

# ***Church Safety Officer Handbook***

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*Oregon Conference of Seventh-day Adventist*

<b><i>What is Safety</i></b>	<b>4</b>
<b><i>The Church Safety Officer</i></b>	<b>5 – 9</b>
<b><i>Safety Committee/Meetings/Activities</i></b>	<b>8 – 11</b>
<i>Safety/Accident Investigation</i>	<b>12 – 14</b>
<i>Property Losses/Actions to Avoid</i>	<b>14 – 15</b>
<b><i>Church Activities</i></b>	<b>16</b>
<b><i>Areas Requiring Professional Expertise</i></b>	<b>17</b>
<b><i>Areas of Special Concerns</i></b>	<b>18</b>
<i>Transportation</i>	<b>18</b>
<i>Premises Inspection</i>	<b>18</b>
<i>Walking &amp; Working Surfaces</i>	<b>19</b>
<i>Fire Extinguishers</i>	<b>19</b>
<i>General Fire Safety</i>	<b>19</b>
<i>Baptismal Tanks</i>	<b>20</b>
<i>Electrical Hazards</i>	<b>20</b>
<i>First Aid</i>	<b>20</b>
<i>Safety Promotion</i>	<b>21</b>
<i>Fire Evacuation Planning</i>	<b>21 – 24</b>
<i>Fidelity Controls</i>	<b>25</b>
<i>Rental of Church Facilities</i>	<b>25</b>
<i>Protection/Detection Systems</i>	<b>26</b>
<b><i>Miscellaneous Duties</i></b>	<b>26</b>
<i>Reporting Accidents</i>	
<i>Construction and Remodeling Projects</i>	
<i>Contracts/Agreements</i>	
<i>Loss Control Awareness in your church</i>	
<b><i>Church Safety &amp; Self-Inspection Guide</i></b>	<b>28 – 40</b>
<b><i>Emergency Action Plan (Sample)</i></b>	<b>40 – 43</b>

# ***WHAT IS SAFETY***

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*Safety is a moral obligation to  
conduct business in such a  
way that all people concerned  
will not suffer any injury or  
loss of any kind.*

***Revised 3/2014***

## ***The Church Safety Officer***

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Whether you are a new Safety Officer or have held the position for a number of years, the following information will help you understand your responsibilities. See also the booklet, *Protecting the Church and It's People*, on Adventist Risk Management's website at: **[www.adventistrisk.org](http://www.adventistrisk.org)**

### ***A Team Effort***

You are not alone. Protecting people and property requires a team effort on the part of church pastors, elders and deacons; Sabbath School and activity leaders; the safety committee; the church board; and ultimately, church workers, volunteers and members. Good communication and interaction between you and these individuals is crucial.

### ***Qualifications of a Safety Officer:***

Because the pastor plays a key leadership role and responsibility in loss control, it is recommended that the pastor appoint a head deacon or other qualified individual as the Church Safety Officer.

- The Safety Officer should be organized.
- Should have knowledge of local church organizational structure.
- Should know church membership.
- Be able to get along with people.

- Demonstrate sound and mature judgment.
- Respect the strict confidential procedures of accident review and investigation.
- The Church Safety Officer should be given active membership on the Church Board.
- A Safety Committee should be appointed to support the Safety Officer and assist in carrying out all aspects of the loss control program for all church activities.

### ***Duties of a Safety Officer:***

- Coordinating members of the TEAM
- Help write rules for safety
- Create a safety awareness
- Identify probable unsafe areas
- Apply corrective measures ASAP

### ***Safety Officer Objectives:***

The primary objective for the Church Safety Officer is the prevention of accidents. The Safety Officer with the assistance of the safety committee can help the church achieve a position of taking corrective action consistently after each accident, thereby reducing the causes of major loss and injury at the church.

## *Self-Inspections*

A major way to prevent losses is to identify and correct hazardous conditions before accidents happen. At least once a year, with assistance from a member or members of the safety committee, perform a walk-through of the church. Because hazards can rapidly spring up, more frequent surveys are recommended, and all staff, elders, deacons and volunteers should constantly be vigilant and report or correct them when observed. The Church Self-Inspection Form, also on the website, will help in the identification of key issues.

## *Slips, Trips and Falls*

Slips, trips and falls generally remain a primary cause of church accidents. They can be caused by broken steps, potholes in parking areas, cracked sidewalks, torn and wrinkled carpet, gravel, twigs or other debris on walkways, or wet floors from inclement weather, or spills, to name a few. Promptly correct these conditions.

