

# **THOMAS JEFFERSON DISTRICT CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION REQUIREMENTS**

(Approved at the TJD Annual Meeting, April 2005, with Educational Supplement)

## **PREAMBLE**

We, the Thomas Jefferson District, as an institutional body of religious communities, recognize the importance of creating communities where everyone, especially our children and youth, are safe. We recognize that religious communities must be dedicated to the creation of safe environments for all our members, particularly our children and teenage youth, who are vulnerable to incidents of abuse.

We recognize that present in our religious communities is a high level of trust, a welcoming of newcomers, and a strong reliance on volunteers to serve in our programs for children and youth. Given these factors in our communities we feel it is necessary for us to adopt protection requirements and explanatory guidelines to guard against incidents of abuse. We further realize that institutions operating in the best manner possible with all due concern for our children and youth still cannot guarantee an absolutely risk-free environment.

We recognize that to adequately address the need for safe environments, it will mean change and sacrifice of some convenience, yet we know it is our responsibility to respond to the reality of our situation and to our children and youth. Our faith calls us to create the kind of safe and non-violent environments that lend themselves to justice in human interactions.

In this spirit, we endorse the following requirements for events conducted under the purview of the Thomas Jefferson District, and strongly urge our member congregations to adopt them for local activities involving children and youth.

## **REQUIREMENTS STATEMENT**

The requirements will encompass the following topics:

- I. Screening and Selection of Workers with Children and Youth
- II. Supervision Requirements
- III. Procedures for Reporting, Response, and Removal of an Advisor
- IV. Code of Conduct for Workers with Children and Youth
- V. Implementation and Education

These requirements will apply to all Thomas Jefferson District (TJD) sponsored events such as, but not limited to:

- District Conferences
- Religious Education Cluster Events
- District Youth Steering Committee (DYSC) conferences and DYSC sanctioned youth conferences hosted by congregations
- Religious Education Week Conference, if co-sponsored by the district.

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## **SCREENING AND SELECTION OF WORKERS WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

### **Screening**

With the exception of parents assisting in their child's program, all other workers who provide direct care or supervision of children or teenage youth at Thomas Jefferson District events, including adults serving on the District Youth Steering Committee, must meet the following criteria:

- The advisor for youth must have been active in a TJD congregation for at least six months. It is strongly recommended that advisors for high school aged youth be at least 25 years old, with a required minimum of 22 years of age for middle school youth. For nursery care and all other grade-levels, it is recommended that workers be at least 18 years of age.
- All compensated workers must consent to a criminal background check and such check must be performed.
- All applicants for compensated positions must complete an application form and supply two references. These references should be people who have known the applicant for at least three years, preferably in relation to previous work with children or youth. Government-issued photo identification, such as a driver's license, must be presented.
- All workers must sign the Code of Conduct form.

### **EVENT SUPERVISION RECOMMENDATIONS**

A minimum of two adults should be scheduled to supervise groups. Exceptions for exigent circumstances only may be made by the primary on-site adult leader.

For the purposes of these requirements a "group" is defined as those minors who have been assigned to a nursery, preschool, or individual class or specific program or activity within the context of that class, as well as youth who are taking part in a planned, organized component of their program.

Minimum adult-to-child/youth ratio is as follows:

- Nursery/Preschool—1:6
- Elementary—1:6
- Middle School—1:8
- High School—1:10

If the host site for an event involving children and youth has established more stringent adult-to-child/youth ratios, those of the host site will be used instead of the above ratios.

Corporal punishment may not be used under any circumstances.

If an adult other than a parent or guardian has a private one-to-one meeting with a child or youth during the event, another worker in the program shall be notified about the meeting, either before the meeting or promptly afterward.

No adult, other than a parent, guardian, or sponsor is to be alone with a child or youth off-site.

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Youth who are attending a TJD sponsored event must be accompanied by an on-site advisor. Each advisor may sponsor up to ten youth per event. It is the responsibility of the organizers of each event to ensure that each youth has a sponsor.

### **Transportation To and From District Events**

It is the responsibility of the local congregation or the participant's parents to provide safe transportation to and from TJD events. The TJD strongly recommends that all youth ride with adults who meet the requirements below.

### **Transportation During District Events**

All drivers must be at least 25 years of age, hold a valid driver's license, and must provide proof of motorist insurance.

The vehicle must be equipped with seatbelts for all youth passengers, and seatbelts are to be used when transporting youth during district events.

