

SDA Church

Safety Committee Functions

A. COMMITTEE COMPOSITION

Each year the church board or church pastor is to appoint a church safety officer and safety committee. (See Job Description, Church Safety Officer, available from Adventist Risk Management, Inc.) The committee is generally composed of the church safety officer, at least one deacon/deaconess, one Sabbath School teacher, and one youth pastor or sponsor of youth activities. Attempts should also be made to represent those areas or activities involving a higher degree of risk.

It is the church's option whether to include youth participation. Accident investigation may involve confidential information; therefore youth involvement should be restricted to committee work on pre-loss activities.

The chairperson of the committee is to be appointed by the group.

B. COMMITTEE OBJECTIVE

The primary objective of a safety committee is to work with the church safety officer in the prevention of accidents. The committee can help the church achieve a position of taking corrective action consistently after each accident, thereby reducing major loss causes at the church.

C. MEETINGS

The committee is to meet on a regular basis. Minutes should be recorded on at least a quarterly basis. (Note: For smaller churches, one option is to have safety addressed as a permanent part of staff/board meetings, at least monthly.)

D. PRIMARY METHOD OF CONTROLLING ACCIDENTS

1. The primary method of controlling accidents will be formal investigation and review of all accidents at the church - both actual accidents and near miss incidents.
2. At each regularly scheduled meeting, the chairperson or safety officer is responsible for providing the following information:

INJURY ACCIDENTS

- a. What was the person doing?
- b. How were they injured?
- c. What unsafe act was committed?
- d. Was there a hazardous condition?

PROPERTY LOSSES

- a. Provide a description of the property.
- b. How was the property damaged?
- c. Was there an unsafe act?
- d. Was there a hazardous condition?
- e. Where possible, supply a photograph of the damaged property.

Using the above information, a designated individual, formally appointed in writing by the committee should seek to determine the underlying causes of the accident by the following:

- a. Visit the scene;
- b. Interview witnesses to the accident;
- c. Check for causes resulting from anyone's actions, dangerous practices, inability, disobeying rules, etc.;

- d. Check for poor housekeeping;
- e. Determine if there was improper apparel;
- f. Determine if there was defective equipment;
- g. Record information of any other poor conditions.

Upon receiving the report from the designated individual, the committee is to make written recommendations to the church pastor. The recommendations will include their conclusion as to what caused the accident, and corrective measures to prevent a similar accident in the future. The pastor may choose to present significant findings to the church board for information and possible policy adjustments.

E. THE COMMITTEE SHOULD AVOID

1. Attempting to pin the blame on an individual;
2. Assuming there is just one cause for an accident;
3. Assigning causes of accidents which are too general or vague;
4. Determining causes of an accident without investigation;
5. Attempting to take the place of the administration in corrective action;
6. Any signed, written statement or description of the incident by witnesses or persons involved;
7. Investigation of sexual misconduct incidents;
8. Release of information to anyone other than a claims representative of Adventist Risk Management, Inc. or the department head of the local conference.

F. AREAS REQUIRING PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE

The committee should review the following areas, and ensure periodic inspections and/or repair by licensed professionals:

***BOILERS
CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES
ELECTRICAL WIRING AND EQUIPMENT
FIRE EXTINGUISHERS AND ALARM SYSTEMS
HEATING/AIR CONDITIONING SYSTEMS
VEHICLES***

G. AREAS REQUIRING PERIODIC COMMITTEE REVIEW

1. The following basic safety features should be followed in play activities (picnics, socials, etc.), sports, and Pathfinder activities:
 - a. Before each activity, require a thorough warm-up period;
 - b. The sponsor/activity leader teaches performance techniques of each activity;
 - c. All playing areas are smooth, well-drained, and level (grass, blacktop, track surfaces, gymnasium floors, etc.);
 - d. Sand, pea gravel, or other resilient materials are maintained beneath playground equipment;
 - e. Adequate space is provided for each activity;
 - f. Adequate safety areas and boundary lines are provided around all games and activities;
 - g. Equipment is in safe, sound condition;
 - h. Equipment is inspected on a periodic basis;
 - i. Hazardous obstructions are removed or properly padded;
 - j. Players wear properly fitted, appropriate clothing;
 - k. Members participate in activities suitable to individual skill level;
 - l. Require supervisor of activity to have signed Medical Consent forms readily available;
 - m. Adequate sponsors for specific activity.

