



Essential Resources for Youth Workers

PART ONE



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Did you know that about two-thirds of the claims against church entities involve allegations of improper supervision?

Supervision is almost always an issue when a claim is presented, particularly those involving children and youth. So, what is adequate supervision? When it comes down to it, two elements equal appropriate supervision in any event: **quantity** and **quality**. It is not only the number of supervisors per participant, but also the quality of the supervisors participating in your event.

If you were to find yourself in a situation in which a participant was injured, what questions would be asked about supervision? Here are some examples:

- How did you train the supervisors on what was expected of them?
 - o How did you tell them?
 - o What materials were distributed?
 - o Did the materials include an emergency plan?
 - o Did you require all supervisors to attend the training or orientation?
- Did you inform the supervisors on which five, six, or eight participants they were specifically responsible for?
- Did they know these participants' names?
 - o Did they meet each participant before the event?
 - o Did they have access to contact information for each member of their respective group?

- Did they know each participant's medical condition?
- Did you instruct them of what to do in an emergency?

In previous situations in which ARM was involved, parent supervisors would say, "I didn't know what to do. Nobody told me. We didn't have an orientation. I figured I was just along to watch the kids." This lack of clarity constitutes evidence of unpreparedness or indifference and disregard for the well-being of children being supervised. On the contrary, being prepared will not prevent every problem, but it will minimize them.

Appropriate supervision that accounts for both the **quantity** and **quality** of your chaperones is critical. When supervisors are prepared and engaged, it will minimize the chance of injury and other problems. When this happens, your loss prevention efforts will result in greater success. In fact, proper preparation of supervisors is good loss prevention. The safety and well-being of each young person under your organization's care is of the greatest importance. Cost savings and claim prevention naturally result when emphasis is put on properly caring for those in your care. Aim for these outings to result in lifelong memories and lasting friendships, not in life altering tragic injury or worse.



Boosting the Quality of Your Supervision

How can you improve the quality of your supervision, minimize risks, and better prepare your chaperones? Take the time to train them comprehensively. As a leader, use these guidelines to ensure your chaperones are well equipped to provide quality supervision.

- 1. Conduct a site visit to the facilities or the area you will be visiting. Evaluate the area and familiarize yourself with your contact person for the activity. Ask what the facility offers in the way of emergencies. Does the facility provide on-site medical personnel? If not, you may want to consider bringing a nurse or other medical professional with you. What other services are available? When selecting a site, take into consideration the various available services.
- 2. Establish criteria for the kind of chaperones you will need for your outing. Assess the type of activity your trip entails, the skills and abilities required, and the number of male and female students who will attend. Answering these questions will give you an idea of what kind of chaperones you will need for your trip.
- 3. For example, chaperones for a canoe trip should be comfortable in the water and an outdoor setting. Mission trips involving physical labor should have chaperones comfortable with being on their feet and engaging in physical activity for extended periods of time.

Lastly, create an emergency plan for your outing and plan for other non-emergency situations. If you don't know how to organize such a project, refer to ARM's **Emergency Planning** page to help you get started. No emergency plan is going to account for every contingency, but if you have no plan in place, you are at risk for much greater problems.

In training your chaperones, here are do's and don'ts:

- **Do pay attention**. Constant observation is necessary so always keep an eye on your students.
- Do bond with the youth. Your kids should not be afraid of you. Building a bond is essential for children to feel comfortable to approach staff members with any problems.
- Do address problems and report them. If a child is missing or an accident has occurred,

- immediately respond to the incident. Your emergency plan should cover this.
- **Do know the emergency plan.** Calling 911 is not an emergency plan. Review what each chaperone should do in an emergency. Equip each chaperone with the contact information for the leader as well as all the other chaperones. Additionally, each chaperone should have the contact information for each child (if applicable).
- Don't view the trip as a vacation. While it is okay
 to enjoy the trip, you are there to work. Enjoyment
 is only secondary to your primary purpose.
 Remember that you are there to make sure
 those in your charge are cared for and are safe.
- Don't be unfamiliar with your group. You should know each person entrusted to your care.
 This is another reason why bonding is important.
 Get to know your kids, their ages, and any special needs they may have.
- Don't forget about medical needs. This is a crucial part of making sure your trip is safe and successful. Know the specific medical needs of each child, any prescription medications they are taking, and if these medications need special handling.
- Don't skip permission forms and medical disclosures. Every parent or guardian should be required to fill them out for each child. These will help you know what to do in the case of a medical emergency. Additionally, handing these forms to an and emergency medical professional and/or doctor can be life-saving to a child.

