

CHURCH SAFETY OFFICER

JOB DESCRIPTION

QUALIFICATIONS AND APPOINTMENT

- A. In recognition of the pastor's leadership role and responsibility in loss control, it is recommended that the pastor appoint a head deacon or another qualified individual as the Church Safety Officer.
- B. The Safety Officer should be organized, possess knowledge of the local church organizational structure, and know the church membership. In addition, he/she must be able to get along with people, demonstrate sound and mature judgment, and respect the strict confidential procedures associated with various aspects of accident review and investigation.
- C. The Church Safety Officer shall be given active membership on the church board.
- D. For larger churches, a safety committee may be appointed to support the Safety Officer and assist in carrying out the loss control program for all church facilities and activities. Otherwise, the church board shall serve in this supporting role.

SAFETY OFFICER OBJECTIVES

- A. The primary objective for the Church Safety Officer is the prevention of *property losses* (e.g. fire, water damage, theft) *accidents* or *other losses* at church and on church-sponsored activities.
- B. The Safety Officer, with the assistance of the church safety committee or board, can help the church take corrective action consistently after each loss or accident, thereby reducing major loss causes at the church.

MEETINGS

- A. The Church Safety Officer is to meet with and provide a report to the safety committee or church board on a regular basis, no less than once a quarter.
- B. Minutes of each meeting should reflect the Safety Officer's report and any actions taken.

INVESTIGATING ACCIDENTS/LOSSES

- A. An important method of controlling losses is the formal investigation and review of all accidents or other losses at the church or on church-sponsored activities.
- B. At each regularly scheduled meeting, the safety officer is responsible for providing the following information:
 - 1. What was the injured person doing?
 - 2. How were they injured?
 - 3. What unsafe act was committed?
 - 4. Was there a hazardous condition?

- C. In addition to injuries to persons, property losses should be investigated by the Safety Officer and the following items determined:
1. Description of the property.
 2. How was the property damaged?
 3. Was there an unsafe act?
 4. Was there a hazardous condition?
 5. Where possible, supply a photograph of damaged property.
- D. The Safety Officer shall assist the safety committee with determining the underlying causes of all accidents by using the following procedures:
1. Visit the scene.
 2. Interview witnesses to the accident.
 3. Check for causes resulting from anyone's actions, dangerous practices, inability, disobeying rules, etc.
 4. Check for poor housekeeping.
 5. Determine if there was defective equipment.
 6. Determine if there was improper apparel.
 7. Record information of any other poor conditions.

ACTIONS TO AVOID

- A. Attempting to pin the blame on an individual.
- B. Assuming there is just one cause for an accident.
- C. Assigning causes of accidents that are too general or vague.
- D. Determining causes of an accident without investigation.
- E. Attempting to take the place of the church board/administration in corrective action.
- F. Any signed, written statement or description of the incident by witnesses, or persons involved.
- G. Investigation of child abuse or sexual misconduct incidents.
- H. Release of information to anyone other than a claims representative of Adventist Risk Management, Conference legal counsel or the Conference Risk Management Department.

CHURCH ACTIVITIES

- A. An inventory should be made of all church-sponsored activities.
- B. In order to be considered "church-sponsored," activities must be approved by the church board.
- C. Another list should be made of **prohibited activities**, which should not be allowed unless approved by the Conference and special arrangements made for insurance coverage through the Conference Risk Management Department. These activities include:
 1. Use of Trampolines, Mini-Trampolines and other springboard devices.
 2. Tackle Football.
 3. Baseball (Hardball).
 4. Sale or use of fireworks.
 5. Private Airplane Operation.
 6. Skateboarding.
 7. Paintball and similar activities.

8. Use of Motorcycles.
 9. Operation of ATVs (3-wheeled & 4-wheeled All-Terrain-Vehicles).
 10. Rock climbing, rappelling, climbing walls and ropes courses (Special insurance coverage is available upon request).
 11. Scuba Diving.
 12. Bungee Jumping, Skydiving and other extreme sports.
- D. An inventory should be made of activities that require an extra degree of supervision, planning, and procedural guidelines. The activity sponsor should be required to have signed Release of Liability and Medical Consent Forms readily available. Written rules and formal procedures should be maintained and required for activities such as, but not restricted to:
1. Operation of Day-Care Centers.
 2. Operation Day Camps.
 3. Field trips.
 4. Pathfinder activities.
 5. Afternoon hikes/trips.
 6. Bon fires and campfire socials.
 7. Work bees.
 8. Hayrides, skating, skiing, etc.
 9. Ingathering programs.
 10. Health-screening fairs.
 11. Swimming or any other water activity.

