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UCC Resources:



The Insurance Board is a nonprofit corporation established by the participating Conferences of the United Church of Christ. They administer a property and liability insurance program serving churches and related entities within four denominations: United Church of Christ, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Presbyterian Church (USA) and Alliance of Baptists.

Learn More: <http://insuranceboard.org/>

As a church leader you have a duty to provide a safe place for worship and ministry. The Insurance Board provides you a variety of resources to help you fulfill your covenant. Refer to the Safety Resources section on their website for laws, resources and details regarding abuse and bullying prevention and education.

For **Abuse Prevention Programs**, they offer the **SafeConduct™ Workbench**, including a **Self-Assessment** tool for churches with a safe church policy already in place, and the new **SafeConduct™ Policy Template**, for churches who have no policy in place or need to augment their policy based on the self-assessment.

The **Armatus** training program by Praesidium is available to all UCC churches whether or not they are insured through the IB. It's FREE!! An overview of the program is available at:

http://www.insuranceboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Training_Implementation_Armatus_2014_03_21.pdf

The **background checking service** is available to the same churches. Pricing for background checking is different for non-participants. We pay half the cost for churches participating in the IB insurance program. For an explanation of the pricing differences, refer to the file:

<http://www.insuranceboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Administrator-Guide-2015-12-16-CLEAN.pdf>

For general guidance please refer to the **Policy Template**, available at

<http://www.insuranceboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/SafeConduct-Foreword-2011-03-30.pdf>

*Resources listed in these sections have been successfully utilized and recommended by local church(es) in the New Hampshire Conference United Church of Christ.

UCC Resources (Curricula):



Sexual Abuse Prevention A Course of Study for Teenagers

Age Level: Youth

Methodology: Discussion

Author: Rebecca Voelkel-Haugen and Marie M. Fortune

Learn More/Order:

<http://www.uccresources.com/products/sexual-abuse-prevention-a-course-of-study-for-teenagers-revised-and-updated-voelkel-haugen-and-fortune>

This book explores the issues of violence and sexuality faced by today's teenagers and the role the church should play in response to sexual abuse. This revised and updated edition addresses the experiences of date rape, stranger rape, and incestuous abuse. It also looks at the cultural context in which these experiences occur - with a special emphasis on the media, especially music video television. The curriculum includes six one to one and one-half hour sessions, each carefully designed to facilitate an honest, respectful, Christian response to the sexual abuse of young people.



Preventing Child Sexual Abuse

Age Level: 5-8 and 9-12

Methodology: Discussion

Author: Katherine Goering Reid and Marie M. Fortune

Learn More/Order:

<http://www.uccresources.com/products/preventing-child-sexual-abuse-a-curriculum-for-ages-5-8-and-9-12-reid?s=recomatic&variant=538850785>

This course provides information about sexual abuse and prevention to elementary school aged children (Grades 1-6) in the context of a religious education program. The thirteen sessions fit into a typical Sunday morning church school program, but can also be used for summer vacation church school, after school programs, camping programs, and a variety of other children's group events.

The curriculum draws on excellent secular materials while using basic biblical resources. It confronts misinterpretations of biblical passages that have been used to support abusive relationships. Through this program, prevention techniques are taught in an environment of God's caring and a supportive community.

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Other Resources*:

Group's Church Volunteer Central

Learn More: <http://www.churchvolunteercentral.com> (click on "Protect")

From their website,

"Are you sure your church is safe?"

No doubt about it, God is our shepherd. Our protector. Our shield. Yet...things happen.

It's the stuff none of us like to think about, much less talk about. But if church leaders aren't the champions of a safe ministry environment, who will be?

Thankfully, you can be prepared. It's easy to be proactive with Church Volunteer Central. You get access to a variety of reliable, thorough background checks. (Starting at just \$9—PLUS get your first two background checks for *free*.) And no annual minimum orders or additional activation fees that some other providers attach.

You'll get up-to-date info about the constant changes in the security biz. Plus you'll find hundreds of forms, releases, waivers, letters, articles, online training sessions, and other resources that will make you a knight in shining armor."

Reducing the Risk Kit

Learn More/Order from Church Law Today: <http://www.reducingtherisk.com>

- Interactive, engaging DVD training program with 10 segments.
- Comprehensive *Leader's Guide* and the *Trainee Workbook*, for a turn-key program that you can easily and quickly put into practice at your church.
- *Screening Forms & Records File for Volunteers* that make it easy for you to properly screen and keep track of the volunteers—a must-have should you face an allegation of abuse.

Ministry leaders, volunteers and board members alike will learn first-hand from leading experts on how to screen and select workers, implement solid supervision policies and respond to allegations.

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Stop it Now!

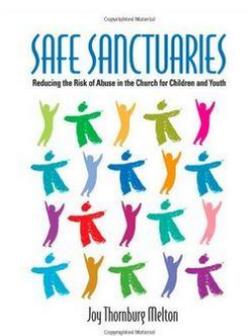
Stop It Now! was founded by Fran Henry, a survivor of childhood sexual abuse who learned first hand that standard approaches to keeping children safe from child sexual abuse at that time did not respond to the complex relationships surrounding most abuse.

Her vision? To have the sexual abuse of children recognized as a preventable public health problem, to make helping adults take responsibility to prevent and stop sexual abuse of children a main focus of prevention, and to create effective programs based on these principles. She created Stop It Now! over 20 years ago to prevent the sexual abuse of children by mobilizing adults, families and communities to take actions that protect children before they are harmed.