It Is Better to Be Prepared

Even if you do not know every small detail, it is best to take the initiative and train your chaperones. Inform them well of their job expectations and advise them on how to react in an emergency. Provide them with an orientation and allow time to answer any questions. Have an emergency plan and contact list available. Establish a point person to which chaperones can look to for leadership whether in a crisis or a normal setting. Insist they become familiar with the emergency plan.

Preparation and awareness are the keys to having a successful trip. Supervisors are there for a purpose. Be sure you define the purpose and communicate it to the supervisors.

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How many staff members you have supervising activities depends both on the level of risk involved with the activity and the needs of the children. Children with special needs, high-energy children, and very young ones require more supervision.

The key is to consider each activity, outing, or field trip and provide the best-qualified personnel possible, in ample numbers, to maintain the security of youth and to keep youth safe. The number one priority in child supervision is to "never let children out of one's sight." Claims files are filled with tragic stories of terrible things that happened when children were left unsupervised.

Provide a Minimum of Two Qualified Supervisors

Make sure to use those with specific knowledge of the particular activity, including training, certification, degrees, etc. Depending on the activity—museum visit, swimming, hiking, etc.— qualifications and numbers will vary.

QUALITY IS ESSENTIAL

Provide a minimum of two qualified supervisors for each situation.

Give Supervision 100 Percent

Periods of supervisory responsibility are not the time for grading papers, making personal phone calls,

conversing with associates, participating in the activity, or other things that may distract from the actual task of supervision. A few seconds of inattention can lead to tragic consequences.

The benefit of having two supervisors means an authorized supervisor is always present. In the event of an emergency, someone may need to go for help while the other supervisor remains behind to watch the children in their care. In addition, supervision in numbers helps to prevent child abuse or accusations of child abuse. Where programs include youth that are physically or mentally challenged, additional supervision will be required.

Variables that increase the need for more supervision are:

- Environmental Hazards: geographic features such as bodies of water that children may fall in, strong currents in areas where youth are swimming, wooded areas where children my become lost, etc.
- Experience and Qualifications of Staff
 Members: maturity and judgment, experience,
 knowledge, training, etc.
- **Skill Level of Children:** age, number of persons, physical condition, disabilities, etc.



How Much Risk the Activity Involves: ARM recommends that hazardous-risk activities, such as mountain climbing, require one adult per four children. A high-risk activity—such as a field trip—requires one adult per eight children. A low-risk activity, such as attending a class, would require one adult per 12 children.

Water sports and swimming require additional supervision and safety measures. Make sure a

lifeguard is on duty when your pool is open. Most public pools should have a minimum of two lifeguards on duty at all times.

Some children require more supervision than others and require staff or volunteers that have more skill in child supervision. Children who require more attention take time away from other proper supervision of other children. More supervision will be needed in these instances.

RECOMMENDED STAFF TO CHILD RATIOS



Hazardous Risk Activity 1:4



High Risk Activity 1:8

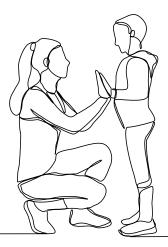


Low Risk Activity 1:12

How many staff members you have supervising activities depends both on the level of risk involved with the activity and the needs of the children.

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Personal Body Safety for Children and Youth

Protecting Students and Staff

In Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, Ellen G. White writes: "[Teachers] will discern that they have a most important field in the Lord's vineyard to cultivate." Educating children and the adults who work with them about appropriate methods of physical contact helps protect everyone from harm and allegations of misconduct.

Appropriate Touch: Guidelines for Staff Members

- Always ask for permission to hug, pat on the back, or even high-five a child.
- Only touch at the shoulder level or above.
- Use side hugs.
- Rough physical play, physical discipline, and horseplay are inappropriate.

Providing Guidelines for Children

Help your students to understand that their bodies belong only to them. No one is allowed to touch them without permission. And kids should always ask before touching someone else.

Personal Body Zones

Reinforce the importance of understanding and protecting personal body zones.

