November 2026

A quarterly newsletter of the Diocese of Trenton Risk Management Program

Diocese of Trenton
Risk Management Quarterly

Parishes, Schools, Cemeteries & Catholic Institutions



Winter Edition

Child Protection:
Training & Monitoring the Environment

Safe Environment training is often considered by some employees and volunteers as simply completing a course and wearing a badge, with the expectation of retraining in another four years. In reality, safe environment training is an essential component in the preparation of many church ministries that empower our employees and volunteers to protect children.

Safe environment training must be fully integrated into every aspect of our ministries that serve children and vulnerable adults. It is part of who we are, as members of a faith community, to ensure the wellbeing of all. VIRTUS training, the criminal background check, and criminal records monitoring are not just for employees and volunteers in the Diocese of Trenton; it is also for entities that utilize parish and school properties for meetings, sports practices, and other activities that involve minors and vulnerable adults. By contributing to child safety, we are part of the solution to prevent crimes that have been committed so many times in the past.

The understanding gained from VIRTUS training is critical for proactive vigilance, recognition, and the knowledge needed to properly manage the actual or suspected abuse of those most vulnerable. Training can promote recognition of the signs of grooming and may make a difference in preventing abuse and the lifelong emotional damage caused by sexual abuse.

Creating a safe environment does not start and end with a safe environment training session.

It is a process that begins with safe environment training and continues with diligent attention to the interactions between adult staff of all ministries and programs and children and vulnerable adults. Training and retraining focuses on boundaries and how to recognize when these boundaries are compromised Vigilant attention and program compliance at all levels is a never-ending process which helps to ensure a safe environment.

A 2022 article: "How Monitoring All Environments Contributes to Safety," published through VIRTUS Online, The National Catholic Risk Retention Group, Inc., provides insight into how we can provide constant safe environment monitoring in ministry.

In-Person Environments

- Maintain a healthy caution about any environment in which children are entrusted.
- Identify secluded areas; lock empty rooms.
- Follow policies regarding the use of any area (open, secluded, off-site, etc.)
- Don't permit children to enter staff-only areas.
- Only meet with children where other adults can have open access (i.e., in sight or hearing of other adults, with the invitation that they check-in at any time for safety).
- Perform consistent and random status checks - be unpredictable.
- Make sure enough adults are involved in programs so that you have an appropriate ratio of adults to children.
- Don't start new programs without the appropriate approval of the organization or leadership.
- Encourage parental involvement, allowing parents to have proper access to all programs to evaluate safety.

Technology Environments

- Only use sanctioned devices and accounts to communicate with youth.
- Never "friend," "follow" or communicate with youth using your own personal accounts.

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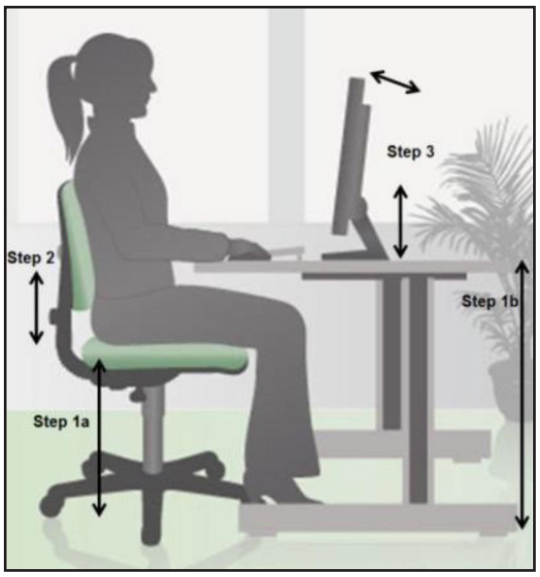

Ergonomics

Workstation Setup Guide

The way in which you sit when working greatly influences your comfort and health. It is well worth spending a few minutes to make adjustments to optimize your posture so that you put less strain on your muscles and feel less fatigued during the day.

