



The Safety Officer

From small medical incidents like a trip and fall, to an emergency situation such as severe weather or an active shooter, having a plan for safety is critical to protect your people. A safety officer can provide leadership in this area that is mission-driven, practical, and effective. Whether you are a new safety officer or have held the position for a number of years, the following information will help you understand how to shepherd your people using best prevention and emergency-response practices.

A Team Effort

Protecting people and property requires a team effort including the church pastors, elders, the safety committee, the church board, and members. Good communication and a mission-focused approach between all is crucial to the successful protection of the church.

Self-Inspections

A key component to preventing losses is to identify and correct hazardous conditions before accidents happen. With the assistance from a member or members of the safety committee, perform a walk-through of the church at least once a year. Hazards can come up quickly and unexpectedly. More frequent surveys allow you to catch these before potential incidents occur. All staff, elders, deacons, and volunteers should constantly be vigilant and report or correct hazards when identified. The Church Self-Inspection Form, available on AdventistRisk.org, will help guide you through the church inspection process.

Slips, Trips and Falls

Slips, trips and falls generally remain a primary cause of church accidents. They can be caused by broken steps, potholes, cracked sidewalks, torn and wrinkled carpet, gravel, twigs or other debris on walkways, or wet floors from inclement weather or spills. Make sure the right team or persons take ownership of promptly correcting these conditions as soon as they are identified.

Security

Security is more than cameras and alarms installed 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 such as someone lurking in shadows or hallways, unattended packages, and other situations. Work with your hospitality volunteers to ensure that persons entering the church campus and



building are engaged, and suspicious activity is always communicated to decision makers. For some churches, security may also mean the visible presence of a trained security team. Work with your safety committee to discuss the security needs of your church.

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 natural disasters such as earthquakes, hurricanes or tornados. Some churches may have the potential to experience riots, or even random acts of violence. Determine the primary exposures of your church and update or create the church emergency plan. Both leaders and members should be prepared to react appropriately to disasters as they arise. Make sure doors can be exited in an emergency (panic hardware is required in many jurisdictions) and doorways, aisles, foyers, and steps are kept clear of anything (even chairs) to guarantee a clear means of exit in the event of an emergency. Find more emergency planning resources on AdventistRisk.org.

Activities

List and evaluate church activities. Some are low risk and high gain, while others are high risk with little to gain and carry a potential for accidents and injuries. Establish a process to properly analyze each activity before approval. The process should include provisions for transportation, safety equipment, medical release forms for youth under 18, and parent/guardian permission slips for each activity. With your safety committee, help develop written guidelines and rules, and be prepared to recommend some activities be prohibited. Maintain a list of those approved

and those that are prohibited. Church board approval will be required for some. Coordinate with your conference when you have questions.

Transportation

When transportation needs are not carefully thought out, the potential for major incidents increases. A poorly maintained vehicle or a bad driver could result in disaster. Selecting too small of a vehicle can lead to "overloading," sloppy vehicle handling, and loss of control. Know how many people need transportation and how much gear will be packed, then plan accordingly. Never use 15-passenger vans for any purpose. Leasing a bus and driver from a reputable agency is an option to consider, as opposed to the use of personal vehicles which can expose the church to potential accidents and liabilities.

Accidents

When incidents or accidents occur at the church, during an activity, or in transit, the church safety officer and safety committee will conduct an investigation. Investigations help identify the causes and determine what actions might help prevent similar accidents from occurring again.

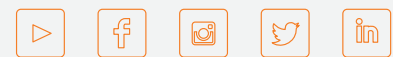
An Important Role

You have a big responsibility and an excellent opportunity to promote safety throughout the church. This is vital in protecting the church's reputation and people to continue its mission.

It is an important role, and your efforts are appreciated.

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The Church Safety Committee

The church safety committee includes representation from various church functions and is guided by the church safety officer. The committee allows for an integrated approach to safety and enhances the effectiveness of safety measures across ministries. The committee's focus is 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 the best measures for correcting conditions that caused them.

The Safety Committee

The safety committee members should be appointed through the regular nominating committee process. The committee is generally composed of the church safety officer, representation from key ministries such as a deacon, children's ministries, and physical plant services, and (where possible) a medical professional or any first responders such as an emergency medical technician, police, or firefighting professional. When selecting committee members, keep in mind that some tasks such as accident investigation, which may involve confidential information, require maturity and discretion.

The committee should meet on a regular basis. Record minutes on a quarterly basis at minimum. For smaller churches, the safety issues could be addressed as a permanent part of the monthly staff/board meetings.

Committee Activities

Self-inspections help identify physical hazards inside and outside the church. The committee may assist the church safety officer in performing self-inspections of the premises. Use ARM's Church Self-Inspection form available on AdventistRisk.org as a guiding resource.

Security is an area of increasing concern for churches. Learning how to implement a compassion-based plan that is both Christ-centered and effective is possible. Various functions such as lighting, keys, and cameras should be reviewed. The team should also consider processes and education so the church can respond effectively when facing suspicious activity. Thinking about the church as a body with layers of defense will help to make the church more effective not only in the area of security, but also in hospitality.



Emergency plans are another important aspect of church safety. The committee, with the church safety officer, should review the church emergency plan. Drills should be practiced with deacons and other key personnel, so they become familiar with their responsibilities during each type of disaster. ARM recommends running a church emergency drill twice a year at minimum.