Learn more: <http://www.stopitnow.org/>

Specific Resources for churches include:

- [Tip Sheet: Child Sexual Abuse Prevention for Faith Communities](#)



Safe Sanctuaries: Reducing the Risk of Abuse in the Church for Children and Youth

- Author: Joy Thornburg Melton
- Published: September 1, 2008

Learn More/Order: <http://www.amazon.com/Safe-Sanctuaries-Reducing-Church-Children/dp/0881775436>

The Only Resource of Its Kind. 2-bestsellers-in-1! 10th anniversary edition of Safe Sanctuaries for children and youth Featuring updated and timely information about protecting young people from online predators..

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Supplemental Resources (Topic Specific)*:

Internet Safety Guidelines

Provided by the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ

Learn More: <http://www.ctucc.org/resources/onlinesafetyguidelines.html>

Insurance Board Webinar Series: Social Media – Plan, Prepare, Protect

(webinar conducted on October 22, 2012, slides are only available within 48 hours of the webinar). Watch their site for current offerings.

Social media is “child’s play” for children, but not for churches. A review of the many considerations around church use of social media, including management controls and oversight, copyright, libel, privacy and security.

Best Practices (by Topic)*:

Clearly define the term Adult (by age and purpose)

Most Safe Church policies require two adults be present during activities involving children and youth or in Sunday school classrooms. It is highly recommended that the term, Adult, be clearly defined in terms of age and purpose. This is illustrated in the examples below:

- An adult, over the age of 18
- Non-related adults, age 21 or older,
- Students in Sunday School shall be under the care and supervision of two adults, one of whom may be a high school aide/assistant teacher who is at least five years older than the eldest student in the class

Use a Floater(s) to meet the “Two Adults” requirement

In churches with a limited volunteer pool, it is often difficult to meet the requirement of having two adults present during an activity or in the classroom. It is possible to use a floater(s) to satisfy this requirement. A floater is a person who “floats” around and checks on each group. It is highly recommended that the floater have visual and physical access to **all** areas (either requiring doors to be open or having prominent windows in the doors). Thus, more than one floater may be required if the Sunday school space is located on more than one floor in a building or in disconnected areas on the same floor of a building.

- If, during Sunday school, a staff member or another adult needs to be alone in a room with a child or youth for any purpose, a second adult should be informed of the session. The session should be held in a room with an observation window in the door or, if there is no window, with the door ajar
- Our policy requires at least two adults (or one adult and a "floater") to be present at all times when caring for children and youth

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Include Transportation in Your Safe Church Policy

Your Safe Church Policy should include information regarding transportation. When any person operates a vehicle on behalf of your church, your church has a liability exposure. Items to consider and review with your church insurance company include:

The minimum age of a driver (recommendation is 21, with three years driving experience)

Will your policy include performing a driving record check?

Will your policy include a requirement that the driver carry personal automobile insurance?

If so, what coverage (liability, property damage) and in what amount?

Define what to do in the event of an accident

Know the limitations of your Screening Process

There are many types of background checks that can be performed. They may cover items ranging from personal references to Social Security Number Verification, employment history verification, education verification, civil record history, credit history, and criminal history. Checks can be performed at a National Level or a Local (State) level. Before you order the check ensure you know what information it will provide and will NOT provide and decide how you plan to protect and respond to that information once you receive it.

NH has very strict guidelines on the **release of Motor Vehicle Records**. Not only do they require the driver to authorize the release of the information, they require the request be notarized. Consult the Division of Motor Vehicles for detailed information on the process and a request form: <http://www.nh.gov/safety/divisions/dmv/forms/documents/dsmv505.pdf>

Response Procedure

It is recommended that your policies include procedures for responding to items discovered during a routine background check or to allegations of misconduct. Should an incident occur, it is much better to have defined in advance, how you will respond.

Educate and Communicate

The congregation, volunteers, employees and children should all be aware of the Safe Church Policies and Procedures. The purpose is to acquire knowledge and empower everyone to help maintain safer spaces in our churches. Churches may post these documents on their website, offer age appropriate training sessions for both adults and children, and/or use a Covenant at the beginning of every year. The Covenant helps communicate the fact that we take our responsibility seriously when it comes to ensuring that the Church is a safe and supportive place for worship, Christian growth, and fellowship.

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Sample Policy Documents*:

- First Congregational Church Manchester, NH
Safe Church Policy Concerning Abuse Prevention
http://www.nhcucc.org/Documents/Christian_Education/FCC_Manchester_Safe_Church_Policy_v1.2.pdf
- First Church Congregational United Church of Christ Rochester, New Hampshire
Policy to Prevent Sexual Exploitation and to Provide a Safe Church for All
http://www.nhcucc.org/Documents/Christian_Education/Rochester_Safety_Policy.pdf
- Donald Clark, Nationwide Special Counsel, United Church Christ has provides several resources, including a sample policy, to assist you in Making our Churches Safe. They can be found at: http://www.ucc.org/ministers_safe
- New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ “Safer Spaces” Policy:
http://nhcucc.org/Resources/SaferSpacesPolicy/downloads/safer_spaces.pdf
- Donald Clark, Nationwide Special Counsel, United Church Christ provided training to the Massachusetts Conference on **Welcoming Sex Offenders to worship with us**. Watch the video at: <https://vimeo.com/album/3035650/video/105568010>

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