## *Security*

Security is more than cameras and some alarms on doors and windows. ***A security program designed to protect people and property includes*** increased visibility through the trimming of vegetation, good lighting (inside and out), and other elements. Everyone must be observant and responsive to suspicious activity (someone lurking in shadows or hallways, unattended packages,

etc.). In some locations it may also mean the visible presence of a trained security team.

### ***Emergency Plans and Preparedness***

For most churches, it's business as usual week after week, but that can change in an instant, particularly in an area prone to earthquakes, hurricanes or other natural disasters. In some locations, there may also be a potential for riots, while a random act of violence can occur anywhere. Determine the primary exposures to your church and make sure your church has an emergency plan and is prepared to react appropriately to disasters as they arise. (See *"Church Emergency Response and Business Continuity Planning"* and *"AEDs"* on the website.)

Various codes also require that doors remain unlocked and that doorways, aisles, foyers and steps be kept clear of anything (yes even chairs) to ensure a clear means of egress in the event of an emergency.

### ***Activities***

List and evaluate church activities. Some are low risk and high gain, while others are high risk with little to gain and a potential for injured youth, staff or volunteers. Establish a process where each activity is properly analyzed before approval. Ensure that the process includes provisions for transportation, safety equipment, medical release forms for youth under 18 and parent/guardian permission slips for each activity. Help develop written guidelines and rules and be prepared to

recommend that some activities be prohibited. Maintain a list of those approved and those that are prohibited. Church board approval will be required for some.

## ***Transportation***

So much can go wrong when transportation needs are not carefully thought out. A poorly maintained vehicle or a bad driver could result in disaster. Selecting too small of a vehicle for the need can lead to “overloading,” sloppy vehicle handling and loss of control. Know how many people need to be transported, how much gear needs to be hauled and plan accordingly. Leasing a bus and driver from a reputable agency is an option to consider, as opposed to a lot of personal vehicles with volunteers whose vehicles or driving habits may be unsafe.

## ***Accidents***

When incidents or accidents occur at the church, during an activity, or in transit, the Church Safety Officer in conjunction with the safety committee will conduct an investigation. Investigations help to identify the causes and what actions might help prevent similar accidents from occurring again. See the Foresight, “Accident Investigation,” for additional information on this topic.

## ***An Important Role***

You have a big responsibility and an excellent opportunity to promote safety throughout the church.

***IT IS AN IMPORTANT ROLE, AND YOUR  
EFFORTS ARE APPRECIATED!***

## ***SAFETY COMMITTEE***

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The Church Safety Committee comprised of representation from various church departments and under the guidance of the Church Safety Officer will make an effective team to enhance the overall church safety program and prevent accidents. The committee's focus will be on the development of safety programs and emergency plans; identification of exposures through self-inspections and activity reviews; and the investigation of accidents to determine measures for correcting the conditions that caused them. See the booklet, *Protecting the Church and It's People*.

### ***The Committee***

The church board or church pastor should appoint the church safety committee annually. The committee is generally composed of the Church Safety Officer (see *Foresight, The Church Safety Officer*); at least one deacon/deaconess; one Sabbath School teacher; and one youth pastor or sponsor of youth activities. Ensure that the



committee has representation from areas or activities involving a high degree of risk.

It is the church's option whether to include youth participation, but keep in mind that accident investigation may involve confidential information. If youth is part of the committee, involvement should be restricted to committee work on "pre-loss" activities.

The group generally appoints the chairperson of the committee, although the church administration may make the selection based on a particular individual's expertise.

### ***Meetings***

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

### ***Committee Activities***

Self-Inspections help identify physical hazards inside and outside the church. The committee will assist the church safety officer in performing **self-inspections** of the premises.

The committee, in conjunction with the church safety officer, should also be involved in reviewing

the church's disaster plan. Drills can be practiced with the deacons and other key personnel so they will know their responsibilities during each type of disaster, or a practice evacuation of the entire membership could be conducted during the year.

The committee should review activities and help determine safety elements needed (specific activities should however be approved by the church board in advance). See the [Field Trip Activity Planner](#). Pay particular attention to the need for parental/guardian permission slips and signed medical release forms for minors.