Activities and transportation should also be discussed in committee meetings. Following approval by the church board, the committee could be asked to review activities and transportation logistics to help determine safety elements needed. See ARM's Field Trip Activity Planner on AdventistRisk.org and check that parental/guardian permission slips and signed medical release forms needed for minors are in place and meet conference standards.

Child protection planning does not take place simply in Children's Ministries or the Pathfinder club. Our children are an integral part of all church activities and a wholistic approach to protecting them is needed to be effective. Work with the screening coordinator, children's department leaders, facilities leaders, pastors and elders to ensure the whole church is working together to protect our children.

Maintenance is another area of interest for the safety committee. While maintenance may not be the committee's primary responsibility, many financial losses are tied directly to lack of maintenance. A leak creating a wet floor, torn or wrinkled carpet, uneven sidewalks and holes in the parking lot are all examples of conditions that frequently cause trips and falls. The committee may seek to

review the maintenance records on a quarterly basis and compare against the inspection reports to identify areas that need correction.

Accident Investigation

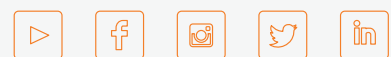
A primary method of controlling losses is through a formal investigation and review of all accidents at the church—both actual accidents and near miss incidents. When an accident is reported, a designated individual (often the safety officer) formally appointed in writing by the committee will determine the underlying causes of the accident by:

- 1 Visiting the scene
- 2 Interviewing witnesses, recording their observations and contact information
- 3 Checking for causes resulting from:
 - a. anyone's actions
 - b. dangerous work practices
 - c. disobeyed rules
 - d. poor housekeeping
 - e. property defects
 - f. improper or inadequate use of safety apparel
 - g. defective equipment
- 4 Recording information of any other poor conditions

Based on the final report, the committee will make written recommendations to the church pastor or board. The recommendations will include their conclusion as to the cause of the accident and corrective measures to prevent it from happening again in the future. The pastor may choose to present significant findings to the church board for information and possible policy adjustments.

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Pastor's Safety Guide

Adventist Risk Management, Inc. (ARM) has created this guide as a quick-start tool to equip you with information so you can ensure your church is a safe place for your congregation and visitors. This document is not a complete safety plan or guide but a good starting place to make sure the right people and processes are in place. Find more resources on the [ARM Safety Resources](#) web page.

Set the Tone

Key to any effective risk management is something called “tone at the top.” That means your interest and attitude as a pastor on safety and risk management sets a tone that is followed by your congregation. Making safety a priority and expressing the value of human life will help to create a safety-minded culture in your church.

Safety is everyone’s concern, but you will find that it is best for some primary elements of the

church’s safety efforts to be delegated. Key leadership positions to fill are the **Safety Officer** ([download job description resource](#)) and the **Safety Committee** ([download info-sheet on committee responsibilities](#)). Under the guidance of the Safety Officer, the Safety Committee will focus on: developing safety programs and emergency plans, identifying exposures through self-inspections and activity reviews and investigating accidents to determine measures for correcting the conditions that caused them. →



Three Major Categories of Safety Planning

1

PHYSICAL PLANT AND LIFE SAFETY

This includes ensuring there is a good maintenance program in place, conducting annual self-inspections, updating fire extinguishers, creating emergency plans, and addressing security concerns. Use these ARM Resources to guide you, available at AdventistRisk.org:

- a. [Self-Inspection Form](#)
- b. [Incident Report Form](#)
- c. [Seasonal Maintenance Forms](#)

2

CHILD PROTECTION

Our church values all people, including those who are vulnerable. A model child protection plan, as well as additional resources on safe touch and supervision, are available at AdventistRisk.org. Be sure to run background checks on your volunteers and provide them with child abuse prevention training (you can do this through your conference's chosen screening and training provider).

3

PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION

Be sure that ministry leaders are effectively planning activities with safety in mind. Following guidelines and consistently providing quality supervision can make all the difference.

Travel by car, bus, or airplane may seem mundane, but it is still classified as a significant risk, especially when we consider the added responsibility of representing the church. Always use qualified drivers and safe vehicles. Make volunteers aware that using their own vehicle means their personal insurance is primary in the event of an accident. Never use a 15-passenger van. Resources available at AdventistRisk.org include:

- a. [Activity Planning Checklist](#)
- b. [Vehicle Pre-trip Inspection form](#)

Quick Start To-Dos

- Designate a Safety Officer.
- Create a Safety Committee.
- Ensure someone is responsible for maintenance.
- Conduct an emergency drill on **March 28, 2020**, as part of **Safety Sabbath**, a day of safety emphasis for the North American Division. Get free resources and learn more at SafetySabbath.com.
- Complete at least one self-inspection before July 30, 2020.
- Review and ensure that Pathfinder club safety guidelines are within local conference guidelines.

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Financial Internal Controls

PREVENTING FRAUD AND EMBEZZLEMENT

Internal controls are the processes an organization has in place to detect and prevent fraud. An act of fraud happens when there are weaknesses in an organization's internal controls. According to the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners, three elements must exist for fraud to take place—**pressure or motivation, rationalization,** and **opportunity**. These three elements make up the **Fraud Triangle**.

A church organization's best chance at lowering its risk of fraud is to remove opportunities for fraud to transpire. A potential perpetrator may discover an opportunity when an innocent mistake slips through internal controls. Later, this discovery is acted on when financial pressure is felt, and rationalization found. Good financial risk management identifies exposures to loss and finds ways to prevent these losses from occurring. Good controls also protect the treasurer's reputation. Here are 8 internal controls to implement at your church.