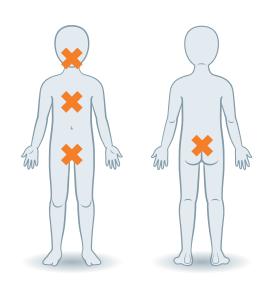
These four body zones are always off-limits (except in the event of emergency medical response, such as the administering of CPR/first aid by a medical professional):

× Mouth

× Chest

× Between the legs

X Buttocks





Communicating Safe and Unsafe Touch



Safe Touch...

- is affirming and uplifting.
- is respectful of privacy and personal zones.
- is aware of boundaries and asks permission.
- can be a side hug from a teacher to a child.



Unsafe Touch...

- seeks to compromise the boundaries and privacy of personal zones.
- is not respectful of the individual's body autonomy.
- includes hitting, pushing, or kicking.

Helping Your Students Report Inappropriate Behavior

Children must be encouraged and empowered to report inappropriate behavior toward them. As teachers, help them speak up if something has occurred. Remind them that their personal zones are off-limits to everyone and they must talk to a trusted grown-up. Inappropriate behavior to a child is never the child's fault. If abuse is suspected, you as an educator must speak up.

Learn more at adventistrisk.org



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How to Recognize and Prevent Child Abuse

I stared at the computer screen in confusion.

He was the child being abused, and I didn't realize it?

As the new intern for my local church conference, I was participating in child protection training for the first time. The instructional program was guiding me through different hypothetical scenarios as a camp counselor. My fictional campers would do or say something, and I would respond.

In each scenario, I had my eyes on certain kids as potential victims, but I was certain one kid was all right. He seemed happy and comfortable sharing about his home life. With a sweet demeanor, he talked about his ant friends when everyone shared about the pets they had at home.

At the end of the camp, his guardians never showed up. When I asked him if I could call one of his parent's or another individual approved to pick him up, he burst into tears and begged me not to call another person.

He told me his father would beat him if someone else picked him up and insisted he would be fine if left alone to wait. Then he said he was often left alone for extended periods of time. I learned that he was often left locked in the garage while his father went out. His father didn't provide him with food, water, heating, air conditioning, or bathroom facilities in the garage. During these solitary hours, he watched his ant friends because he had nothing else to do.

The training program explained what next steps I should take now that I suspected abuse was taking

place. I couldn't take my eyes off the computer screen as the little boy's face looked back at me. I stared at the cartoon image of this child who represented so many real children who experience abuse in their lifetime.

Abuse Can Happen Anywhere

Children can be abused:

- At home
- At school
- · At church activities
- · By adults
- · By parents
- · By other children.

As a camp counselor, Sabbath School teacher, Pathfinder leader, or schoolteacher, your work with children comes with the responsibility and privilege to protect those children from harm. By taking proper child protection measures in your ministry, you can:

- 1. Prevent abuse.
- 2. Recognize suspected abuse.
- 3. Report it to stop future abuse from taking place.

Five Ways to Prevent or Stop Child Abuse

1. Background Screening

Perform background checks on all staff and volunteers before they are allowed to work with kids in your ministry. Repeat the checks every three years. If the



background check shows that the potential volunteer or staff member has a history of child abuse, they are not eligible to work with children.

2. Child Protection Training

Train all staff and volunteers to recognize and report suspected child abuse. Contact your local church conference for recommended programs to use.

3. Supervision

Plan for appropriate child supervision at all your ministry activities. Learn more about best supervision practices in the **Youth Supervision Info Sheet**.

4. Talk to Children and Youth About Abuse

Talk to the children under your care about:

- · Types of abuse
- Consent
- · Body ownership
- Appropriate touch
- How to report abuse

An increasing number of child abuse cases involve children abusing other children. Talk to those under your care about what is healthy activity and what is not, and how to ask for help if they are in an unsafe situation.

Use the <u>Personal and Body Safety for Children and Youth</u> info sheet to talk to children about boundaries for their bodies.

5. Report Suspected Abuse

If you suspect abuse is taking place, report it immediately to your ministry leader. Do not wait for someone else to report the abuse.

Ministry leaders should then report abuse or neglect by calling local child protective services officer or law enforcement agency so professionals can assess the situation. Reporting is required by law.

Notify Adventist Risk Management, Inc. (ARM) concurrent with your notice to child protection services or the police.

