

**The Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Methodist Church**  
**Safe Sanctuary Policy – Effective July 1, 2011**

**GENERAL**

As leaders in ministry, we recognize that our work is a sacred trust which we exercise on God's behalf. The Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Methodist Church is committed to providing a safe environment for all those who participate in our faith community. We will be good shepherds of all entrusted to our care, following the model of Jesus, our Good Shepherd. We refer to the policy which guides us in this work, and which follows below and includes many pieces of supporting documentation, as the Rocky Mountain Conference Safe Sanctuary policy, or just Safe Sanctuary Policy.

Having a solid Safe Sanctuary Policy in place for those who work in a position of trust with children, youth, and vulnerable adults will serve us well as we shepherd those in our spiritual care. This policy will assist us with practical and specific standards for our stewardship of this trust. By following this policy, we will help protect those in our care, as well as honor the parents and others who have entrusted their loved ones to us. Furthermore this policy can protect us- both individually as ministry leaders and collectively as a Conference- from false accusations and aid us in establishing safe ministry settings.

The following policies, effective July 1, 2011 shall be in force, at all Conference-level programs involving children, youth (defined as 18 years of age and younger), and vulnerable adults (diminished physical, mental, or emotional capacities). The same policies are highly recommended to the local churches of the Conference, recognizing that differences among ministry settings may allow for variations in how they're implemented. Within such variations, however, compliance with State laws and "best practices" required by our current insurance provider is mandatory.

**WORKING WITH CHILDREN, YOUTH, and/or VULNERABLE ADULTS  
AT CONFERENCE EVENTS**

In order to work at a Conference level event with children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults, a volunteer or paid worker must establish a "Safe Sanctuary file" with the Conference Office, which may come from his or her local church. If the local church is in need of forms, they are located on the Conference website (<http://rmcumc.org/rmc/Other%20Ministries/ethical-education.html>).

**The Safe Sanctuary file should document that the volunteer or paid worker:**

- Be either a regular attendee or have been a member of the local church for a minimum of six months.
- Has submitted an authorization form for permission to conduct a background check ("Authorization and Request for Criminal Records Check"). Youth are only required to submit a form for a reference check.
- Has obtained clearance from the National Register of Sex Offenders, as well as the State of residence. (State Bureau of Investigations from CO, WY, or UT) Conference volunteers or paid staff must also obtain a finger print check, paid for by the Conference.
- Has reviewed job descriptions/expectations and safe practices for specific ministry areas involving children, youth, and vulnerable adults.
- Understands the laws of Mandatory Reporting for the State in which the event is held (CO, WY, UT).

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### **Safe Sanctuary file (cont'd)**

- Has participated in Safe Sanctuary training (copy of certificate of completion in the file)
- Has provided a Motor Vehicle Check, proof of insurance, and valid driver's license if transporting children, youth, or vulnerable adults is part of their responsibilities.

### **An Event Coordinator will be designated for each Conference event.**

#### **The Conference Event Coordinator is responsible for the following:**

- Identifying him-/herself to all leaders and participants at the beginning of the event and giving a brief presentation covering what is expected in terms of safety and "Safe Sanctuary" for all at the event. The Event Coordinator is responsible for monitoring "Safe Sanctuary" at the event.
- Ensuring Compliance with the Following Basic Standards
  1. Occupancy limitations of all buildings in which Conference programs are held shall be observed per applicable "Certificates of Occupancy." Related to this, the Conference Event Coordinator shall be responsible for being aware of and educating Event leaders as to building floor plan, building capacity, fire/emergency evacuation procedures, and emergency exits.
  2. All groups conducting such programs shall have the necessary certificates of insurance both for liability and workers compensation. They shall be displayed as required by law.
  3. All such programs shall conform to Federal and State wage and tax laws for employees.
- Knowing and following the mandatory reporting laws for the State in which the event is held
- Ensuring that any child care services provided at the Event are either licensed or exempted from licensing according to Federal and/or State regulations.
- Ensuring appropriate response by Event and Conference leaders to reports of abuse or neglect
- Proper response to any concerns raised by a background check conducted for a potential volunteer. Bringing such concerns to the attention of Conference leadership for direction is the place to start.

#### **Furthermore, the Event Coordinator must be aware of the following:**

- The Conference "Crisis Communication Plan". Unless otherwise designated, the Event Coordinator shall be the media spokesperson at Conference events. For local church events, see the statement in the "Supporting Documentation" PDF file referenced below.
- Church and Non/Church Programs as Related to Insurance
- Participant Behavior Covenant and Medical/Permission Slips as applicable for the Event
- "Training Resources" – a listing of helpful resources serving as a bibliography, included in the "Supporting Documentation" file associated with this policy.

#### **Supporting Documentation for this Safe Sanctuary Policy includes the following:**

- ✓ A Model for a Local Church Policy on Safe Sanctuary, including "Safe Practices" when working with children, youth, and vulnerable adults (PDF file: "Model of Local Church SS Policy incl Safe Prx.pdf")
- ✓ Each of the following are contained in the PDF file, "SS Policy Supporting Doc.pdf":
  - Media Spokesperson description
  - "Authorization and Request for Criminal Records Check" form
  - "Church Programs and Non-church Programs as Related to Insurance"
  - "Transportation Safety within Your Ministry"
  - "Participant Behavior Covenant"
  - "Conference Safe Sanctuary Checklist"
  - "Helpful Resources" bibliography