### ***Promoting Safety***

The committee will promote safety in numerous ways including the use of:

- Bulletin Boards
- Church Bulletins
- Newsletters
- Sermon Material
- Videos and Films
- Special Announcements
- Discussion at Board Meetings
- Guest Speakers

## ***Accident Investigation***

A primary method of controlling losses is through a formal investigation and review of all accidents at the church – both actual accidents and near miss incidents. (See the *Foresight: Accident Investigation* and the [Accident Investigation Form](#)).



When an accident (or near miss incident) is reported, a designated individual (often the safety officer), formally appointed in writing by the committee, should seek to determine the underlying causes of the accident by:

The Safety Officer will assist the safety committee to determine the underlying causes of all accidents by using the following procedures:

1. *Visit the scene*
2. *Interview witnesses to the accident, noting their observations and obtaining contact information*
3. *Checking for causes resulting from anyone's actions, dangerous practices, disobeying rules, speeding, etc.*
4. *Check for poor housekeeping or property defects*
5. *Determine if there was defective equipment*

6. *Determine if there was improper apparel*
7. *Recording information of any other poor conditions*

Upon receiving the report from the designated individual, the committee will 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.

***NOTE:*** *All accidents shall be reported immediately per Conference protocols.*

At each regular meeting, the safety officer is responsible for providing the following information:

1. *What was the injured person doing?*
2. *How was the person injured?*
3. *What unsafe action may have contributed?*
4. *Was there a hazardous condition?*

### ***Property Losses***

In addition to injuries to *persons*, ***property losses*** should be investigated by the Safety Officer to determine such items as:

1. *Description of the property*
2. *How was the property damaged or lost?*
3. *Was there an unsafe action.*
4. *Was there a hazardous condition?*
5. *Where possible, supply a photograph of the damaged property.*

### ***Actions to Avoid***

- Attempting to pin the blame on an individual.
- Assuming there is just one cause for an accident.
- Assigning causes of accidents which are too general or vague.
- Determining causes of an accident without investigation.
- Attempting to take the place of the church board or administration in corrective action.
- Any signed, written statement or description of the incident by witnesses, or persons involved.
- Investigation of sexual misconduct incidents – (Refer to the Pastor).
- Release of information to anyone other than a claims representative of Adventist Risk Management, Inc. or the Risk Management department head of the local conference.

## CHURCH ACTIVITIES

An inventory should be made of all church-sponsored activities. Another list should be made of prohibited activities, which would include but not be limited to:

1. *Trampolines*
2. *Tackle football*
3. *Baseball*
4. *Airplanes*
5. *Skateboarding*
6. *Motorcycles*
7. *ATV's (3-wheeled & 4-wheeled All-terrain Vehicles.)*



An inventory should be made of activities which require an extra degree of supervision, planning, and procedural guidelines. The activity sponsor should be required to have signed Medical Consent Forms readily available for minors. Written rules and formal procedures should be maintained and required for activities such as but not restricted to:

1. *Day care centers*
2. *Day Camps*
3. *Field trips*
4. *Pathfinder activities*
5. *Afternoon hikes & trips*
6. *Bonfires and campfire socials*
7. *Work bees*



8. *Hayrides, skating, water skiing, etc.*
9. *Ingathering programs*
10. *Health-screening fairs*

### ***Areas Requiring Professional Expertise***

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

1. *Boilers and mechanical equipment*
2. *Construction activities*
3. *Electrical wiring and equipment*
4. *Fire extinguishers and alarm systems*
5. *Heating/air conditioning systems*
6. *Cooking equipment*
7. *Vehicles*



## ***Areas of Special Concern***

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### ***Transportation***

It is the Church Safety Officer's responsibility to establish an effective and safe transportation policy.

- 1. Non church-owned vehicles used for church activities must be currently insured to meet state law requirements.*
- 2. Only mature drivers (21 years of age or older), with a known reputation for good driving habits, should be asked to drive for the church activities.*
- 3. Open trucks, trailers, moving vans, and campers are prohibited for transporting church members.*
- 4. Vehicles, including school buses, used for church activities must be in excellent operating condition, properly licensed, and operated by experienced drivers.*

### ***Premises Inspection:***

- At least once a year, the safety officer is encouraged to perform an inspection of the premises.
- Following the inspection, a written report of his/her findings and recommendations should be given to the church



administration. *Forms for this report are available from the conference.*

### ***Walking and Working Surfaces:***

- ✓ *Free of tear and slipping hazards*
- ✓ *Unguarded floor openings*
- ✓ *Proper handrails on stairs*
- ✓ *Clear aisles*
- ✓ *Dark area properly lighted*

