



The Church Safety Committee

The Church Safety Committee, comprised of representation from various church departments and under the guidance of the Church Safety Officer will make an effective team to enhance the overall church safety program and prevent accidents. The committee's focus will be 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 measures for correcting the conditions that caused them.

The Committee

The church board or church pastor should appoint the church safety committee annually. The committee is generally composed of the Church Safety Officer (see Foresight, The Church Safety Officer, on our website); at least one deacon/deaconess; one Sabbath School teacher; and one youth pastor or sponsor of youth activities. Ensure that the committee has representation from areas or activities involving a high degree of risk. It is the church's option whether to include youth participation, but keep in mind that accident investigation may involve confidential information. If youth is part of the committee, involvement should be restricted to committee work on "pre-loss" activities. The group generally appoints the chairperson of the committee, although the church administration may make the selection based on a particular individual's expertise.

Meetings

The committee is to meet on a regular basis. Minutes should be recorded on at least a quarterly basis. (Note: For smaller churches, one option is to have safety addressed as a permanent part of staff/board meetings, at least monthly.)

Committee Activities

Self-Inspections help identify physical hazards inside and outside the church. The committee will assist the church safety officer in performing self-inspections of the premises. (A church self-inspection form is available on Adventist Risk Management's website.)

The committee, in conjunction with the church safety officer, should also be involved in reviewing the church's disaster plan. Drills can be practiced with the deacons and other key personnel so they will know their responsibilities during each type of disaster, or a practice evacuation of the entire membership could be conducted during the year.

The committee should review activities and help determine safety elements needed (specific activities should however be approved by the church board in advance). See the Field Trip Activity Planner on the website. Pay particular attention to the need for parental/guardian permission slips and signed medical release forms for minors.

Promoting Safety

The committee will promote safety in numerous ways including the use of:

- Bulletin Boards
- Church Bulletins
- Newsletters
- Sermon Material
- Videos And Films
- Special Announcements
- Discussion At Board Meetings
- Guest Speakers

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 (or near miss incident) is reported, a designated individual (often the safety officer), formally appointed in writing by the committee, should seek to determine the underlying causes of the accident by:

1. Visiting the scene
2. Interviewing witnesses to the accident, 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 if there was improper safety apparel
6. Determining if there was defective equipment
7. Recording information of any other poor conditions

Upon receiving the report from the designated individual, the committee will make written recommendations to the church pastor. The recommendations will include their conclusion as to what caused the accident, and corrective measures to prevent a similar accident in the future. The pastor may choose to present significant findings to the church board for information and possible policy adjustments.

NOTE: All accidents shall be reported immediately per Conference protocols.