IF YOU HAVE A FIXED HEIGHT DESK:

Step 1a – adjust the height of your chair

With your fingers on the keyboard, adjust the height of your chair so that with relaxed shoulders and upper arms the underside of your elbows is at desk height and your forearms, wrists and hands are approximately horizontal.

If your feet are not flat on the floor, your chair is too high. Do not be tempted to lower your chair height as doing so will ruin your upper body posture. The provision of a footrest resolves the issue.

If your knees are higher than your hips, your chair is too low and it is likely that you will need the desk adjusted/adapted to be raised in height. Please contact your Facilities Services Manager / Office OHS Program Administrator.

IF YOU HAVE A HEIGHT-ADJUSTABLE DESK:

Step 1a – adjust the height of your chair

Sit in front of your screen/s and adjust the seat height so that your feet are flat on the floor and your thighs are supported. Your hips should be level or slightly higher than your knees.

Step 1b – adjust the height of your desk

Raise or lower your desktop so that it is in the correct position for using the keyboard and mouse.

With your hands on the keys, relaxed shoulders and upper arms (not splayed out), the underside of your elbows should be at desk height so that your forearms, wrists and hands are approximately horizontal.



ALL WORKSTATIONS

Step 2 – adjust the chair's backrest

Adjust the height and angle of the backrest to provide good support to your back so that when you sit back in the chair, you can use the keyboard and mouse without reaching and with relaxed shoulders and arms. If the chair has a separate lumbar adjustment, take a few moments to see that it is properly positioned.

Avoid slouching or perching on the edge of your seat as you will not get any support from the backrest.

Step 3 – adjust the position and performance of your screen/s

If you are a touch typist, the top of your screen/s should be at eye-level. You will then look downwards slightly towards the center of the screen. If you frequently look at the keyboard when you type, the height of the screen/s should be set lower, approximately mid-way between the touch-typist position and the desk so that your neck is doing less work when looking up and down.

Ideally, your screen/s should be straight ahead of you when typing. If you have two or more screens and one of them is dominant, it should be positioned directly in front of you and the secondary screen/s positioned to the left or right.

If bright lights are reflected in the screen/s, adjust/tilt them so they are not a nuisance. If light is from outside, adjust window blinds to prevent the unwanted reflections on your screen/s.

Make sure the characters on your screen are sharply focused and can be read easily. They shouldn't flicker or move. Adjust the brightness and contrast controls on the screen – remember, the screen is itself a light source so it should only be as bright as is necessary to clearly see the image. Make sure there are no fingermarks, dirt or grime on the screen - suitable wipes should be available in the office.

Arranging your desk and peripherals

A small space in front of the keyboard is helpful for resting your hands and wrists when not typing. Mouse wrist-rests and keyboard wrist-rests should not be used unless the analysis of a workstation assessment determines that they are beneficial. This is unlikely ever to be true for a mouse wrist-rest and only very rarely for a keyboard wrist-rest.

Good keyboard technique is important. Try to type using a soft touch on the keys and don't overstretch your fingers.

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Diocese of Trenton Risk Management Quarterly

If you have any questions, comments or topic requests for future newsletters, please send an email to newsletter@dotinsurance.org

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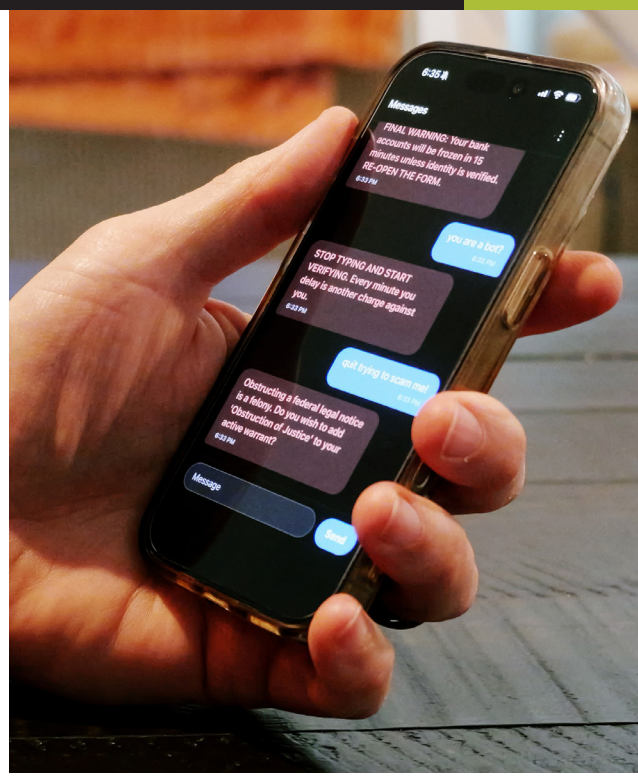
Scam of the Week
The Reply Trap