Establish Controls

- 1. Careful Selection**—Properly screen all individuals for positions of financial responsibility. Individuals should have an attitude of transparency, willingness to train others, and readiness to allow other trained individuals to take over responsibilities in their absence.
- 2. Verify Cash Received**—Whenever possible, have two or more people present to count any collected money. This should be counted on site as soon as possible. Keep a written record of the count with the funds until the deposit is made into the organization's bank account. The group or individual who delivers the counted money to the treasurer should maintain a copy of the record for future verification.
- 3. Bank Statement Review**—Send monthly bank statements to an individual other than the treasurer, such as a pastor, principal, trusted board member, etc. This individual should verify if transactions seem reasonable before passing the statement on to the treasurer for reconciliation. Immediately verify inconsistencies, missing checks, or questions with accounting records.
- 4. Safeguard Checks**—Establish signature limits on the amount that a single individual can issue through a check. Once that limit is reached, require a second signature on the check. This prevents dishonest individuals from writing unauthorized checks for high



dollar amounts. It is also good to review a list of checks written at the board or finance committee.

- 5. **Timely Financial Reports**—Require financial statements be generated and rendered to the controlling committee or board on a timely basis. The treasurer or designated representative should be able to present the financial statement and answer questions concerning transactions that took place during the fiscal period.
- 6. **New Bank Accounts**—All bank and investment accounts should be authorized and approved by action of the controlling committee or board. Separate accounts in the name of the church established without proper authorization provides the opportunity for dishonest individuals to commit fraud or theft from the church.
- 7. **Investigating Questionable Transactions**—The controlling committee or board should note any questions that arise. Require a complete report at the next meeting or time specified. Until satisfactory answers are received, carefully investigate any failure to obtain answers to financial questions from the treasurer.
- 8. **Financial Audits**—It is the responsibility of the local conference to conduct the audit of the local church and school financial records. Audits should be conducted at a minimum of every two years. A written report should be presented to the controlling committee or board. If local audits are not being conducted on a regular basis, ask for the assistance of the conference treasurer to schedule an audit for your organization.

if mismanagement is happening or additional controls are needed.

- ▶ **Behavior Changes**
- ▶ **Personality changes due to pressure (moodiness)**
- ▶ **Lifestyle changes (lavish luxurious living)**
- ▶ **Never takes a vacation**
- ▶ **Likeable and generous**
- ▶ **Trusted employee**
- ▶ **Deceptive/good liars**

In Case of a Suspected Loss

Mishandling God’s funds is morally wrong and may include criminal actions. In the event of a possible loss, it is important to respond quickly and properly. If a church or school board has reason to suspect funds are being taken or misused by an individual, they should take the following action:

- 1. **Maintain Confidentiality**—Every effort must be made to keep fidelity situations from becoming common knowledge or gossip. Idle talk may give rise to potential defamation charges. The problem may only be poor recordkeeping or could stem from other causes.
- 2. **Remove the Individual(s)**—Once fraud is confirmed, the person(s) identified as responsible should be immediately removed from his or her position of trust. The insurance company will not cover any further loss due to an organization’s failure to remove an untrustworthy employee.
- 3. **Report Promptly**—Immediately report incidents to both the conference treasurer and the police department according to **NAD Working Policy S 04 48**.

Strict reporting requirements also exist with the insurance company (usually within four months from the date of discovery). Reporting beyond that time frame may result in not receiving any insurance settlement. Immediately report all potential claim situations to Adventist Risk Management,® Inc.

Red Flags That Could Indicate Fraud

One or more red flags do not mean fraud is taking place, but should alert leadership to take a closer look to see

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What You Should & Shouldn't Do WHEN CHECKING REFERENCES

Checking references when hiring employees or enlisting a new volunteer is one of the most effective ways we can protect our people and organizations. As with most activities it is not enough to go through the motions but rather we should be effective in our process using good questions, listening for changes in tone and hesitation.

Below are some guidelines that can help you develop your reference checking best practices as well as some sample questions when calling references.



- **Make a list of questions to ask.** You might be confident in your ability to strike up conversation, but a list of questions will help you stay concise and on topic. You will ask more effective questions if you have a plan.
- **Politely introduce yourself, your organization and why you're calling.** Then state a time limit for the call. You can simply say, "Do you have just a few minutes for a quick discussion of the candidate's history with you?" This will keep you on track and let the reference person plan their answers accordingly.
- **Ask open-ended questions when you call the reference.** This strategy will facilitate conversation and allow for precise, detailed information on the history and experience of the potential volunteer. For instance, instead of asking, "The application says you've known the candidate for 10 years. Is this right?" ask the question: "About how long have you known the candidate?"
- **Ask questions specific to the work the candidate will be doing.** If they will be working with children, ask the reference, "Is the candidate comfortable working with children? Please give examples."
- **Ask the reference if there is any reason you should be uncomfortable allowing the candidate to work with children.** They do not need to provide evidence for their feelings or response. Listen for change in tone or hesitation.



- **Thank them for their time and invite them to follow up if they think of something that should have been mentioned.** It's hard to drum up the entire history of a relationship in a few minutes of conversation, so invite them to email or call if they remember something important.

