

SafeChurch Resource Packet

The GuideOne Center for Risk Management



Loveland, Colorado
www.safechurch.com

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1. Emergency and Crisis Survey for Churches

	Yes	No
Have we created a written and formalized emergency response plan?		
Do we train our leaders and staff on how to respond to emergencies?		
Do we train ushers and greeters on emergency response?		
Do we conduct regular evacuation drills?		
Do we regularly offer first-aid, CPR, and other emergency training for staff, volunteers, and members?		
Are all exit routes in the church clearly marked?		
Do we have first-aid kits readily available in all key areas of the facility?		
Have we considered purchasing oxygen and defibrillator equipment?		
Have we identified key medical professionals in our congregation?		
Have we formed a Medical Team?		
Do we have immediate access to phones at all times?		
Have we identified and appointed a representative to speak on behalf of the church?		
Do we have Directors and Officers (D&O) insurance coverage in place?		
Do we complete proper paperwork to document any emergencies we experience?		
Have we identified legal counsel for our church?		
Have we set aside funds to pay for legal counsel?		
Have our hiring, personnel, and other policies been reviewed by legal counsel?		
Do our leaders understand the terms and conditions of our church's insurance policy?		
Have we set aside funds to pay insurance deductibles and expenses related to insurance claims?		
Do we have a good relationship with our insurance agent to receive advice and risk management consultation?		

2. Monthly Inspection Checklist

Slip and Fall Prevention	N/A	Yes	No
Are ladders inspected before each use to ensure they're safe?			
Is scaffolding inspected before each use to ensure it's safe?			
Are walking surfaces free of obstructions, cracks, and potholes, and repaired if more than a ¼-inch variance is found in the surface			
Are parking lots free of cracks and potholes and repaired if more than a ¼-inch variance is found in the surface?			
Do entrance and exit doors open and shut smoothly?			
Are carpet remnants, scatter rugs, or cheap mats (with or without vinyl backing) not used?			
Are all stairs, aisles, and hallways free of obstructions?			
Are handrails in good condition and adequately secured?			
Are ramps clear of obstructions?			
Are electrical, telephone, and microphone cords routed around walkways and doorways? Where this is not possible, are they securely taped down or covered with mats?			
Are all light fixtures illuminating interior and exterior walking surfaces in good repair (walkways, parking lots, stairways, hallways, basements)?			
Is snow and ice removal equipment (including shovels, ice melt, and snowblowers) available?			
Are snow and ice being adequately removed from sidewalks and parking lots in a timely fashion?			
Are de-icing products applied to walkways in front of entrances during snowstorms and ice storms?			
Are mats installed at entrances during snowstorms and ice storms?			
Are equipment and supplies, including mops, buckets, and warning signs or cones, available to deal with wet conditions?			
Do gutter downspouts not drain onto walkways?			

Exits	N/A	Yes	No
Are all routes of egress from the building free from obstructions?			
Are all emergency exit signs visible and in good condition?			
Are all exit signs illuminated and working?			
Have all emergency lighting units been tested, and are they working properly?			
Are locks and panic hardware on all exit doors? Are they in good working order? Do the doors open outward?			

Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning	N/A	Yes	No
Are combustible materials being stored at least 36 inches away from the furnace or boiler?			

Electrical	N/A	Yes	No
If the electrical system utilizes fuses, are appropriate Fustat adapters installed to prevent the use of oversized fuses?			
Do all switches, outlets, and junction boxes have cover plates?			
Do you avoid using adapters that allow multiple cords to be plugged into one outlet?			
Do all electrical circuit breaker boxes have their front panels?			
Are extension cords that are used for temporary wiring in good condition (for example, cord insulation not damaged, ground plug not missing)?			
Is permanent wiring being used instead of extension cords?			
Are all combustible materials being stored at least 36 inches away from electrical panels?			
Are ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) tested?			
Are electrical outlets equipped with appropriate outlet safety plugs in the children's area?			

Water Damage	N/A	Yes	No
Is the building clear of signs of current or past water damage (for example, rotten wood, damaged walls or floors, stained ceiling panels, dampness in lower levels or basement)?			
Has the roof been checked for loose or missing shingles, insufficient caulking around vents and chimneys or skylights, and flashing in valleys and eaves?			
Are gutters, downspouts, and eaves cleaned on a regular basis to keep them clear of debris and functioning correctly?			
Are downspouts properly connected and extended to at least 6 feet away from the building?			
Are water supply lines checked for leaks or damage (for example, sinks, toilets, water fountains)?			
Are early signs of mold quickly cleaned with bleach and water?			
Is the baptistery properly monitored during the entire filling process?			

Fire Protection	N/A	Yes	No
Are all items stored at least 18 inches away from sprinkler heads?			
Have items such as holiday decorations and maintenance items been checked to ensure they're not being hung from sprinkler heads?			
Is the area around the sprinkler system shut-off valve clear of all obstacles?			
Are fire extinguishers fully charged, properly mounted, and easily accessible?			
Are all flammable and combustible liquids appropriately marked and kept in a UL-listed, locked, flammable liquid storage cabinet?			

Kitchen	N/A	Yes	No
Is the hood and ventilation system installed over the cooking equipment free from grease buildup?			
Is the general cooking area of the kitchen clean, free of grease buildup, and in good condition?			
Is a Class K-rated fire extinguisher installed in a visible, easily accessible location within the kitchen and fully charged?			

Are the deep-fat fryers a minimum of 16 inches away from any open-flame appliance?			
Are proper food preparation procedures, including preparation, serving, storage, and sanitation, being followed?			

Elevators/Lifts	N/A	Yes	No
Are all elevators adjusted to be even and level with the floor surface?			

Housekeeping	N/A	Yes	No
Is trash stored in enclosed containers and taken outside daily?			
Are cleaning products well marked and stored in a safe and locked place?			
Are all combustible materials (boxes, paper products) stored in appropriate locations and being kept at least 36 inches from any heating equipment or electrical panels?			
Are cleaning rags being appropriately stored in metal containers with self-closing lids?			

Emergency Preparedness	N/A	Yes	No
Are emergency evacuation diagrams posted throughout the building identifying all exits, evacuation routes, safe assembly spaces, fire extinguishers, and first-aid kits?			
Are safe shelter areas marked at the church? Is a basic disaster supply kit provided in the safe shelter area?			
Is a basic first-aid kit provided, and is it fully stocked?			

Crime	N/A	Yes	No
Are the doors and windows locked when the building is unoccupied?			
Are ladders, tools, and flammable liquids such as cleaning supplies and gasoline locked up at the end of the day?			
Are lighting fixtures protected through the use of plastic lenses or metal screens over the fixtures?			
Are interior entry lights left on overnight?			
Are stairways and fire escapes that provide access to the roof secured?			

Does a responsible person, prior to leaving the building for the day, conduct a tour of the building and grounds to make sure all doors and windows are secured?			
To prevent a fire from spreading to adjacent buildings, are all trash containers stored away from buildings?			

Playground Equipment	N/A	Yes	No
Do surfaces around playground equipment have at least 9 to 12 inches of wood chips, mulch, sand, or pea gravel (an alternative is mats or synthetic surfacing made of safety-tested rubber or rubberlike materials)? Does the protective surfacing extend at least 6 feet in all directions from the play equipment?			
Is the playground equipment inspected according to the manufacturers' recommendations?			
Has the equipment been checked to ensure there are no dangerous hardware such as open S-hooks on swings and protruding bolts or sharp points or edges?			

The items listed in this survey are those that cause the most damage and result in the more frequent and severe claims, but this is not an exhaustive list. If you answered "no" to any of the survey questions, corrective action should be taken as soon as possible.

Item Number: _____

Corrective Action Taken:

Name of Inspector: _____ Date of Inspection: _____

3. Annual Inspection Checklist

Slip and Fall Prevention	N/A	Yes	No
Are Type III-rated ladders having a weight rating of 200 pounds and a duty rating of "light-duty household" not used?			
Are ladders inspected before each use to ensure they're safe?			
Has training for employees and volunteers on safe use, inspection, and maintenance of ladders been completed?			
Is scaffolding manufactured and not homemade?			
Is scaffolding inspected before each use to ensure that it is safe?			
Is training provided for employees and volunteers who perform work while on a scaffold so that they recognize the hazards associated with the type of scaffold being used and understand the procedures to control or minimize those hazards?			
Are walking surfaces free of obstructions, cracks, and potholes and repaired if more than a ¼-inch variance is found in the surface?			
Are parking lots free of cracks and potholes and repaired if more than a ¼-inch variance is found in the surface?			
Are curbs 6 inches in height and painted a contrasting color?			
Are curbs leading to entrances or heavy-traffic areas appropriately painted in a contrasting color?			
Are tire stops in good condition, not taller than 6½ inches, and painted a contrasting color such as yellow?			
Are speed bumps in good condition and painted a contrasting color? Are signs warning of their presence installed?			
Do entrance and exit doors open and shut smoothly?			
Are doorsills flush with the floor? If not, is there is no more than a ¾-inch variance?			
Are floor mats installed at entrances that are designed for removal of dust, dirt, and moisture? Are the mats slip-resistant and in good condition with no signs of severe wear and tear?			
Are carpet remnants, scatter rugs, or cheap mats (with or without vinyl backing) not used?			
Are floor mats long enough to take two full steps (6 to 8 feet) before stepping onto other surfaces?			

Do floor mats and runners receive proper cleaning and maintenance?			
Is carpeting throughout the building(s) in good shape and not loose, buckled, or showing signs of severe wear and tear?			
Are all hard-surfaced floors level and in good condition, and are non-slip finishes applied to the floors according to the manufacturer's recommendations?			
Do areas prone to the presence of water (for example, entrances and bathrooms) have high slip-resistance characteristics?			
Is the height of each step (riser) between 7 and 7½ inches? Is the width (tread) between 9 and 10 inches?			
Do all steps with a smooth surface have an anti-slip material applied to the tread?			
Are all stairs, aisles, and hallways free of obstructions?			
Is every flight of stairs having four or more steps equipped with a handrail that is between 34 and 38 inches high?			
Are handrails in good condition and adequately secured in place?			
Do ramps have a slope no greater than 1 vertical by 8 horizontal or 7 degrees? If the ramps are to be used by disabled individuals, is the slope not greater than 1 vertical by 12 horizontal?			
Are ramps clear of obstructions, and are handrails installed if the ramps have a rise of 6 inches or greater?			
Are the open sides of all balconies equipped with guardrails, and are the rails at least 42 inches high? Do they consist of posts and a top rail and an intermediate rail halfway between the top rail and floor?			
Are electrical, telephone, and microphone cords routed around walkways and doorways? Where this is not possible, are they securely taped down or covered with mats?			
Are all interior and exterior walking surfaces adequately illuminated and light fixtures in good repair (for example, walkways, parking lots, stairways, hallways, basements)?			
Is the baptistery provided with sturdy handrails, stairs having non-slip treads, and the tank properly protected (drained, covered, and with guardrails) during nonuse?			
Has a person been designated to monitor snow and ice conditions, and is this individual responsible for coordinating snow/ice removal operations?			

Is snow and ice removal equipment available (including equipment such as shovels, ice melt, and snowblowers)?			
Are snow and ice being adequately removed from sidewalks and parking lots in a timely fashion?			
Are de-icing products applied to walkways in front of entrances during snowstorms and ice storms?			
Are mats installed at entrances during snowstorms and ice storms?			
Since a log documenting the steps taken to remove snow and ice can be a good defense against claims that the church was negligent in snow/ice removal, is a log utilized, and does the church consistently document all aspects of snow and ice removal operations?			
If a contractor is used for snow and ice removal, does the contractor provide a certificate of insurance naming the church as an additional insured under the contractor's insurance policy, and is a written contract used with a hold harmless/indemnification clause included?			
Are employees and volunteers trained to identify wet conditions and clean up spills immediately?			
Are equipment and supplies available to deal with the wet conditions, including mops, buckets, and warning signs or cones?			
Do gutter downspouts not drain onto walkways?			

Exits	N/A	Yes	No
Are all routes of egress from the building free from obstructions?			
Are all emergency exit signs visible and in good condition?			
Are all exit signs illuminated and working?			
Have all emergency lighting units been tested, and are they working properly?			
Are all exit doors in good working order (for example, are locks and panic hardware in good working condition, and do doors open outward)?			

Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning	N/A	Yes	No
Have all heating and cooling units been inspected and serviced in the last year?			
Are all combustible materials being stored at least 36 inches away from the furnace or boiler?			
Are the boiler's current inspection certificates posted in the boiler room?			

Electrical	N/A	Yes	No
If the building is older than 1970, has the electrical system been upgraded by a licensed electrical contractor?			
Is the electrical system for the building(s) inspected every 5 years by a licensed electrician?			
If the electrical system utilizes fuses, are appropriate Fustat adapters installed to prevent the use of oversized fuses?			
Do all switches, outlets, or junction boxes have their cover plates?			
Do you avoid using adapters that allow multiple cords to be plugged into one outlet?			
Do all of the electrical circuit breaker boxes have their front panels?			
Are extension cords that are used for temporary wiring in good condition, (for example, cord insulation not damaged, ground plug not missing)?			
Is permanent wiring being used instead of extension cords?			
Are all combustible materials being stored at least 36 inches away from the electrical panels?			
Are all outlets within 36 inches of water equipped with ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs)?			
Are ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) being periodically tested?			
Is the building equipped with lightning and surge protection?			
Are electrical outlets equipped with appropriate outlet safety plugs in the children's area?			

Water Damage	N/A	Yes	No
Are water supply lines checked for leaks or damage (for example, sinks, toilets, water fountains)?			
Is the building checked for signs of current or past water damage (for example, rotten wood, damaged walls or floors, stained ceiling panels, dampness in lower levels or basement)?			
Are water pipes that are exposed to freezing temperatures and cold drafts adequately insulated, or are precautions taken to keep them from freezing?			
Are the building's sump pumps and their battery backups tested periodically?			

Are gutters, downspouts, and eaves being cleaned on a regular basis to keep them clear of debris and functioning correctly?			
Are downspouts properly connected and extended to at least 6 feet away from the building?			
Is there no evidence of past water damage, including rotten fascia boards, siding, or eaves?			
Is the roof inspected annually for loose or missing shingles, insufficient caulking around vents, chimneys, or skylights, and flashing in valleys and eaves?			
Are mortar joints on masonry buildings free of any cracks or damage?			
Are there no visible structural hazards or damage to the building (for example, loose wood, cracks in walls and bricks)?			
Are exterior portions of the building not in need of painting?			
Are windows and doors properly sealed to prevent water from entering?			
Does the earth adequately slope away (that is, there are no low spots) near the building's foundation?			
Are early signs of mold quickly cleaned with bleach and water?			
Has any excessive mold buildup been tested by a certified health professional?			
Is the baptistery properly monitored during the entire filling process?			

Fire Protection	N/A	Yes	No
Is the sprinkler system inspected annually by a certified contractor?			
Are all items being stored at least 18 inches from any sprinkler heads?			
Are sprinkler heads that are exposed to potential physical damage protected with a metal guard?			
Have items such as holiday decorations and maintenance items been checked to ensure they're not being hung from sprinkler heads?			
Is the area around the sprinkler system shut-off valve clear of all obstacles?			
Are fire detection sensors unobstructed, operational, and periodically tested by a certified contractor?			
Is the fire alarm system tested on an annual basis by a certified contractor?			

