

PROCEDURE ON SAFE ENVIRONMENT TRAINING AND BACKGROUND CHECKS FOR VOLUNTEERS:

Clarifying the USCCB's Charter Definition of "On-going, Unsupervised Contact with Minors"

History: Since the Charter's inception, the Diocese of Spokane has required *all volunteers* whose duties put them in on-going contact with minors and young people to have a background check and safe environment training.

Recently, the Diocese has adopted the USCCB's directives regarding safe environment training and background checks for those with "on-going, unsupervised contact with minors". This has raised many questions about which volunteers require both a background check and safe environment training. For example, do you background screen and train volunteers who have on-going contact with children but are never alone with them, so that the contact is never "unsupervised"?

In our Diocese, the designation "**on-going**" is equally as important as "**unsupervised**" because on-going contact, even if supervised, increases the potential for adults to develop trusting relationships with minors and young people. These relationships then create opportunities for grooming, boundary violations, and abuse. Because of what we have learned about abuse and the abuser's use of grooming, we must be vigilant about who we allow to meet and get to know our children and young people.

Therefore it is critical that all those with on-going contact with minors and young people, whether supervised or not, receive background checks and safe environment training.

While the final determination of who has on-going contact with children and young people must remain with each parish or school, the Diocese has developed guidelines and questions to assist you. The Diocesan Safe Environment Director is always available for guidance. [Duane Schafer](#), (509) 358-4283, cell (509) 220-5190.

These considerations will help you determine who has on-going contact with children and young people.

1. Recurring Nature of Contact: Will this person repeatedly be around children/young people during a school year, summer camp/classes?
2. Duration of Contact: Is this person's time with children and young people extended (vs. meet and greet?)
3. Directness of Contact: Will this person work one-on-one with the child or with a group of children/young people?

Bishop Daly has established four levels of training/screening based on the type of volunteer service, as follows:

THE VOLUNTEERS LISTED BELOW SHOULD ALWAYS:

1. **RECEIVE SAFE ENVIRONMENT TRAINING**
2. **HAVE A BACKGROUND CHECK**
3. **SIGN THE CODE OF CONDUCT**
4. **COMPLETE THE DISCLOSURE STATEMENT:**
 - Religious education catechists, aides, and substitutes
 - Sports team coaches, trainers, assistants
 - Youth choir directors, leaders
 - Vacation bible school teachers
 - Youth group leaders, aides
 - Regular chaperones
 - Overnight chaperones, regular drivers
 - Altar server trainers
 - Eucharistic Ministers for the homebound
 - Nursery, child care, pre-school workers

- Parish-sponsored Boy and Girl Scout troop volunteers
- School tutors
- Volunteers who assist in schools in various ways, but whose services require on-going contact: regular car pool drivers, field trip chaperones, classroom helpers

B. THE VOLUNTEERS LISTED BELOW DO NOT NEED TO HAVE SAFE ENVIRONMENT TRAINING AND A BACKGROUND CHECK, BUT SHOULD:

- 1. SIGN THE CODE OF CONDUCT**
- 2. COMPLETE THE DISCLOSURE STATEMENT**

- Eucharistic Ministers
- Lectors
- Ushers
- Musicians

C. THE VOLUNTEERS LISTED BELOW DO NOT NEED SAFE ENVIRONMENT TRAINING, A BACKGROUND CHECK, CODE OF CONDUCT, OR DISCLOSURE STATEMENT:

Administration and Organization Volunteers

- Envelope stuffers, telephone assistance

Committee workers – finance, parish council, school board

Adult programs when child contact is not expected

- Bible study
- Retreats
- Sacramental preparation

RCIA instructors

Volunteers for parish festivals, breakfasts, picnics and other events where children will be present with their families and contact with children is limited and not the sole focus of the event or service

D. VOLUNTEERS WHO CANNOT BE BACKGROUND SCREENED

The USCCB has recently issued guidelines for parishes and schools where some parents and volunteers do not have social security numbers and therefore cannot be background checked. We recognize that they are integral to our parishes and school communities and want to be involved as volunteers. **THESE VOLUNTEERS SHOULD:**

- 1. OBTAIN A RECOMMENDATION LETTER FROM A RELATIVE OR COMMUNITY MEMBER**
- 2. HAVE SAFE ENVIRONMENT TRAINING**
- 3. INSURE THAT ANOTHER ADULT WHO HAS HAD SAFE ENVIRONMENT TRAINING IS ALWAYS PRESENT WHEN WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS**
- 4. SIGN THE CODE OF CONDUCT**
- 5. COMPLETE THE DISCLOSURE STATEMENT**