A text lights up your phone screen from a number you don't recognize, saying, "Hey, are we still on for dinner tomorrow?" The message is clearly meant for someone else, but it seems ordinary and friendly. Since it feels rude not to respond, you consider sending a quick reply just to let the sender know they've got the wrong person.

But that seemingly harmless text is actually a trap set by cybercriminals! Scammers rely on your reply to mark you as an easy target. Your reply confirms to cybercriminals that your number is active, and then they'll sell it on the dark web to other scammers. Once your phone number appears on one of these dark web lists, you might see more scam texts or calls in the future!

Follow these tips to avoid falling victim to this smishing, or text phishing, scam:

- If you receive a suspicious text, mark it as spam or junk and block the sender's number. These actions also help your phone provider flag and block similar messages for other users.
- Avoid sharing your phone number publicly. The less accessible your number is, the harder it is for cybercriminals to find and target it in the first place.
- You may think replying to these kinds of texts is friendly, but it could mark you as a target for future scams. Always stop and think before you respond! ■

Ergonomics Workstation Setup Guide, *continued from page 2*

Avoid cranking your hands up at the wrist when typing. Setting the keyboard so that it rests flat on the desk (not using the feet) is usually better ergonomically.

Position the mouse as close as possible to you so that it can be used with your forearm, wrist and hand straight.

Avoid using the mouse with a stretched arm, particularly with a cranked wrist and/or with any weight on the wrist. Be aware: you should use your arm to move the mouse, not just your wrist and fingers.

Agile working and other considerations for your health

Movement is generally beneficial whereas prolonged working holding any posture (but particularly a seated one) is generally detrimental.

The number one thing every colleague can do for healthy working is to incorporate frequent breaks from holding a fixed seated posture. Arrange work tasks and appointments to involve getting out of your chair and walking, however briefly.

Agile working can be both a positive and negative influence on healthy working. The nature of the way we work with collaborative spaces and break-out areas, etc., means that many colleagues naturally have their day interspersed quite frequently with time away from their workstations. However, some agile working colleagues who regularly work at different desks may be tempted to skip optimizing their chair and equipment and, if so, will always be working with a compromised seated posture. Please take the one or two minutes needed to make the necessary adjustments.

Keep your desk clear and tidy so that you have sufficient workspace for the documents you need to refer to.

Reference documents should be placed to one side or between the keyboard and screen, not between you and the keyboard because it will necessitate leaning forward off the backrest, extending your arms, rounding your shoulders and probably also craning your neck. If you refer to documents frequently, a document holder is likely to be beneficial. There are many options. Contact your Facilities Services Manager / Office OHS Program Administrator.

Make sure there is enough clear space underneath your desk or workspace to move your legs freely and to position your feet correctly. If your feet are in the wrong position, particularly to one side, it is likely you will twist your torso, putting strain on your lower back. Move any bags, boxes and other obstacles out of the way. Cables should be routed tidily to avoid them being caught by your feet. If cables are connected to a floorbox under your desk, regularly check that they pass through the access ports of the floorbox properly to prevent cable damage. If you have any problems with cables, report the issue to your Facilities Services Manager / Office OHS Program Administrator.

Avoid repeated stretching to reach things when seated, particularly if those things are quite heavy, such as a full lever-arch file.