2. Within the first two weeks of appointment, the committee should perform the following premises inspection. A written report of findings and recommendations should be sent to the church pastor and church board. Items to be addressed in the report:

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

- Appropriate type for the location
- Date last checked
- Fully charged
- Rust and/or corrosion
- Safety pin in place
- Mounted securely
- Kept in potential fire hazard areas
- Instructions on use
- Readily visible

FIRE ALARMS

- Reachable height
- Date last checked
- Readily visible
- Smoke alarms operational

FIRE ESCAPES

- Broken steps
- Mounts and brackets
- Splinters or other obstructions
- Directional sign readily visible

GENERAL FIRE SAFETY

- Drapes and curtains flameproof and away from any heat source
- Excess material and supplies properly stored
- Trash containers constructed of metal
- Oily rags and mops stored in metal containers
- Compressed gas cylinders properly secured
- Dead-end passageway properly labeled
- Exit doors open in direction of exit travel
- Evacuation routes posted
- Deacons/deaconesses assigned for evacuation posts (at each exit door)
- Self-closing doors in boiler and furnace room
- Fire drills once a year (possibly at the end of a service, during a potluck, or during a Path-finder meeting)
- Sabbath School rooms do not have exits blocked by tables, chairs, etc.
- Cradle Roll, Tiny Tots, and Kindergarten rooms have safety caps on electrical outlets
- Baptistry is equipped with automatic shut off for water and heater
- Microphone is away from baptistry, and away from anyone's reach
- Exit signs properly lighted
- Meeting room capacity signs posted
- Panic hardware on main doors
- Smoke detector in kitchen. Proper exit provided for fellowship hall. Emergency numbers posted, to include:
 - 911 or Police Department, Fire Department, Ambulance, nearest emergency room.

WALKING AND WORKING SURFACES

- Free of tears, tripping hazards and slippery surfaces
- Unguarded floor openings
- Proper handrails on stairs with four or more risers
 - (except where stairs are part of emergency egress; in which case, handrails are required regardless of the number of risers)
- Baptistry has non-slip floors, and steps, and proper handrails

All. handrails properly secured
Proper handrails including:
 midrails - on open sides,
 midrails and toe boards for balcony and overhead storage.
Uniform height of stairsteps
Clear aisles
Dark areas properly lighted

FIRST AID

First aid kit
Adequate supply of stock
Inventory kit once a month
Note dated items

WRITTEN PROGRAMS/DOCUMENTATION

Meeting minutes
Training (where applicable)
OSHA injury report
Driver selection program
MSDS (Hazardous material program - Material Safety Data Sheets)

H. MISCELLANEOUS ACTIVITIES

1. The committee should, in conjunction with the church safety officer, be involved in reviewing the church's disaster plan with the entire membership and conduct one practice "drill" for each type of disaster during the year.
2. The committee should require the supervisor of all off-premises activities to have signed Medical Consent forms readily available. Especially on Pathfinder camping-trips or outings, on Sabbath afternoon activities/walks, workbees, or during Ingathering, etc.
3. The committee should be alert to any opportunity to promote safety:

BULLETIN BOARDS
CHURCH BULLETINS
NEWSLETTERS
SERMON MATERIAL
SHOW VIDEOS AND FILMS
SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS
DISCUSSION AT BOARD MEETINGS
GUEST SPEAKERS

I. PATHFINDER PROGRAM

The Safety Committee will closely adhere to the standards set forth in the Loss Control for Pathfinders Guidelines.

NOTE: Refer to the Self-Inspection for Churches form for more detailed survey information.