entirely.
 - c. Limit access to certain programs or areas at specific times
 - d. Require other conditions, such as monitored attendance and/or coordination with the individual's probation/parole officer or treatment provider.Whatever plan your ministry adopts, it must be consistently applied and then only to individuals you have confirmed are sex offenders. This can be verified by checking the National Sex Offender Public Website at www.nsopw.gov.
- 3. Meet with the Offender** – When a person is found to be a registered sex offender, a meeting with ministry leadership should be set up to talk with the offender. This meeting serves to protect the children by informing the offender of the church's established plan, the ministry by obtaining permission to run a thorough background check, and the offender by discussing who will be made aware of the situation.

To learn more about creating a plan and meeting with offenders, be sure to read the included article from GuideOne titled "Dealing with Sex Offenders".

Reporting Incidents

A policy that should be addressed within your ministry's Sexual Misconduct Prevention Policy is that of reporting incidents or suspicions of misconduct. A list of individuals within your ministry to whom incidents or suspicions can be reported should be clearly given in your policy. This list does not need to be specifically named individuals, but rather clearly named roles in the church such as pastor, deacon, elder, etc.

It is not a good idea to name only one person to receive reports of misconduct. All too often it is a person of leadership and trust who becomes a perpetrator. By naming several people to receive reports, one person is prevented from being above accountability.

Also be aware of state laws regarding mandatory reporting of suspected abuse, be it from within your ministry or from the home.



Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?

Matthew 6:26

Schools and Daycares

Schools and daycares have more to consider in keeping their children safe than preventing incidents of sexual misconduct and abuse. Other areas of safety to consider are nursery, toy, and playground safety. These are important areas of your ministry to monitor regularly for the safety of the children in your care.

When creating a safety policy it should be expanded to include policies for sick children, suspected abuse at home, child drop off, check in, and pick up, medication protocol, and disciplinary action. The enclosed Child Safety booklet will assist you in creating a more expansive Child Protection Policy that goes beyond preventing and reporting sexual misconduct.