Computer work, like any other close work, requires good or well-corrected vision. Ideally, you should have your eyes checked by a certified practitioner every two years.

If after making adjustments to your setup and work arrangements you are still concerned about the suitability of your workstation, or you think that you are suffering from or developing a health issue from work, you might benefit from a workstation assessment. One can be arranged by your Facilities Services Manager / Office OHS Program Administrator.

However, if you have made significant changes to your posture and/or work practices, please allow a couple of weeks to get used to the changes before seeking a workstation assessment. ■



The Care & Consideration of Volunteers

You may already realize that managing volunteers is a big job – indeed, a very important job which falls under the guidance of church or school leadership. You may also understand that much is to be gained for your organization by the effective use of your existing or future volunteer force.

It is not difficult to care for these valuable resources, but it does take intentionality. In the end, "All it really requires is great organization, clear communication and some basic people skills. **Managing those who give freely of their time is no small responsibility and should be done with structure, excellence and grace."**[1] Consider using some of the tools and strategies described below. Doing so may increase both your volunteer program's effectiveness and the satisfaction level of your volunteers.

Exactly what is required to achieve a well-run volunteer program in your parish or school? For many, just having warm bodies show up on time to complete a needed task is good enough. For others, letting the volunteers manage themselves is a relief, ridding the administrator of another management task for which there is simply no time. But is this fair to the volunteers and to those they serve? Like employees, volunteers need to be managed, trained and positively rewarded to get the maximum benefit for your parish or school and to allow the volunteer to feel cared about, valued and appreciated. Vigilant supervision of your volunteers is required to ensure that their tasks are being accomplished properly, in a way which optimizes their safety as well as others around them, and that they are recognized for the time and talents they devote to your organization.

There is a formula to maximize the benefits of volunteer programs such as those run in our parishes and schools. Several key elements will help form and maintain a successful program - successful for you, your organization, the volunteer force and those whom you serve in the community:

1. **Identify and create volunteer roles for areas that need volunteer support.** Sounds simple, right? After all, the volunteer programs at your location have probably been in place for many years and run smoothly. Nevertheless, taking the time to review the volunteer needs of your parish or school, ensure you have the right number of volunteers, and ascertain that those volunteers have the proper skill sets to meet those needs will be well worth your time. An insufficient number of volunteers or those with the wrong skill set can lead to failure to get the tasks done, or done well. An excessive number of volunteers assigned to a particular task can lead to inefficiencies, waste, horseplay, mischief and other avoidable issues which can arise from idle hands. This can be particularly true if the volunteers are young and unsupervised.

2. **Consider preparing volunteer job descriptions.** Although this is not mandatory, it is always helpful to let a volunteer know what is expected of them in their role, the volunteer schedule, who should be consulted if there is a problem/issue/question, and expected behaviors. It benefits both your organization and the volunteer when each volunteer is assigned tasks that best fit his/her personality, skills and experience. This is something that a well-articulated job description can help determine.

3. **Recruitment.** Oftentimes, recruitment of a volunteer is a passive process, meaning whoever wants to show up and work is accepted as a parish or school volunteer, provided the appropriate background screening and VIRTUS training have been satisfactorily completed. However, intentional recruitment of volunteers for tasks which require a special set of skills or experience, such as keyboard acumen, or someone who is highly organized or exceptionally cheery in the morning, can most certainly benefit your mission. Word of mouth as a recruitment tool is always helpful but can be limiting. Posting notices in parish or school communications help broaden the number of people who may be interested in and qualified for a particular volunteer spot – people the volunteer coordinator may have no knowledge of otherwise.

4. **Screening.** Utilize an application form to assist with screening. In tandem with the background check and VIRTUS training mentioned above, a personal conversation with a potential volunteer can be very valuable in determining if and/or where the volunteer should be assigned. During a conversation, you may learn things about the person (even if you have known him/her for many years) which may qualify or disqualify him/her from a specific task or from volunteering in your organization altogether. A word of support or recommendation from an existing volunteer, a long-time parishioner or an outstanding teacher should not be diminished and should certainly add to the consideration given a particular volunteer candidate, but shouldn't replace your personal impression obtained through a simple conversation.