### ***Fire Extinguishers:***

- ✓ *Appropriate type for the location*
- ✓ *Date last checked*
- ✓ *Fully charged*
- ✓ *Safety pin in place*
- ✓ *Mounted securely*
- ✓ *Kept in potential fire hazard areas*
- ✓ *Instruction on proper use*

### ***General Fire Safety:***

- ✓ *Exit doors open in direction of exit travel*
- ✓ *Evacuation routes posted*
- ✓ *Deacon/Deaconess assigned for evacuation*
- ✓ *Self closing doors in boiler and furnace room*
- ✓ *Fire drills conducted on a regular basis*
- ✓ *Sabbath school room exits clear of storage*
- ✓ *Cradle Roll/Kindergarten room outlet caps*
- ✓ *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 must include 911 or Police Department.*

### ***Baptismal Tanks:***

- ✓ *Baptistery equipped with automatic shut off for water and heater.*
- ✓ *Microphones are to be placed away from the edge of the water and mounted on floor stands.*
- ✓ *The stairs and walking surfaces should be coated with a proper tread surface to prevent slippery conditions, and handrails must be installed.*
- ✓ *Uniform height of the steps.*

### ***Electrical Hazards:***

- ✓ *Use licensed electrician for electrical work*
- ✓ *Circuit box should have routing labels*
- ✓ *Ground Fault Interrupters at sinks*
- ✓ *Exposed wires capped*
- ✓ *Circuit Overloading*
- ✓ *Don't forget cords can cause tripping hazards*

### ***First Aid:***

- ✓ *First aid kit a must*
- ✓ *Adequate supply of stock*
- ✓ *Inventory kit frequently*
- ✓ *Note date sensitive items*
- ✓ *Identify medically trained individuals*
- ✓ *Arrange medical professionals to be available on a rotating basis*

## ***Safety Promotion:***

- ✓ *Bulletin boards*
- ✓ *Church bulletins*
- ✓ *Newsletters*
- ✓ *Sermon material*
- ✓ *Videos & films*
- ✓ *Guest speakers*

## ***Fire & Evacuation Planning:***

- ***Church Safety Officer***
  - Work with head Elder & head Deacon.
    - *Ensure that Elders, Deacons and Sabbath school leaders and others in charge are included.*
  - Establish roles for all parties.
  - Provide training.
- ***Local fire department can offer good input***
  - They can assist you with the evacuation procedures based on layout of your facility.
- ***Fire drills***
  - Hold fire drills periodically.
  - Ensure familiarity with the plan.
  - Define each individual's responsibility.
  - Evaluate to determine what elements did not go smoothly and where changes are needed.

- Conduct an actual drill during church services.
  - *Let congregation know that it is just a drill.*
  - *Pastor should emphasize the need for all adults to remain calm and move to nearest exit.*
- ***Items to review after the drill***
  - Effectiveness of the alarm system.
    - *Operational*
    - *Audible*
    - *Notified appropriate parties (if monitored)*
    - How smoothly and quickly the evacuation went.
    - Whether everyone participated.
    - Showed up at designated evacuation safe areas.
  - Deficiencies in plan noted, rewritten and reevaluated in future drills.
- ***Deacon's Responsibilities***
  - In conjunction with a church security walkthrough for suspicious persons, objects of unsafe conditions they shall ensure that all exit passageways are clear and that doors are unlocked and operate properly.
  - Ensure fire alarm panel is operational.

- *Looking to confirm no “trouble lights” lit on panel box.*
- Be familiar with all locations and emergency evacuation routes illustrated on maps throughout the facility.
- Monitor conditions of the facility.
  - *Halls and other locations for suspicious persons who could be a threat to church members, volunteers, children or property.*
  - *If fire is discovered they should immediately close any doors to help contain the fire, activate the fire alarm system and assist in evacuation of the area.*
- Each Sabbath a deacon will be assigned restrooms and other key locations that need to be checked if an emergency arises and evacuation is required.
- While most alarm systems notify occupants and a monitoring company or the fire department, the head Deacon will still immediately call 911.