Written permission of the parent/guardian of all minor passengers will be obtained prior to being transported. This permission will include all relevant details pertaining to the event, such as date and location, name of driver(s), time of departure and time of return.

No driver may consume alcohol or use any form of drug which can affect physical or mental performance during or before carrying out his/her duty as a driver.

A minimum of two adults must accompany a group going off-site. Exceptions for exigent circumstances only may be made by the primary on-site adult leader.

## **REPORTING OF INCIDENTS, RESPONSE, AND REMOVAL OF AN ADVISOR**

### **Reporting**

All persons affiliated with a TJD event, including compensated workers, volunteers, adults, or youth, who acquire knowledge or a reasonable suspicion that one or more youth at a District event has been sexually molested or exploited, injured or been the victim of significant objectionable conduct shall immediately report the incident to the person in charge of the event.

Every person in charge of an event to whom a report of molestation, injury, or objectionable conduct is made shall immediately:

- (i) determine whether they occupy the status of a person required under the law of the jurisdiction in which the incident occurred to report such incident to law enforcement authorities, and if so, the person shall report the incident to such authorities;
- (ii) report the incident in writing to either the District Executive or the Program Consultant of the TJD; and
- (iii) report the incident to the parent of the apparent victim. In addition, it is advisable that the incident be reported to the Senior Minister of the congregation with which the apparent victim is affiliated, provided, however, that such reports are not required if good reasons exist for not doing so and such good reasons are expressed in a writing delivered immediately to the District Executive or Program Consultant of the TJD.

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Adults who, although neither a person in charge of an event nor a person affiliated with the event, nevertheless acquire knowledge or a reasonable suspicion that one or more youth at a TJD event has been sexual molested or exploited, injured, or been the victim of significant objectionable conduct, (i) must consider whether they are required to report the incident to the law enforcement authorities of the jurisdiction in which the incident occurred, and if so, report the incident, (ii) notify the parent of the apparent victim, and (iii) should, unless good reasons exist for doing otherwise, report the incident to the District Executive or Program Consultant of the TJD.

Definitions of persons required to report, and what must be reported, under the laws of North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, Tennessee and Georgia, and an explanation of procedures to follow when making a statutorily required report, are found in Insert A to these requirements.

### **Response to Media Inquiries**

Only the District Executive or Lifespan Program Consultant (or her/his specific designee) may speak for the TJD in response to media inquiries concerning an alleged incident of abuse, injury, or objectionable conduct.

Please see Insert B to these requirements for further information.

### **Removal of an Adult Advisor**

Should circumstances or events arise that indicate that an adult advisor is no longer a suitable person for working with children or youth, said adult will be removed from involvement or contact with children or youth. Any person with concerns about an adult advisor shall contact the District Lifespan Program Consultant or District Executive, who will assess the need for removal. The District Staff then will consult with necessary parties, including appropriate leadership of the advisor's local congregation and the Thomas Jefferson District Youth Steering Committee (TJ DYSC) to determine whether such action is necessary. The District staff then will inform the TJD Board President and their appropriate supervisor in the District Services Staff Group of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

In taking any such action, the District Staff will afford the affected worker or advisor an opportunity to know the charges against him or her, to know the evidence, and source thereof, supporting such charges, and the right to reply to or rebut such charges.

It is understood that such action will be handled with due caution and discretion, and that the District Staff of the TJD has the full backing and support of the TJD Board in implementing this policy. Because of potential exposure to charges of discrimination or other legal hazard, the Board shall be promptly advised of the circumstances surrounding any removal action under this policy.

Although these requirements are designed for TJD sponsored events, individual congregations are encouraged to develop their own requirements in concert with these.

Recommended by the task force comprised of:

- ~Laurel Amabile, TJD Lifespan Program Consultant
- ~Lindsey Bergman, TJ District Youth Steering Committee
- ~Kathleen Carpenter, Religious Educator
- ~Qiyamah Rahman, TJ District Executive
- ~Ed Wilde, TJD Trustee, UUA Board

**Approved 4/2005**

# THOMAS JEFFERSON DISTRICT, UUA

## Code of Conduct for Adults Working with Children and Youth

Adults working with children and youth in programs sponsored by the Thomas Jefferson District and its affiliated groups, are in a position of stewardship and play a key role in fostering spiritual development of both individual participants and the program community. Adults are expected to nurture the physical, emotional, and spiritual growth of children and youth by fostering an environment of kindness, trust, respectfulness, and fun. No one's enjoyment should ever be at the expense of another person's health, well being, or self-esteem. While onsite at TJD youth conferences, adult advisors are expected to abide by the conference or event rules and behavior guidelines. For example, the "Big Four" guidelines of 1) No illegal drugs or alcohol, 2) No sex, 3) No smoking, and 4) No violence or weapons.