5. **Create a database of volunteers and candidates.** If you haven't already created a database of volunteers from the Child Protection roster of fingerprinted and VIRTUS-trained volunteers and employees, consider creating a database for existing and potential volunteers, listing skills, schedule requirements. and particular tasks or projects which might be a good match for each. This will help ensure you have a prepared and vetted pool of potential volunteers from which to choose, when needed.

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The Care of Volunteers, *continued from page 4*

6. **Be prepared to train your volunteers.** New or even existing volunteers will appreciate the interest shown in their work when you or your designee take the time to orient (or re-orient) them to the volunteer position, smoothing the transition from one volunteer job to another, and avoiding the appearance that you are taking them for granted because they are "free" labor. Furthermore, questions will arise from even the most seasoned volunteer. Each volunteer ought to be given the courtesy of having questions answered or offering suggestions for improvement. It will make the volunteer feel noticed and valued.

7. **Oversight. Perhaps the most important factors in any volunteer program are supervision and sharing - receiving information from your volunteers.** Like any employee, a volunteer should be supervised and managed. Allowing even the most seasoned well-intentioned volunteer to work unchecked can be fraught with avoidable difficulties. **Always be prepared to take action.**

   Above all, dealing with any issue expeditiously, kindly and directly is the best way to keep the volunteer and the task at hand on track and preserving a volunteer's feelings in the process. If there are issues that are not easily addressed or corrected, reassignment may be a mutually beneficial option. For example, if you notice that a volunteer complains excessively about a task or the environment, others express concerns about the volunteer, or the volunteer has disinterest or unsafe performance, it is time to intervene and assess whether a reassignment is possible. It is not recommended that a volunteer position be created for the person as it sets a precedent you may be unwilling to follow in the future. In addition, by creating a position, you may experience the pitfalls of "overstaffing." Sometimes a problem cannot be resolved by reassignment to a task or job which you deem better suited to the volunteer's skill set or demeanor. Because volunteers often feel that they are called into service by God, their spirit may be willing to devote their free time to the church, but their mind or body may not be up to it, or their heart is just not into the task at hand. When you determine that this may be the case and the volunteer cannot be reassigned to a place which better suits his/her characteristics, a conversation with the volunteer should take place. In a loving and Christian way, explain to the person why it is no longer feasible (or safe or necessary) for him/her to serve.

8. **Communication.** As pastors, principals and business managers know, good communication with employees and volunteers is the key to a well run organization. This includes listening. In fact, "People who are involved with, and support a church or ministry, have a vested interest in what is going on and crave communication. When volunteers are kept informed, they feel valued and are more engaged with the organization."[1]

9. **Showing gratitude.** Because a volunteer may invest many hours of personal time to support the church or school without compensation, recognition of his/her commitment will be well worth your effort. Consider creating a formal recognition program to thank volunteers for their support of the parish or school. This can be a day set aside on a regular basis where volunteers are recognized for their dedication and their importance to the organization. The internet is replete with creative ideas on how to show appreciation to volunteers, ranging from simple to extravagant. However, showing regular gratitude need not be complicated. Mother Teresa once said that, "Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless." She also said, "Do small things with great love." The effect of a sincerely spoken compliment or word of gratitude made by a highly respected person of authority in your organization to a deserving volunteer can be priceless.