- If fire is small and can safely be extinguished one person should use the fire extinguisher while someone else calls 911 and evacuation proceeds until facility is deemed safe for return.
- **Delayed calls to fire departments have historically led to greater losses of facilities.**
- ***Duties of Sabbath School Teachers:***
  - Responsible for children in their classroom.
  - Shall know the location of all emergency exits and location of evacuation meeting areas.
  - Within first 10 minutes of Sabbath School teachers shall ensure they have an accurate roll for their class.
    - *Take the list with them to the designated safety area.*
  - During evacuation
    - Direct children out of the classroom.
    - Ensure all are present.
    - Close the door and lead them calmly to designated safe area where they will verify again that all are present.
    - Do not turn children over to parents until all have reached the designated safe area and

final head count has been made.

### ***Fidelity Controls:***

- Amounts above the minimum allotted to Petty Cash must not remain on the church premises.
- Monies should not be taken to the treasurer's home. Instead, church deacons should be involved in counting the money immediately after receiving the offering, and deposited as soon as possible. Ideally, this includes a drop-off deposit on Sabbath, with the church treasurer or assistant treasurer going to the bank on Monday morning to prepare the deposit.
- The specific task of counting the money should be on a rotating basis, and the appearance of repetition in the procedure of depositing funds should be avoided.

### ***Rental of Church Facilities:***

- When the church is considering the rental of the facilities, the Safety Officer should make sure appropriate use agreements and/or hold-harmless agreements have been signed, and that an endorsement is written listing the church as an additional insured on the renter's liability policy in the minimum amount of \$1 million.

- If the rental of the premises is for non-SDA functions, the Safety Officer should review the nature of the activity.
- In addition, the local conference should be contacted for its approval.

### ***Protection/Detection Systems:***

- The Safety Officer should review the need for a burglary protection and/or fire-detection system in the church. Should the church actually consider installation, the Safety Officer should be involved in reviewing the plans and proposal with the local conference treasurer.

### ***Miscellaneous Duties:***

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1. Review procedures for the immediate ***reporting of all accidents*** to the conference office.
2. On ***construction and remodeling projects***, assure blueprints have been reviewed by the conference office and Adventist Risk Management, Inc. for life-safety features well in advance of the initial construction date.
3. Review ***contracts***, in close consultation with the conference office, before obtaining signatures.



4. Request annual information from the conference on church ***accident frequency for churches*** throughout the conference to gain knowledge of general exposures to accidents.
5. Use creative and innovative techniques to promote ***loss control awareness*** such as newsletters, bulletins, announcements, sermon material, discussions at board meetings, etc.
6. Develop a close working relationship with the local fire marshal.
7. Work closely with other board members on planning emergency evacuation procedures.

## CHURCH SAFETY & SELF INSPECTION GUIDE



2013

## ***Introduction***

Welcome to the *Church Safety and Self-Inspection Guide*. No matter what your position in the church, this document, along with the *Church Safety Self-Inspection Form* ([www.adventistrisk.org](http://www.adventistrisk.org)), will help you identify potential exposures and take steps to prevent losses at your church. With any good safety program, a number of the key safety features are administrative elements. We will look at some of those before beginning our walk through of the church facility. When we do begin our survey, we will begin outdoors where it all starts, as church members and visitors alike step from their cars in the parking lot and begin walking toward the sanctuary or Sabbath School classrooms. Additional information can also be found in the booklet, *Protecting the Church and It's People*, and a more thorough *Church Self Inspection Form* on Adventist Risk Management's website at [www.adventistrisk.org](http://www.adventistrisk.org).

Church administrators need to recognize the importance of making safety a top priority in all aspects, from services, to Sabbath School classes, to activities, like potlucks, Pathfinders, and various outreach programs, including mission projects. Church employees, volunteers, visitors and children all require safe facilities and safety and health programs that help protect them from harm.

## ***Administrative***

- The church administration has appointed a Church Safety Officer
- A child-abuse prevention program is in place
- A six-month rule is utilized for volunteers seeking to work with children
- Background checks are performed for all employees and volunteers
- There is a Church Safety Committee. *(In a small church, one option is to have safety addressed as a permanent part of staff/board meetings, at least monthly.)*
- The Church has written safety rules
- Church employee and volunteer health and safety programs are in place *(training, personal protective equipment 'PPE' provided, etc.)*
- Accident investigation and reporting procedures are in place
- Facility self-inspections are conducted
- Preventive maintenance programs are in place
- Prompt repairs of leaks and other conditions prevent further deterioration
- The church has a written emergency plan
- All staff, Sabbath School teachers, elders, deacons and volunteers know their roles in an emergency

## ***Church Protection***

Early detection of fire or break-in, and monitoring by a central station allows for quick response and less damage or loss. It requires systems that detect smoke or break-in, alarm notification to a company that monitors those systems and prompt notification to fire or police by that company.