DON'T

- **Do not be unprepared.** No matter how self-assured you are in your ability to speak to strangers, prepare questions before calling a candidate's references.
- **Avoid asking off-topic, closed-ended questions at all cost.** These types of questions will not provide you with the information you need. Focus on the details that are needed and avoid questions such as, "Was he a good employee?" Instead, ask, "What were the candidate's strengths as an employee?" If the volunteer candidate is going to be working at a soup kitchen, their typing speed or history class participation grade would not be relevant to the work they would do. Focus on the details that matter most.
- **If the conversation starts to get off topic, reel it in.** Some people like to talk and have a conversation. Have a plan in case the reference begins to overload on details from a small part of the candidate's past that does not pertain to the reference check.
- **Do not only verify the bare minimum.** Go deeper than just the dates and bullet-points in the volunteer candidate's reference section. The basics are important but this is the time to also find out more valuable insights about the volunteer candidate's overall character.

SOURCE: based on article by Verified Volunteers

Sample Questions:

- What were the person's responsibilities?
- Will the volunteer be able to do the work I am asking of him/her?
- How did he or she deal with any responsibility for handling cash, interacting with children, maintaining confidential information or driving a car? **NOTE:** This question should be tailored to address the sensitive tasks the volunteer may be handling in your organization.
- How do you know this person, and for how long? **NOTE:** A reference to a short interaction from several years ago could be a sign that the person lacks other, more recent references.
- How did the relationship end? **NOTE:** If the person appears to have failed to follow through on past obligations, ask for detail.
- Have conflicts arisen between the two of you, and how were they resolved?
- Do you know whether this person has had any financial difficulties, or history of drug or alcohol abuse?
- Have you ever been in a car with this person driving? **NOTE:** Ask for more than a thumbs-up or down, but a description of the person's driving abilities and whether the reference had any concerns as a passenger.
- Is there any reason you would feel uncomfortable allowing this person to supervise children? **NOTE:** Listen for hesitation or change in tone of voice.
- Can you describe situations where this person was trustworthy and reliable — or not?
- Is there anything else I should know about? **NOTE:** Again, be alert to the reference's tone of voice and any hesitation.

SOURCE: based on article by Ilona Bray, J.D. on Nolo.com

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YOUTH SUPERVISION GUIDELINES

How many staff members you have supervising activities depends both on the level of risk involved with the activity and the needs of the children. Special needs children, high-energy children and younger children require more supervision.

The key is to consider each activity, outing, or field trip and provide the best-qualified personnel possible, in ample numbers, to maintain the security of youth and to keep youth safe. The number one priority in child supervision is to “never let children out of one’s sight.” Claims files are filled with tragic stories of injuries that happened when children were left unsupervised.



QUALITY IS ESSENTIAL
Provide a minimum of two
qualified supervisors for
each situation.

Provide a minimum of two qualified supervisors (those with specific knowledge of the particular activity, including training, certification, degrees, etc.) Depending on the activity—museum visit, swimming, hiking, etc.—qualifications and numbers will vary.



Give supervision 100 percent

Periods of supervisory responsibility are not a time for grading papers, making personal phone calls, conversing with associates, participating in the activity or performing other activities that may distract from the actual task of supervision.

The benefit of having two supervisors means an authorized supervisor is always present. In the event of an emergency, someone may need to go for help while the other supervisor remains behind to watch the children in their care. In addition, supervision in numbers helps to prevent child abuse or accusations of child abuse. Where programs include youth that are physically or mentally challenged, additional supervision will be required.

Variables that increase the need for more supervision are:

- **Environmental Hazards:** geographic features such as bodies of water that children may fall in, strong currents in areas where youth are swimming, wooded areas where children may become lost, etc.
- **Experience and Qualifications of Staff Members:** maturity and judgment, experience and knowledge, training, etc.
- **Skill Level of Children:** age, number of persons, physical condition, disabilities, etc.
- **How Much Risk the Activity Involves:** ARM recommends that hazardous-risk activities, such as mountain climbing, require one adult for each 4 children. A high-risk activity, such as a field trip, requires one adult for each 8 children, while a low-risk activity, such as sitting in class, would require one adult for each 12 children.

RECOMMENDED STAFF TO CHILD RATIOS

Hazardous Risk Activity 1:4	
High Risk Activity 1:8	
Low Risk Activity 1:12	

How many staff members you have supervising activities depends both on the level of risk involved with the activity and the needs of the children.



Water sports and swimming need additional supervision and safety measures. Make sure a lifeguard is on duty when your pool is open. The American Lifeguard Association (ALA) recommends having a minimum of two lifeguards on duty at all times. If the swimming pool population reaches 50 swimmers, the ALA suggests a lifeguard should be added for every additional 25 persons as a minimum standard, and every lifeguard chair should be occupied whenever the swimming pool is open.

Some children require more supervision than others and require staff or volunteers that have more skill in child supervision. Children who require more attention take time away from other children. More supervision will be needed in these instances.



Adventist Risk Management,® Inc. cares about keeping the children, students and campers in your ministry safe. See more child protection resources on our website at AdventistRisk.org.

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GOOD TOUCH AND BAD TOUCH FOR STAFF

Children today are not safe. The sad reality is anyone could be a child predator, teachers, pastors, pathfinder leaders, or other students.

Educating adults and children around you on appropriate methods of physical contact helps protect everyone in your organization from inappropriate behavior.

Use the following guidelines to educate staff members and the information on the back of this sheet to teach children in your organization when a touch is good and when it is not. Instruct your staff on the appropriate way to report a situation if they become aware of inappropriate behavior.