You Can Make a Difference

If you work with children, you can help protect them from abuse. Use the information in this article to prevent abuse in your ministry. If you are not a leader in your ministry, but you see an area where your ministry can improve their child protection, speak up. Share this article with someone who works with children. Your actions may prevent another child from being abused.



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It is so important to have a proactive Child Protection Plan in place to prevent child abuse and to protect your young people from inappropriate conduct by adults or other children.

Creating such a plan doesn't need to be difficult. Here are items to include in yours:

1 | Premises Review

Access to Premises

Carefully monitor the arrival and departure of children at your facilities. Keep all ministry activities within a specified area and do not allow children unrestricted access throughout the building or property.

Interior and Exterior Lighting

Ensure your facilities are well lit—both indoors and outdoors—during all children's and youth programs to facilitate appropriate security and supervision.

Visual Panels

Be sure all areas have either windows or vision panels in the doors to allow easy monitoring of the activities taking place in these rooms. Vision panels should be free from paper, curtains or other materials.

Toilets

Limit the number of children allowed to use the toilets at the same time. Monitor these areas to minimise one-on-one situations, which can lead to foul play, inappropriate behaviour, or accusations and misunderstandings.

Supervision

Appropriate adult supervision is required at all times.

Always use the two-adult rule, which means more than one adult should be present with children at all times. If this is not possible, an adult should never be alone with one child. All staff should make this a high priority and know what is expected of them as they interact with children and teenagers.

Dismissal of Staff

Any adult who fails to abide by the outlined code of conduct could be subject to dismissal from participation in the ministry. This policy is to protect children and teenagers from harm and to protect staff from accusations and misunderstandings.

2 | Personnel

Staff Selection

Carefully interview and select all adult staff members (employees and volunteers) after a six-month waiting period during which they are known to you or are a member of your church. This time period allows you to become acquainted with the individual's talents, personality and temperament. Conduct background screenings in accordance with denominational policies, which include background and reference checks.

Staff Training

All staff members who work with children and



teenagers should be appropriately trained in child abuse awareness, prevention and the reporting laws of the local jurisdiction. Training should also include the expected code of conduct in keeping with the Christ-centred mission of the ministry.

3 | Protecting Children

Discipline and Touching

Carefully monitor staff members' interactions with children and teenagers to ensure appropriate behaviour in keeping with the ministry's code of conduct.

Out-of-program Contact

Carefully monitor any staff member who has frequent out-of-program contact with a child or teenager, especially contact on a one-to-one basis or without the knowledge of the child's parent or guardian.

Sign-in/Sign-out Controls

Maintain a record of all children who are participating in the activity and be sure they are picked up and released only to a parent or other authorised adult as designated in a parental permission slip.

Reporting Incidents

Be watchful for any signs of child abuse or incidents of inappropriate conduct by adults or other children. Promptly report all incidents of suspected child abuse to the police and to the local denominational administration.

Stranger Awareness

Always be alert and observant of any strangers or unknown individuals who may be watching or lurking around the premises during children's or youth ministry activities.

Bullying Awareness

Watch for signs of bullying or incidents of inappropriate initiation activity among children or teenagers. Adopt a zero-tolerance policy and teach them to respect each other by living the Golden Rule and developing strong Christian friendships.

4 | Program Review

Evaluate

Evaluate your Child Protection Plan twice a year. Ask your team:

- What concerns or issues arose, and how were they handled?
- Were incidents handled effectively? Are there further steps that need to be taken?
- Are there any concerns or issues that the program does not cover?
- How should the program be modified to address these new concerns?

Implement

Modify your program to accommodate improvements. Send out a notice to all staff members and parents introducing any changes to your Child Protection Plan. Incorporate modifications into your program regularly and continue to affirm and encourage all staff in their mission to keep all children safe.

Continue to affirm and encourage all staff in their mission to keep all children safe.

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What Should Your Pathfinder Club Know About Risk Management?

As a leader or staff member for your Pathfinder club, it is your responsibility to create a safe environment for your club members and be prepared for possible incidents your club may face throughout the year. By following some basic safety guidelines and implementing risk management practices, you will be able to minimize emergencies and be better prepared. Here are a few risk management practices to implement.

Activity Planning

Every Pathfinder club will have various activities throughout the year, including camping trips, community service events, and regular meetings. It is crucial to be prepared during each of these activities for issues that may arise.