Is there a portable fire extinguisher permanently mounted in a visible location within 75 feet of any location within the building?			
Are portable fire extinguishers serviced on an annual basis by a certified contractor?			
Are all flammable and combustible liquids appropriately marked and kept in a UL-listed, locked, flammable liquid storage cabinet?			
Are candles used only with appropriate supervision?			

Kitchen	N/A	Yes	No
Is the hood and ventilation system installed over the cooking equipment being cleaned on a regular basis, including filters, hood, and duct work?			
Is the general cooking area of the kitchen clean, free of grease buildup, and in good condition?			
Is a Class K-rated fire extinguisher installed in a visible, easily accessible location within the kitchen?			
Is the automatic fire suppression system protecting the deep-fat fryers and grease-producing appliances being serviced on a 6-month basis by a certified contractor?			
Has manual activation of the automatic fire suppression system been installed, and is the kitchen staff (employees and volunteers) trained in how to manually activate the system?			
Are the deep-fat fryers equipped with a temperature-limiting device?			
Are the deep-fat fryers a minimum of 16 inches away from any open flame-producing appliance?			
Are proper food preparation procedures being followed (including procedures for serving, storage, and sanitation)?			

Elevators/Lifts	N/A	Yes	No
Are elevators working properly and been serviced by a certified elevator servicing contractor in the last year, and have the service tags been kept on file?			
Are all elevators adjusted to be even and level with the floor surface?			

Housekeeping	N/A	Yes	No
Is trash stored in enclosed containers and taken outside daily?			

Are cleaning products well marked and stored in a safe and locked place?			
Are all combustible materials (boxes, paper products) stored in appropriate locations and kept at least 36 inches from any heating equipment or electrical panels?			
Are cleaning rags being appropriately stored in metal containers with self-closing lids?			

Emergency Preparedness	N/A	Yes	No
Has the church developed an Emergency Response Plan?			
Have emergency evacuation diagrams been developed and posted throughout the building identifying all exits, evacuation routes, safe assembly spaces, fire extinguishers, and first-aid kits?			
Are natural disaster drills and fire evacuation plans practiced regularly?			
Have safe shelter areas been identified and marked at the church, and have the staff and congregation members been made aware of the locations? Also, has a basic disaster supply kit been provided in the safe shelter area?			
Is there a pre-appointed, qualified representative to field all questions from the media and investigators?			
Has the church compiled a list of important phone numbers, accounts, and addresses?			
Has an itemized inventory of all items, equipment, and other valuables within the church along with photographs and video recordings of items within the church's interior been completed?			
Have backup files of computer data and important records and copies of vital paper records and the disaster recovery plan been made, and is all of this information being kept at a secure off-site location?			
Have arrangements been made ahead of time for an alternative meeting space and use of equipment?			
Has the facility been inspected to determine how safe and secure it will be in the event of a disaster, and have modifications been made, if needed, such as trimming of tree limbs and keeping roofs maintained?			
Do you have a designated individual to be the security director?			
Have policies and procedures been developed on what to do in the event a violent situation occurs at the church?			

Have ushers and greeters been properly trained on how to handle violent situations?			
Have local laws been consulted to determine requirements for using security personnel?			
Have security guards been properly screened, trained, and supervised, and do they have the appropriate licensing and permits?			
If a hired security service is used, has the church verified that the service has the appropriate licensing? Has the church entered into a hold harmless agreement with the security service, and is it named as an additional insured on the service's insurance policy?			
If the church uses armed security guards, have consultations with an attorney, local law enforcement, and an insurance agent been done to determine the feasibility of using such services? Are armed guards properly licensed, and do they hold necessary permits and carry only legal and authorized weapons?			
Have a medical leader and medical personnel within the congregation been chosen?			
Has basic medical emergency training been provided, including how to respond to medical emergencies, CPR, first aid, and AEDs (if present)?			
Is a basic first-aid kit provided, and is it fully stocked?			
Are medical emergency procedures practiced on a scheduled basis?			

Crime	N/A	Yes	No
Are the doors and windows locked when the building is unoccupied?			
Are 1-inch deadbolt locks installed on exterior doors?			
Are exterior doors made of solid core (not hollow) construction, preferably metal (including the doorframe), and, if hinged on the outside, are tamper-proof hinges installed?			
Is there a key control policy in place that documents who is in possession of a key at any given time, ensures that rekeying or replacing the door locks occurs when a key is lost, eliminates or limits the use of a master key, and keeps backup keys in a locked key box?			
Are ladders, tools, and flammable liquids such as cleaning supplies and gasoline locked up at the end of the day?			

Has exterior lighting been installed that illuminates all sides of the building, including parking lots, walkways and entry/exit doors, and is it in good working order?			
Are lighting fixtures protected through the use of plastic lenses or metal screens over the fixtures?			
Has motion-activated lighting been installed near entry/exit doors?			
Are interior entry lights left on during overnight hours?			
Are timers for interior/exterior lights updated following time changes?			
Are stairways and fire escapes that provide access to the roof secured?			
Does a responsible person, prior to leaving the building for the day, conduct a tour of the building and grounds to make sure all doors and windows are secured?			
Are shrubs and trees trimmed around windows and doors to eliminate potential hiding places for arsonists and criminals?			
Are signs or displays installed so as not to block the view of the building?			
To prevent a fire from spreading to adjacent buildings, are all trash containers stored away from buildings?			
Are large rocks used for landscaping not present?			
Have church members, local authorities, or neighbors been contacted to help watch the building and grounds for suspicious behavior?			
Are valuables (fine art, rare books, valuable collectibles, or other rare items) kept in a secured location?			
Is an inventory or schedule of valuables maintained including a detailed description and value?			
Have high-value items been photographed and/or videotaped, and are copies maintained of the inventory/schedule, photographs, and videotapes off-site?			

Outside Groups/Repair Contractors	N/A	Yes	No
Have updated certificates of insurance been obtained from any outside groups using the facility?			
Do you have outside groups complete a facility usage agreement that includes a hold harmless provision?			

Do you have written contracts with all contractors that include a hold harmless provision?			
Have updated certificates of insurance been obtained from any contractors performing work on or for the church?			

Playground Equipment	N/A	Yes	No
Is the playground built in a location that eliminates any obstacles or hazards children could encounter when traveling to and from the playground site?			
Does the playground have appropriate boundaries, such as fences or landscape hedges, so that children cannot leave, and others cannot enter the playground area unnoticed?			
Is the playground equipment of commercial grade quality, has it been installed and maintained according to the manufacturers' recommendations, and is it age appropriate?			
Does the playground not contain any hazardous types of equipment (for example, merry-go-rounds, monkey bars, animal figure swings, and/or spring-loaded equipment)?			
Do the surfaces around the playground equipment have at least 9 to 12 inches of wood chips, mulch, sand, or pea gravel (an alternative is mats or synthetic surfacing made of safety-tested rubber or rubberlike materials), and does the protective surfacing extend at least 6 feet in all directions from the play equipment?			
Is the playground equipment inspected according to the manufacturers' recommendations?			
Is there no dangerous hardware such as open S-hooks on swings, protruding bolts, or sharp points/edges?			
Have any tripping hazards such as exposed concrete footings, tree stumps, and rocks been removed or protected?			

Insurance	N/A	Yes	No
Have you provided your insurance agent with an up-to-date Contents Evaluation Sheet?			
Has a Building Value Analysis been completed, with a copy going to your insurance agent?			
Have you discussed insurance with your agent in the last year?			

The items listed in this survey are those that cause the most damage and result in the more frequent and severe claims, but this is not an exhaustive list. If you answered “no” to any of the survey questions, corrective action should be taken as soon as possible.

Item Number: _____

Corrective Action Taken:

Name of Inspector: _____ Date of Inspection: _____

4. Security Checklist

Locks/Doors	N/A	Yes	No	Notes
Are all exterior doors equipped with proper locking devices?				
Are exterior doors of solid core construction?				
Are hinges that are exposed on a door's exterior equipped with nonremovable hinge pins?				
Are doors to adjoining buildings locked at night?				
Are all exterior doors kept locked when the building is unoccupied?				
Is there a routine check made each night to ensure all doors are locked?				

Windows	N/A	Yes	No	Notes
Note: All windows should be secured no matter how small or inaccessible they may seem.				
Are basement windows clear of shrubbery and other obstructions?				
Are basement windows protected by:				
bars?				
wire mesh?				
window locks?				
Are stained-glass windows protected by:				
wire mesh?				
Plexiglas?				
Lexan?				
other?				
Are all windows, including those above ground level, properly fitted with a locking device?				
checked each night to make sure each window is closed and securely locked?				

Lights	N/A	Yes	No	Notes
Are exterior lights installed to illuminate the exterior of buildings and their alleyways?				
Are interior lights left on at night?				
Are entrance lights left on at night so intruders will be clearly visible if forcibly attempting to enter the premises?				
Are lights left on in strategic locations to allow people and/or police to see easily into the premises (either when passing by on foot or when driving by in a vehicle)?				
Are timing devices used to turn lights on and off at preset times to give the impression the premises are occupied?				

Intrusion Devices	N/A	Yes	No	Notes
Do you have a security alarm system?				
If you have a system, is it listed by Underwriters Laboratories Inc.?				
Was it properly installed by licensed workers?				
Is your security alarm system checked regularly?				
Does your system have contacts or motion sensors at all exterior points of entry?				
Does your system automatically report to a remote, certified, 24/7 alarm-monitoring station?				
Does your system sound a local alarm (horn or siren)?				

Security Measures	N/A	Yes	No	Notes
Do you maintain a written or photographic inventory of all valuables and records on the premises?				
Do you keep a copy of this inventory off-site?				

Are personnel assigned to check exits, entrances, and windows to make sure they are secure before leaving each night?				
Are sacred objects, vessels, and other valuables kept in a safe, vault, or locked cabinet when not being used?				
When employees with access to keys or safe combinations terminate their employment, are the locks and/or combinations changed?				
Do you have a security guard?				
Did you investigate this guard before hiring him or her?				
Are ladders, boxes, and other equipment put away after use so that they are not left for use by anyone intent on criminal behavior?				
Are the premises used in the evening for meetings and other activities? (Evening activities generally reduce the possibility of burglary/theft.)				
Have you arranged for a regular police patrol or a security force check at night?				

Completed by: _____ Date: _____

5. General Church Property Survey

	Yes	No
Do we conduct monthly and annual inspections of buildings and equipment?		
Are the inspections documented and forms kept in a known location?		
Do we make sure that deficiencies noted during the inspection are assigned to someone for correction?		
Do we have a procedure to make sure the work has been completed on time and correctly?		
Do we have an easy method to report problems or hazards?		
Do we have the names and contact information for certified contractors?		
Do we ensure that all major work is done by licensed contractors?		
Do we require that contractors name our church as an additional insured on their insurance policies and provide us with proof of insurance?		
Is there funding set aside for maintenance and immediate, necessary repairs?		
Are rules posted for use of equipment such as kitchen equipment and power tools?		
Is there adequate, qualified supervision during workdays and when repairs are conducted?		
Do we have a way to respond quickly to weather-related issues?		
Is the staff trained on responding to a known problem, hazard, or emergency?		
Do we have equipment that monitors for fire, smoke, flooding, or break-ins?		
Do we have adequate insurance for property protection?		
Do we have an accurate, updated listing and appraisal of property, equipment, and fine art?		
Are valuables secured in locked, unmarked cabinets or closets?		
Are paper records and sensitive electronic information properly secured?		
Are backup systems and passwords utilized for information security?		

6. Key Areas for Fire Safety Consideration

Naturally, your church will need to develop a fire prevention/safety program that is customized to meet its specific needs. In general, though, there are four areas that your team should consider: (1) structure, equipment, and maintenance; (2) congregation and staff safety; (3) building security/arson prevention; and (4) future enhancements.

Structure, Equipment, and Maintenance

Systems service—The heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems in the facility should be inspected and serviced on a regular basis. We highly recommend annual service and cleaning.

Electrical wiring—The facility's electrical wiring should be inspected annually and repaired or replaced if needed. This is critical in older churches. All work should be done by a certified electrician. It is especially important that churches with fuses in their electrical systems either have a licensed electrician replace their systems with circuit breakers or utilize Fustats, safety adapters installed into a socket-style fuse holder to prevent the use of an oversized fuse on an electrical circuit. Failure to do so could result in overload of the electrical system and a fire starting.

Storage—All flammable and combustible materials should be stored away from furnace equipment. Put flammables in a UL-listed cabinet or a locked closet. Gasoline-powered equipment and gas containers should be stored away from occupied buildings.

Decorations—Be sure holiday decorations, lighting, and displays do not cause fire hazards when in use or in storage.

Electrical outlets—Do not allow outlets to become overloaded. Upgrade to three-slot grounded outlets. Have ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) devices installed in bathrooms, the kitchen, and anywhere a person might use electricity near wet conditions.

Extension cords—Avoid or minimize the use of extension cords. Use only cords that are rated for the equipment. Any frayed cords or cracked plugs should be replaced.

Fire extinguishers—Use extinguishers that are approved by Underwriter Laboratories (UL) and rated for Class A, B, and C fires. Inspect extinguishers regularly to make sure they are functional and the charge is up to date.

Kitchen—Inspect stoves regularly, and double-check them after every event. Keep K-rated fire extinguishers on hand, and post instructions in the kitchen area.

Smoke detectors and alarms—Test all smoke detectors and alarm systems for proper operation once a month. If detectors use batteries, replace them at least annually.

Sprinkler system—Have the system professionally inspected and serviced regularly.

Trash—Remove trash daily, and keep outdoor trash containers a safe distance from the building.

Congregation and Staff Safety

Evacuation—Establish evacuation plans and identify areas outside the church where everyone should meet. Train ushers and staff on how to respond. Communicate plans to the congregation with newsletters and signage.

Fire drills—Organize and conduct practice fire drills periodically. A drill held during a Sunday service is an excellent learning experience.

Exits—Inspect all fire exits, doors, and locks to ensure they are functioning properly and are not blocked by storage items.

Emergency lighting—Periodically inspect emergency exit signs and emergency lights to make sure that they will be fully functional when needed.

Emergency Response Team—Organize and train members to serve on an Emergency Response Team. Training should include first aid and CPR.

Insurance coverage—To further protect your organization, be sure the church carries adequate property and liability coverage. Many churches are under-insured for the current value of their property and contents.

Building Security/Arson Prevention

Many people are surprised to learn that arson is the leading cause of commercial building fires. On average, more than 37,500 structure fires are intentionally set each year in the United States, and arson is one of the top 10 causes of insurance claims filed by churches.

Partly because of their religious beliefs and their tendency to take minimal security precautions, churches can be vulnerable targets for arsonists. To help prevent arson, follow the “Five L’s” of crime prevention discussed in Chapter 5 of *The Missing Ministry*. In addition, take the following steps to help reduce the risk of arson. Many of these precautions will also help prevent burglary and vandalism.