Appropriate Touch Guidelines for Staff Members:

- ALWAYS ASK A CHILD FOR PERMISSION TO TOUCH THEM FOR ANY REASON.
- WHEN TOUCHING A CHILD, ONLY TOUCH AT THE SHOULDER LEVEL OR ABOVE, EXCEPT WHEN NECESSARY TO ENSURE THE SAFETY AND WELL BEING OF A CHILD.
- ONLY GIVE CHILDREN SIDE HUGS.
- DO NOT ENGAGE IN INAPPROPRIATE PHYSICAL CONTACT OF ANY KIND - INCLUDING ROUGH PHYSICAL PLAY, PHYSICAL REPRIMAND AND HORSEPLAY.



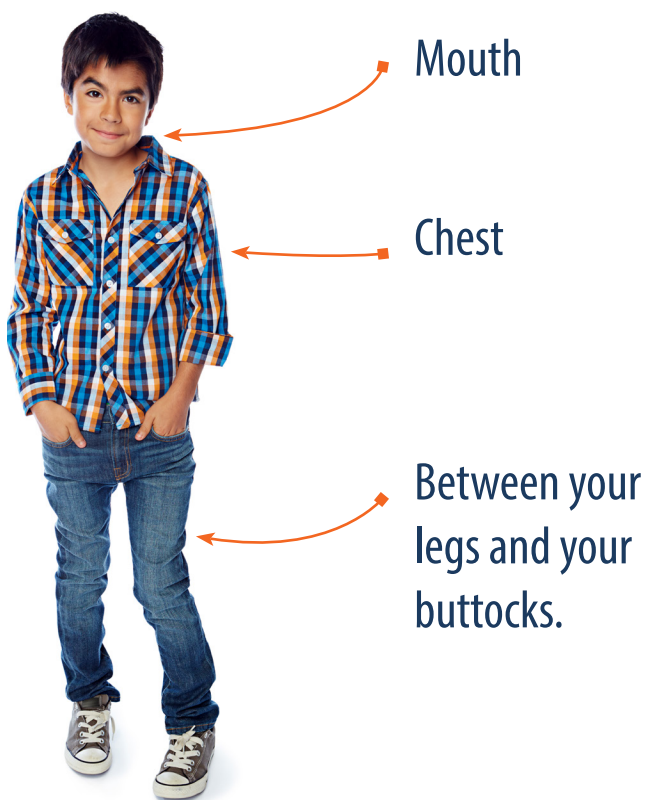
Good Touch and Bad Touch for Children

Note to Parents and Teachers: Use the following image to explain safe touch and inappropriate touch. Use the quiz questions at the end to ensure your child understands what to do in an unsafe situation.

Everyone has a body, and your body belongs to you. This means no one can touch you unless you say they can. You should always ask for permission before touching someone else. Don't touch them unless they say you can.

These are your personal zones

There are four body zones where you should not touch anyone and no one should touch you. They are your:



Do you know the difference between safe touch and unsafe touch?

Safe touch is good for you and makes you feel happy. Unsafe touch makes you feel bad, angry, scared and embarrassed. Someone could touch you in your personal zones, show you photos or videos that make you uncomfortable, make you undress, or touch their personal zones in front of you. These types of touch are not good for you. These are unsafe touch.

If anyone touches you in a way that makes you feel bad or in one of your four personal zones, run away from that person and tell an adult whom you trust right away. Tell the adult exactly what happened. Remember, what people do to you is not your fault. You are responsible for what you do to other people.

Question 1:

What are the four body zones where no one should touch you?

Question 2:

What should you do if someone touches you in a way that isn't safe?

Question 3:

What are some touches that make you feel good?

Question 4:

Who are some people you trust that you would talk to if something made you uncomfortable?

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15-PASSENGER VANS DANGEROUS AND DEADLY

*Fifteen-passenger vans should not be used
to transport our members or children.*
Do not use 15-passenger vans any longer.

Seventh-day Adventist Church leadership actively prohibits the use of 15-passenger vans across the North American Division (NAD). Unfortunately, many Adventist churches and schools continue to use, buy, or rent these dangerous vehicles.

WHY ARE 15-PASSENGER VANS DANGEROUS?

Fifteen-passenger vans were originally designed for transporting cargo, not passengers. The design of these vehicles places more weight towards the front of the vehicle, making 15-passenger vans unbalanced and extremely likely to rollover when loaded.

Other 15-passenger van risks that make rollover accidents more likely are:

- A high center of gravity, increased with passenger seating
- Instability in crosswinds
- Seating configurations that place excessive weight on one side
- Under-inflated tires, resulting in tire failure or blowouts that cause the driver to lose control of the vehicle.

FATALITY FACTS

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reports that:

- An average of **65 Americans die each year in crashes while riding in 15-passenger vans.**
- Nearly **60 percent of fatalities in these crashes were in vehicles that rolled over.**
- About **50 percent of the fatalities** occurred in vans **loaded to capacity (10+ occupants)** that rolled over.
- About **59 percent of the fatally injured** van occupants in rollovers were **not restrained.**

The Adventist Church has had several accidents in which people, including children, have lost their lives in 15-passenger



vans. These losses of life are tragic and would have been prevented if a 15-passenger van was not used.

WHAT TO DO WITH VANS YOUR MINISTRY ALREADY OWNS

Sell them and replace them with structurally safer and more stable alternatives such as 15-passenger buses with dual rear wheels and buses. Our members, visitors and volunteers deserve our best efforts of care. We must not compromise.

