

Safe Church
Overview of Requirements of Pennsylvania and Canon Law
The Episcopal Diocese of Bethlehem
Updated June 2019

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania requires all active clergy (including supply), lay employees, vestry members, and volunteers to obtain clearances in order to continue their positions. The law also requires that employees and volunteers be considered mandated reporters of suspected child abuse. All current clergy and employees must be in compliance with these policies, and clearances need to be renewed every 60 months.

In addition to Pennsylvania law, all active clergy (including supply), lay employees, vestry members, volunteers, and key holders, and teenage assistants (14-17 years) in the Diocese of Bethlehem must complete Safeguarding Trainings. These trainings must be renewed every 36 months. Safeguarding Training is done online. If you do not yet have a username and password, please complete the [Safeguarding Online Training request form](#) (fillable PDF) and email the form to [Paula Lapinski](mailto:Paula.Lapinski).

Please view the appropriate section below to see details about what steps you need to take in order to be compliant with Pennsylvania and Canon law. All links and documents referenced in this guide can be accessed at <https://www.diobeth.org/congregational-resources/parish-management/safe-church>

If you have any questions or run into any issues, please contact Paula at paula@diobeth.org or Megan at megan@diobeth.org, or call 610-691-5655.

Requirements for Clergy and Lay Employees

In the Diocese of Bethlehem we are committed to establishing and maintaining safe environments for children in our congregations and church buildings. All parishes are required to adhere to the Diocesan Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse adopted by Diocesan Council, which are available for download.

[Diocesan Policies](#) (updated March 2019).

1) Complete all required Safeguarding courses online.

All required modules must be completed on the [SafeGuarding website](#). Please note the required modules changed in 2019. SafeGuarding training must be completed every 36 months.

If you've registered previously, your username is your first initial followed by your last name (ex: mdembi), and your password is the last four digits of your phone number followed by "pa" (ex: 5151pa). If you are unable to login, you can click the "I forgot my username/password" links on the bottom of the login screen for help. If you are still unable to login, or you have not yet registered, please email [Paula Lapinski](mailto:Paula.Lapinski), and she will provide you with a username and password.

The following modules must be completed:

Meet Sam
It Happened to Me
Preventing Sexual Activity Between Young Children
Keeping Your Church Safe
Safeguarding God's People: Preventing Sexual Exploitation – for Congregations
Your Policies
Safeguarding God's People: Preventing Sexual Harassment – For Managers and Supervisors
Duty to Report – Mandated Reporter
Social Media Safety

There are additional modules you'll need to take if your church runs a camp or a school. Please consult the attached chart to ensure you are completing the correct modules.

Beginning in 2021, if you've completed all trainings listed above, you may renew your training every 36 months by completing the following modules:

Safeguarding God's People: Preventing Sexual Exploitation – for Congregations
Your Policies
Duty to Report – Mandated Reporter
Social Media Safety
Abuse Prevention Refresher

Please note that items 2-4 must be redone every 60 months in accordance with Pennsylvania law

2) Obtain a Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance.

This can be done through the [online portal](#) or you can submit a [paper form](#) to:
ChildLine and Abuse Registry
Pennsylvania Department of Human Services
PO Box 8170
Harrisburg, PA 17105-8170

Keep in mind that as clergy and lay employees, you cannot register for clearances and background checks as a volunteer. You are considered an employee.

3) Obtain a Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Record Check.

This can be done through the [online portal](#) or you can submit a [paper form](#) to:

Pennsylvania State Police
Central Repository – 164
1800 Elmerton Avenue
Harrisburg, PA 17110-9758

Keep in mind that as clergy and lay employees, you cannot register for clearances and background checks as a volunteer.

4) Obtain an FBI Criminal Background Check.

Go to the [Identigo website](#) and enter the service code **1KG756**. You will then be able to schedule an appointment at a fingerprinting site near you, and learn what you'll need to bring in order to facilitate processing.

For more information about obtaining child abuse clearances and state/FBI background checks, visit PA's [DHS website](#).

5) Keep documents on file in appropriate location

Clergy

Copies of your Child Abuse History Clearance, State Police Criminal Records Check, and FBI Criminal Background check must be stored in the diocesan office, as well as a secure location at your parish. You may email copies to [Paula Lapinski](#), or send them via mail to

Paula Lapinski
The Episcopal Diocese of Bethlehem
333 Wyandotte Street
Bethlehem, PA 18015

Lay Employees

Copies of your Child Abuse History Clearance, State Police Criminal Records Check, and FBI Criminal Background check must be stored in a secure location at your parish.

	Clergy, Staff & Vestry	Clergy, Staff & Vestry Renewal	Volunteers & Keyholders	Volunteers & Keyholders Renewal	Pre-Schools (Grace Montessori, St. Gabriel's, St. Alban's, St. Stepehn's- Whitehall)	Pre-School Renewal	Cathedral addition for Camp Staff
Meet Sam	x		x		x		
It Happened to Me	x		x		x		
Preventing Sexual Activity Between Young Children	x				x		x
Keeping Your Church Safe	x		x				
Safeguarding God's People: Preventing Sexual Exploitation - for Congregations	x	x	x	x			
Your Policies	x		x				
Safeguarding God's People: Preventing Sexual Harassment - for Managers & Supervisors	x						
Duty to Report Mandated Reporter	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Social Media Safety	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Abuse Prevention Refresher		x		x		x	
Abuse Risk Management for Volunteers			x				
Keeping Your School Safe					x	x	
Preventing Bullying					x		x
Safeguarding God's People: Preventing Sexual Haraament - for workers					x	x	
Keeping Your Camp Safe							x