- Keep doors and windows locked when the building is unoccupied. Doors should have nonremovable hinge pins.
- Protect windows and glass entries with wire mesh, bars, or Lexan.
- Light all sides of the building and parking areas.
- Trim shrubbery to minimize hiding places.
- Remove loose material, combustibles, and trash from the property.
- Have police routinely check the premises.
- Participate in a Neighborhood Watch program.
- Protect open crawl spaces.
- Limit access to roofs, fire escapes, and outside stairways to authorized personnel.

Candle Safety

Candles are often an integral part of religious gatherings and ceremonies. However, since candles pose a major fire risk, churches should monitor candle use closely.

- Candles should be sturdy, difficult to tip over, made from heat-resistant/noncombustible materials, and large enough to collect dripping wax.
- Place candles on a sturdy, uncluttered surface, away from edges or places where they can be knocked over.
- Keep candles away from combustible materials and flammable liquids.
- Do not place candles in windows or near doorways.
- Trim candle wicks to ¼ inch, and discard candles when they’ve burned down to within 2 inches of their holders.

- Never leave a burning candle unattended, and do not leave the room until the wick has stopped glowing.
- Extinguish candles carefully with a long-handled candle snuffer or soft, direct breath.
- Do not splatter wax.
- Store matches and lighters in a locked cabinet.
- Avoid using candles during a power outage. Instead, keep flashlights and battery-powered lighting on hand for emergencies.

Proper Storage of Flammable Liquids

Just about every church has one or more kinds of flammable liquids stored somewhere on-site. Gasoline for lawn mowers, cans of paint, and solvents for cleaning are a few common examples. If these materials are not stored properly, the church is exposed to serious fire hazards. Not only can the materials ignite, but if a fire breaks out and reaches a storage area, the liquids can cause the flames to spread more rapidly throughout the facility. During your church inspections, make sure the following guidelines are followed:

- Keep flammable liquids in their original containers or properly labeled in UL-listed safety cans.
- Store containers in a UL-listed flammable liquid storage cabinet.
- Don't store more than 60 gallons of flammable liquid in a cabinet.
- Store quantities greater than 60 gallons safely and securely away from the building or in an approved flammable liquid storage room.

In addition, make sure that ordinary combustibles such as cardboard boxes, papier-mâché items, and holiday decorations are stored away from furnaces and other heat sources. Two churches in the Southeast learned this lesson the hard way several years ago. One church was moving out of the church building and another church was moving in when cardboard moving boxes were left near a furnace. They ignited, and the ensuing blaze totally destroyed the \$2 million church building.

Fire Extinguishers

Portable fire extinguishers are an excellent first line of defense in fighting a fire if the fire is small and does not pose an immediate threat to the safety of the person using the extinguisher. Fire extinguishers are rated A, B, C, D, or K for the type and size of fire they can extinguish.

A—Ordinary Combustibles

B—Flammable Liquids

C—Electrical Equipment

D—Combustible Metals

K—Combustible Cooking

Extinguishers with multiple letter ratings, such as A-B-C, can be used on different types of fires. All churches need at least one UL-listed portable fire extinguisher with a minimum rating of 2A for every 3,000 square feet of floor space and located within 75 feet of any point within the building. Extinguishers should be mounted where they can be easily accessed and should be clearly marked with a sign. We also recommend a diagram of the building that shows the location of each extinguisher. Extinguishers should not be set on floors or mounted behind doors.

Each month, fire extinguishers should be visually inspected to verify they are ready for use. Every 12 months, fire extinguishers need to be checked and serviced by a qualified service company to ensure they are working properly and are fully charged. The service company should place a tag on each extinguisher following the service.

Sprinkler Systems

Churches with sprinkler systems should have an annual inspection and service performed by a fire protection contractor. Service should include an annual flow test. Records of these tests should be kept on file. Also, the church custodian, maintenance personnel, or members of the Church Safety and Security (CSS) Team should be trained to visually inspect the sprinkler system each month. During this inspection, check for the following things:

- Is the area around the sprinkler system shut-off valve clear of obstacles? (This is important so the system can be turned off quickly if there is a leak or after a fire to minimize water damage.)
- Is the control valve open? Is it secured or supervised?
- Are the sprinkler heads and pipes in good condition? (If sprinkler heads have been painted over or are damaged, they should be replaced. Extra sprinkler heads and a sprinkler wrench should be kept on hand.)
- Are there at least 18 inches of clearance below all sprinkler heads? (Light fixtures, heating and cooling ducts, signs, or temporary decorations should not obstruct sprinkler heads.)
- Make sure nothing is hanging from a sprinkler head or piping. (The weight could cause the piping to crack or fail.)
- If there is a fire department connection on the exterior of the building, make sure it is unobstructed and caps cover the connection.
- If the sprinkler system is monitored with a central station fire alarm, make sure the station alarm is functioning properly.

Future Enhancements

The CSS Team should identify desired enhancements to the facility and prioritize the projects. Take steps to gain approval from church leaders to make the enhancements and acquire necessary funding. Here are some examples:

- **Add a sprinkler system.** If your church doesn't already have a sprinkler system, retrofitting the facility for a system should be an immediate goal. Because a system can save lives and greatly reduce property damage, installing one is a wise investment.
- **Get a monitored system.** Consider purchasing a fire detection/security system that includes a 24-hour monitoring service. If a fire occurs when the building is unoccupied, the fire department and/or police can be summoned immediately. Sophisticated sensor and detection equipment is available with these systems.
- **Create a central greeting/security station.** A central station is an excellent feature for greeting guests, improving security, and facilitating check-in and checkout of children and guests. It can serve as a central point for alarms and notification of a fire or breach of security. For even greater safety, install intercom and closed-circuit video cameras at entrances that can be monitored at the station.
- **Build extra-wide doorways and halls.** If your church is constructing an addition or new facility, strongly consider extra-wide doorways and hallways as part of the plan. They can greatly improve the efficiency and speed of a building evacuation.

- **Add storage spaces.** Few churches have ample storage. If you're building, plan additional storage spaces, including a closet designed for flammable materials.
- **Use evacuation carts.** Infants, toddlers, and other small children can be placed on evacuation carts and taken from the building quickly.

Lightning and Surge Protection

If your church experiences a direct or nearby lightning strike, there's a good chance it will cause an electrical surge, which is a brief rise in voltage that exceeds safe levels of operation for electrical equipment. Electrical surges—also known as *transient voltage*—are a leading cause of equipment failure. The cost to repair or replace the equipment can be extremely high and may or may not be covered by insurance.

In addition to lightning strikes, the operation of high-power electrical devices such as elevators, air conditioners, and refrigerators; faulty wiring; problems with the utility company's equipment; downed power lines; and blackouts or brownouts can also cause electrical surges.

In conjunction with an electrical grounding system, churches can protect their facilities and equipment from electrical surges by having surge protection devices (SPDs) installed. SPDs sense an electrical surge and safely divert the excess voltage.

For the best protection, churches are advised to install surge protection devices in three zones:

Zone I—on the electrical service entrance equipment where power comes into the building. This protects the church and equipment from surges generated outside.

Zone II—at each distribution panel supplying critical or sensitive electronic equipment. This provides protection against internally generated surges.

Zone III—on each piece of equipment (point of use) requiring protection, such as computers, modems, fax machines, copiers, and printers.

At least two zones of protection—electrical service entrance and point of use—are recommended for commercial facilities, including churches.

7. Financial Safeguards Survey

Developing a Financial Policy	N/A	Yes	No
Do you have a financial policy that identifies how money is handled, counted, deposited, reported, and audited?			

Collection Safeguards	N/A	Yes	No
Are ushers trained on what to do to safeguard the collection during and after it is taken?			
Are there always two unrelated adults with the money from collection to deposit?			
Does a team of individuals count the collections in a secure location?			
Is taking funds home to count forbidden?			
Are bank bags placed in a nondescript bag when taken to the bank?			
Is a signed and dated counting form used that lists all currency, coins, and checks?			

Internal Controls	N/A	Yes	No
Is there a separation of duties between the ushers, counting team, treasurer, and the financial secretary?			
Are dual signatures required for all checks over a specified dollar amount?			
Are bank statements opened and reviewed by someone who is not involved in writing the checks?			

Screening Workers	N/A	Yes	No
Are criminal background checks conducted on employees who handle funds?			
Are credit checks conducted on employees who handle funds?			
Are different individuals rotated into these positions to ensure safeguarding of funds?			

Purchases	N/A	Yes	No
Are purchases made through a voucher system in which check requests are accompanied by appropriate paperwork supporting the expense?			
Do purchases over a specified dollar amount require the approval of a church or ministry leader?			

Petty Cash Funds	N/A	Yes	No
Are guidelines set for the use of petty cash?			
Are petty cash funds stored in a locked location?			
Are distributions from the fund documented?			
Are periodic, unannounced audits conducted on the fund?			

Special Funds	N/A	Yes	No
Are procedures outlined for the handling of special funds such as benevolence or pastor's discretionary funds and special events such as bazaars, craft fairs, and dinners?			

Financial Reporting	N/A	Yes	No
Are financial summaries or reports provided to the congregation?			

Bonding	N/A	Yes	No
Are financial workers bonded?			

Audit of Financial Records	N/A	Yes	No
Are annual audits conducted by someone other than the financial secretary or treasurer?			

Reporting of Incidents	N/A	Yes	No
Are procedures outlined on how to handle an accusation or suspicion of a theft or embezzlement?			

Insurance	N/A	Yes	No
Does the church have sufficient property and liability insurance, including any special coverages needed such as employee dishonesty, sexual misconduct liability, directors and officers liability, employment practices liability, non-owned and hired automobile liability, and employee benefits liability?			
Does the church periodically consult with its insurance agent about insurance coverages, deductibles, and property valuation?			

8. Employee/Volunteer Risk Management Survey

	Yes	No
Do we inspect all work areas to identify potential hazards?		
Do we inform and train workers on safe work practices?		
Do we post safety signs to remind workers and volunteers of safety issues?		
Are offices checked regularly for unsafe chairs, desks, and equipment?		
Have we conducted an ergonomics inspection in office areas as well as other areas that have lifting and material-handling responsibilities?		
Do we inspect tools regularly for safety?		
Do we provide proper ventilation in work areas?		
Are employees permitted to turn down jobs they are not fit to perform?		
Do we encourage workers to notify us about safety hazards and other concerns?		
Do we have adequate workers' compensation insurance?		
Have we posted our workers' compensation program, and is it being followed?		
Do we have a return-to-work program so injured employees can get back on the job sooner?		
Do we have and distribute an Employee Handbook that describes the church's policies and procedures?		
Have we established policies for hiring, discipline, termination, and employee conduct?		
Do we provide employees with job descriptions?		
Do we conduct regular employee performance evaluations?		
Do we have employment practices liability (EPL) insurance?		

9. Safety Program Checklist

If your church is like many others and has not implemented a worker safety program, the following checklist will provide you with a good starting point:

Slips, Trips, and Falls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use no-skid surface on floors. • Use safety pads in front of workbenches. • Post warning cones or signs near hazardous conditions.
Foot Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use steel-toed shoes when doing jobs involving power tools, heavy loads, or moving. • Wear safe, work-appropriate shoes at all times.
Repetitive Motion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a workplace evaluation. • Reduce task frequency. • Alternate tasks. • Rotate workers. • Take breaks.
Stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan workload. • Pace your work. • Switch roles. • Encourage worker participation in decisions. • Encourage relaxation techniques, exercise, good nutrition, and adequate sleep. • Offer counseling.
Air Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all work areas are well ventilated. • Keep chemicals locked up in a ventilated area away from the work area. • Test air if ongoing concerns arise. • Look for evidence of mold. • If mold persists after cleaning, have it analyzed.
Lifting/Back Problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspect all loads to be lifted for weight and size. • Always bend at the knees and lift with your legs. • Always have a firm grip. • Keep feet planted when lifting. • Don't twist while lifting. • Ask for help.
Eye Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use approved safety eyewear when grinding, sanding, operating power tools, mowing, conducting general maintenance and repair, applying chemicals and fertilizer, and completing auto repair.
Ear Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use approved ear protection when doing jobs that are loud or prolonged.

Hand Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check all hand tools to ensure they are safe and in working order. • Use the correct tools for the job you are performing. • When using knives, cut away from your body. • Pull wrenches instead of pushing them. • Use screwdrivers with nonconductive handles. • Use files with handles. • Use torches carefully so they do not ignite wiring and other objects.
Power Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspect all power tools to ensure they are safe and in working order. • Place all objects in vices or ensure that sawhorses are on a safe surface prior to cutting. • Use protective gear (for eyes, ears, feet, and so on) when operating all power tools. • Make sure there is no standing water in the area.
Ladders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use only approved ladders and step stools to reach high places (do not use items such as chairs, buckets, and shelves). • Inspect ladders to ensure they are not cracked, warped, or in otherwise poor condition. • Do not use slide ladders that are over 30 feet in height. • The width between side rails should be no less than 11.5 inches for ladders up to 12 feet and then ¼-inch for every additional foot in length. • Secure the top rung if leaning ladder against a tree, pole, or an uneven surface. • Always keep one hand on the ladder, or use a security belt. • Always face the ladder. • Don't leave ladders unattended. • Don't lean too far away from the ladder. • Use ladders with safety feet (to adhere to the appropriate surface). • Keep ladders at a safe angle (a quarter of the total length of the ladder between the ladder and the object). • Use a rope to raise and lower materials and tools. • Have a second person hold the base of the ladder.
Signs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hang signs and posters promoting safety in work areas. • Display warning signs near dangers and hazards. • Use signs (such as in the kitchen) to remind workers of proper procedures.

10. Post-Offer Pre-Employment Health Assessment

A post-offer pre-employment physical is needed to obtain and document baseline information about medical conditions present prior to hire in the event of a later worker's compensation claim and to determine if a forbidding medical condition exists that will harm the individual or other employees. The Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) stipulates that such examinations may be performed *after* a job has been offered.

To Be Completed by the Organization Requesting the Physical		
Candidate's Name		
Candidate's Job Title		
Employer's Name		
Employer's Address		
Contact Name	Phone Number	
To Be Completed by the Evaluating Physician		
QUESTION	Yes	No
A job description is used when evaluating new hires to determine if they have the physical ability to complete the job functions required for the position they are seeking. Did the candidate provide the physician with a job description?		
Did the physician conduct a physical examination relating to the functions of the job duties, evaluating conditions that might affect performance or predispose this individual to occupational injuries relating to the manual labor positions the candidate is seeking?		
Based on the job description and the physical examination, is the candidate able to safely perform all of the job functions listed in the written job description? (If the answer is "no," please complete the following section.)		

The following changes must be made in the job duties to meet the medical restrictions imposed by this physician:

Physician's Signature, MD/DO/CRNP

Print Name	
Address	
Phone	Date

11. Preventing Back Injuries

- Exercise regularly to build greater abdominal (stomach) and oblique (side) muscle strength.
- Avoid long periods of sitting, lifting or pulling heavy objects, frequent bending or twisting, heavy physical exertion, repetitive motion, and constant exposure to vibration (such as driving).
- Stop smoking. A smoker's risk of low back pain is up to 2¹/₂ times greater than a nonsmoker's risk.
- Lose weight. Obesity (weighing more than 20 percent of your ideal weight) increases the risk of back pain.
- Practice good posture.
- Stop chronic coughing.
- Go easy in the morning when your spine is less flexible.