The following are specific expectations set forth for all adults working with children and youth at TJD sponsored events:

- **Sleep**—Workers at district events are expected to get adequate sleep during district events, so that they may be alert and clear thinking, and able to maintain good judgment and perform their expected duties in a competent and professional manner.
- **"Friendship" with Youth**—It is natural for youth and adults to develop a genuine fondness for one another, **but it is** not appropriate for adults to look to youth for "friendship." Adult workers must be mature enough to assume responsibility for the youth during district events. The adults must understand the power differentials in their relationships with youth and must be able to maintain healthy and appropriate boundaries with youth and other adults.
- **Unofficial Contact with Youth**—Sometimes a genuine mentoring relationship will develop between a youth and an adult. Such relationships can be not only healthy, but transformative for both. In some cases, however, if adults do not have the best interest and well being of the youth at heart, the relationship could become exploitative. Any relationship developed with a youth outside of TJD sponsored events must be with the full knowledge and consent of the parents. It is in the best interest of both the adult and the youth that the parents as well as district or congregation leader be aware of these outside activities.
- **Sexualized Behavior**— Engaging in any manner of sexual behavior with a child or youth is never appropriate. This refers not only to explicitly sexual behavior, but also to sexually provocative behavior or language. Physical expressions of affection, such as hugs, are best initiated by the youth and kept from being prolonged by the adult.
- **Confidentiality**—Adults working with children and youth under the aegis of the district are responsible not only to the children and youth, but to the district as well. In the event that a child or youth participant discloses information that s/he is experiencing physical or substance abuse, or is a danger to self or others, the adult worker must not keep the information a secret. Adults may be bound by certain state reporting laws (see insert A for reporting statues). If such a disclosure is made, encourage the child or youth to seek help from a parent or other authority figure. In addition, the adult worker must inform the TJD staff about the situation, so that an appropriate course of action can be determined.

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## Accordance with this Code of Conduct

By signing below, the signer indicates s/he has been informed of this code and agrees to abide by it before assuming their work with children and/or youth involved in district activities. In cases of violation of this code, appropriate action will be taken.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

Role/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Congregation \_\_\_\_\_

Date Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Event/Location/Date(s) \_\_\_\_\_

### REFERENCE AND BACKGROUND CHECK AUTHORIZATION FORM

The names and contact information for three references (including at least one congregational leader or professional staff person) who have known you for at least three years and can recommend you as appropriate for a leadership role in programs for children and youth:

1) Name \_\_\_\_\_ Role \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

2) Name \_\_\_\_\_ Role \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

3) Name \_\_\_\_\_ Role \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

I give my authorization for TJD leaders to check my references and to conduct a criminal background check prior to any work I perform with children and youth at the TJD sponsored event. Should my application be accepted, I agree to be bound by the protection requirements and policies set forth by the TJD regarding child care and youth workers.

Name (printed) \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security # \_\_\_\_\_ Photo ID # \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

**Do not write below this line; for office use only**

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Reviewed & Signed     Reference Checked     Background Check     Copy on File     Rejected  
**Approved 4/2005**

**THOMAS JEFFERSON DISTRICT, UUA  
CHILD CARE AND YOUTH WORKER APPLICATION FORM, Part I**

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

The Role or Position you are applying for \_\_\_\_\_

**CONGREGATION HISTORY AND PRIOR WORK WITH CHILDREN AND/OR YOUTH**

List the congregations you have attended regularly during the past five years:

<u>Name of Congregation</u>	<u>City/State</u>	<u>Dates</u>
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List all previous congregational work involving children and/or youth (for example: the name of congregation, names of advisors/religious educators, your role, and responsibilities performed during your service.)

List all previous community (non-church) work involving children and/or youth (for example: name of organizations, addresses, supervisors' names, your role, and responsibilities performed during your service.)