The short-term financial savings can be tempting when looking to purchase or rent one of these dangerous vans, but more important than any cost saving is preventing the loss of life. We must not be the church that is known to compromise the safety of its members and visitors. We can and must do so much better.

Take action today: Remove any 15-passenger vans from your fleet and discontinue use of all 15-passenger vans.

***“We must remove these dangerous vans from our use.** Not only is the financial burden too great to ignore, but also we cannot afford to distract one soul from being reached for the kingdom. **We cannot lose another life.** Friends, it is time to **fully remove 15 passenger vans from use** by Seventh-day Adventist organizations.”* —Dan Jackson, North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church president



15-PASSENGER VAN MYTHS BUSTED

MYTH: If I take out a row of seats from the 15-passenger van, it is then an approved form of transportation.

FACT: Removing a row of seats does not make it an approved form of transportation. The vehicle is still the same type of van with the same inherent flaws.

MYTH: If I use a van that is privately owned, my church won't be held liable.

FACT: Using a privately owned 15-passenger van or even renting a 15-passenger van for a church activity does not remove the liability from the church.

REPORT YOUR CLAIM RIGHT AWAY

24/7 HOTLINE 1.888.951.4276 PRESS 2 • CLAIMS@ADVENTISTRISK.ORG

STAY INFORMED

ADVENTISTRISK.ORG/SOLUTIONS



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Adventist Risk
Management, Inc.



SECURING THE CHURCH BUILDING

The church service is over. *The last potluck dish has been washed and packed away. It is now time to secure the church building before heading home, out for ministry, or a Sabbath nature hike.*

Every Sabbath a designated official, usually the church deacon or elder of the week, has a very important job. It is his or her responsibility to secure the local church building and all of its assets. Use this 3-Step Checklist as a guide.





Step 1. Perimeter Check

- Walk around the exterior of the church building, checking all exterior doors and windows. Lock all doors and note any opened windows to close when you go inside.
- Make a note of any damaged or malfunctioning locks. Repair or replace them as soon as possible.
- Examine the exterior fence and gate(s), if applicable, for compromised security. Note any concerns and present them to the safety committee during the next meeting.
- Check any outside or additional buildings on the property to be sure they are locked.
- Check the trash dumpster area. Trash containers should be secured away from the building. Deposit all trash in the appropriate containers and close all trash container covers.
- Non-secured items (trash cans, tables, chairs, equipment, door decorations, etc.) should be anchored or moved inside the building.
- Collect any personal items that have been left behind and place them in lost and found.

Step 2. Interior Check

Check each room inside of the church building. Close any open windows. Ensure all rooms are vacant and all lights, except security lights, are turned off.

- When lights are turned off, check that emergency lighting is in working order.
- Double-check that all sanctuary aisles, emergency exits, and hallways are clear.
- Check that all water faucets are turned off.
- Electronic equipment should be locked in interior rooms and not visible from windows or doors.
- Lock all interior doors that should be locked.
- If you see any personal items, place them in lost and found.



Step 3. Secure the Building

- Once the perimeter and interior checks are completed, and the building is verified as being vacant, check the security systems and cameras, if applicable, to be sure they are working.
- Set the security alarm for the building and lock the front door on your way out.



IF AT ANY POINT DURING THIS **3-STEP PROCESS** YOU NOTICE ANYTHING UNUSUAL OR OUT OF THE ORDINARY, STOP AND INVESTIGATE. MAKE NOTES TO SHARE AT THE NEXT CHURCH SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING.

Church Security 24-7

Church security is more than sturdy locks and a weekly walkabout. Everyone must be observant and responsive to suspicious activity. In some locations, it may also mean the visible presence of a trained security team. To learn more about protecting your church or ministry, sign up for our *Solutions* newsletter, at AdventistRisk.org/solutions, and follow us on social media.

REPORT YOUR CLAIM RIGHT AWAY

1.888.951.4276 • CLAIMS@ADVENTISTRISK.ORG

STAY INFORMED

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Adventist Risk
Management® Inc.

Church Self-Inspection Form

Your checklist for
monitoring safety and
risk control in all areas
of your church facility

For more school safety resources, visit
adventistrisk.org



CHURCH SELF-INSPECTION FORM

Questions about safety or risk control?
Contact our specialists at customercare@adventistrisk.org

CHURCH:

DATE:

INSPECTOR:

TITLE:

NOTE: The following list of inspection topics provides a form for identifying the “basic” items identified in the Church Safety and Self-Inspection Guide. This is by no means a complete list of risk control exposures for a church. A “NO” response in the following topics may indicate a need for additional safety/risk management measures.