Use Safe Lifting Techniques

- Lift with your legs and not your back by squatting and bending your knees. Rise slowly.
- Try to avoid situations in which you must lift by bending forward at the waist.
- Keep your upper back straight while maintaining a slight arch in your lower back.
- Keep what you are lifting as close to your body as possible (near the navel is recommended).
- Never lift a heavy object above shoulder level.
- Avoid turning or twisting your body while holding a heavy object. Use your feet to change direction, taking small steps.
- Test every load before you lift by pushing the object lightly with your hands or feet to see how easily it moves. If items are heavy or appear to be, ask a co-worker to help you. Or use a dolly or forklift, if possible.
- Make sure the weight of the object is balanced.
- Pace yourself. Take small breaks if you are lifting a number of heavy items.
- Make sure you have enough room to lift safely. Clear space around the object before picking it up.
- Don't rely on a back belt to protect you. They are not proven to prevent injury.

12. Ladder Safety Procedures

Here are some key points to stress to workers and volunteers before you allow them to use a ladder at your facility:

- **Inspect the church's ladders.** At least twice a year, all ladders should be inspected to ensure they are in safe and sturdy working condition. Prior to use, double-check to make sure the rungs are solid: All screws should be tight, and the steps should be clean and free from mud, dirt, or water.
- **Select the right ladder for the job.** Always pick a ladder that is longer than what is needed to reach the work area. Use stepladders for work at low or medium heights. Use extension ladders if climbing to higher elevations such as windows, gutters, and roofs. Do not use an aluminum ladder near overhead power lines.
- **Place ladders properly.** All ladders should be placed on a firm, level surface. Do not place a ladder on a soft, uneven, or wet surface. When using an extension ladder, place it unextended on the ground, perpendicular to the wall where it will be positioned. Its "fly" section (the part that slides) should be on the bottom and its feet out from the wall one quarter of the height to which it will be raised. The top portion of the ladder should extend above the roofline.
- **Secure ladders to trees or poles.** Consider attaching the ladder to a tree or pole to prevent the ladder from slipping from beneath the worker. When the job is complete, remember to remove the ladder and return it to a storage area.
- **Move materials carefully.** Workers have a tendency to pull or push items while on a ladder. Use extreme caution, as accidents often happen when weight shifts.
- **Climb with caution.** Do not climb above the third rung from the top. Also, never lean beyond your belt buckle when on a ladder. If you can't reach something, get down and move the ladder closer. Hold on to the rails when climbing, and stay in the center of the ladder. And always lean toward the ladder when climbing.
- **Get a helper.** It's always safer if someone is available to hold the ladder in position and brace it while another person is climbing and working.
- **Wear safe clothing.** Always wear closed, sturdy shoes (no sandals) when climbing ladders, and make sure clothing items will not catch somewhere on the ladder.
- **Don't let everyone use ladders.** Not everyone is qualified to use a ladder safely. If people are too old, too young, or if they have health or physical issues, do not allow them to use ladders at your facility. They may think they are capable, but it's better to be safe than sorry.

13. Safer Work Space Worksheet

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

To help prevent musculoskeletal injuries to workers, we strongly advise churches to evaluate all computer workstations and instruct workers on proper procedures and techniques. It is especially important to ensure neutral body positioning. Neutral body positioning is a comfortable working posture in which joints are naturally aligned. Working with the body in a neutral position reduces stress and strain on the muscles, tendons, and skeletal system and minimizes the risk of developing musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs).

To maintain a neutral body posture, keep these factors in mind:

- Hands, wrists, and forearms should be straight, in line, and roughly parallel to the floor.
- Head should be level, or bent slightly forward, forward facing, and balanced. Generally, it should be in line with the torso.
- Shoulders should be relaxed, and upper arms should hang normally at the side of the body.
- Elbows should stay close to the body and be bent between 90 and 120 degrees.
- Feet should be fully supported by the floor or a footrest.
- Back should be fully supported with appropriate lumbar support when sitting vertical or leaning back slightly.
- Thighs and hips should be supported by a well-padded seat and be generally parallel to the floor.
- Knees should be about the same height as the hips, and the feet should be slightly forward.
- Even if you have a good neutral body position while working, it is not healthy to keep the same posture for prolonged periods. Therefore, change your working position frequently throughout the day by making small adjustments to your chair or backrest. Stretch your fingers, hands, arms, and torso. Stand up and walk around for a few minutes periodically, taking breaks from computer work at least hourly.

Chairs Are Important

A quality chair that is well designed and appropriately adjusted is an essential element of a safe and productive computer workstation. A good chair provides necessary support to the back, legs, buttocks, and arms while reducing exposure to awkward postures, contact stress, and forceful exertions.

- The backrest should conform to the natural curvature of your spine and provide adequate lumbar support.
- The seat should be comfortable and allow your feet to rest flat on the floor or footrest.
- Armrests should be soft, allowing your shoulders to relax and your elbows to stay close to your body.
- The chair should have a five-leg base with casters that allow easy movement along the floor.

Check Desk Design and Adjustment

To provide adequate clearance for your legs, proper placement of computer components and accessories, and a neutral body position, the desk must be well designed and adjusted appropriately. Consider the following factors as you install, set up, and configure comfortable and productive desks:

- The desk surface should allow you to place the monitor directly in front of you, at least 20 inches away.
- Avoid storing items such as a CPU under desks.
- Desks should be able to accommodate a variety of working postures.

Use Document Holders

Document holders keep printed reference materials close to the user and the monitor. Proper positioning of document holders depends on the type of task and documents. Appropriate placement of the holder may reduce or eliminate risk factors such as awkward head and neck postures, fatigue, headaches, and eyestrain. Generally, a document holder should be at the same height and distance as the monitor.

Position Keyboards Properly

To reduce exposure to awkward postures, repetition, and contact stress, keep the following tips in mind for proper arrangement of computer keyboards:

- Place the keyboard directly in front of you.
- Your shoulders should be relaxed and your elbows close to your body.
- Your wrists should be straight and in line with your forearms.

Set Up Monitors Correctly

A quality monitor placed in the correct position will help reduce exposure to forceful exertions, awkward postures, and overhead glare. Excessive fatigue, eyestrain, and neck and back pain can be reduced as well. Here are our recommendations for monitor positioning:

- Put the monitor directly in front of you and at least 20 inches away.
- Place the monitor so the top line of the screen is at or below eye level and the monitor is perpendicular to nearby windows.

Mouse and Pointers

The selection and placement of a mouse/pointer is another important factor in creating a safe computer workstation. Reduce fatigue with the following techniques:

- Keep the mouse/pointer close to the keyboard, usually to the right or left of the keyboard.
- Alternate hands to operate the mouse/pointer.
- Use keyboard shortcuts to reduce extended use.
- Try palm and wrist supports. Wrist or palm rests can increase comfort at a computer workstation. Although opinions vary regarding the use of palm or wrist supports, proper use has been shown to reduce muscle activity and to facilitate neutral wrist angles. Consider using a wrist rest to maintain straight wrist posture and to minimize contact stress during typing and mouse activities.

Telephones and Other Equipment

While telephones add to the convenience of a workstation, they usually have cords that can get tangled up and can cause the user to assume awkward postures. Consider using a speakerphone or headset for long conversations. And keep the telephone close enough to avoid repeated stretching and reaching.

Other office equipment, such as printers, should be within arm's reach to prevent straining from reaching for printed documents. To prevent workers' feet from getting tangled in cords, tape cords that are under the desk to the floor, or attach cords to the underside of a desk.

14. Counseling Misconduct Safeguards

Use a counseling covenant or agreement. Prepare a written counseling agreement to provide to the counselee that describes the scope of counseling and its length, duration, and confidential nature. We also recommend an “alternate dispute resolution clause” in the agreement. Such a clause can state that any disputes arising from the counseling relationship will be submitted to mediation and/or arbitration instead of filing a lawsuit. Consult with an attorney to draft this covenant/agreement.

Limit the scope of counseling. Counseling provided by church employees should be limited to spiritual or biblical counseling. Counseling for matters such as domestic abuse, mental health, and addiction rehabilitation should be referred to professional counselors who have expertise and certification in such areas.

Establish a policy for opposite gender counseling. To avoid allegations of impropriety, carefully consider how to handle opposite gender counseling. Some churches prohibit members of one gender from counseling the other gender. Among churches that permit opposite gender counseling, some require the presence of a third party. However, since including a third party in counseling sessions has implications for the clergy-penitent privilege, it is wise to consult with a local attorney concerning the laws of your state.

Limit the number of sessions. Avoid open-ended counseling relationships that last for extended periods of time. Establish a limit on the total number of sessions that will be provided (such as three to five per year). If the counselee has needs that extend beyond the session limit, refer him or her to a professional counselor.

Limit locations and meet in a visible setting. For instance, allow counseling only in the pastor’s office or another location on church property. It is often wise to avoid off-campus counseling. Also, the greater the visibility of the counseling sessions—without compromising confidentiality—the less likely there will be an allegation of misconduct. To increase visibility, consider installing a window in the pastor’s office and/or leaving the door open. Some churches have even installed video cameras in the office (without audio) to record activities during counseling, but it is best to consult with a local attorney before doing this to determine if a video camera is permissible by law.

Maintain confidentiality. If notes or other documents are generated during the counseling sessions, make sure that those documents are kept in a locked location. Also, the counselor should not discuss the substance of the counseling sessions with other parties, and all conversations should remain confidential. One exception is if a minister learns of child abuse during the counseling relationship. In that instance, the minister should consult with a local attorney concerning the mandatory reporting statute in the state and its relationship to the clergy-penitent privilege.

Watch for boundary violations. Individuals who provide counseling should be aware of the risks and know what types of situations to watch for. Counselors are advised to establish an accountability system with their spouse and/or other persons to head off improprieties in counseling relationships. Here are some warning signs that counselors should be aware of:

- increasingly personal conversations, particularly concerning the counselor’s personal life;
- any physical contact beyond handshake greetings, such as inappropriate pats or hugs;
- fantasizing about a sexual relationship with a counselee;
- offering to drive a counselee home;

- arranging meetings outside of the normal counseling time; and
- a counselor who begins to hide feelings and/or meetings with a counselee from the counselor's accountability system, including a spouse.

15. Mission Trip Planning Worksheet

Establish written policies for mission trips. Whether your church is considering its first mission trip or is regularly involved with a trip, it's wise to establish written policies that should always be followed. Here are a number of general guidelines:

- Clarify which church leaders need to approve the mission trip.
- Require a written proposal for the mission to be submitted for approval.
- Consult with an attorney prior to approving the trip.
- Determine the requirements for participation in the trip (for example, age of participants, health, experience needed, church membership).
- Identify the qualifications necessary to be a trip leader.
- If minors are eligible to participate, determine the proper adult-to-minor ratio.
- If adults are traveling with minors, require background checks for all of the adult participants.
- Determine what types of documents the participants must provide (for example, a hold harmless form, doctor's consent form, copy of passport).
- Designate a contact person (who will not go on the trip) to serve as the liaison between the church, mission group, and family members.
- Investigate whether the church should purchase special mission trip insurance.
- Establish procedures to follow in the event of an emergency.

Research the destination. Before the trip is approved, leaders of the mission should thoroughly research their destination and assess the safety of traveling in the country or region. If the trip is outside of the country, this research is critical.

Get travel security information. For international missions, utilize resources such as the website of the U.S. Department of State—Bureau of Consular Affairs at www.travel.state.gov/travel/warnings.html. This site provides a wide variety of international travel information, including the following:

- **Consular information sheets** are available for every country in the world and include information such as the location of the U.S. embassy or consulate, health conditions, minor political disturbances, unusual currency and entry regulations, and crime and security information.
- **Travel warnings** are issued when the State Department recommends that Americans should avoid traveling to a certain country.
- **Public announcements** provide information about terrorist threats and other conditions posing significant risks to the security of American travelers.

Carefully plan and prepare for the trip. Careful planning and preparation are the best ways to avoid problems during a mission trip, minimize risks, and maximize the safety of your group. If your group is traveling outside of the country, the mission trip leaders should learn as much as possible about passports, visas, immunizations, customs, laws, and the proper etiquette for visitors in the country.

Consider health issues. Verify that all mission travelers are healthy prior to leaving. Participants should each get a physical at least six weeks before they leave, receive their doctor's approval in writing, and obtain any vaccinations that are required.

It is also wise to determine the location of the hospital nearest to the mission site and to know how to reach the hospital in case of an emergency. Also, before traveling abroad, participants should check with their health insurance companies to see what medical services will be

covered. If an American citizen becomes seriously ill or injured when abroad, a U.S. consular officer can assist in locating the appropriate medical services.

Train participants prior to leaving. All mission trip leaders and volunteers should receive appropriate training prior to leaving. For instance, first-aid and CPR training are essential. If participants are traveling outside the United States, training should also cover the foreign country's customs, laws, health risks, and unique dangers. Use training seminars, group meetings, videos, and written materials to share training information.

Arrange safe land travel. Although airline travel is certainly not risk free, land transportation in foreign countries via bus, van, taxi, rental cars, and other vehicles can pose significant dangers. As part of the planning process, mission trip leaders should take extra steps to arrange for safe land transportation. For example, avoid 15-passenger vans, rent vehicles only from reputable companies, plan routes carefully, wear safety belts, and keep the doors locked at all times when driving.

16. Proper Food Handling

Food Preparation

- Use foods before the “use by” date.
- Wash your hands before food is prepared and in between the preparation of each item.
- Wash cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and countertops with hot, soapy water before and in between using each food item.
- Use one cutting board for produce and a separate board for meat and poultry to reduce the risk of salmonella and other bacteria-causing illnesses.
- Keep juices from different food items from mixing.
- Marinate meat, seafood, and poultry in the refrigerator in covered, nonmetallic containers.
- Cook foods thoroughly according to the following guidelines:
 - ✓ Meat and poultry should be cooked until juices appear clear.
 - ✓ Hamburgers should reach a temperature of 160 degrees.
 - ✓ Seafood should be cooked until it is opaque and flaky.
 - ✓ Eggs should be cooked so they are firm and not runny.

Proper Serving

- When someone brings food from home, be sure it is heated or refrigerated until it is served.
- Keep cold food below 40 degrees and hot foods at 140 degrees or above.
- When hosting a buffet, do not mix new food with existing food.
- Use separate platters for holding raw and cooked foods.
- Food should not be left out at room temperature for over two hours (one hour if over 90 degrees outside). Remember, food brought from home will likely have been left out for a significant period of time.
- Hot foods should be refrigerated within two hours after cooking.

Proper Storing

- Label all foods with a date.
- Most refrigerated leftovers should be used in three to five days.
- Don't ever taste food to check for freshness. When in doubt, throw it out.
- Reheat leftovers to 165 degrees, and make sure they are steaming hot.
- If you're using coolers, food should be eaten only if there is still ice in the cooler and the food is cooled to refrigerator temperature.

