

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Alaska Conference of Seventh-day Adventists



Child Protection is a high priority of the Alaska Conference and the Seventh-day Adventist Church at large. These organizations are working with Adventist Risk Management to develop safety standards in our churches and schools for individuals who work with children. To this end, the Alaska Conference has developed policy in regards to three areas:

1. **Church Child Protection Plan:** Each school, church, company and group within the Alaska Conference is required to enact a child protection plan. Plans must be written and a copy provided to Administration along with a list of individuals who work with your children who must complete a background check. To get started, provided is the Child Protection Resource Guide for SDA Pastors which includes guidelines for putting a child protection plan in place. **Plans must be submitted to the conference by April 15, 2017** and renewed annually, however you may want to adjust this time to align with nominating committee or the start of the school year to capture volunteer changes. Addition church resources and informational videos on child protection are available at <https://adventistrisk.org/prevention-resources/safety-topics/child-and-youth-activities/child-protection>.
2. **Background Checks:** It is the policy of the Alaska Conference that individuals that work with children ages 18 and under will undergo a background check to include criminal and sexual offender screening. Background checks will be conducted every three years **for both volunteers and employees**. The conference has joined with the North American Division in utilizing Verified Volunteers to complete this process. The process to enable a volunteer to work with children includes:
 - a. The volunteer is a member in good standing for a minimum of six months at your church
 - b. The Individual will complete a Volunteer Information form to include three non-related individuals as references and complete a background check. This process includes a) the volunteer or employee establishing an account with Verified Volunteers at <http://www.ncsrisk.org/adventist/>, b) completing an on-line class in regards to child safety, and c) providing personal information for the background check.
 - c. The local church Volunteer Service Committee will complete the reference checks, provide the volunteer with the Code of Conduct and complete the "Local Board Action" section on the Volunteer Ministry Form. The form is then forwarded to the conference office for review and approval.

Once the background check is complete, an online copy will be available to the Alaska Conference for review and approval. All information received is kept in complete confidentiality. The cost of background checks is being covered by the conference at this time.

Each location has the option of appointing a local volunteer coordinator who can access the automated system and review the status of their church volunteers. When appointing the coordinator consider the information that they may access is personal and confidential and nature.

3. **Registered Sexual Offenders:** Churches may encounter individuals who want to worship at church who are registered sex offenders. To assist churches in this process, the Alaska Conference has provided guidelines on how to effectively attend to these individuals in your congregation. Provided are a) Suggested Policy for the Local Church and b) a Registered Sex Offender Commitment form.

If you have questions about establishing a child protection plan or registered sex offenders, please contact me. Questions in regards to individuals needing background checks can be directed to Brenda Campbell Johnson at alaskainfo@ac.npuc.org.