



Getting Started – Guidance for Church Councils and Congregations

What do we already have in place?

Check for Safe Church policies that already exist but may have fallen by the wayside. Find out what verbal agreements you have in place. Then it is only a matter of following up what you have in place and adjusting that to fit the *Safe Church in the Northern Synod* policies and procedures.

Safety Team

Having the right policies and procedures is one thing, keeping them in place and up-to-date is another. Communicating policies and procedures to the whole church is the right place to start, but there is also the need for ongoing awareness. Appointing a Safe Church Contact Person and/or a small team to help team leaders and ministry leaders implement the procedures will keep church safety on the agenda.

However, this is an oversight role and the implementation is not solely the responsibility of the Safe Church Contact Person, Minister or the Church Council.

Ministry leaders and team leaders need to recruit for and supervise their teams, arrange for appropriate training and awareness, and carry out program specific planning (risk management).

Steps to Implementation

A quick-start guide:

1. Church Council

- a. Adopt and communicate to the whole congregation the *Safe Church in the Northern Synod Policy*, this includes:
 - i. *Church Council Statement of Commitment to Safe Church* (also can be used for Programs or Events)
 - ii. *Leaders and Volunteers Policy and Personal Statement of Commitment*
 - iii. *Safe Leaders Policy*
- b. Where possible appoint a team to oversee the process and to be a contact point for the congregation. As a minimum appoint a Safety Officer.
- c. Appoint a Safe Church Contact Person for reporting and debriefing purposes and advise the Synod of this appointment.
- d. Implement the *Safe Church in the Northern Synod Checklist* (see below).
- e. Ensure tasks assigned to Program/Event/Ministry Coordinator/Team Leaders, in point 3 below, are being implemented in a timely manner.
- f. Access ongoing Safe Church training for all who are in positions of leadership/responsibility in the congregation.



2. Safety Team / Safety Officer / Church Council

- a. Meet with Ministry Leaders and Team Leaders to discuss implementation plan.
- b. Implement WHS policies.
- c. Regularly check to see how implementation is going.
- d. Auditing process (after 12-18 months).
- e. Ensure all leaders have Working With Children Checks (Ochre cards in NT) and Police Checks as appropriate to their roles.
 - i. Record these together with expiry dates and provide information to Synod office.

3. Program / Event / Ministry Coordinator or Team Leaders

- a. Appoint Leaders using the *Safe Church in the Northern Synod* Policies and Procedures (see documents on recruitment).
- b. Complete Approval for Ministry applications for each Ministry and submit for approval by the Church Council.
- c. Church Council will grant permission for Ministries/Activities when team leaders have completed safety plans.
- d. Ministry approvals are evaluated yearly by Leaders and Church Council.
- e. Access ongoing Safe Church training, with all leaders to complete Safe Church Awareness and Training every three years.



Safe Church in the Northern Synod – Getting Started Checklist

| Action | Date Actioned | Review Date |
|--|---------------|-------------|
| Adopt <i>Safe Church in the Northern Synod</i> Policies and Procedures. | | |
| Sign <i>Church Council Statement of Commitment to keeping Children Safe</i> . | | |
| Plan dates for implementation and implement. | | |
| Church Council appoints a Safe Church Contact Person. | | |
| Church Council communicates who this person is to whole church. | | |
| Church Council appoints a Safety Officer / Team. | | |
| Ensure all leaders attend initial Safe Church Training prior to appointment and refresher every 2 years. Send copy of attendance sheets to Synod. | | |
| Screen and recruit leaders using Safe Church Recruitment Process, Role Descriptions, Application Form and Letter of Appointment. | | |
| Ensure each leader signs the Safe Leader and Volunteer Policy and Personal Commitment to Child Safety. | | |
| Safe Church Contact person records Working With Children card details (including expiry date) and sends copy to Synod. | | |
| Leaders submit Ministry Activity Application annually. | | |
| Church Council approves Ministry Activity Applications annually. | | |
| All leaders made aware of, and use, reporting concerns, abuse, and misconduct processes. | | |
| Church Council/Safety Team communicate WHS policy and procedure. | | |
| Church Council/Safety Team ensure someone from each ministry has basic First Aid Certificate. | | |
| Church Council/Safety Team ensures an up-to-date First Aid Kit is available for all ministry activities. | | |
| Church Council/Safety Team ensures a copy of the food safety guide is in a visible place in the kitchen. | | |
| Church Council/Safety Team ensures evacuation procedures, plans and other signage are in place. | | |
| Program/event leaders use checklists and procedures in the <i>Safe Church in the Northern Synod Manual</i> for ensuring safe environments. | | |
| Ensure all ministry leaders understand UCA ethics/code of conduct, policy and procedures for concerns and incidents. | | |