17. Child and Youth Risk Management Survey

	Yes	No
Do we have a written policy and plan to protect children and youth?		
Is our Child and Youth Protection Policy published and communicated to the staff? Are the procedures followed consistently?		
Are state reporting laws for child abuse understood and followed?		
Do we have a policy for selecting, screening, and hiring people who work with children and youth?		
Do we conduct background checks on staff and volunteers?		
Do we complete and document reference checks?		
Do we have a clear plan in place for responding to allegations of sexual abuse at church?		
Do we understand and follow the “two-adult rule”?		
Do we require a waiting period before allowing people to work with children and youth?		
Do we have sufficient supervision for those who work with children and youth?		
Do we have a backup plan if adequate supervision is not possible?		
Do we provide our workers with ongoing training on child abuse prevention and other relevant safety issues?		
Do people who work with children and youth receive regular evaluations?		
Are high-risk activities approved before they take place?		
Are all appropriate forms signed before a youth activity or trip is allowed to take place?		
Do we have policies and procedures for counseling youth?		
Do we inspect the nursery/toddler area weekly to ensure safety?		
Do we have a check-in/checkout policy for children? Is it followed?		
Do we have and use “incident report forms” to document injuries, accidents, and concerns?		

18. Sample Child/Youth Protection Policy

General Purpose Statement

[CHURCH NAME] seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children and youth who participate in our programs and activities. By implementing the practices below, [CHURCH NAME] affirms our goal to protect the children and youth of [CHURCH NAME] from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers from false accusations.

Definitions

For purposes of this policy, the terms “child” or “children” include all persons under the age of 18 years.

Selection of Workers

All employees and all persons who desire to work with the children participating in our programs and activities will be screened. This screening includes the following:

a. Six-Month Rule

No volunteer will be considered for any position involving contact with minors until he or she has been involved with [CHURCH NAME] for a minimum of six (6) months. This time of interaction between our leadership and the applicant allows for a better evaluation of the applicant’s suitability for working with children.

b. Written Application

All persons seeking to work with children must complete and sign a written application using a form to be supplied by us. The application will request basic information from the applicant and will inquire into previous experience with children, previous church affiliation, reference and employment information, as well as disclosure of any previous criminal convictions. The application form will be maintained in confidence on file at the [CHURCH NAME].

c. Personal Interview

After the applicant has completed the application, a face-to-face interview may be scheduled with the applicant to discuss his or her suitability for the position.

d. Reference Checks

Before an applicant is permitted to work with children, at least two of the applicant’s references will be checked. These references should be of an institutional nature as opposed to personal or family references, preferably from organizations where the applicant has worked with children in the past. Documentation of the reference checks will be maintained in confidence on file at [CHURCH NAME].

e. Criminal Background Check

A national criminal background check is required for all employees (regardless of position) and for the following categories of volunteers:

- those who will be involved in our school/preschool/day-care center
- those who will be involved in overnight activities with minors
- those counseling minors

- those involved in one-on-one mentorship of minors
- those having occasional one-on-one contact with minors (such as church-sponsored athletic team coaches and vehicle drivers)

Before a background check is run, prospective workers will be asked to sign an authorization form allowing the church to run the check. If an individual declines to sign the authorization form, he or she will be unable to work with children.

What constitutes a disqualifying offense that will keep an individual from working with children will be determined by [IDENTIFY TITLE/POSITION OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON OR TEAM] on a case-by-case basis in light of all the surrounding circumstances. Generally, convictions for an offense involving children and/or for offenses involving violence, dishonesty, illegal substances, indecency, and any conduct contrary to our mission will preclude someone from being permitted to work with children. Failure to disclose a criminal conviction on the application form will also be a disqualifying event.

The background check authorization form and results will be maintained in confidence on file at the [CHURCH NAME].

Two-Adult Rule

It is our goal to have a minimum of two unrelated adult workers in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during our programs and activities. Some youth classes may have only one adult teacher in attendance during the class session; in these instances, doors to the classroom should remain open and there should be no fewer than three students with the adult teacher. We do not allow minors to be alone with one adult on our premises or in any sponsored activity unless in a counseling situation.

Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse

For purposes of this policy, “child abuse” is any action (or lack of action) that endangers or harms a child’s physical, psychological, or emotional health and development. Child abuse occurs in different ways and includes the following:

- **Physical abuse**—any physical injury to a child that is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns, and biting.
- **Emotional abuse**—emotional injury when the child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling, and persistent teasing.
- **Sexual abuse**—any sexual activity between a child and an adult or between a child and another child at least four years older than the victim, including activities such as fondling, exhibitionism, intercourse, incest, and pornography.
- **Neglect**—depriving a child of his or her essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care.

Child care workers may have the opportunity to become aware of abuse or neglect of the children under our care. In the event that an individual involved in the care of children at [CHURCH NAME] becomes aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a child under his or her care, the individual should report the suspected abuse or neglect immediately to the [TITLE OF PERSON TO WHOM ABUSE SHOULD BE REPORTED] for further action, including reporting to authorities as may be mandated by state law.

In the event that an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred at [CHURCH NAME] or during our sponsored programs or activities, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. The parent or guardian of the child will be notified.
2. The worker alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave from working with children pending an investigation.
3. Our insurance company will be notified, and we will complete an incident report.
4. We will comply with the state's requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse as the law then exists.
5. We will cooperate with any investigation of the incident by state or local authorities. In the event there is no investigation of the incident by state or local authorities, a team will be formed to investigate the circumstances of the incident. The team should act only in consultation with our insurance company and/or attorney.
6. Any person who is not found innocent of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be removed from his or her position with children or youth.
7. [NAME OR TITLE OF DESIGNATED REPRESENTATIVE] will be our representative to the media concerning incidents of abuse or neglect, unless he or she is alleged to be involved. All other workers should refrain from speaking to the media.
8. A pastoral visit will be arranged for those who desire it.

You may also want to consider the following provisions regarding child protection:

Open-Door Policy

Classroom doors should remain open unless there is a window in the door or a window beside it. Doors should never be locked while persons are inside the room.

Teenage Workers

We recognize that there may be times when it is necessary or desirable for baby sitters (paid or volunteer), who themselves are under the age of 18, to assist in caring for children during programs or activities. The following guidelines apply to such workers:

- Teenage workers must be at least 14 years of age.
- Teenage workers will be screened as specified above.
- Teenage workers must be under the supervision of an adult and must never be left alone with children.

Check-In/Checkout Procedure

For children below the third grade, a security check-in/checkout procedure will be followed. The child will be signed in by a parent or guardian, who will receive a "child check" for the child (similar to a claim check). The parent or guardian must present the "child check" in order to sign out the child from our care. In the event that a parent or guardian is unable to present the "child check," [TITLE OF MINISTRY LEADER] will be contacted. [TITLE OF MINISTRY LEADER] will be responsible for releasing the child to the care of a parent or guardian after discussing the surrounding circumstances with the parent or guardian.

Sick Child Policy

It is our desire to provide a healthy and safe environment for all of the children at [CHURCH NAME]. Parents are encouraged to be considerate of other children when deciding whether to place a child under our care. In general, children with the following symptoms should *not* be dropped off:

- fever, diarrhea, or vomiting within the last 48 hours
- green or yellow runny nose
- eye or skin infections
- other symptoms of communicable or infectious disease

Children who are observed by our workers to be ill will be separated from other children, and the parent or guardian will be contacted to request that the child be picked up for the day.

Medications Policy

It is the policy of [CHURCH NAME] not to administer either prescription or nonprescription medications to the children under our care. Medications should be administered by a parent at home. Parents are reminded of our sick child policy. Exceptions to the medications policy may be granted to parents of children with potentially life-threatening conditions (such as asthma or severe allergic reactions). Parents of such children should address their situation with [TITLE OF MINISTRY LEADER] to develop a plan of action.

Discipline Policy

It is the policy of [CHURCH NAME] not to administer corporal punishment, even if parents have suggested it or given permission for it. There should be no spanking, grabbing, hitting, or other physical discipline of children. Workers should consult with [TITLE OF MINISTRY LEADER] if assistance is needed with disciplinary issues.

Restroom Guidelines

Children 5 years of age and younger should use a classroom bathroom, if one is available. If a classroom bathroom is not available, workers should escort a group of children to the hallway bathroom. They should always go in a group, and the worker should never take a child to the bathroom alone. The workers should check the bathroom first to make sure that it is empty, and then allow the children inside. The workers should then remain outside the bathroom door and escort the children back to the classroom. If a child is taking longer than seems necessary, the worker should open the bathroom door and call the child's name. If a child requires assistance, the workers should prop open the bathroom door and leave the stall door open as he or she assists the child.

For children over the age of 5, at least one adult male should take boys to the restroom, and at least one adult female should take girls. The worker should check the bathroom first to make sure that the bathroom is empty, and then allow the children inside. The worker should then remain outside the bathroom door and escort the children back to the classroom.

For the protection of all, workers should *never* be alone with a child in a bathroom with the door closed and never be in a closed bathroom stall with a child. Parents are strongly encouraged to have their children visit the bathroom prior to each class.

Accidental Injuries to Children

In the event that a child or youth is injured while under our care, these steps should be followed:

1. For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, workers will provide first aid (for example, applying adhesive bandages) as appropriate and will notify the child's parent or guardian of the injury at the time the child is picked up from our care.
2. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple first aid, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be summoned in addition to the worker's supervisor. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called.
3. Once the child has received appropriate medical attention, an incident report will be completed in the case of injuries requiring treatment by a medical professional.

Training

[CHURCH NAME] will provide training on this child protection policy to all new child care workers and will strive to provide opportunities for additional training classes or events on an annual basis. All workers are strongly encouraged to attend these training events.

19. Child/Youth Worker Application Form

Child/Youth Worker Application Form

It is the goal of this church to create a safe and secure environment for all children and workers who are involved in church activities. To facilitate this emphasis, it is necessary to gather pertinent information from those who desire employment or offer volunteer services to our children and youth program. This information will be used for the sole purpose of helping the church provide a safe and secure environment for children and workers.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Social Security No.: _____

Have you ever used a name(s) other than the one above? If yes, please list:

Current Address: _____

City, State, ZIP: _____ Years at Address: _____

Previous Address: _____

Current Phone Number: (Home) _____ (Work) _____

Please respond to all questions that apply to the position you are applying/volunteering for:

Position you are applying/volunteering for: _____

When are you available to work? _____

Do you have a valid driver's license? _____ Commercial license? _____

License Number: _____ State Issued: _____

Current Employer: _____ Length of Employment: _____

Name of Supervisor: _____ Phone Number: _____

Previous Employers (within last five years):

Dates Employed:

Is there any reason you should not work with or around children or youth? _____

Have you ever been the subject of a child abuse investigation? _____

If yes, please provide details: _____

Have you ever been convicted of or pleaded guilty to a criminal offense? _____

If yes, please provide details: _____

Please list your education background:

Name	Graduate?	Year	Degree or Course of Study
------	-----------	------	---------------------------

High School _____	_____	_____	_____
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College _____	_____	_____	_____
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Other (please specify) _____	_____	_____	_____
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Please provide the following church information:

What, if any, church affiliation do you have? _____

How long have you attended that church? _____ Are you a member? _____

List other churches you have been affiliated with: _____

Have you ever worked with youth or children before? _____ List where: _____

Please list two references (must be of a business or organizational nature):

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ Years Known Each Other: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ Years Known Each Other: _____

I hereby give permission to make a thorough investigation of my past employment, education, and background, and release from liability all persons, companies, or corporations supplying such information. I also release the church from any liability that might result from making such an investigation. I understand that any false statements or implications made by me on this application or other required documentation shall be considered sufficient cause for denial of employment or discharge.

Name: _____ Date: _____

20. Response Procedures for Sexual Misconduct Allegations

- Report the alleged abuse or misconduct immediately to a designated leader at the church who is not suspected of the abuse.
- Take seriously any allegation, and address it immediately. Don't blame the victim or minimize or deny the situation.
- Notify the church's insurance company, and complete an incident report form.
- Obtain legal counsel.
- If a parent or guardian is unaware of the alleged abuse, notify him or her.
- Immediately place the worker who is alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct on leave pending an investigation.
- The church must comply with the state's requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse according to the law.
- Designate a media representative for the church, and advise all other staff members to refer any questions from the media to the representative.
- The church must cooperate with any investigation of the incident by state or local authorities. In the event there is no investigation of the incident by state or local authorities, form a team to investigate the incident. The team should act only in consultation with the church's insurance company and/or attorney.

21. Nursery and Toddler Area Safety Checklist

General Inspection	N/A	Yes	No
To help prevent electrocution, are all electrical outlets equipped with outlet covers? Be sure the outlet covers cannot be easily removed by children and are large enough so that children cannot choke on them.			
Are all outlets within 3 feet of a water source installed with ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs)?			
Since loose, hanging drapery/blind cords pose a strangulation and entanglement hazard, are these cords kept out of reach of cribs and children?			
Are all loose, hanging wires and appliance cords kept out of reach of children?			
Are television and audiovisual equipment on movable carts properly secured with straps or mounting brackets?			
Is access to stairways properly protected?			
Is any dresser, shelving, or similar equipment appropriately anchored to the wall to prevent it from accidentally tipping over?			
Are all diapering areas separate from children's play areas?			
Are any lower drawers of dressers, file cabinets, or similar furniture equipped with appropriate latches to keep children from opening them?			
Are doors to closets, hallways, and other rooms equipped with a lock?			
Have all plastic bags been removed from the nursery area?			
Are there properly functioning UL-listed smoke detectors installed in each room, and are they tested on a regular basis? (A log of when and who tested the smoke detectors should be kept.)			
Is there a properly functioning UL-listed carbon monoxide detector installed at a minimum of one per floor? (Refer to manufacturer's recommendations for installation instructions.)			
Are potentially dangerous products, including medicines and cleaning supplies, stored in original, labeled containers in locked cabinets?			
To protect children from burns, are procedures in place for warming bottles?			
Are hot water temperatures periodically tested to ensure that the water temperature does not exceed 120 degrees Fahrenheit? (A log of when and who tested the water should be kept.)			
Is a first-aid kit located in an accessible location? (The first-aid kits should be inventoried on a regular basis and a log kept of when and who conducted the inventory.)			

Nursery Equipment

Cribs	N/A	Yes	No
Do mattresses fit snugly next to the crib so that there is no gap? (If two adult fingers can be placed between the mattress and the crib, the mattress should be immediately replaced. Children can suffocate in the spaces formed between mattresses or from ill-fitting mattresses.)			
Are there no missing, loose, broken, or improperly installed screws, brackets, or other hardware on the crib or mattress support?			
Are the crib slats spaced no more than 2 ³ / ₈ -inches between crib slats?			
Have crib slats been inspected to ensure that none are missing or damaged?			
Are all of the crib's corner posts no more than 1/ ₁₆ -inch above the top of the end panel so a baby's clothing cannot catch?			
Have the headboard and footboard been checked to ensure they don't have any cutouts where the baby's head could become trapped?			
Do bumper pads cover the entire inside perimeter of the crib and tie or snap in place? (Bumper pads should have at least six straps or ties, and any excess length of straps or ties should be cut off. Bumper pads should never be used in lieu of proper spacing between the slats and should be removed from the crib as soon as the child can pull itself to a standing position.)			
Are the top rails of crib sides, in their raised position, at least 26 inches above the top of the mattress support at its lowest position?			
Are no soft items being placed in the crib with the child, including soft bedding such as quilts, comforters, and pillows? (These items increase the risk of SIDS and suffocation.)			
Are no large plastic bags or similar items being used as mattress covers? (Plastic can cling to a child's face and present a suffocation hazard.)			
Does the crib require two distinct motions or a minimum force of 10 pounds to lower the sides? (This will prevent the child from being able to lower the sides.)			
Are mobiles or crib gyms removed to reduce the chances of an entanglement hazard when the child reaches 5 months or begins to show signs of being able to push or pull itself up?			