While general permission and waiver forms should be signed at the beginning of the club year, specific permission must be obtained from the parents or legal guardians of each club member for any activity that takes Pathfinders away from your regular meeting location. Permission forms should also include a medical waiver that allows emergency medical treatment and discloses medical conditions. Permission and waiver forms must be accurate to the activities that will be taking place. Parents/Legal Guardians must be the ones to give permission by signing the form. The forms must be received before the scheduled activity or trip.

Travel Issues

Each Pathfinder trip will carry its own potential risks, and it is essential to follow prevention tactics and have a protection plan in place. We may not be able to control the outcome of each trip, but we can do our part as leaders to avert preventable incidents from occurring.

Depending on the size of your Pathfinder club, it may be necessary to secure larger vehicles to transport your club members. When researching what kind of vehicle to use, make sure there are no recalls for your chosen vehicle and that anything you do use has been serviced recently .

Do not use 15-passenger vans. Please be aware that some vans advertised as 12-passenger vans are actually the same size as a 15-passenger van. These vehicles are dangerous as they are far more prone to flipping over. If renting a bus, always rent from a



reputable company and make sure the vehicle is in good working order before driving it off the lot. Travel insurance should also be secured before your trip if going out of your country of origin.

Implementing a Child Protection Plan

Your church and your Pathfinder club should be a place where participants are safe from sexual abuse and violence. Ensure that your adult volunteers understand the Seventh-day Adventist Church's expectations for those working with children as outlined in the *Church Manual*.

- **a. Two-Adult Policy**—Have two adults present in children's classrooms or activities.
- **b. Open Door**—Discourage private or one-on-one contact and encourage an open-door policy in all situations. Where an open door is not possible, station a second adult at the door.
- c. Volunteer Screening—Ensure all volunteers complete a volunteer information form, check their references, and, if required by law, do a police background check.
- **d. Six-Month Policy**—Require a waiting period of six months for newly baptized or transferring members who have indicated a willingness to work with children.
- **e. Training**—Provide regular training for teachers and volunteers to help them understand and protect children and how to nurture their faith.

If your church does not have a child protection plan in place, rally your local church board to create one.

Health and Safety Guidelines

ARM encourages Pathfinder club leaders to receive basic training in case of a medical or health emergency with a club member. Set aside a time for your club leaders to receive training in basic first aid, CPR, and concussion awareness and prevention. Also, consider training your leaders to use automated external defibrillators (AEDs) and other health safety equipment. In a moment of crisis, this kind of training can be life-saving or provide relief until the injured can be taken to a medical facility.

Your club may also provide opportunities for members to be involved in sports, games, or activities. Make sure your leaders know what to do if an injury occurs, how to treat minor injuries such as light sprains and pulled muscles, and when to seek medical attention. You may also want to educate your club members on the most common sports injuries and how they can stay safe while playing.

As a leader, you hold a substantial responsibility, both in leading your counselors and keeping members safe while they are in your care. ARM understands the importance of this responsibility and wants to make sure you have the tools and resources you need to provide a safe environment for your club members.

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Are You Prepared for a Medical Emergency?

Whether a church member falls down a flight of stairs, trips over an extension cord, or suffers from an allergic reaction on church premis, medical emergency preparedness can mean the difference between life and death, speedy recovery, or major complications.

For example, in cases of cardiac arrest, immediate defibrillation with an automated external defibrillator (AED) can significantly increase the chances of survival, according to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

The equipment on hand, the effectiveness of the response, and the documentation of an incident may also help mitigate any liability claims filed against the church. Assembling a trained medical response team and charting an effective response plan is a great start to securing a safe environment. Taking these steps now can help prevent or diminish injury if an emergency does occur.

Emergency Response Plan

After charting a plan and assembling a team, promote awareness within the community and secure the necessary equipment. To implement your plan, take the following steps:

- 1. Identify plan goals.
- 2. Designate members of the response team, along with their responsibilities.
- 3. Share plan and responsibilities with staff.
- 4. Communicate plan with general population through signs and announcements.

One important facet of effective emergency response is identifying potential risks. An emergency is defined

as an unforeseen event that requires immediate response. What common storms or natural disasters have occurred in your area in the past? What potential situations might your church find itself in during the year? Compile a list of potential risks and emergencies.