While total security is preferred, churches might consider putting alarms in areas where the greatest losses might occur (video and sound rooms, computer equipment rooms, accounting areas, music equipment storage, etc.).

- Sprinkler systems where available receive annual professional Maintenance
- Multi-purpose fire extinguishers are within 75 feet of any location (150 feet apart)
- Fire extinguishers are checked monthly for tampering or pressure loss
- There are smoke/heat detectors (hardwired with battery backup)
- There is a fire alarm system
- Fire alarm systems are tested annually and are functioning properly
- There are hard-wired carbon monoxide detectors in buildings with fossil-fuel heating and hot water heaters
- Lightning protection is installed
- The church has a security system
- Fire and security alarm systems are monitored by a central station
- Dusk to dawn perimeter lighting is used
- Trees and shrubs are trimmed to reduce the potential for crime and/or assaults
- Lawnmowers, fuel for lawnmowers and other flammables are stored in a separate storage shed
- Key/access card inventories are maintained
- Keys are marked "Do Not Copy"
- The church maintains a written list and photographic inventory of building contents and valuables

## *The Church Grounds*

Many accidents on church property are a result of trip and fall accidents, which are caused by defective parking lots and sidewalks, slippery surfaces, debris from trees and loose gravel, and unmarked changes in walking surface heights, among others. Transitions in levels, which can include steps, can also be a challenge for some church members, and handrails help provide stability for them on stairs, ramps and other changes in elevation. Look for these and other issues that can cause people to slip, trip or fall.

- *The parking lot is free of potholes, twigs and tree limbs, loose gravel and other debris*
- *Sidewalks do not have cracks, lifting from tree roots, deterioration from weather, and other defects that cause tripping*
- *Snow and ice is removed immediately, icy areas appropriately treated*
- *Water from downspouts does not cross walks where it can freeze and cause slip and fall accidents*
- *All steps have handrails*
- *Spaces in railings/balusters are less than 4 inches*
- *Step railings are firmly secured*
- *Wheelchair accessible ramps are available*
- *Open sides of steps or platforms have upper and mid-rails (and toeboards for balconies and overhead storage areas)*
- *Ramps have guide and upper rails to keep wheel chairs from dropping off*
- *The parking lot and sidewalks are well lit*
- *Trees are properly maintained and dead limbs*

*removed.*

- *Fences and gates are in good condition*
- *Driveway chain barriers, if used, have reflectors*

## ***Enter Without Risk***

We would like to hope that once we enter a church we would safely make it to the sanctuary or a Sabbath school class without injury. But that is not always the case. Water is sometimes tracked into the facility creating slippery areas, and defective floors also increase the risk of an accident. Activities increase the risk of falls, as well, as power cords and speaker wires are run across floors and aisles, which can also affect emergency egress and violate life-safety codes.

- *Non-slip rugs/mats with tapered edges are used inside  
entranceways (not towels) to collect water, ice,  
snow and mud*
- *No torn or wrinkled carpeting or loose tiles and  
flooring*
- *No cords or speaker wires on floors across  
aisles and doorways*
- *Wet floor signs are used and wet conditions are  
mopped  
immediately when wet areas and spills are  
observed*
- *Aisles, steps and exit passageways are free of  
boxes, chairs,  
musical instruments and other hazards that can  
cause trip and fall  
accidents or hinder emergency egress*
- *Interior steps and changes in elevation have  
handrails*

- *Handrails have at least 1 ½ inch clearance between rails and walls they are mounted to*
- *Handrails are not loose*

## ***Safe in the Sanctuary***

On many Sabbaths and during special events, the Sanctuary can be full to overflowing. Safety is a concern at any time, but when facilities are bursting at the seams, it is harder to maintain safe conditions and tempting to violate life-safety codes. Keeping designated aisles clear of chairs, pianos, and other objects is more challenging.