List any gifts, callings, training, education or other factors that have prepared you for work with children and/or youth:

~<date>

**Approved 4/2005**



**THOMAS JEFFERSON DISTRICT, UUA  
PARTICIPATION RELEASE AND AUTHORIZATION  
FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT OF MINORS**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, the undersigned represent that I am the Parent/Guardian of \_\_\_\_\_, my son/daughter. I grant permission for my child to participate in the following adult supervised activity:

\_\_\_\_\_. The activity will take place at the following location(s): \_\_\_\_\_ from (date & time) \_\_\_\_\_ to (date & time) \_\_\_\_\_, and I grant permission for my son/daughter to be transported to and from the location by reasonable and safe means.

I agree and hereby do release and hold harmless the Thomas Jefferson District, the hosting member congregation and/or any and all adult supervisors for the activity, from and for any and all liability which may arise for damages, loss or injuries, either to person or property, which my son/daughter may sustain while engaged in the activity conducted, including, but not limited to, any damages, loss or injuries that may be sustained through transportation to and from the activity.

Should any injury occur, I grant permission for my son/daughter to receive emergency treatment from an appropriate health care provider to be selected by the adult supervisor of the activity, when, in such supervisor's opinion, the need for such treatment is immediate, and when efforts to contact me (us) are unsuccessful. I also agree to pay and be responsible for all medical, hospital or other expenses which the Thomas Jefferson District and/or any and all adult supervisors may incur as a result of securing such treatment.

I further agree to assume responsibility for any liability which may arise for damages, loss or injuries, as described herein which may be caused or contributed to by my son/daughter to the person or property of others.

Name (printed) \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship to Participant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Home address: \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
Home phone number: \_\_\_\_\_ Emergency phone number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Family Physician/Practice: \_\_\_\_\_ Physician's phone number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Parent or Guardian's Employer: \_\_\_\_\_  
Health Insurance provider: \_\_\_\_\_ Policy/Group#: \_\_\_\_\_  
Child's Allergies: \_\_\_\_\_ Physical limitations: \_\_\_\_\_  
Medicine Child is currently taking: \_\_\_\_\_ Other needs \_\_\_\_\_

**Approved 4/2005**

~Revised, Oct 2003

## Insert A\*

# Mandatory Reporting Statutes in the Thomas Jefferson District

(Compiled by Dr. Charles Hewitt)

Mandated reporters of child or elder abuse or neglect in all 50 states and the District of Columbia are: medical personnel, school personnel, daycare providers, social service personnel, mental health care personnel and law enforcement personnel. North Carolina and Tennessee require **all** the aforementioned persons, (**including** clergy members) to be mandated reporters. Georgia and South Carolina further include as mandated reporters any persons who process or produce visual or printed matter of a minor being sexually exploited.

In the states comprising the Thomas Jefferson District (NC, SC, VA, TN and GA), only South Carolina has excused clergy members from reporting incidents of abuse/neglect **if** the information was obtained during privileged confidential communication; however, clergy members in South Carolina must report any abuse/neglect that they observe while performing their duties, including some other role different than “priest and penitent.”

The extent of the knowledge that triggers the legal duty to report is “a reasonable cause to suspect” abuse/neglect. The report must be made to a child protection agency or a law enforcement agency. Reporting only to a parent or relative will **not** satisfy the reporter’s legally-mandated duty to report. Every state and the District of Columbia has a law that absolutely protects any reporter of abuse/neglect from civil and criminal liability as long as the report was made in “good faith.”

In Georgia, reports are made to the local county Department of Children and Family Services. Call 1-800-4 A CHILD for a county listing.

In North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia, reports are made to the local county Department of Social Services. Call 1-800-4 A CHILD for a county listing.

In Tennessee, reports are made to the local county Department of Children’s Services. Call 1-800-4 A CHILD for a county listing.

In the Thomas Jefferson District, two states have child abuse/neglect hotlines:

- ◆ North Carolina: 919-733-2580
- ◆ Virginia: 1-800-552-7906

THE NATIONAL CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT HOTLINE TELEPHONE NUMBERS:

- ◆ 1-800-4 A CHILD
- ◆ 1-800-422-4453
- ◆ TDD: 800-2 A CHILD

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## **Insert B**

**Responding to the Media**—If the media contacts a congregation, district body or leader about an alleged abusive situation involving the district, only the District Executive or Program Consultant (or her/his specific designee) should speak for the Thomas Jefferson District. In general, the following requirements apply for these situations with the public media:

- So long as the speaker has reason to believe that the incident has been reported to the District Executive or Program Consultant serving the Thomas Jefferson District, the media should be referred to these professional staff for a substantive response to the inquiry.
- Because of the issue of confidentiality, in the best interests of the child or youth, we cannot discuss specific cases in a public context. Particularly if litigation seems possible, it is important that we protect both the district and the interests of the child or youth. An appropriate response to further media inquiry is for the speaker to state that s/he wishes to protect the confidentiality of the apparent victim and cannot comment on the details of the situation for that reason.
- The District Executive or Program Consultant can freely discuss the steps the district has taken to guard against abusive situations.
- In any subsequent litigation, details provided by any person with even apparent authority of the Thomas Jefferson District or any of its member congregations may be used against those entities.