For medical emergencies, the first line of defense is awareness of the signs and symptoms of a potential emergency, including:

- · difficulty breathing, shortness of breath
- chest or upper abdominal pain or pressure lasting two minutes or more.
- unusual abdominal pain
- fainting, sudden dizziness, weakness
- changes in vision
- · difficulty speaking
- confusion or changes in mental status, unusual behavior
- · any sudden or severe pain
- uncontrolled bleeding
- · severe or persistent vomiting or diarrhea
- coughing or vomiting blood
- suicidal or homicidal feelings

Supplies

Your church and your Pathfinder club should be a place where participants are safe from sexual abuse and violence. Ensure that your adult volunteers



understand the Seventh-day Adventist Church's expectations for those working with children as outlined in the *Church Manual*.

Training

Proper training is an essential part of preparing to effectively respond to medical emergencies. To ensure your team is qualified, explore training options in your area. Most emergency services and organizations such as the American Red Cross and St. John Ambulance offer first aid courses. Make sure to compile a list of these resources to pass along when staffing changes occur.

Automated External Defibrillators

One of the most powerful tools for survival in a medical emergency is an automated external defibrillator, or AED. If someone suffers cardiac arrest, the proper use of an AED may increase chances of survival from five to seven percent to 60 percent. Lawsuits have even been filed against institutions that did not have an AED.

When deciding whether to obtain the equipment, consider the possibility of people suffering cardiac arrest, taking into account environmental conditions, the best placement of the equipment (e.g., areas where electric-powered devices are used, or outdoor worksites where lightning may occur), and the age, health, stress levels, and fitness of your workers, members, and visitors.

Authorization to purchase an AED must come from a prescribing physician. Most AED vendors will provide the prescription with your purchase. When installing the equipment, it is important to make sure it is accessible from all areas of your building. AEDs require proper training and should not be used to the exclusion of Emergency Medical Services (EMS); rather, AEDs help increase the chances of survival while waiting for emergency crews to arrive. First aid responders should be able to effectively identify

cardiac arrest, notify EMS, perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), provide early defibrillation with an AED, and provide support to the victim while EMS is on their way.

Safety First

In the article "How to Handle Accidents at Church Functions," Joseph Doukmetzian says, "Remember, if you call the emergency response number and the injuries turn out not be serious, the emergency responders can move on to their next call with no harm. However, if you don't call for emergency response and the injuries are serious, that could mean the difference between losing a limb, or even in dire circumstances, losing a life." He advises to err on the side of caution: you won't regret it.

Reporting the Accident

Accidents happen, but how you respond to the accident is what you will be remembered by. It is very important to document an accident as soon as possible. The longer you delay, the harder it is to recall important details. These details can be crucial in protecting your ministry, especially if the injured person decides to file a claim against the church.

PLEASE NOTE: The information within this article is to be used for educational purposes only and is not medical advice.

REFERENCES

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Accident/Incident Report

NOTE: THIS FORM IS FOR INTERNAL LOSS PREVENTION USE ONLY AND IT IS NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR ANY REQUIRED CLAIMS FORMS.

INFORMATION OF THE PERSON COMPLETING THIS FORM			
FIRST NAME:	LAST NAME:		
EMAIL:	PHONE NUMBER:		
	I		
INCIDENT/ACCIDENT			
DATE AND TIME (IF KNOWN) OF ACCIDENT/INCIDENT:	DATE FORM COM	PLETED:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:	STATE:	ZIP CODE/POSTAL CODE:	
INJURED PERSON OR PERSONS WHO SUSTAINED DAMAGE			
NAME:	EMAIL:		
DESCRIBE ACCIDENT/INCIDENT			
Include description of what happened, who or what was injured or damaged, cause of	injury or damage,	and what was done after the damage or injury.	
WITNESSES			
NAME:	PHONE NUMBER:		
EMAIL:			
NAME:	PHONE NUMBER:		
EMAIL:			



ACCIDENT/INCIDENT REPORTED TO
ist entities you have reported this matter to, including SDA entities [your conference or other entity] or law enforcement.
DESCRIBE ANY POST ACCIDENT/INCIDENT ACTIONS
DESCRIBE ANY POST ACCIDENT/INCIDENT ACTIONS applicable, state what, if anything, has happened since the accident, including whether or not you have heard from anyone about the incident and who you reported it to.