- *Aisles are clear of cords, podiums, chairs, pianos, candles and other objects.*
- *Exit route maps are displayed throughout the facility.*
- *All exit doors are unlocked during occupancy.*
- *Exit doors have panic hardware. (Deadbolts, chains with locks, and other devices prohibited.)*
- *Exit doors are in good condition and function properly.*
- *Exit doors swing out in the direction of exit travel.*
- *Rooms with more than 50 occupants or that are greater than 1000 ft<sup>2</sup> have two exit doors.*
- *Exit doors serving 100 or more occupants have “panic” hardware (**Note:** In some jurisdictions, this requirement is for 50 or more.)*
- *The maximum occupancy for all assembly areas is posted.*
- *All exits are adequately marked with lighted exit signs.*
- *Emergency lighting is in place and operates properly.*



- *Pews and other seating are properly secured and in good Condition.*
- *Doors, passages and stairways that might be mistaken for an exit have “approved” signage stating “NO EXIT.” (“NO” in 2-inch high letters with 3/8th inch stroke width and “EXIT” in 1-inch high letters below the word “NO.”).*
- *Dead-end corridors do not exceed 20 feet.*
- *Lighting is adequate throughout*
- *Paper and combustible decorations on walls do not exceed 20% of the wall they are mounted on.*
- *All classrooms, youth rooms, offices and other similar areas have vision panels installed to reduce the potential for misconduct or accusations of misconduct (all areas within the room are visible from the outside).*
- *Glass doors or mirrors have designs applied or etched into them to alert occupants of their presence.*

### ***Mother’s Room and Rest Rooms***

The presence of toddlers and small children in mother’s rooms increases potential loss exposures in that area. Children can be pinched by defective equipment, shocked if they push something into an electrical outlet and can fall from infant change tables.

- *Electrical outlets within 6-feet of sinks have ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) protection*
- *Electrical outlets in mother’s rooms have safety caps installed.*
- *The pads for infant change tables in restrooms and mother’s rooms have safety lips and are*

- secured to the change table or wall unit*
- *Change table safety straps are available and used*
- *Signage is in place instructing parents to use safety straps and not to leave the child unattended.*
- *Cribs are in good condition and meet Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) guidelines*
- *Spills are wiped up immediately*
- *No hazardous chemicals under sinks or accessible in closets.*

## ***Baptismal Tanks***

Baptismal tanks come with a number of potential inherent hazards. Unless they have overflow drains, water can flow over the top and cause property damage. There is also the potential for slips and falls and even electrocution, all of which have occurred.

- *Microphones and other electrical equipment are not within reach of anyone in the baptistery.*
- *Steps into the tank and the tank bottom have non-slip treads or slip resistant surfaces.*
- *Handrails are provided along the steps into the tank.*
- *Baptismal tank has an overflow drain.*
- *The filling process is monitored.*
- *Tanks are drained immediately after use.*
- *The heater is checked after the baptism to ensure it has been turned off.*

## ***Mechanical Rooms/Janitor Closet***

Mechanical and utility rooms can be some of the most hazardous areas in the church. In mechanical rooms you will find power mains, circuit breaker panels and other electrical equipment, as well as furnaces, boilers, water heaters and/or other equipment. Janitor closets generally have shelves of cleaning materials that might be hazardous if not used properly or if children enter an unlocked closet and come into contact with dangerous chemicals. These rooms are generally built in a manner that provides fire separation from halls, attics and common areas. That fire separation is lost when doors are left open and holes are poked through ceilings and walls and not refilled with a fire-retardant sealer. These rooms need to be kept locked and free of incidental storage, like Christmas decorations and other items. Equipment can be damaged and unauthorized individuals injured if they accidentally strike the equipment while moving storage around.

- *Mechanical rooms and janitor closets have self-closing fire-rated doors.*
- *Doors are locked.*
- *Mechanical rooms are free of combustibles, flammables and general church storage.*
- *Good housekeeping is observed.*
- *Main switches, shut-off valves and plumbing are properly labeled.*
- *Mechanical rooms and janitor closets are free of poke throughs and other openings that negate fire separation.*
- *A multi-purpose type ABC fire extinguisher is*

*mounted inside the door of the mechanical room.*

- *Mechanical rooms have smoke/heat detectors tied to the fire alarm System.*
- *Ground fault circuit interrupter protection is provided for electrical outlets within six-feet of sinks in janitor closets.*
- *Three feet of clear space is maintained in front of electrical panels.*
- *All electrical and equipment panels and junction boxes have covers.*
- *Pinch and nip points on all machinery and equipment are properly guarded.*
- *All chemicals are properly labeled.*
- *Material safety data sheets (MSDS) are available for all chemicals.*
- *Personal protective equipment (PPE) is available as required by maintenance or janitorial tasks and specific chemicals (masks, gloves, etc.)*

### ***Kitchens and Fellowship Halls***

Facilities vary from church to church. Some have small residential type stoves, while others have commercial cooking units. Operations can be the typical potluck or a major food service operation, like a soup kitchen. Potential losses can be property losses from fire, burns from hot items, cuts from knives and slips and falls on wet floors, to name a few. Injuries have also occurred when tables stacked against walls fell over on children. Ensure that egress aisles are available when setting up tables in fellowship halls.

