Safe Church FAQs for Users

Q: What is Safe Church?

A: Safe Church is the official program of the Episcopal Church as passed by General Convention and adopted by our diocese for the protection of people within the church and in its ministries. Safe Church is a comprehensive program including the following major components: Policies, Background Screenings, Training, and Reporting.

Q: Where can you find information about Safe Church?

A: The Episcopal Diocese of Northern California hosts a comprehensive and regularly updated web page regarding Safe Church at: www.norcalepiscopal.org/site/safe-church

Q: What information is on the Diocesan Safe Church page?

A: We have information regarding the following items: Policies, Background Screenings, Training, Reporting, and Administrator guides.

Q: What platform is used for training?

A: The Episcopal Church (via the Church Pension Group) contracts, on behalf of all dioceses and congregations, with Praesidium Academy to host our Safe Church trainings. This service is FREE to our churches.

Q: What if I don't have a Praesidium account?

A: If you do not have a Praesidium account, please contact your church's Safe Church Administrator. Each church is assigned an administrator to manage Praesidium accounts. If you do not know who your Safe Church Administrator is, please contact the Clergy in charge, Senior Warden, or Parish Administrator at your church. If your church does not have a Safe Church Administrator, please contact Michelle Karimi at michelle@norcalepiscopal.org.

Q: What trainings and screenings are required to complete?

A: The Safe Church requirements in the Episcopal Diocese of Northern California can be found on our website linked here, as well as in the chart below (*which is also downloadable if clicked*):

		Background Screenings				
Position	**Mandated Reporter**	**Background Check**	**DMV Records Check**	**Credit Check**	**LiveScan Fingerprinting**	**Promoting a Safe Environment: Employee/Supervisor Sexual Harassment Training – CA**
Clergy	X	X	X	X	X	Required by all clergy and lay employees **ONLY IF** the employer has a comination of 5 or more employees and volunteers (see note below)
Lay Employees	X	X	If authorized to drive	Required for Treasurers and check signers	X	
Unpaid Administrators *(Including Vestry/Mission Committee Members)*	X	X			X	See Note Below
Volunteers	See Note Below	See Note Below			See Note Below	

Q: Who needs to take the California Mandated Reporter training?

A: Per California law AB506, all administrators (paid or unpaid) and employees (clergy & lay) must complete this training. Volunteers 18 years of age or older that have direct contact with, or supervision of, children for more than 16 hours per month or 32 hours per year must also complete this training.

Q: How to take the California Mandated Reporter training?

A: Click here to sign into your Praesidium account. Scroll down to navigate to the list of available trainings. Select the *"**CANRA Mandated Reporter**"* training and click *"Start Course."* As the diocese has access to view completed trainings, you do not need to send us your certificate of completion; however, you should discuss this with your church as they may want a copy for their records.

Q: Where to find the Model Policies for The Episcopal Church and The Diocese of Northern California?

A: The Episcopal Church's Model Policy for the Protection of Children and Youth can be downloaded here, and Model Policy for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults can be downloaded here. Model Policies for The Episcopal Diocese of Northern California be found here.

Q: Who needs to take Sexual Harassment training?

A: Per California law, employers with five or more employees are required to provide sexual harassment prevention training to all clergy, lay employees, and volunteers every two years. This mandatory training (30 minutes) for supervisors and non-supervisory employees must also take place within six months of hire or promotion and every two years thereafter. Taking these individual learner courses in a group setting will not satisfy the requirements.

In determining whether an employer meets the threshold and is subject to the sexual harassment prevention training requirement, independent contractors, volunteers, and unpaid interns are also counted in addition to employees. For example, if an employer has 2 part-time employees and 6 volunteers, the employer would meet the threshold requirement and would need to ensure the 2 part-time employees complete the training. The 6 volunteers would not be required to do so but are welcome to. While volunteers, independent contractors, and unpaid interns are not required to take this training, employers might consider encouraging it as a best practice.

Q: How do you take Sexual Harassment training?