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## **Insert C**

### **IMPLEMENTATION AND EDUCATION**

Initially, the proposal should be presented in draft form, and input be solicited from congregations. A copy of the draft should be sent to each congregation with a reasonable period specified for a response. The proposal should be revised on the basis of the responses received. Then the revision would be presented to congregations at both district meetings and cluster meetings.

#### **Implementation**

Once the requirements are accepted by the Board, the requirements and a cover letter will be sent directly to the following parties:

- TJD Board and Staff
- TJD RE Committee members
- TJ DYSC Leaders
- TJD Ministers and the President of the Southeast UU Ministers' Association (SEUUMA)
- Religious Education leaders of congregations in TJD and the President of the Southeast Liberal Religious Educators' Association (LREDA)
- Youth Advisors in local congregations in TJD
- Site Coordinators and Staff for upcoming district events, such as District Annual Meeting, Fall Leadership Conferences, and DYSC-sponsored Youth Conferences.

An article will be prepared for the next issue of the TJ Connections and RE Connections newsletters.

An electronic announcement will be sent out via the TJD Board and Committees-L.

#### **Education**

Facilitate District Workshops--facilitators will be identified to lead risk management workshops for congregational lay and professional leaders at upcoming conferences or cluster events.

Provide Support Materials to congregations and leaders – Purchase recommended resource and training materials for the TJD RE Lending Library. A list of available resources will be included in the initial mailing of the requirements, in the packets for risk management workshop participants, and in district newsletters.

Maintain the Program – To ensure that district leaders continue to maintain the safety of events for children and youth, a task force appointed by the TJD Board will review the requirements and make appropriate revisions every two years.

Promote Safe Congregation Practices– These requirements have been developed specifically for district events, though congregations are strongly encouraged to use these to develop their own safety requirements and risk management practices.

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## Supplemental Resource for Educational Purposes

### **SAFETY AND RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES FOR CONGREGATION LEADERS**

By Laurel Amabile, Southeast Regional Lifespan Program Consultant, UUA

Recent events and societal trends have prompted more questions and concerns about safety policies and risk management procedures to protect children and youth in our congregations. Though this can be a complicated and uncomfortable subject for congregation leaders and volunteers, greater awareness and research over the past decade have led to a variety of recommended safety procedures, protection considerations, and risk management resources.

Congregations may handle the screening of volunteers working with children and youth varying ways, but in a growing number of congregations, districts and volunteer-based agencies, written applications, reference and criminal background checks are conducted routinely for all staff and volunteers. Many UU congregations have developed comprehensive safety policies and standardized procedures they use to protect children and set forth expectations for their volunteers. Volunteer applications and criminal background checks are essential in congregations experiencing rapid growth and those with populations of people advisable moving in and out of the area (military bases, technology centers, universities).

Consider the following advice and recommendations:

- 1) Do not recruit RE volunteers who are new to your congregation--allow at least six months for them to function appropriately in the life of the congregation. Some individuals and families come directly with years of service at other UU congregations. These folks may be experienced enough to work with children and youth sooner than six months, though it is best to contact that congregation for references and recommendations from the Director of RE or the Parish Minister.
- 2) Orient and train all RE volunteers to the RE Program, policies, and expectations-- Providing a packet of materials that includes a calendar for the year, child and faith development info, suggestions for RE teachers, and RE program policies, including safety policies and procedures. Include a copy of the Code of Ethics for Adults (and Older Youth) Working with Children and Youth with this material.
- 3) Have all church staff and volunteers working with children and youth review and sign a copy of the above code of ethics YEARLY and keep signed copies on file in the office.
- 4) Put in writing and make official (by governing board sanction or vote) any policies and procedures in place related to safety:
  - a) Institute Universal Precautions for infectious diseases, handling of bodily fluids, etc, especially Nursery and toddler caregivers.
  - b) Establish an emergency evacuation procedure for your facilities and schedule practice drills at least once a year.
  - c) Develop clearly defined behavior/safety expectations for children, youth and adults for both inside and outside of the church building (such as playground safety procedures)

d) Medical Release Form to be provided for any off-site field trip or church -sponsored activity--signed by parent/guardian with copies of the forms provided to the assigned drivers or chaperones. Copies of driver's licenses and insurance cards should be kept on file as well.

