**Standing Operating Procedure   
Addressing Safe Environment Issues  
New Ministry or Special Event**

***General***

This SOP assumes that the new ministry has already been approved by the Pastor as appropriate for the Parish at this time and the Bishop as required. The Pastor or his delegate will provide overall supervision of the establishment of the new ministry.

This SOP is directed to the Safe Environment aspects of establishing a ministry.

The formation of a new ministry is an opportunity to serve the people of the parish in a new way. It is a time of excitement and energy. For the good of all, it is important that this excitement and energy be channeled into a structure and a process that protect both those served by the ministry and those providing that service.

***Assessment of Risk***

From among those collaborating to form the new ministry, a contact person should be designated. That person will be the primary liaison with the parish Compliance Officer.

In conjunction with the Compliance Officer, and under the supervision of the Pastor or his delegate, the following aspects of the new ministry should be articulated:

* Mission, including those to be served
* Organizational structure
* Method of operation
* The various roles of its volunteers
* Funding of the organization

Based on that information, and with the assistance of the Compliance Officer, it will be possible to articulate the risks inherent to the ministry. Pay particular attention to whether minors are involved in receiving and/or providing service. Consider also the psychological or spiritual vulnerability of adults that are served.

Considering all the information collected in this process, the Pastor will then determine, in consultation with the ministry team and the Compliance Officer, the level of risk/responsibility of the various roles designated in the ministry.

The various volunteers in the ministry must be classified either as high responsibility.

***Development of the Ministry SOP***

Include general commitments from the Parish Compliance Plan. These will include the commitment that no person with a history of sexual abuse of a minor will be permitted to serve as an employee or volunteer. In addition, the SOP should include the responsibility of any employee or volunteer to adhere to the mandatory reporting law in the State of Arizona should there arise reasonable suspicion that a child or vulnerable adult has been or is being abused.

The selection of employees or volunteers, including: application, interview, reference check and criminal history check, and orientation, must be in accordance with that required by the Diocese of Tucson Department of Human Resources. The ministry leader will be responsible for coordinating with the Parish Compliance Officer to insure that the procedure conforms to the Parish Compliance Plan and that it is implemented as written.

Describe the initial education of the employees and volunteers, including education regarding the Guidelines for the Prevention of and Response to Sexual Misconduct, the Code of Conduct and the mandated reporter law. Detail the nature and timing of ongoing education that will be provided.

Detail the procedures that will be followed to minimize the risks that have been identified as inherent to the ministry. These procedures will be designed to promote accountability and visibility on the part of each employee or volunteer providing service. They will describe the supervision that will be provided and the persons responsible for providing it. They will embody the behavior expected of each employee and volunteer. They must be made specific to the nature of the ministry. Model SOPs for some ministries are available on the Office of Child, Adolescent and Adult Protection web site (under Resources) or call 520-838-2513.

Commit to use the SOP as part of the initial and ongoing education of employees and volunteers providing services in the ministry.

***Recruit ministry employees or volunteers***

When given authority to do so, advertise the new ministry to parishioners.

Invite interested persons to submit an on-line application to serve as an employee or volunteer, as applicable.

Select appropriate persons based on the selection requirements which include an application, interviews, reference checks, and a criminal history check including a fingerprint check.

Determine from the Compliance Officer if appropriate candidates are already screened and at what level. Conduct the necessary screening on those who are not yet screened.

Provide initial education in Code of Conduct, mandated reporter law and the SOP of the ministry.

Following successful completion of the on-line Safe Environment training, the criminal history check and final approval from the Pastor and Compliance Officer, provide a meaningful assignment for the employee or volunteer.

The ministry leader should maintain a roster of active ministry team members. The nature of the roster should be determined in coordination with the Compliance Officer to facilitate tracking and reporting on compliance at the end of each fiscal year (July 1-June 30).

***Annual Review***

At the beginning of each fiscal year, review the roster of employees or volunteers to determine who is required, prior to June 30, the end of that fiscal year, to renew the criminal history check and/or update Safe Environment Program education.

Coordinate with the Compliance Officer to insure that each employee or volunteer is in compliance by the end of the fiscal year.

At the end of each fiscal year, or more often, review the Ministry SOP to insure that it is being followed and to make any adjustments that may be indicated by experience. The modified SOP should be submitted to the Pastor and Compliance Officer for approval.

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