AREAS REQUIRING PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE

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

- A. *Transportation.* It is the Church Safety Officer's responsibility to assist the church in being aware of and following the Conference Transportation Safety Policy. Copies of the policy are available from the Conference Risk Management Department. Among the provisions in the policy are the following:
1. Non-church owned vehicles used for church activities shall 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. Use the NCC drivers' questionnaire and obtain Motor Vehicle Record report (from Risk Management Dept.) and proof of insurance.
 3. Open trucks, trailers, moving vans, and campers are prohibited for transporting church members.

4. Motor homes should only be used to transport passengers in seating with approved seatbelts.
 5. Vehicles, including school buses, used for church activities shall be in excellent operating condition, inspected before each trip, properly licensed, and operated by experienced drivers.
 6. Due to serious safety concerns and federal government safety warnings, vans with a seating capacity of 11 or more shall not be purchased or rented for church use. Such vans already owned by a church shall be operated pursuant to the Conference Transportation Safety Policy provisions applying to these vehicles until the church is able to replace them with vehicles that meet passenger safety requirements.
- B. *Premises Inspection.* At least once a year, the safety officer should 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.
 - C. *Fidelity Controls.* Amounts above the minimum allotted Petty Cash shall not remain on church premises. Monies should not be taken to the treasurer's home. Instead, church deacons should be involved in counting the money immediately after taking up the offering, and deposited as soon as possible. Ideally, offerings could be placed in a lockable deposit bag and placed in the bank's night-depository on the way home from church, with the church treasurer or assistant treasurer going to the bank on the next business day to prepare the deposit paperwork. 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. The church board should be provided with a monthly bank reconciliation and copy of the bank summary statement.
 - D. *Baptismal Tanks.* 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 adhesive to prevent slippery conditions, and handrails shall be installed.
 - E. *Rental of Church Facilities.* When the church is considering the rental of their facilities, the Safety Officer should make sure that appropriate lease agreements and hold-harmless agreements have been signed, and that an Insurance Certificate endorsement is provided listing the church and NCC Association as additional insureds. If rental of the premises is for non-SDA functions, the Safety Officer should review the nature of the activity and the NCC Association contacted for approval.
 - F. *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 NCC Association.
 - G. *Volunteer Screening.* The Safety Officer should review the church's program for child abuse protection. This program should include a requirement that all volunteers working with children complete a written application including references that are checked; that no volunteer be allowed to work with children until they have been attending your church for at least six months; that each volunteer be provided a copy of the Child Care Guidelines and informed that the church has a "Zero Tolerance Policy" for child abuse; lower division

- classrooms or classroom doors have windows to the hallway or door is kept open; young children are released only to designated adults after Sabbath School or other church activity, and; suspected child abuse is reported immediately as required by state law and Conference policy.
- H. *Employment Practices.* The Safety Officer should review the church's practices for hiring employees. Written NCC employment applications required and references checked; all required employment paperwork completed and submitted to Conference Human Resources Department before employee begins work; NCC hourly employee contracts signed; employees are provided NCC Employee Injury Prevention handbook; Required employment and workers' compensation notices posted in the church office; periodic performance evaluations performed; employee injuries immediately reported to workers' compensation carrier and Conference Risk Management Department; significant employee discipline or termination for cause fully documented and reported to Conference Human Resources Department.
 - I. *Contract Services.* The Safety Officer should review the church's practices for hiring contract services (janitorial contracts, tree trimming, construction, etc.); written contracts required; hold harmless provision in contract naming the church and NCC Association; Copies of certificates of insurance with additional insured endorsement for liability coverage and workers' compensation coverage for any workers involved in providing the services (NO EXEPTIONS!).

MISCELLANEOUS DUTIES

- A. Review procedures for the immediate reporting of all accidents to the Conference Risk Management Department.
- B. On construction and remodeling projects, assure that the Conference Office and Adventist Risk Management, Inc. have reviewed blueprints for life safety features well in advance of the initial construction date.
- C. Review all contracts, in close consultation with the NCC Association office for legal review, before obtaining signatures.
- D. Request annual information from the Conference Risk Management Department on church accident frequency and severity for churches throughout the conference to gain knowledge of general exposures to accidents.
- E. Use creative and innovative techniques to promote loss control, such as newsletters, bulletins, announcements, sermon material, discussions at board meetings, etc.
- F. Develop a close working relationship with the local fire marshal.
- G. Work closely with other board members on planning emergency evacuation procedures.