e) Use written applications for mentors of youth, or any volunteers who will be working with children or youth in congregation-sponsored programs and activities conducted both on and off-site. (For sample forms and responsible staffing recommendations online at the UUA website, visit: <http://www.uua.org/programs/ministry/responsiblestaffing.html> )

5) Review your church liability policy to track responsibilities and areas of liability related to all RE activities and programs involving children and youth.

a) Inspect insurance policy for who empowers all non-ordained staff and/or volunteers in their scopes of responsibility--is it the governing board that is responsible? The Parish Minister? Is the DRE or RE Committee accountable for incidents related to children and youth during RE-sponsored events?

b) Know how claims are handled in the event of playground accident and for any accidents in cars driven by staff or volunteers. (It is a good idea to have a copy of your volunteer drivers' license and insurance card on file when trips are scheduled.)

c) All of these conditions can vary from policy to policy and additional professional insurance or steps may need to be put in place, if the policies are lacking certain coverage. Consult with your congregation's insurance representative/agent for further clarification and recommendations.

d) Contact your state officials about the existence of "Good Samaritan" provisions that may protect volunteers during their service to your organization.

6) Document any incidents or reports of injuries or accidents and keep on file. Use a standardized form, and make sure RE incidents are reported to the Minister. Research done by Christian Ministry Resources indicates that 1 in 50 churches are sued each year, most related to injury claims.

### **Other things to explore related to safety and risk management in churches:**

1) The Ratio of adults to children or youth--avoid having only one adult in a room with children and youth; at least two caregivers is advised for every group of children and youth.

2) Assess your congregation's areas of vulnerability. Ask yourselves: Can children or youth be isolated in our buildings or grounds? Can those in upstairs classrooms get out of the building in the case of an emergency, such as fire? Are there windows in the doors so that classroom activities can be monitored?

3) Provide training for staff and volunteers in basic first aid, universal precautions (handling bodily fluids and dealing with infectious diseases), child abuse protection, and fire safety procedures.

4) Determine the process to be followed if there is an incident or accusation of abuse or neglect. Know your state laws on reporting abuse or neglect, for mandatory reporting status varies from state to state.

5) Discuss the behaviors you would look for which are indicators of inappropriate conduct or potential abuse. Make sure that the Minister or Director of Religious Education is aware of anyone who is observed behaving inappropriately with a child or youth.

6) Determine how often there should be an inspection of the congregation's playground equipment, toys, and classroom areas to ensure ongoing safety.

Legal advisors of nonprofit organizations and churches advise that these steps be taken to provide a safe environment and to *demonstrate the intent to protect and ensure safety* through explicit means, such as written safety policies and procedures, medical release forms, safe practices and proper training of staff and volunteers. In addition, we have the moral obligation to do so as faith organizations and leaders.

In addition, there are various sample policies, procedures and forms already developed that can be used as models for developing your own policies and procedures, such as medical release forms, code of ethics statements, incident documentation forms. Many of these are available via the UUA website, through the Congregational Services or Lifespan Faith Development staff groups.

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ON THE SUBJECT OF RISK MANAGEMENT AND SAFETY IN CONGREGATIONS**

### **UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION RESOURCES:**

UUA website address: [www.uua.org](http://www.uua.org) Main Telephone # 617-742-2100.

The UUA Office of Congregational Services has a number of good resources in that section of the website. <http://www.uua.org/cde/education/safecong.html>

Responsible Staffing, a 2005 online resource for staff screening and employment available through the Department of Ministry & Professional Leadership:

<http://www.uua.org/programs/ministry/responsiblestaffing.html>

Balancing Acts: Keeping Children Safe in Congregations, an online resource by Debra W. Haffner, available via the Congregational Services Office,

<http://www.uua.org/cde/ethics/balancing/index.html>

Creating Safe Congregations, 1997, edited by Pat Hoertdoerfer and William Sinkford, UUA Bookstore Item #5331. UUA Bookstore: 1-800-215-9076, or online: [www.uua.org/bookstore](http://www.uua.org/bookstore)

A second edition of this valuable resource is now being created.