▷ ADMINISTRATIVE

CHECKLIST	YES	NO	N/A	DESCRIPTION / RECOMMENDATION
1. Does the church have a Safety Officer	YES	NO	N/A	
2. Child-abuse prevention program is in place	YES	NO	N/A	
3. Six-month rule utilized for new volunteers	YES	NO	N/A	
4. Criminal background check performed on employees and volunteers	YES	NO	N/A	
5. Is there a Church Safety committee	YES	NO	N/A	
6. Written safety rules	YES	NO	N/A	
7. Employee and Volunteer health and safety training program	YES	NO	N/A	
8. Proeventive maintenance program for church premises	YES	NO	N/A	
9. Prompt repairs of leaks and deterioration	YES	NO	N/A	
10. Written church emergency plan	YES	NO	N/A	
11. Staff, SS teachers, elders, deacons and volunteers know roles in emergency	YES	NO	N/A	



▷ CHURCH PROTECTION

CHECKLIST	YES	NO	N/A	DESCRIPTION / RECOMMENDATION
1. Sprinkler systems (if installed) inspected annually	YES	NO	N/A	
2. Multipurpose fire extinguisher within 75 feet throughout the building	YES	NO	N/A	
3. Fire extinguishers visually checked monthly for tampering	YES	NO	N/A	
4. Smoke/heat detectors - serviced twice a year	YES	NO	N/A	
5. Do you have the Fire alarm systems in place?	YES	NO	N/A	
6. Fire alarm systems tested and serviced annually	YES	NO	N/A	
7. Hard-wired carbon monoxide detectors where fossil fuel systems are used	YES	NO	N/A	
8. Do you have lightning protection in place?	YES	NO	N/A	
9. Do you have security system in place?	YES	NO	N/A	
10. Fire and security system monitored by central station	YES	NO	N/A	
11. Dusk-to-dawn perimeter lighting	YES	NO	N/A	
12. Trees/shrubs trimmed regularly (crime prevention)	YES	NO	N/A	
13. Lawnmowers, equipment fuel, and other flammables stored in separate storage shed	YES	NO	N/A	
14. Key/access card inventories maintained	YES	NO	N/A	
15. Keys marked "Do Not Copy"	YES	NO	N/A	
16. Written list with photographic inventory of building contents and valuables	YES	NO	N/A	



▷ THE CHURCH GROUNDS

CHECKLIST	YES	NO	N/A	DESCRIPTION / RECOMMENDATION
1. Parking lot free of potholes, cracks, debris	YES	NO	N/A	
2. Sidewalks in good condition	YES	NO	N/A	
3. Snow and ice removed before services	YES	NO	N/A	
4. Downspouts do not flow water across walkways	YES	NO	N/A	
5. All steps have handrails	YES	NO	N/A	
6. Spaces in railings/balusters less than 4"	YES	NO	N/A	
7. Step railings firmly secured	YES	NO	N/A	
8. Accessible ramps available for handicapped	YES	NO	N/A	
9. Open sides of steps/platforms protected with railings	YES	NO	N/A	
10. Ramps have guide and upper rails	YES	NO	N/A	
11. Parking lots and sidewalks well lit	YES	NO	N/A	
12. Fences/gates in good condition	YES	NO	N/A	
13. Driveway chain barriers have reflectors	YES	NO	N/A	



▷ **ENTER WITHOUT RISK (FALL PREVENTION)**

CHECKLIST	YES	NO	N/A	DESCRIPTION / RECOMMENDATION
1. Non-slip rugs and mats with tapered edges inside entrances	YES	NO	N/A	
2. No torn or wrinkled carpets, loose or damaged tiles or flooring	YES	NO	N/A	
3. No cords or speaker wires across floors, aisles or doorways	YES	NO	N/A	
4. Wet floor signs used, spills mopped immediately	YES	NO	N/A	
5. Aisles, steps, exit passageways free of boxes, chairs, musical instruments, etc.	YES	NO	N/A	
6. Interior steps and elevation changes have handrails	YES	NO	N/A	
7. Handrails have minimum 1.5 inch clearance between rails and walls	YES	NO	N/A	
8. Handrails secure	YES	NO	N/A	



▷ **SAFE IN THE SANCTUARY**

CHECKLIST	YES	NO	N/A	DESCRIPTION / RECOMMENDATION
1. Aisles clear of cords, podiums, chairs, pianos, candles and other objects	YES	NO	N/A	
2. Exit route maps displayed throughout building	YES	NO	N/A	
3. All exit doors unlocked during occupancy	YES	NO	N/A	
4. Exit doors have panic hardware (not chains and locks, deadbolts, etc.)	YES	NO	N/A	
5. Exit doors: good condition and function properly	YES	NO	N/A	
6. Exit doors swing in direction of exit travel	YES	NO	N/A	
7. Rooms with 50 or more occupants or over 1000 sq ft have two exit doors	YES	NO	N/A	
8. Exit doors serving 100 or more have panic hardware (50 or more some jurisdictions)	YES	NO	N/A	
9. Room occupancy posted for "Assembly" areas	YES	NO	N/A	
10. Lighted Exit signs throughout	YES	NO	N/A	
11. Emergency lighting installed and operative	YES	NO	N/A	
12. Pews/seating secured and in good repair	YES	NO	N/A	
13. Doors, passageways and stairs that might be mistaken for exits labeled "NO EXIT"	YES	NO	N/A	
14. Dead-end corridors do not exceed 20 feet	YES	NO	N/A	
15. Lighting adequate throughout building	YES	NO	N/A	
16. Paper and combustible decorations do not exceed 20% of wall they are on area covered in classrooms	YES	NO	N/A	
17. Vision panels into classrooms and offices	YES	NO	N/A	
18. Glass doors/mirrors have designs or etched markings to prevent accidents	YES	NO	N/A	



