



The Church Safety Committee

The Church Safety Committee is comprised of representation from various church functions, guided by the Church Safety Officer. The Committee allows for a more integrated approach to safety and enhances the effectiveness of safety measures across ministries. Their focus is on the development of safety programs and emergency plans, identification of exposures through self-inspections and activity reviews, and the investigation of accidents to determine the best measures for correcting conditions that caused them.

The Committee

The church board or church pastor should appoint the church safety committee through the regular nominating committee process. The committee is generally composed of the Church Safety Officer and key leaders such as a deacon, Children's ministries, physical plant services, and where possible a medical professional or any first responders such as an EMT, police, or fire professional. Some churches may wish to include youth participation which can be very positive. Keep in mind that some tasks such as accident investigation, which may involve confidential information, may be better suited to a mature mind. If youth members are in the committee, involvement should be restricted to committee work on prevention activities.

The committee should meet on a regular basis. Record minutes on a quarterly basis at minimum. For smaller

churches, one option is to have safety issues addressed at least monthly as a permanent part of staff/board meetings.

Committee Activities

Self-inspections help identify physical hazards inside and outside the church. The committee may assist the church Safety Officer in performing self-inspections of the premises. Use ARM's Church Self-Inspection form available on AdventistRisk.org as a guiding resource.

Security is an area of increasing concern for churches. Learning how to implement a compassion-based plan that is both Christ-centered and effective is possible. Various functions such as lighting, keys, and cameras should be reviewed. The team should also consider processes and education so that the church can respond effectively when facing suspicious activity. Thinking about



the church as a body with layers of defense will help to make the church more effective not only in the area of security but also in hospitality.

Emergency plans are another important aspect of church safety. The committee, in conjunction with the church safety officer, should also review the church emergency plan. Drills should be practiced with deacons and other key personnel to become familiar with their responsibilities during each type of disaster. ARM recommends running a church emergency drill twice a year at minimum.

Activities and transportation should also be discussed in committee meetings. Following the approval by the church board, the committee could be asked to review activities and transportation logistics, and help determine safety elements needed. See ARM’s Field Trip Activity Planner on the website and check that parental/guardian permission slips and signed medical release forms needed for minors are in place and meet conference standards.

Child protection planning does not take place simply in Children’s Ministries or the Pathfinder club. Our children are an integral part of all church activities and a wholistic approach to protecting them is needed to be effective. Work with the screening coordinator, children’s department leaders, facilities leaders, pastors and elders to ensure the whole church is working together to protect our children.

Maintenance is another area of interest for the Safety Committee. While maintenance may not be the committee’s primary responsibility, many losses are tied directly to lack of maintenance. A leak creating a wet floor, torn or wrinkled carpet, uneven sidewalks and holes in the parking lot are all examples of conditions that frequently cause trips and falls. The committee may seek to review the

maintenance records on a quarterly basis and compare against the inspection reports to identify areas that need correction.

Accident Investigation

A primary method of controlling losses is through a formal investigation and review of all accidents at the church – both actual accidents and near miss incidents. When an accident is reported, a designated individual (often the Safety Officer), formally appointed in writing by the committee, will determine the underlying causes of the accident by:

- 1 Visiting the scene
- 2 Interviewing witnesses, noting their observations and obtaining contact information
- 3 Checking for causes resulting from anyone’s actions, dangerous work practices, disobeying rules, speeding, etc.
- 4 Checking for poor housekeeping or property defects
- 5 Determining use of improper safety apparel
- 6 Determining use of defective equipment
- 7 Recording information of any other poor conditions

Based on the final report, the committee will make written recommendations to the church pastor or board. The recommendations will include their conclusion as to the cause of the accident and corrective measures to prevent it from happening again in the future. The pastor may choose to present significant findings to the church board for information and possible policy adjustments.

NOTE: All accidents must be reported immediately per Conference protocols

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