Gates and Enclosures	N/A	Yes	No
Are the appropriate types of gates or enclosures being used? (For example, pressure-mounted gates should never be used at the top of stairs.)			
Are child-safety gates being used for children 6-24 months? (Most gates are not recommended for children under 6 months or over 24 months.)			
Have accordion-style baby gates been checked to ensure they weren't manufactured prior to February 1985? (The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission [CPSC] warns that an entrapment and strangulation hazard exists with gates made prior to February 1985.)			

Highchairs	N/A	Yes	No
Does the highchair have a wide base for stability?			
Is the highchair equipped with a "crotch" strap that is independent of the tray, and does the buckle easily fasten and unfasten?			
Will the tray securely lock?			

Playpens	N/A	Yes	No
Is only the mattress that is provided by the manufacturer being used? (Children can suffocate in the spaces formed between mattresses or from ill-fitting mattresses.)			
If using a mesh-sided playpen, is the mesh size less than ¼-inch and attached securely? (This will help prevent strangulation—mesh size must be smaller than tiny buttons on baby's clothing.)			
Has the playpen been examined to ensure it has no catch points, such as protruding hardware?			
Do the top rails of the units lock into place automatically?			
Are all playpens in good shape? (Using a modified or improperly repaired unit can create hazards.)			
Have playpens been checked to ensure that no soft items (including soft bedding such as quilts, comforters, and pillows) are being placed in the playpen with the child? (These items increase the risk of SIDS and suffocation.)			

Walkers	N/A	Yes	No
Is the nursery inspected to prevent children using walkers from coming into contact with hazards? (Be sure, for example, that children can't use walkers to roll down stairs or reach high objects.)			

Bassinets and Cradles	N/A	Yes	No
Are bassinets and cradles equipped with a wide base to prevent tipping over?			
Does the mattress fit snugly within the bed frame? (Children can suffocate in the spaces formed between mattresses or from ill-fitting mattresses.)			
Does the rocking mechanism have a locking device?			
Are bassinets and cradles not being used with children who can roll over or pull themselves up?			
Have bassinets and cradles been inspected to ensure they don't contain any beads or other decorative material that could become a choking hazard?			

Toy Chests	N/A	Yes	No
Is the toy chest not equipped with a latch that could entrap a child?			
Is the chest equipped with ventilation holes?			
Are all chests having a lid equipped with spring-loaded hinges that will support the lid in any position and keep it from slamming?			

Strollers	N/A	Yes	No
Do all strollers have a wide base to prevent tipping over?			
Are all strollers equipped with a frame-locking mechanism that prevents the stroller from accidentally collapsing?			
Are all strollers equipped with brakes that securely lock the wheels?			
Are all strollers equipped with a seat belt and crotch strap that are securely attached to the frame?			

Changing Tables	N/A	Yes	No
Are all changing tables equipped with a protective barrier on all four sides?			
Are changing tables equipped with drawers or shelves for storage? (This will prevent a person from leaving the baby on the table to retrieve supplies.)			

Pacifiers	N/A	Yes	No
Are only one-piece pacifiers used to prevent the baby from choking on small parts?			
Is the pacifier's shield large enough so it can't fit into the baby's mouth (at least 1½ inches wide), and is it equipped with air holes?			
Do you make sure that no ribbon, string, yarn, or similar items are tied to pacifiers?			
Are all pacifiers regularly inspected for cracks in the rubber or loose parts?			
Are all damaged pacifiers properly disposed of immediately?			
Are all pacifiers cleaned according to the manufacturer's recommendations?			

Toys	N/A	Yes	No
Are children allowed to play only with those toys recommended for their age?			
Are toys for older children stored in a separate location away from toys for younger children?			
Are appropriate-sized toys made available to younger children? (The toy is big enough when it cannot be put into the child's nose, mouth, or ears. Marbles and beads are examples of toys that are too small.)			
Are all toys with small parts periodically inspected to ensure the parts are securely fastened?			
Are all toys with moving parts periodically inspected to ensure the moving parts are securely attached?			
Are there no toys with sharp edges or points?			
Are there no toys with slots or holes that can pinch children's fingers?			
Do all toys made with cloth carry labels such as "flame resistant," "flame retardant," or "nonflammable"?			
Are no toys filled with a potentially harmful substance such as small pellets?			
Are toys specifically designed for outdoors used only outdoors?			
Are all broken toys returned to new condition or thrown away?			
Are all ride-on toys well balanced to reduce the chances of them tipping over?			

Are children not allowed to sleep with battery-operated toys?			
Are all toys periodically cleaned to keep them sanitary?			
Are no toys painted with lead-based paints?			
Have toys and furnishings in the nursery been reviewed to see if they are subject to safety recalls? (The Consumer Product Safety Commission's website for toy recalls is www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prerel/category/toy.html .)			

22. Playground Safety Factors

According to the National Program for Playground Safety (NPPS), which is funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the most important factors in evaluating the safety of any playground are the surface, design and spacing, equipment installation, and maintenance. The NPPS guidelines for safe playgrounds include the following:

Utilize Shock-Absorbing Surfaces

One of the key ways to reduce the frequency and severity of injuries due to falls is to install a proper playground surface. If the surface under playground equipment is both soft and thick enough, it can help absorb the shock of a child falling.

- Acceptable surfaces are loosely filled materials such as wood chips, mulch, sand, pea gravel, or shredded rubber. These surfaces help cushion most falls. Surfacing mats made of safety-tested rubber or rubberlike materials may also be used.
- Concrete, asphalt, and blacktop are unsafe and unacceptable. So are grass, soil, and packed-earth surfaces because of their insufficient shock-absorbing characteristics. Serious and paralyzing injuries can occur if a child falls from playground equipment onto a hard surface below.
- The depth of surface material needed will vary based on the height of your playground equipment, but generally 12 inches of depth should be used for equipment up to 8 feet high. The surface material must not be packed down because packing will lessen any cushioning effect.
- The playground surface should be free of standing water and debris, such as rocks, tree stumps, and tree roots, that could cause a child to slip, trip, and fall.
- No surface materials are considered safe enough if the combined height of the playground equipment and the child (standing on top of a platform) is greater than 12 feet.
- No dangerous materials should be on the surface. These include broken glass, twisted metal, or exposed concrete footings from the playground equipment or fence.

Surface materials on any playground should also cover appropriate-sized “fall zones” (the areas surrounding any equipment where children could possibly fall). The following are the fall zones the NPPS recommends for climbing equipment, slides, and swings:

- Climbing equipment: a minimum of 6 feet in every direction.
- Slides: a minimum of 6 feet in every direction. Adding 4 feet to the height of the slide gives a good estimate of how much surfacing should extend beyond the exit slope of the slide.
- Swings: in front and back, two times the height of the swing set, and 6 feet on either side of the swing set support beams.

Proper Design and Spacing

Playground equipment is designed and manufactured for two age groups: preschool children 2 to 5 years old, and school-age children 5 to 12 years old. Equipment built after 1994 should have a sticker on it indicating which age group it is meant for. Look for this sticker whenever possible.

Younger children should never play on equipment designed for older kids because the equipment sizes and proportions will be too large or tall for small children, which can lead to injuries. At the safest playgrounds, play areas for younger children are separated from those

meant for older children. This avoids confusion about the age appropriateness of the playground equipment.

Safe Heights

Climbing areas should be no taller than these recommended maximum heights for each age group:

- Preschool children—no higher than 5 feet
- School-age children—no higher than 7 feet

Swings

Seat rests for swings should be made of rubber or canvas, not wood or metal, and there should be:

- at least 24 inches between suspended swings and at least 30 inches between a swing and the support frame
- at least a 12-inch clearance between the ground and the underside of the swing for preschoolers, a 16-inch clearance for school-age children, and a 24-inch clearance for tot swings.

Proper Spacing

Make sure playground equipment is properly spaced to enhance safety.

- Play structures more than 30 inches tall should be spaced at least 9 feet apart.
- Guardrails should be present on elevated platforms more than 30 inches above the ground.
- Swings and other equipment with moving parts should be located in an area that is separate from the rest of the playground. A child should never have to cross directly in front of or behind the swings to reach other equipment.

Risky Equipment

For a safe playground, the following types of equipment are not recommended and should be avoided or removed:

- Animal figure swings and/or spring-loaded equipment.
- Glider swings that hold more than one child at a time.
- Merry-go-rounds.
- Swinging ropes that can fray, unravel, or form a noose. Any kind of rope attached to play equipment poses a strangulation hazard, so never let children tie jump-ropes or pet leashes onto the equipment.
- Exercise rings (as used in gymnastics) and trapeze bars.
- Metal slides.
- Monkey bars. People use the terms *monkey bars*, *jungle gyms*, and *climbing equipment* interchangeably, but actual monkey bars are a specific type of climbing equipment with interior bars from which a child may fall from a height greater than 18 inches. In the early 1980s, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention stated that monkey bars were unsuitable for safe playgrounds.
- Trampolines. These are never appropriate for safe playgrounds.
- Seesaws and old-style teeter-totters.

Equipment Installation, Inspection, and Maintenance

Playground equipment should always be well designed and made of durable materials that won't weaken when exposed to the elements. Use only commercial grade playground equipment, as residential grade equipment is not built for the heavy use church and school playgrounds experience. Follow the manufacturer's instructions when installing play equipment, and inspect all equipment and surfaces regularly to identify problems such as loose nuts and bolts, sharp edges, corrosion, or deterioration.

- Check for objects that stick out on equipment and could cut a child or cause clothing to become entangled, such as the following:
 - ✓ hardware that forms a hook
 - ✓ open S-hooks or protruding bolt ends (All S-hooks should be closed.)
 - ✓ rungs that protrude outward from the sides of climbing structures
 - ✓ sharp or unfinished edges on any equipment
- All hardware on equipment should be secure with no loose parts or broken equipment. Plastic and wood should show no signs of weakening, and there should not be any splintered or rusted surfaces. If a part seems worn out, loose, or in need of other maintenance, designate it off limits immediately and report the problem to your maintenance staff, who should fix it as soon as possible.
- All openings on equipment (for example, rungs on a ladder) must measure either less than 3½ inches or greater than 9 inches so kids can't get their heads trapped in the space.
- Playground equipment with moving parts should be checked for pinch points that could pinch or crush a child's finger or hand.
- If a sandbox is installed, check to make sure that it contains sand that is intended for playground purposes only; other types of sand, such as sand used in construction, may contain hazardous materials, including asbestos. Check for hazardous debris such as sharp sticks or broken glass, and be sure that the sand is free of bugs. Sandboxes should be covered overnight to prevent contamination from animals such as cats.
- The playground should look clean and well maintained.
- There should be no broken equipment.
- Wooden equipment should not be cracking or splintering.
- Metal equipment should not be rusted.
- A fence should surround the playground to prevent children from running off, possibly into traffic.
- Surface materials on the playground need to be maintained regularly to keep the surfacing material loosely packed and covering all appropriate areas, especially in the fall zones surrounding playground equipment.

Post rules. Consider posting signs by the playground to let parents and children know what is expected of them. For example, is the playground open to the public, or is it limited to church use only? Typically, signs will specify who may use the playground, the playground hours, and whatever guidelines your church has instituted. These may include such things as adult supervision is required; no running, pushing, or shoving; do not use equipment when wet; no bare feet—proper footwear required; no beverages or glass containers allowed; no pets; and do not use equipment unless designed for your age. Some churches opt to include assumption of risk language on their signs (such as “play at your own risk”), but it is recommended that you discuss the effectiveness of such language with your church's attorney before including it on a sign.

23. Parent or Guardian of a Minor Consent and Hold Harmless Agreement

Parent or Guardian of a Minor Consent and Hold Harmless Form

(This form should be completed for each increased risk and off-site event, and a copy should be taken on each trip.)

Name of Activity: _____ Date: _____

Child's Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Age: _____ Sex: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

I, _____ [PRINTED NAME OF PARENT/GUARDIAN], being the parent or legal guardian of _____ [PRINTED NAME OF MINOR], have been informed of the above activity sponsored by _____ [NAME OF CHURCH OR ORGANIZATION] and hereby give my consent for my minor child to participate in this activity.

I understand that all reasonable safety precautions will be taken by the leaders of this activity and that the possibility of an unforeseen hazard does exist. I further agree not to hold _____ [NAME OF CHURCH OR ORGANIZATION], its leaders, employees, and volunteer staff liable for damages, losses, diseases, or injuries incurred by the minor listed on this form.

I also understand that my minor child is to be excluded from the following activities:

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

24. Parent or Guardian Consent to Treat a Minor

(This form should be completed annually, and a copy should be taken on each trip.)

Being the parent or legal guardian of _____ [MINOR'S PRINTED NAME], I _____ [PARENT/GUARDIAN'S PRINTED NAME] do consent to any X-ray, anesthetic, medical, surgical, or dental diagnosis or treatment that may be deemed necessary for my minor child. Further, I understand that all efforts will be made to contact me prior to treatment. In the event I cannot be reached in an emergency, I give permission to the activity leader to make the decisions necessary for treatment. Should there be no activity leader available, I give permission to the attending physician to treat my minor child. I further understand that the doctors, dentists, and other providers attending to my child will take all reasonable safety precautions during their care.

Further, as parent or legal guardian, I am responsible for the health care decisions of my minor child and agree that my insurance plan is the primary plan to pay for the dental, medical, or hospital care or treatment that is given to my child. Any policy of the church or organization sponsoring this event will be used as the secondary coverage.

Minor's Date of Birth: _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

25. Youth and Child Accident/Incident Report

Youth and Child Accident/Incident Report

Date: _____ Name of Preparer (*printed*): _____

Is this an: Accident Incident Allegation Other (*specify*):

Names(s) of Child(ren)/Youth: _____

How was the accident/incident brought to your attention? _____

Adults witnessing or present during accident/incident: _____

Person reporting the accident/incident: _____

Date, time, and location of accident/incident: _____

Description of the accident/incident as reported or witnessed: _____

Did anyone else witness the event? If so, list names: _____

Were there visible injuries? If yes, please list: _____

How were the injuries treated? _____

Who treated the injuries? _____

Were parents/guardians notified? _____ List the date/time: _____

Is this an accident/incident requiring mandatory reporting to authorities?