The UUA Congregation Handbook, property insurance section:

<http://www.uua.org/cde/handbook/conghand-19a.htm>. Full handbook is available via the UUA Book Store.

The Safety/Abuse Clearinghouse Resource Packet, available from the RE Department. Contact Pat Hoertdoerfer, Director of Children, Families, and Intergenerational Programs.

Email: [phoertdoerfer@uua.org](mailto:phoertdoerfer@uua.org), or call 617-742-2100 ext 362.

The UUA's Our Whole Lives, sexuality education series offers advice on issues related to sexual abuse and safety. These materials are available from the UUA Book store and may be borrowed from district RE Lending Libraries or the UUA Lifespan Faith Development lending library.

The UUA Office of Church Staff Finance can provide some information for congregations and leaders, [www.uua.org](http://www.uua.org), in the Ministry and Professional Leadership section.

## **OTHER SOURCES:**

American Camp Association, <http://www.acacamps.org/>  
<http://bookstore.acacamps.org/ecommerce/Shop> for bookstore with Risk Management resources.

Safe and Secure: The Alban Guide to Protecting Your Congregation, 1999, by Jeffrey W. Hanna, Alban Institute publication #AL202. Alban Institute book store: 1-800-486-1318 ext 244, or online: [www.alban.org](http://www.alban.org)

Energize Volunteer Resource Catalog and website: [www.energizeinc.com](http://www.energizeinc.com), or 1-800-395-9800.

Church Mutual Insurance Co, 1-800-554-2642, UUA's insurance company:  
<http://www.churchmutual.com/> (This company has a check sheet with a variety of free copies of risk management materials which you can request via the mail.)

Risk Management Handbook, published by Christian Ministries Resources, Institute for Church Leadership, <http://www.iclonline.com/>, 704-821-3845. On this website there is a link to the GuideOne Insurance Company, which has a number of excellent on-line resources for risk management. The web address: [www.guideonecenter.com](http://www.guideonecenter.com)

Also available from the Institute for Church Leadership website, <http://www.iclonline.com/>  
The 2002 Cambridge Program in Risk Management for Churches and Schools, at website address: <http://cmr.gospelcom.net/cambridge.htm>

## BACKGROUND SCREENING SERVICES

➤ **National Background Investigations** <http://www.nationalbackground.com/contactus/index.html>

PO Box 966, Sevensville, MD 21666

**410-604-6200 phone/410-604-2496 fax**

**Email:** [Ilene@nationalbackground.com](mailto:Ilene@nationalbackground.com)

**Services:** Offer national background screening services.

➤ **Oxford Document Management Company**

[www.oxforddoc.com](http://www.oxforddoc.com)

**1-800-801-9114**

**Services:** The offer five, ten, and fifteen year background referencing.

**Fees:** Fees range from \$90-\$15.00, depending on how far back one needs to go.

➤ **Screen Church Staff**

[www.ScreenChurchStaff.com](http://www.ScreenChurchStaff.com)

**Offered by Christian Ministry Resources**

**Services:** A range of services to meet lay and professional needs in a congregation.

**Fees:** Depends on the number of services done. Their recommended package for church volunteers is about \$65.00

➤ **ScreenNow**

[www.choicepoint.com](http://www.choicepoint.com)

**Recommended by Church Mutual**

**1-800-853-2414**

**Email:** [info@screennow.com](mailto:info@screennow.com)

**Services:** There are several options with a 15% discount for those organizations with Church Mutual insurance policies. A one-time membership fee of \$50 is required.

**Fees:** Fees range for Church Mutual customers depends on which option(s) one chooses. The National Criminal file search is \$21.25; the cost for county criminal searches is \$13.60 per county. State criminal records search (where available) is \$4.25 per state. Motor vehicle reports are \$4.25 per state.

➤ **State and Local Agencies**

Many states now have online resources for conducting criminal background checks for volunteers and employees. In addition, most states have websites that identify all registered child abusers and sexual predators.

➤ **Volunteer Select** (associated with ChoicePoint)

[www.volunteersselect.com](http://www.volunteersselect.com)

**678-893-9600** (for technical assistance)

**Services:** Volunteer screening require a \$25 one-time membership fee.

Social Security Screen, National Criminal File, Sexual Offender Search