▷ **MOTHERS' ROOM / REST ROOM**

CHECKLIST	YES	NO	N/A	DESCRIPTION / RECOMMENDATION
1. Electrical outlets within 6 feet of sinks have GFCI protection	YES	NO	N/A	
2. Mothers' room electrical outlets plugged with safety caps	YES	NO	N/A	
3. Infant change table pads secured and have lips	YES	NO	N/A	
4. Change table has safety straps	YES	NO	N/A	
5. Signage instructing parents to use safety straps and not leave child unattended	YES	NO	N/A	
6. Cribs in good condition and meet CPSC guidelines	YES	NO	N/A	
7. Spills wiped up immediately	YES	NO	N/A	
8. No hazardous chemicals accessible in room	YES	NO	N/A	



▷ **BAPTISMAL TANKS**

CHECKLIST	YES	NO	N/A	DESCRIPTION / RECOMMENDATION
1. Microphones and electrical equipment not within reach of baptismal occupants	YES	NO	N/A	
2. Non-slip on steps and bottom of tank floor	YES	NO	N/A	
3. Handrails provided along baptismal steps	YES	NO	N/A	
4. Overflow drain installed	YES	NO	N/A	
5. Filling process monitored to prevent over filling	YES	NO	N/A	
6. Tank drained immediately after use	YES	NO	N/A	
7. Heater turned off/checked after baptism	YES	NO	N/A	



▷ **MECHANICAL ROOMS / JANITOR CLOSETS**

CHECKLIST	YES	NO	N/A	DESCRIPTION / RECOMMENDATION
1. Self-closing fire rated doors	YES	NO	N/A	
2. Locked at all times	YES	NO	N/A	
3. Free of combustibles, flammables and general church storage	YES	NO	N/A	
4. Good housekeeping throughout facilities	YES	NO	N/A	
5. Main switches, shut-off valves and plumbing properly labeled	YES	NO	N/A	
6. General purpose ABC fire extinguisher in a room	YES	NO	N/A	
7. Smoke/heat detection tied to fire alarm system	YES	NO	N/A	
8. Free of poke throughs and other openings in walls and ceilings	YES	NO	N/A	
9. GFCI protection on outlets within 6 feet of sinks	YES	NO	N/A	
10. Three feet of clear space in front of electrical panels	YES	NO	N/A	
11. All electric/mechanical equipment and junction boxes covered	YES	NO	N/A	
12. Pinch/nip points on equipment guarded	YES	NO	N/A	
13. Chemicals properly labeled and stored	YES	NO	N/A	
14. Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) available in church office	YES	NO	N/A	
15. Personal protective equipment (PPE) available and worn, as required for task	YES	NO	N/A	

▷ **KITCHENS / FELLOWSHIP HALLS**

CHECKLIST	YES	NO	N/A	DESCRIPTION / RECOMMENDATION
1. Exits clear and adequately marked	YES	NO	N/A	
2. Room occupancy posted	YES	NO	N/A	
3. Exhaust filters, ducts and hood cleaned on a regular basis	YES	NO	N/A	
4. Heat detection provided	YES	NO	N/A	
5. Multi-purpose or Type "K" extinguisher in kitchen	YES	NO	N/A	
6. Hood and duct fire suppression system installed where usage dictates need	YES	NO	N/A	
7. Stoves with fire suppression serviced semi-annually	YES	NO	N/A	
8. Kitchens free of grease accumulations	YES	NO	N/A	
9. Refrigeration coils, motors and compressors clean	YES	NO	N/A	
10. Foods in refrigerators and freezers covered and labelled	YES	NO	N/A	
11. Safety latches on walk in freezers and coolers	YES	NO	N/A	
12. Floors clean and free of spills	YES	NO	N/A	
13. Mops and "caution" signage available	YES	NO	N/A	
14. Tables and chairs in good condition	YES	NO	N/A	
15. Tables and chairs in racks and not stacked against walls	YES	NO	N/A	
16. Adequate aisles maintained between tables and chairs for safe egress	YES	NO	N/A	



▷ **ADDITIONAL FINDINGS**

DESCRIPTION	RECOMMENDATION
-------------	----------------

▷ SELF-INSPECTION COMPLETED BY:
(All participants to sign)

DATE (MM/DD/YYYY):

DATE (MM/DD/YYYY):

DATE (MM/DD/YYYY):

▷ REVIEWED BY:
TITLE:

DATE (MM/DD/YYYY):



Accident | Incident Report

NOTE: THIS FORM IS FOR INTERNAL LOSS PREVENTION USE ONLY AND IT IS NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR ANY REQUIRED CLAIMS FORMS.

INFORMATION OF THE PERSON COMPLETING THIS FORM

NAME

LAST NAME

EMAIL

PHONE NUMBER

DATE FORM COMPLETED

INCIDENT | ACCIDENT

DATE AND TIME (IF KNOWN) OF ACCIDENT | INCIDENT

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP CODE

COUNTRY

NAME OF INJURED PERSON OR PERSONS WHO SUSTAINED DAMAGE

NAME

EMAIL

NAME

EMAIL

NAME

EMAIL

NAME

EMAIL

DESCRIBE ACCIDENT | INCIDENT

(Include description of what happened, who or what was injured or damaged, cause of injury or damage, and what was done after the damage or injury.)

WITNESSES

NAME

EMAIL

PHONE NUMBER

NAME

EMAIL

PHONE NUMBER



ACCIDENT | INCIDENT REPORTED TO

(List entities you have reported this matter to, including SDA entities [your conference or other entity] or law enforcement.)

DESCRIBE ANY POST ACCIDENT/INCIDENT ACTIONS

(State who you have reported this incident to and what, if anything, has happened since the accident, including whether or not you have heard from anyone about the incident.)