

MinistrySafe

<http://www.ministrysafe.com/>

Why?

Sexual abusers looking for access to children will gravitate to programs or organizations where few protective measures are in place. The widespread nature of child sexual abuse is inescapable. When a child is sexually abused in a Church program, the consequences to child and family are devastating. The impact to a ministry is enormous, and the tarnish to the name and reputation of Christ is immeasurable. Legal exposure related to these issues is large, and growing.

Experts have concluded that whenever there is a gathering of children for at least four days in a row, during any part of the day, for purposes which are recreational, athletic, religious or educational, there is a higher risk of harm to children – including sexual abuse.

How? A Five Part Safety System

The Safety System should be considered by every church for their youth program, children's ministry, VBS or camp activity to enrich the life of the child, while ensuring his or her safety. In order to accomplish this, churches need an overlapping system of protection. MinistrySafe recommends the implementation of a five part system of protection, including:

- Child Sexual Abuse Awareness Training for staff and volunteers
- Training in Skillful Screening
- Appropriate Background Checks
- Effective Policies and Procedures, tailored to individual programs
- Systems for Monitoring and Oversight
-

Cost

There are 3 options; Consultant Led Training, Single Training, and MinistrySafe Online program.

- **Consultant Led Training**

The Consultant Led Training is a training the trainer event. This would be for a church who feels they don't require the added benefit of the resources, tracking system, etc. The cost for this training is \$1500.00 plus expenses. Honestly I only see this as an option say if a presbytery wanted to sponsor a training event for children or youth leaders or if a group of a churches wanted to host again for ministry leaders.

The cons of this option as an individual church use:

- The need for a legal representative to write policies and procedures
- Trained staff to train the staff and volunteers in the area of Sexual Abuse Awareness
- The cost

- **Single Training**

The Single Training is designed for a one time use, and the cost is \$15.00 per person. For example if an individual is going to volunteer for a church event (i.e. VBS) or church camp.

The cons of this option:

- The burden of getting the training is on the individual

- No access to the resources
 - No access to the control panel for tracking
- **MinistrySafe Online Annual Membership**
The cost of the MinistrySafe program is very inexpensive, and may be discontinued at any time . A member pays a \$100 annual fee to access the control panel and resources. The cost for the online training is \$5.00 per trainee.

What do you get for your membership fee?

MinistrySafe members have access to the MinistrySafe Online Safety System. The online tools are designed to make the implementation of the Church's safety system easy.

- Sexual Abuse Awareness Training
- Policies and Procedures
- Screening Documents (Application, Reference Check, and Interview Forms)
- Control Panel for Tracking Your Organization's Safety Information

Training

A user completes a hour Sexual Abuse Awareness online training, they will take a short quiz to receive their certificate of completion. The church is notified of the results. The training may be accessed from any internet connected computer however the trainee may only access at one computer at a time. The training is best viewed using Broadband services due to the slow speed if dial up is used, and may not be downloaded to a computer. They may only be viewed as streaming video.

Online Control Panel

The Online Control Panel allows the church to track everyone who has been entered into the system for training. It allows the user to track the staff/volunteer names, department, reference checks, interviews and completion of background checks.

Resources

- **Policies & Procedures**
Ministry Safe provides comprehensive policies and procedures that have been crafted to realistically fit a Church's individual ministries. The policies are an overflow of their extensive legal experience and their years of service in children and student ministries. As a member of the Ministry Safe program a church has access to the policies for Children's and Student ministries to use as a template for their own policies.
- **Screening Forms**
Ministry Safe offers the most comprehensive screening strategies and forms. They believe that a fine tuned screening process is far more effective than even the best background check. Below are the forms the Church will have access to :
 - Overview of Skillful Screening Procedures
 - Sexual Abuser Characteristics
 - Allowing Abusers to "Opt-Out"
 - Key Risk Indicators
 - Employment Application (designed to elicit high-risk responses)
 - Volunteer Application (designed to elicit high-risk responses)
 - Applicant Statements and Agreed Code of Conduct (employees and volunteers)
 - Safety Application (for employees and volunteers)

- Safety Application – description of high-risk and low-risk responses
- Sample Interview Form
- Interview Instructions
- Interview – description of high-risk and low-risk responses
- Interview – follow-up questions to evasive or high-risk responses
- Reference Form – for use by mail
- Reference Form – for use by telephone
- Instructions for the use of References
- Sample Cover Letter for Reference Form

Founders:

Gregory Love and Kimberlee Norris have a nationwide sexual abuse litigation practice representing victims of sexual abuse throughout the United States. In addition, the firm represents ministries and secular organizations such as the Gladney Center for Adoption, Lena Pope Home (foster care), H.O.P.E. Farm, Covenant Classical School, and church and para-church ministries.

Summary: Jim and Fred after reviewing their website and attending the training: “The MinistrySafe program is one that I could see as a valuable resource to church planters. I thought back to the beginning days of Redemption and the number of children involved in the ministry because of their parents. For the most part, we didn’t know each other from Adam. This would have been a very practical and inexpensive to implement in the structure of ministry organization. Especially after I think back to a couple people who were felt “just weren’t right” even though they shared what seemed to be a sincere interest and love for children. We don’t like to think Christians would be sexual predators however they are. They look like each one of us, normal individuals who love the Lord.”