

Safe Church - Explanation and Process

In our Baptismal Covenant, we promise to respect the dignity of every human being. One way that we live out that value in ECMN is through the implementation of our Safe Church Policies. Our Safe Church Policies establish and maintain standards intended to ensure that our faith communities are safe places where all of God's people are loved and encouraged to grow into the people God calls us to be. These policies provide specific recommendations, best practices, and guidelines that seek to protect children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

Safe Church Trainings

[Click here for step by step instructions](#) for how to approach integrating the Safe Church Policies at your faith community.

ECMN offers Safe Church trainings through the School for Formation. To see upcoming Safe Church trainings or to learn how to complete the trainings, [please click here](#).

Safe Church Policies

The most updated Safe Church Policies can be found on the ECMN website - under Forms, Safe Church. We have policies covering the following:

Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth (UPDATED 4/9/19)

Policies for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults (UPDATED 4/9/19)

Policies for the Prevention of Sexual Harassment

Policies for the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation

Policies For Addressing Concerns for Lay Ministers Regarding Abuse, Harassment, And Exploitation (UPDATED 6/2020)

Policies for Addressing Concerns for Ordained Ministers - [Title IV Resources](#)

Training Framework:

ECMN now has three (3) distinct tiers of training. Each tier can be completed in person with an ECMN-certified trainer or online. These training recommendations were put in place in order to better clarify who needs to be trained and how, based on their role, and how they can complete those trainings. You can also contact any of our certified [ECMN Safe Church Trainers](#). These trainers have all been trained to use our new training model and resources. These resources (including the powerpoint and videos) can be found in our ECMN Safe Church Training Kit.

- [Click here to view the Safe Church for God's Children Trainer Kit](#), with videos to help start discussions.
- [Click here to view the Safe Church for God's People Trainer Kit](#), with videos to help start discussions.
- ECMN offers Safe Church trainings ON ZOOM through the School for Formation. To see upcoming Safe Church trainings, [please click here](#).

- If you'd like to host an in-person training, contact your Interim Missioner for Children, Youth, Camp, and Young Adults, the Rev. Maggie Nancarrow, at maggie.n@episcopalmn.org.

Tier 1. Universal Training

Summary:

To this end, all faith communities are required to annually make Tier I training available to all members. Tier I training offers a broad overview of all four Safe Church Policy documents through community conversation, with attention to the issues they address regarding vulnerability, power, and healthy boundaries. From here, specific church leaders are required to go further and take more specialized training (Tiers II and III). Each faith community is empowered to deliver Tier I content in whatever medium suits their context best. Some examples include: an adult forum PowerPoint presentation, email communications with links, a clergy or trainer-led video announcement, or all of the above. Above all, this is a moment for the leadership of your faith community to share internally about its approach and commitment to Safe Church policies and practices. [See here for a suggested overview of Tier I content](#). In future, ECMN will offer a video to supplement your Tier 1 training, but in the meantime, please ensure your faith community revisits this training every 12 months.

Policy: It provides a broad overview of all four policies with attention to how to create a safe, healthy, and transformational faith community.

Tier 2. Safe Church for God's Children

Summary: Tier Two is a three-hour foundational training for anyone who has access to facilities and/or is in ministry with children, youth, or vulnerable adults. Tier Two is required for all staff, clergy, and vestry members, those who have access to facilities, decision makers, and all leaders in ministry with children, youth, or vulnerable adults.

Policy: It covers the first two of the four Safe Church Policies (Children and Youth & Vulnerable Adults).

Tier 3. Safe Church for God's People

Summary: Tier Three is a three-hour training for lay staff and clergy, who are involved in managing ministries for youth and adults alike. It discusses the power dynamics present in pastoral relationships and how to prevent inappropriate behaviors. These inappropriate behaviors include abuse, harassment, or exploitation this is either physical, verbal, or sexual. Tier 3 is required for all paid staff, clergy, spiritual directors, lay eucharistic ministers, vestry members, and any other volunteer leaders involved in overseeing or leading pastoral care ministries for adults.

Policy: It covers the two policy documents related to harassment and exploitation, as well as the two policies related to discipline in these matters for lay and ordained ministers.

Background Checks

ECMN provides support in completing background checks for staff and volunteers. Everyone who is required to take Tier 2 and 3 training is also required to pass a background check every five years. For more information on how to do this, please ask your parish administrator and/or email ECMN at backgroundchecks@episcopalmn.org.

If desired, ECMN will process these for \$8. Find the ECMN background check form on the ECMN page under forms.

Requirements of Faith Communities

Step 1: Formally adopt Safe Church Policies at a Vestry, Bishop's Committee, or Board of Directors meeting and record the text of the policies in the minutes. Review and reaffirm your adoption of these policies annually and record it in the meeting minutes.

Step 2: Ensure adequate documentation for previously safe church-trained individuals (who have been trained in the last five years). In order to adhere to legal standards, all trainings must be documented in the online database, Praesidium. If an individual's training is not documented in Praesidium, they must undergo training again to be compliant.

Step 3: Establish a practice for determining who needs renewal and has past the three-year training window. One way to do this is to go into the online safeguarding database, download a spreadsheet of the entire faith community organization, and sort by training date.

Step 4: Identify those in your faith community who need to be Safe Church trained ([Appendix C](#)).

Step 5: Contact a certified ECMN Safe Church trainer to schedule or attend a live training. See [upcoming Zoom trainings here](#) and the [list of trainers here](#). Refer anyone who can't attend in person to the online options ([Google Doc instructions](#)).

Relevant Statutes

<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=148A>

<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=626.557>

<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=626.556>