Were any authorities notified? _____ Who? _____ When? _____

Was the insurance company called? _____ When? _____

What other aspects or details do you need to include? _____

Signature: _____ Position: _____

26. Youth Trip and Overnight Retreat Checklist

	Yes	No
Do we have a written policy for youth trips and overnight retreats?		
Has a detailed plan for the trip/retreat been prepared and approved by church leaders?		
Have an attorney and insurance agent been contacted prior to the event to determine the church's legal liabilities and whether additional insurance protection is needed?		
Have all staff and volunteers for the trip/retreat been properly selected and trained? Have they passed criminal background checks?		
Are there a sufficient number of adult supervisors/chaperones?		
Have safe travel arrangements been made for the group, avoiding the use of 15-passenger vans?		
Have the parents/guardians of the participants signed consent/release, health history, and emergency contact forms?		
Is there a designated church representative who will stay at home and serve as the contact person during the event?		
Will all activities during the event be closely monitored by the adult supervisors?		
Have sleeping/accommodation arrangements been carefully planned to ensure safety and security of participants?		
Have rules of conduct been established and communicated to the participants?		
Are plans in place to send participants home if they disobey the rules?		

27. Transportation Safety Survey

	Yes	No
Is there a team or person who oversees church transportation?		
Do we have a written and clearly communicated transportation policy?		
Do we preselect and screen all drivers?		
Are our drivers between the ages of 25 and 70?		
Do we conduct pre- and post-trip inspections on all church and privately owned vehicles?		
Are trip safety procedures clearly stated to participants prior to each departure?		
Are vehicles equipped with seat belts?		
Is seat belt use mandatory?		
Are vehicles equipped with safety equipment, such as fire extinguishers and first-aid kits?		
Do we have an accident-reporting kit in each vehicle?		
Are drivers or trip leaders equipped with cell phones or other methods of communication?		
Has our insurance agent been consulted about our transportation plans?		
Does our church have business auto insurance coverage?		
Does our church have non-owned and hired automobile liability coverage?		
Has our church developed a policy regarding the personal use of private vehicles in transportation for church events?		
Have we discussed the serious rollover and crash risks associated with 15-passenger vans?		
Have we considered banning the use of 15-passenger vans or requiring that vans be equipped with proper safety equipment (such as dual rear wheels and stability control systems)?		
Do we recognize that minibuses meeting federal school bus standards are among the safest vehicles on the road?		

28. Transportation Worker Application Form

It is the goal of this church to create a safe and secure environment for all members and visitors. To facilitate this emphasis, it is necessary to gather pertinent information from those who desire employment or offer volunteer services through our transportation ministry. This information will be used for the sole purpose of helping the church select drivers and provide a safe and secure environment.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Social Security No.: _____

Have you ever used a name(s) other than the one above? If yes, please list:

Current Address: _____ Years at Address: _____

Previous Address: _____

Home Phone Number: _____ Work Phone: _____

Please respond to all questions that apply to the position you are applying/volunteering for:

Position you are applying/volunteering for: _____

When are you available to work? _____

Do you have a valid driver's license? _____ License Number: _____ State: _____

Do you have a commercial license? _____ License Number: _____ State: _____

Do you have current insurance? _____ Name of Insurance Company: _____

Name of Agent: _____ Agent's Phone Number: _____

Have you ever provided transportation for another organization? _____

If so, please list the organizations and dates:

What types of vehicles have you been trained to drive?

Please list all traffic violations:

Type	Date	Result
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

Current Employer: _____ Length of Employment: _____

Name of Supervisor: _____ Phone Number: _____

Previous Employers (within last five years)	Dates Employed
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>

Is there any reason you should not work with or around children or youth? _____

Have you ever been the subject of a child-abuse investigation? _____

If yes, please provide details: _____

Have you ever been convicted or pleaded guilty to a criminal offense? _____

If yes, please provide details: _____

Please list your educational background:

Name	Graduate?	Year	Degree or Course of Study
High School _____	_____	_____	_____
College _____	_____	_____	_____
Other (please specify) _____	_____	_____	_____

Please provide the following church information:

What, if any, church affiliation do you have? _____

How long have you attended that church? _____ Are you a member? _____

List other churches you have been affiliated with: _____

Have you ever worked with youth or children? _____ List where: _____

Please explain why you are qualified for the desired position: _____

Please list two references (must be of a business or organizational nature):

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ Years Known Each Other: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ Years Known Each Other: _____

I hereby give permission to make a thorough investigation of my past employment, education, and background, and release from liability all persons, companies, or corporations supplying such information. I also release the church from any liability that might result from making such an investigation. I understand that any false statements or implications made by me on this application or other required documentation shall be considered sufficient cause for denial of employment or discharge.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

29. Vehicle Self-Inspection Report and Instructions

Inspection Completed by: _____

Date: _____

Vehicle Make: _____

Model: _____

Year: _____

No.: _____

Beginning Mileage: _____

Ending Mileage: _____

Not OK	OK	Before Starting Engine	After Starting Engine	Not OK	OK
		Body	Brakes		
		Brake/head/tail/clearance lights	Parking brake		
		Direction signals/emergency flashers (four-way)	Drivetrain		
		Wheels and tires	Gauges (oil/fuel/temp/air)		
		Air pressure to manufacturer's recommendations	Heater/defroster/air conditioner		
		Minimum of 1/8-inch tread depth	Speedometer		
		No visible sign of tire deterioration	Steering		
		Windshield wipers and washers	Transmission		
		Horn	Other:		
		Seat belts for all seating positions	Remarks:		
		Seats securely fastened to the floor			
		Battery			
		Belts			
		Fluid levels/leaks			
		Muffler and exhaust system			
		Fire extinguisher			
		First-aid kit			
		Reflectors/flags/flares			
		Other:			

Condition of above vehicle is _____ Satisfactory _____ Unsatisfactory

Signature: _____

Note: This inspection is not intended to satisfy the pre- and post-trip inspection requirements for commercial vehicles. Do not use this report for the purpose of satisfying federal, state, or local regulations pertaining to vehicle inspections.

30. Accident/Incident Report

In Case of an Accident...

1. Stop immediately to investigate.
2. Look for injured people. Do not move them unless they are in immediate and imminent danger.
3. Protect yourself, others, and property from additional injury or damage. If a hazard still exists, remove the vehicle or other equipment from the right of way, if possible. If the vehicle cannot be moved, place emergency flags or flares near the accident scene.
4. Call police and emergency medical services, if needed.
5. Locate witnesses, and obtain their contact information.
6. Exchange contact and insurance information with other drivers.
7. Complete an accident report at the earliest opportunity.
8. Report the accident to a representative from your organization via telephone or in person.
9. Have someone contact your insurance agent to report the accident.

IMPORTANT REMINDER

Never admit fault. Give information pertaining to the accident only to the police and your insurance or church representative.

DAMAGE TO OUR VEHICLE OR PROPERTY

Vehicle Involved: _____ Vehicle No.: _____

Name of Driver: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Address: _____

Driver's License No.: _____ State: _____

List visible damage to our vehicle or other property:

Driver Sign Here: _____

PRELIMINARY ACCIDENT REPORT

Date: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Location: _____

Hour: _____ (a.m.) _____ (p.m.)

DAMAGE TO VEHICLE OR PROPERTY

Make of Vehicle: _____ Model: _____ Driver's License No.: _____

Insurance Carrier: _____

Address: _____ Phone No.: _____

Name of Driver: _____

Address: _____ Phone No.: _____

List visible damage to vehicle or other property:

INJURED PERSONS

Name: _____

Address: _____ Phone No.: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____ Phone No.: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____ Phone No.: _____

WITNESSES

Name: _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone No.: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone No.: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone No.: _____

Was a police report made? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, what police department? _____

Report number (if known): _____

Was anyone cited or arrested? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, who? _____

What charge? _____

DIAGRAM

Show location and direction of travel of all vehicles, streets and names, and skid marks with exact measurements, if possible.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

Where were you going? What load were you carrying? What speed were you going? Estimated speed of other vehicles?

WITNESS INFORMATION CARD

Your cooperation in filling out this card and giving it to the driver will enable us to handle the matter in fairness to all parties concerned.

Accident at: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____ a.m. ___ p.m. ___

Did you see the accident happen? Yes _____ No _____

Did you see anyone hurt? Yes _____ No _____

Were you riding in a vehicle involved? Yes _____ No _____

In your opinion, who was responsible? Our Driver__ Other Driver__ Passenger__ Pedestrian__

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP Code: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone No.: _____

Signature: _____

Thank you!

31. Church/Facilities Usage and Hold Harmless Agreement

Church Usage and Hold Harmless Agreement

I/We, the undersigned authorized representative(s) of _____
[NAME OF ORGANIZATION] of the city of _____, state of _____
shall be using the building and grounds of _____ [CHURCH NAME]
from _____ to _____, 20 _____, for the purpose of _____,
herein referred to as "the activity."

I/We understand and agree that neither _____
[CHURCH NAME] nor its trustees, representatives, employees, or agents may be held liable in
any way for an occurrence in connection with the activity that may result in injury, harm, or other
damages to the undersigned or members of our organization and guests, invited or not.

As part of the consideration for being allowed to use your facility, building, and grounds as well
as all appliances and fixtures in the activity, I/we hereby assume all risk in connection with
participation in the activity. I/We further release _____
[CHURCH NAME], its trustees, employees, agents, or representatives for any damages that
may occur while participating in the activity. I/We further agree to save and hold harmless
_____ [CHURCH NAME], its trustees, employees, agents, or
representatives from any claim by the undersigned member of _____
[NAME OF ORGANIZATION], its estates, heirs, or assigns arising out of or participation in any
form or fashion in the activity. I/We also authorize _____
[CHURCH NAME], its employees, or agents to render or obtain such emergency medical care
or treatment as may be necessary should any injury, harm, or accident occur while participating
in the activity.

I/We further state that I/we are authorized to sign this agreement; that I/we understand the terms
herein are contractual and not mere recital; and that I/we have signed this document of my/our
own free act and volition. I/We further state and acknowledge that I/we have fully informed
ourselves of the content of this affirmation and release by reading it before I/we signed it.

I/We have executed this affirmation and release on the _____ day of _____,
20 _____.

Signature: _____

Signature: _____

32. Preparing for and Responding to Acts of Violence

In December 2007, a lone gunman entered a missionary center in Colorado and shot several people before leaving and driving 80 miles to a large church. Police reported that the gunman had two assault rifles, three handguns, and 1,000 rounds of ammunition in his possession. He began shooting as he neared the lobby of the church. The shooting spree ended when the gunman was confronted and shot by a church security guard. All in all, five people died, including the gunman. Five others were injured in the incidents.

Shocking as it may seem, violent incidents of this nature happen several times each year at churches across the country. Because places of worship are open to the public, churches have become more vulnerable to these senseless acts of violence. This fact sheet addresses what churches can do to prepare for and respond to violent acts.

The Reality of Violence at Church

- While rare, acts of violence do occur at churches.
- Violent acts may include robbery, assault, rape, and even attempted murder or murder.
- The majority of violent acts are carried out by people who have a connection to the congregation.
- The most common violent act at churches, as with schools, is a shooting.
- Often there are warning signs or precursors to the violent act, such as threats or previous outbursts, disputes, or confrontations.
- Most churches are unprepared for a violent event or its aftermath.

Who Is at Risk?

- No church is immune to the risk of a violent episode.
- Churches of all sizes, locations, and resources have experienced acts of violence.

Can a Violent Outburst Be Avoided?

- There is no assurance that a violent episode in church can be avoided. However, you can be prepared for the possibility of an incident.
- By taking personal responsibility for the safety of your church, you will have done the best thing possible to prevent a violent incident from occurring.

How to Make Your Church Less Vulnerable

- Working with your Church Safety and Security (CSS) Team, designate a church security director to be the point person on security issues. Define the responsibilities of that position.
- Develop a church security plan and guidelines with defined roles for all staff persons, including greeters, ushers, and other front-line workers and volunteers. Your local law enforcement agency may be a resource to you in forming the security plan.
- Include in the plan a seating location for ushers and/or security personnel (strategically stationed in both the front and the rear of the sanctuary), lockdown

- procedures for areas of the church, crisis communications, and an evacuation plan for the building.
- Establish a method for quickly communicating issues of concern (such as a weapon) to appropriate church personnel (such as the security director), as well as to authorities. Depending on the size of your church, it may be appropriate to have on hand walkie-talkies, two-way radios, pagers, and/or cell phones.
 - Establish a no-tolerance policy for fights, altercations, and other disruptions.
 - Work with your local law enforcement agency to provide training for staff and front-line workers and volunteers on topics such as violence identification and security methods.
 - Openly discuss issues of concern, and learn to defuse problems before they become incidents. Violence intervention training may be appropriate.

A Word About Security Guards

The use of professional or volunteer security guards at church has become more commonplace in recent years. Basically, a church has two options regarding security guards: (1) maintain its own security guard force or (2) hire a professional security guard service.

Option 1: Maintain Your Own Security Guard Force

- The church is responsible for running background checks and screening all security guard personnel.
- The church is responsible for the training and supervision of its security guard personnel.
- The church is responsible for ensuring that its security force complies with all licensing and certification requirements that might exist under your state's law.
- The church will in most circumstances be liable for the acts of its security guards.
- One option is to hire off-duty active law enforcement officers. An advantage in hiring these individuals is that they will have superior training and experience. However, the church must still train these individuals in what their role will be in emergency situations.

Option 2: Hire a Security Guard Force

- The use of a professional security guard service provides a layer of liability protection for the church.
- The church still must undertake reasonable precautions in hiring the security service such as checking references and fully understanding the service's screening, training, and supervision procedures.
- The church should verify that the security guard company has a license by obtaining a copy.
- The church should enter into a written agreement with the security guard service in which the service agrees to indemnify (hold harmless) the church from any injury or damage that might result from the service's activities.
- The church should make sure that the security guard service is fully insured and have the church added as an additional insured on the service's insurance policies.

Then the church should obtain a copy of the certificate of insurance showing that it has been added as an additional insured on the service's insurance policies.

The use of armed security guards presents additional considerations. While the presence of armed guards can prevent or bring an end to an episode of church violence, their use also raises the risk of injury or death to innocent bystanders, claims for the use of excessive force, and an increased burden for ensuring that all guards are properly screened, trained, and supervised. Also, armed security guards must be properly licensed, hold necessary permits, and carry only legal and authorized weapons.

Arming your church's security guards is something that should be undertaken only in consultation with your church's counsel, local law enforcement, and your insurance agent.

What to Do in the Event of a Violent Incident

If a violent incident occurs at your church, the first priority is to protect the people in your congregation. To do this, follow these steps:

- Call 911.
- If there is an opportunity to keep the invader out by locking doors and/or closing off areas of the church, do so.
- If there is an opportunity to remove all members and guests from the premises, do so as quickly as possible.
- Quickly control panic. By doing so, you will be more likely to conduct a sequenced evacuation, if possible.
- A leader, such as the pastor or security director, must take charge and issue orders.
- All orders must be clear and direct, such as:
 - ✓ "Ushers, secure the building."
 - ✓ "[Fill in name], contact the police."
 - ✓ "[Fill in name], secure the nursery."
 - ✓ "Everyone, take cover on the floor."