- *All exits are clear and adequately marked.*

- *The occupancy for the fellowship hall is posted.*
- *Kitchen exhaust filters, ducts and hoods are clean.*
- *Stoves with fire suppression systems are serviced semi-annually and current.*
- *Heat detection is provided.*
- *A multi-purpose or type “K” fire extinguisher is in the kitchen.*
- *A hood and duct fire suppression system is installed where usage dictates the need.*
- *Refrigeration coils, motors and compressors are free of lint and combustible buildup.*
- *Kitchens are free of grease accumulations.*
- *Foods in refrigerators and freezers are covered.*
- *Walk in freezers or coolers have safety latches.*
- *Floors are clean and free of spills.*
- *Mops and “caution” signage is available for immediate use if spills occur.*
- *Tables and chairs are in good condition.*
- *Tables and chairs are in racks and not stacked against walls.*
- *Adequate aisles are maintained between tables and chairs to allow safe egress from the fellowship hall in an emergency.*

### ***Other Activities***

***Some churches have additional facilities, like playgrounds and childcare and community centers, which will be addressed in separate self-inspection forms. Pathfinder Clubs will also be addressed separately, in an effort to place the***

***responsibility for those inspections on the staff responsible and to keep the Church Self-Inspection as basic as possible and still address a large number of common exposures.***

## **EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN**

### ***FIRE/ARSON/EXPLOSIVES***

#### ***Checklist***

- Sound the alarm; evacuate the building immediately.
- Call:
  - Fire 911 (or) \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_.
  - Emergency Medical Assistance: 911 (or) \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_.
  - Police 911 (or) \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_.
- Determine if there are any serious injuries.
- Determine building status before reoccupying.
- Call emergency board meeting.

#### ***Specifics***

1. Sound alarm, evacuate building if serious threat of danger. Prior

arrangements should be made for the evacuation of any handicapped.

2. Call 911 or the number(s) listed above for required emergency services.
3. If there are any serious injuries, notify necessary rescue personnel.
4. If the building is damaged, several steps may have to be taken. Severe damage will require finding another location while repair work is being performed.
5. An emergency meeting should be convened to deal with the aftermath of the emergency.

### ***FIRE Evacuation Procedures***

- Walk quickly; do not run, to the nearest exit, as specified in safety training and posted on facility diagrams.
- Proceed to the designated assembly area and remain until all personnel are accounted for and authorized to return to the building or leave the facility.
- Department will help to determine if any personnel are missing from their respective departments.
- Only trained, designated personnel will attempt to extinguish small fires, and then

only after sounding the evacuation alarm.  
(Do not attempt to extinguish a fire beyond  
the capabilities of a portable fire extinguisher.)

## ***EARTHQUAKE***

- Immediately take shelter under a desk or sturdy table. Do not attempt to evacuate the building. If no desks or tables are nearby, interior doorways can sometimes be used as a place of refuge.
- Stay clear of outside walls, windows, or objects that can fall.
- When shaking stops, evacuate immediately. Stay clear of buildings, trees, lamp poles, and electrical power poles and lines.
- Check for and provide care for injured.
- Follow instructions of responsible persons.
- Earthquake Kits are available in the following locations:

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## ***WEATHER***

- Evacuate classrooms according to plan, providing for handicapped.



- Move quickly and quietly to the designated area, underground shelter if available, or interior hallways on the first floor. Avoid windows, auditoriums, gymnasiums, and any other wide span or overhead structure. North and east walls are preferable to south and west walls. Sit in fetal position with face and head protected.
- Get word to any who is outside or who are in outlying buildings.
- Check for and provide care for injured.
- Account for all students/staff/others.
- Determine status for safe return to classes or dismissal.

## ***FIRST AID/MEDICAL EMERGENCIES***

In case of emergency, the following persons have been trained in First Aid and CPR, have received bloodborne pathogen training and are designated as emergency first aid providers:

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*For the Church Emergency Response and Business Continuity Planning (Sample Forms and Documentation), visit*

<http://orgcriskmanagement.netadvent.org/assets/242379>