A: Click here to sign into your Praesidium account. Scroll down to navigate to the list of available trainings.

- If you are a supervisor, select the "*Promoting a Safe Environment: Supervisor Sexual Harassment Training – CA" and click "Start Course."*
- If you are not a supervisor, select the "*Promoting a Safe Environment: Employee Sexual Harassment Training – CA" and click "Start Course."*

Q: Who needs to complete a Background Check?

A: Per California law, all administrators (paid or unpaid) and employees (clergy & lay) must complete a background check. Volunteers 18 years of age or older that have direct contact with, or supervision of, children for more than 16 hours per month or 32 hours per year must also complete a background check.

Q: How to complete a Background Check?

A: For new clergy, a full background check must be completed through Oxford Documents. Please contact Jacqi Seppi at jacqi@norcalepiscopal.org for assistance with this. Administrators, lay employees, and required volunteers must reach out to your church's Safe Church Administrator as they will need to initiate the request before you can complete the form. Once the Safe Church Administrator places the request, you can log into your Praesidium account, scroll through the list of trainings, and click on "*Background Check.*" From there you simply complete and submit the form online.

Q: How often does a Background Check need to be renewed?

A: Background checks must be renewed every three years through Praesidium.

Q: Who needs to have a Credit Check?

A: All Treasurers and check signers must complete a Credit Check.

Q: How to complete a Credit Check?

A: Credit Checks can only be initiated by the Diocesan Safe Church Administrator. To run a Credit Check, Safe Church Administrators must email the full name and email address of the individual(s) in need of a credit check. Please email this information to Michelle Karimi at michelle@norcalepiscopal.org with your request for a credit check to initiate the credit check process.

Q: Who needs to complete a LiveScan?

A: Per California law AB506, all administrators (paid or unpaid) and employees (clergy & lay) must complete a fingerprint based state and federal-level LiveScan background screening. Volunteers 18 years of age or older that have direct contact with, or supervision of, children for more than 16 hours per month or 32 hours per year must also complete a LiveScan.

Q: How to complete a LiveScan?

A: Follow the steps below to complete a LiveScan:

1. Download, complete, and send the BCIA 9018 – CalVECHS Waiver Agreement to michelle@norcalepiscopal.org
2. Download, complete and print the BCIA 8016VECHS – Request for LiveScan Service: Employee | Volunteer *(you will submit this to a LiveScan operator)*
3. Go to: https://oag.ca.gov/fingerprints/locations
4. Scroll down and select your county from the list
5. Visit the nearest LiveScan location to you.
6. Submit your BCIA 8016VECHS form to the LiveScan operator
7. Pay the fee to the operator *(please let us know ahead of time if you need a scholarship to cover the cost)*
8. Get fingerprinted

Q: If I have previously completed a LiveScan elsewhere, do I need to complete it again?

A: LiveScan fingerprinting results cannot be used for multiple purposes. Each LiveScan submission is tied to a specific request or agency and is processed for a particular background check purpose. Therefore, even if you have had a LiveScan completed elsewhere, you will still need to complete a new one with our application form.

Q: Are the previous Safe Church, Safe Communities trainings no longer required?

A: In an effort to simplify the process, we are only requiring what is required by state and federal laws while still holding space for and recommending the other trainings. While no longer required, the Safe Church, Safe Communities trainings are still available at no cost to churches and may be completed.

Q: Who is the Diocesan Intake Officer?

A: The Rev. Nancy Streufert is the Intake Officer for the diocese. The Intake Officer will listen with respect, offer pastoral care, create a written report regarding the concern(s) presented and response, and answer questions about the process. Anyone may contact the diocesan intake officer to report concerns about the behavior of a member of a clergy person. This initiates a process, when appropriate, to hold clergy accountable for their behavior. You can reach The Rev. Nancy Streufert at 707-840-6016, or revnancysstreufert@gmail.com. Please note: Clergy members are REQUIRED to report to the intake officer anything that may constitute an offense and to cooperate with the clergy disciplinary process.