How to Make Your Church Staff and Members Less Vulnerable

- Never allow staff to work alone. Always ensure that there are at least two employees present at all times.
- Establish an internal distress code that will alert others in the office to your need for assistance. For example, if church office workers typically address each other by first name, your distress code may be addressing a colleague by last name (for example, "Mr. Smith").
- Keep all church doors locked except when in use, and then limit access points as much as possible.
- Consider installation of a panic button for front-line workers such as receptionists.
- Ensure that exterior lighting is adequate in all areas, especially parking lots and walkways. Ask your local law enforcement for assistance with a lighting audit.
- Always park your car in a well-lit area that is not obstructed by shrubbery, trash bins, trucks, or vans.
- Ensure that all staff know and understand the church's security plan.
- Know where all telephones are located.
- Prepare for the worst-case scenario.

While not every violent incident can be prevented, taking the steps outlined in this fact sheet can help your church become better prepared for responding to criminal acts at church and for communicating to your congregation during a crisis.

33. Kitchen Safeguards

Workers in the church kitchen were busy on a Saturday preparing meals for a fundraising event. The stove, which was too close to a wall, was being heavily used. Because of excessive heat and grease buildup, the wall caught on fire. No one was injured, but the blaze caused extensive damage to the kitchen, fellowship hall, gymnasium, and baptismal area. Cost to repair the damage was \$1.3 million.

To avoid this type of disaster, we advise every church that operates a kitchen to take a variety of safety precautions with cooking equipment, as described in the following sections. The risk of food poisoning is another serious concern and will be addressed as well.

Automatic Extinguishing Systems

Unprotected cooking surfaces and appliances can result in serious fire risks in the church kitchen. If your church uses one or more deep-fat fryers or grease-producing appliances, please consider hiring a qualified contractor to install an automatic extinguishing system over the kitchen's cooking surfaces. The system should meet the following criteria:

- An automatic system should meet the UL 300 standard and be installed in accordance with NFPA 96 that protects the hood, exhaust ducts, all cooking surfaces, and interiors of broilers.
- A device to manually activate the automatic fire-suppression system must be installed as well. It should be accessible in the event of a fire and located along an exit route.
- The system must be equipped with an automatic fuel/power shut-off that is interconnected with the automatic hood and duct fire-extinguishing system. These devices prevent continued heating of the cooking equipment in the event the automatic fire-suppression system is activated.
- Kitchen workers need to be trained on how to manually activate the hood and duct fire-suppression system. Prompt activation of the system will greatly reduce the fire loss.

The automatic extinguishing system needs to be serviced every six months by a competent hood and duct fire-suppression system servicing company. Following service, the system should be tagged showing the service company's name, address, and the date of the last service. A properly maintained system will ensure prompt operation in the event of a fire.

Deep-Fat Fryers

Deep-fat fryers are known for being a dangerous fire risk and are a major cause of fires. Oil from the fryer can easily splash and come into contact with an open flame, especially if the flame is near the fryer itself.

To reduce the chance of a grease fire, the deep fat fryer(s) should be installed or arranged with a minimum 16-inch clearance between the fryer unit and the adjacent surface flame-producing appliance(s). If the 16-inch clearance is not possible, a vertical steel barrier extending 12 inches above the top of the deep-fat fryer or open-flame appliance(s) can be used as an alternative means of protection.

Also, the normal temperature range for food service frying is 325 to 375 degrees Fahrenheit. As the oil temperature increases, so does the risk of an accidental grease fire. All deep-fat fryers should be equipped with a high-temperature-limiting device that will shut off the fuel or energy in

the event the cooking oil exceeds a temperature of 475 degrees. Hire a qualified commercial cooking equipment contractor to install the temperature-limiting device.

Fire Extinguishers

Class K wet chemical fire extinguishers are the best portable extinguishers for kitchen use. Class K extinguishers are tested on commercial deep-fat fryers using the same type of fire test as UL 300 pre-engineered restaurant fire-extinguishing systems. The discharge agent from a Class K extinguisher is a fine mist, which helps prevent grease splash and fire re-flash while cooling the appliance. This makes the Class K extinguisher an ideal choice around virtually all cooking appliances.

Kitchen Hood and Ventilation System Precautions

During cooking operations, grease and grease-laden vapors are frequently created, which represents another fire hazard. To reduce the likelihood of fire due to the collection of grease, a qualified contractor should be hired to install a hood and duct system covering the cooking equipment in accordance with NFPA 96.

The hood and ductwork should be constructed of steel and equipped with the appropriate grease-removal filters, such as baffles. Mesh filters should not be used. The hood must also be equipped with appropriate lighting units that meet NFPA 70.

Regular cleaning of the hood and ventilation system is essential. The frequency of the cleaning depends on the amount of cooking. However, all items including hoods, filters, fans, ducts, and other related cooking equipment should be cleaned on a regular basis. Exhaust hood filters need to be cleaned more frequently, such as once a week. Clean filters will increase the efficiency of the cooking exhaust system, help remove grease-laden vapors, and reduce the risk of a fire. The entire system should be serviced by a qualified contractor at least every six months.

In addition, be sure to use the proper grease-removal filters. Mesh filters do not comply with NFPA 96 and should be used only where there will be little or no grease held in suspension within the exhaust gases. Mesh filters should not be installed above deep-fat fryers, char broilers, griddles, and so on. Baffle filters are more efficient than mesh filters and comply with NFPA 96. Baffle filters are suitable for general cooking with moderate grease load applications. These filters should be made of stainless steel and are simple to clean in a commercial dishwashing machine.

Minimize Grease Buildup

Grease buildup around cooking areas creates an unnecessary fire hazard and should be controlled. Therefore, a policy should be developed outlining a routine inspection and cleaning schedule to prevent the buildup of grease in the kitchen. All kitchen workers who will be affected by this policy need to be trained. In general, the floor and walls around the cooking appliances should be cleaned at least weekly. Also, if the floor/wall covering around the cooking equipment does not prevent grease/oil saturation, consider installing ceramic tile, stainless steel, or other substantial coverings to prevent grease saturation and potential fires.

34. Practicing Church Discipline

Mention the term *church discipline* and what comes to mind? Perhaps it's unpleasant childhood memories of a Sunday school teacher using some form of punishment to keep your class in line. Or perhaps it's painful recollections of an excommunication or "disfellowshipping" episode in the church's past. Let's take a moment to address the practice of church discipline in the sense of nonphysical, spiritual correction of adult church members by church leaders.

Like church membership itself, the practice of church discipline has seen a decline in recent years. Societal changes, changes in the attitudes of both church leaders and attendees, and more lenient interpretations of Scripture have all been cited as reasons for the lessened incidence of church discipline. Indeed, when church discipline is exercised today, it is not unheard of for a claim or lawsuit to result.

For example, a church in Tennessee was sued in 2002 for \$20 million in damages by two former members of the congregation who had been excommunicated. After five years of expensive and emotional litigation, the lawsuit was dismissed by an appeals court in 2007.

Still, for many church leaders, church discipline is an essential practice in their community of faith based on their belief in a scriptural or moral responsibility to guide the spiritual lives of church members.

In exercising church discipline, church leaders have an ally in the First Amendment's guarantee of religious freedom, which prohibits civil courts from getting involved in internal church disputes over such matters as church membership or discipline. As the Tennessee court aptly put it: "Because religious bodies are free to establish their own guidelines for membership and a governance system to resolve disputes about membership without interference from civil authorities, decisions to exclude persons from membership are not reviewable by civil courts."

However, courts' abstention from church discipline matters is not absolute. Courts have intervened in cases where (1) the individual being disciplined withdrew his or her membership before the discipline was imposed, (2) the communication about the discipline was not limited to church members alone, or (3) the communication about the discipline contained defamatory language about the individual in question. Indeed, a jury in Oklahoma awarded \$400,000 in damages to an individual who was disciplined after she withdrew her membership from the church.

Safeguards When Practicing Church Discipline

So how can church leaders wishing to undertake church discipline do so prudently, in a way that minimizes the risk of legal difficulties for the church? Consider the following safeguards:

1. Address church discipline in governing documents. The church's constitution, articles of incorporation or, more commonly, its bylaws should specify the (scriptural) standard for members' conduct and detail the church's disciplinary guidelines and process. If part of the disciplinary process may involve sharing information with church membership as a whole, include such a provision in the bylaws. References to the Bible or other religious texts can help strengthen First Amendment arguments against intervention by civil courts. In its governing documents, the church may wish to address the situation in which a member seeks to withdraw membership while church discipline is pending, perhaps taking the position that membership will not be withdrawn while discipline is pending or that discipline, once instituted, will take its course regardless. Because of the intricacies involved, consultation with the church's legal counsel concerning discipline in the church's governing documents is strongly recommended.

2. Use a membership covenant. Many churches utilize a membership covenant or other document of a similar nature to solemnize the member's commitment to support the work and ministries of the church. Consider including in this covenant a paragraph about conduct expectations or standards and church discipline. In signing the covenant, the member agrees to abide by the church's disciplinary process. Some churches also include a provision in their membership covenant about an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) process, specifying that if the member has a dispute with the church, he or she will submit it to religious mediation or arbitration rather than filing a lawsuit. Peacemaker Ministries, a spiritual conflict-resolution ministry, has substantial information on such "relational commitments" available on its website at www.peacemaker.net.

3. Follow the church discipline process consistently. Because of the First Amendment, the church has much flexibility in its relationship with its members. However, the church should be careful to treat similarly situated members similarly. For example, if adultery is an offense that leads to discipline in your church, be sure to treat a man who is caught in an extramarital affair the same as a woman is treated. To treat one differently than the other could lead to charges that the disciplinary process was a "pretext" for gender-based discrimination and could lead to legal trouble for your church. Being consistent is also a matter of showing fairness to all members and maintaining the church's integrity.

4. Be careful in communications about a discipline incident. Perhaps no other situation presents a greater tension between the desire to follow Scripture and the potential for legal liability than Jesus' admonition to "tell it to the church" (Matthew 18:17). Courts treat defamation (slander or libel) as a separate charge or "cause of action" and will be more willing to entertain such claims, even when they arise from the church discipline process itself. There is, however, additional protection to churches in many states in the form of a legal "qualified privilege" that protects communications made to church members about matters of common interest. To protect itself legally, before making a mass communication about a church discipline matter, the church should (a) make sure that its communication is limited to church members only, (b) state facts that can be verified as opposed to opinions, and (c) have the communication reviewed by the church's counsel before releasing it.

By following these steps and consulting with their counsel, churches that practice discipline of their members can be better positioned to stay true to their scriptural mandate while reducing the likelihood of a lawsuit over a situation that is often, for all sides, one of the more painful undertakings in the life of the church.

35. Computer and Internet Safety

Church computers can greatly enhance the efficiency of administration, and the Internet creates exciting new ways to communicate and advance your ministry. But the digital age also presents a variety of risks that churches need to consider and address.

Keep Your Network Safe

Threats to your computer network range from computer viruses, security breaches, lightning damage, and hardware failure, to power outages and unintentional harm from inexperienced users. To minimize such risks, take the following precautions.

Install three types of security software, including a firewall to prevent unauthorized Internet users from accessing your computer network. Use an anti-spyware program to identify and combat “spyware.” Spyware is a category of malicious software designed to watch what users do with their computers and to send this information to a hacker over the Internet. Also run antivirus software to protect against computer viruses and worms. Update the virus definition files frequently, and run a scan of the hard drive after each update. Finally, educate all computer users to never open attachments from unknown sources and to virus-scan all files that are opened or downloaded, even from a trusted source.

Additional security measures include using passwords to protect against unauthorized access to your computer network and to secure documents containing sensitive information. Good passwords should be at least eight characters in length and contain both letters and numbers in random order. If your organization uses Windows, keep Windows software up to date. For former employees and volunteers, discontinue computer network access. And be sure to install surge-protection devices in your facility to guard against sudden electrical surges that can damage computer equipment.

Maintaining Data Backup

Despite the best precautions, your church may still experience a loss of data. That’s why consistent data backup is so crucial. For instance, regularly back up computer files to another media such as magnetic tapes, “zip” disks, CD-ROMs, or flash drives. Be especially careful to back up database files such as membership files, spreadsheet and financial reporting files, and large documents generated by staff or volunteers. Remind staff members to regularly back up their work. Store a copy of the backed-up data off-site, and keep installation CDs for software programs stored in a secure location.

Operating a Safe Website

Church websites have become exciting communication tools with dynamic capabilities such as streaming media broadcasts or podcasts, online event registration, and online financial transactions. When operating a website, churches should consider the following:

- **Maintain the name.** Consider reserving all variations of your church domain name (.org, .com, .net) to avoid confusion and to keep others with ill intent from establishing alternative websites at those addresses. Have all domains point to your church’s main website address.
- **Protect privacy.** Develop a privacy notice that addresses whether and how your church collects information from the website. Become familiar with the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA). Even if COPPA does not apply to your organization, many churches voluntarily comply with COPPA to protect the personal information of children under age 13.

- **Obtain permission to publish.** Photographs or videos of individuals should not be posted on the church website without their permission. Express written permission should be obtained for any photos accompanied by identifying information such as name and residence. Even with parental permission, photos of minors should not be accompanied by any personally identifying information.
- **Comply with copyrights.** The church may be held liable for any unauthorized use of copyrighted or trademarked works, photos, images, music, logos, and other material housed on its website. Copyright and trademark laws must be followed. Likewise, to protect the church's works from unauthorized duplication or use, the church should consider including a copyright notice on its website.
- **Maintain control.** Consider appointing a person or team to oversee the website's content and style. All pages on the site should be known and approved by the team. Guidelines should be in place before considering pages such as discussion boards, newsgroups, and file or photo sharing.
- **Monitor.** Appoint a designated staff or lay person to regularly view the website looking for functionality problems, broken links, irregularities, inappropriate postings, unauthorized pages, and vandalism or hacking. That individual (and a backup) should have the authority and know-how to take down the website or individual pages, if the need arises.
- **Conducting commerce.** Financial transactions over the Internet warrant special security consideration such as the Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) protocol that provides a secure encrypted connection between an individual's web browser and the church's web server. In addition, before selling items over the Internet, consult with the church's accountant regarding any sales tax and Unrelated Business Income Tax (UBIT) implications in your state.

Internet and E-Mail Usage

Internet and e-mail programs can be highly effective in furthering the mission of the church. However, abuses of the Internet and e-mail can lessen productivity or, in the worst cases, have a devastating impact on the church's ministry. To help head off problems with Internet and e-mail usage, do the following:

- Establish an electronic communications policy that clearly sets out the church's expectations on such issues as the following:
 - ✓ business versus personal use of the Internet, e-mail, and phones
 - ✓ church ownership of computers, programs, and other computer-related items
 - ✓ the church's not providing a right or expectation of privacy in the use of the Internet, e-mail, or voice mail
 - ✓ the church's right to monitor or inspect computers, equipment, and messages
 - ✓ guidance on downloading files and/or software programs
 - ✓ the specifying of prohibited conduct
 - ✓ proper and improper use of mass communication techniques such as e-mail blasts or phone tree messaging
- All users of church computers should be made aware of the electronic communications policy and adhere to it.
- Use filtering and/or accountability software. Filtering software can prevent access to certain websites that contain objectionable content, while accountability programs track Internet usage activity. Assign responsibility to a designated person to periodically review the usage logs for church Internet activity.

- Establish a procedure for reporting and handling incidents of inappropriate Internet or e-mail usage by both staff members and volunteers at the church.