

Safe Sanctuary FAQs

Do all paid employees need all 3 certifications (FBI, state and ChildLine)?

Yes, all paid employees regardless of time living in the State or job title must be fingerprinted and have a PA background check as well as Childline check every 5 years.

What is the required time one is to live in the state of PA to forego the FBI background check?

This is only for volunteers who live in the state of PA for 10 consecutive years. A waiver must be signed stating this to be true and keep waiver on file with the other clearances.

Can a pastor or other event leader drive neighborhood children and/or vulnerable and older adults to and from church and/or church events?

No, this is a violation of protocol unless there are two unrelated people in the same vehicle with the children or adults being transported who have their clearances.

If there is a clothing ministry, food bank, meal ministry at the church must the volunteers also have their clearances?

Yes, unless there are no older/vulnerable adults or children attending (which may be unlikely in most cases). In the past these services considered the children attending be with parents at all times so clearances for those volunteering were not necessary; however, with the resolution of older and vulnerable adults they are required.

Do you still need 2 adults with clearances at meetings with older/vulnerable adults?

If the group does not contain a high-risk group of vulnerable adults i.e. hearing impaired, then one adult with clearances will suffice.

What are considered high risk groups for the vulnerable adults policy?

Those who are blind, deaf, have mental challenges, and possibly physical challenges.

What do we do about hosting Zoom meetings for the 2-adult rule?

There is a best practice document available on the website to address this. The best practice is to use the waiting room feature and begin the meeting when more than 2 or more persons present. In most cases the host is the person with the clearances.

If a friend asks me to drive them to a church function, do I need another person in the vehicle?

If you are not a paid employee, it is basically driving a friend to church. If you are paid, another person should be present with you in the vehicle in all cases for children, and vulnerable and older adults.

What if the pastor needs to do a counseling session?

The best practice is to hold the meeting when others are present in the building, i.e. a secretary. At the very least keep doors open, meet in a place with many windows, and always let someone else know you are holding a meeting, nature does not need to be discussed or whom you are meeting with. Counselors who are certified in this field are covered by their licenses. Try to have someone available in the building if at all possible during meetings. At times, those with licensing in counseling are covered by their licenses. Some exceptions in these cases with adults may be present.

Do we need people with clearances at Admin and SPR meetings?

Usually the pastor is present, who will have their clearances, for these meetings. Most people, although they may fall into the category of older or vulnerable adults, will not meet the criteria to be considered high risk while holding office. One person with clearances for these meetings is considered sufficient.

If you have any questions not covered here or in the policies at your churches, please email Pastor Daniszewski at epasafesanctuaries@epagnj.org. This list will be modified as needed.