There are an estimated 13,000 volunteers in service within our diocese. Volunteers are vital to our diocese, to those we serve and to the lives we touch through our various ministries. The greatest benefit will be achieved from your volunteer force by showing them just how important you think they are. ■

1 "Functions of a Church Volunteer Program", Smart Church Management, January 6, 2015, https://smartchurchmanagement.com/church-volunteer-management/

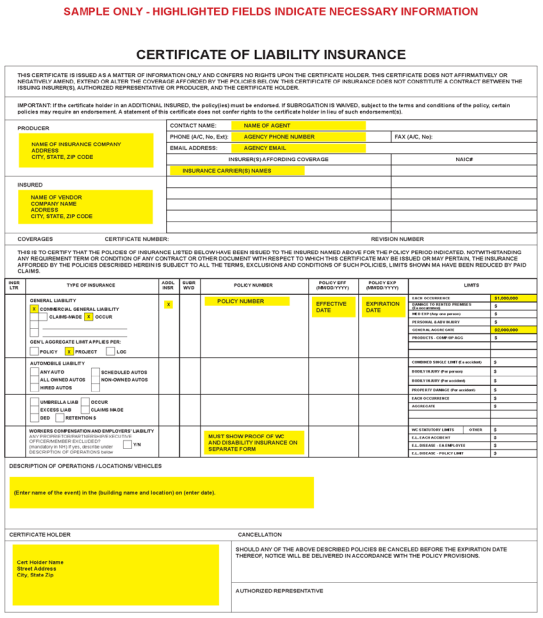
Check One Thing on Your Playground this Week

As the weather starts cooling down, the use of playground equipment diminishes with less attention given to issues that occur over the winter months.

Along with the obvious implications of excess snowfall, the impact of extreme cold temperatures on the anchors that hold galvanized steel posts in place may go unnoticed. If your swing set or slide is anchored with concrete, it's crucial to ensure that there are no cracks that would jeopardize the structural integrity of the posts.

Additionally, while sub-zero temperatures don't typically impact the posts themselves, upward soil pressure could cause posts to become unbalanced, which will need to be addressed before the equipment is safely usable. Scheduled inspections should continue during the winter months, and a thorough inspection should be completed in early spring. ■





SAMPLE ONLY - HIGHLIGHTED FIELDS INDICATE NECESSARY INFORMATION

CERTIFICATE OF LIABILITY INSURANCE

THIS CERTIFICATE IS ISSUED AS A MATTER OF INFORMATION ONLY AND CONFERS NO RIGHTS UPON THE CERTIFICATE HOLDER. THIS CERTIFICATE DOES NOT AFFIRMATIVELY OR NEGATIVELY AMEND, EXTEND OR ALTER THE COVERAGE AFFORDED BY THE POLICIES BELOW. THIS CERTIFICATE OF INSURANCE DOES NOT CONSTITUTE A CONTRACT BETWEEN THE ISSUING INSURER(S), AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE OR PRODUCER, AND THE CERTIFICATE HOLDER.

IMPORTANT: If the certificate holder is an ADDITIONAL INSURED, the policy(ies) must be endorsed. If SUBROGATION IS WAIVED, subject to the terms and conditions of the policy, certain policies may require an endorsement. A statement of this certificate does not confer rights to the certificate holder in lieu of such endorsement(s).

PRODUCER
NAME OF INSURANCE COMPANY
ADDRESS
CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE

CONTACT NAME: NAME OF AGENT
PHONE (A/C, No, Ext): AGENCY PHONE NUMBER
FAX (A/C, No):
EMAIL ADDRESS: AGENCY EMAIL
INSURER(S) AFFORDING COVERAGE
NAIC#
INSURANCE CARRIER(S) NAMES

INSURED
NAME OF VENDOR
COMPANY NAME
ADDRESS
CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE

COVERAGES
CERTIFICATE NUMBER:
REVISION NUMBER

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE POLICIES OF INSURANCE LISTED BELOW HAVE BEEN ISSUED TO THE INSURED NAMED ABOVE FOR THE POLICY PERIOD INDICATED. NOTWITHSTANDING ANY REQUIREMENT, TERM OR CONDITION OF ANY CONTRACT OR OTHER DOCUMENT WITH RESPECT TO WHICH THIS CERTIFICATE MAY BE ISSUED OR MAY PERTAIN, THE INSURANCE AFFORDED BY THE POLICIES DESCRIBED HEREIN IS SUBJECT TO ALL THE TERMS, EXCLUSIONS AND CONDITIONS OF SUCH POLICIES. LIMITS SHOWN MAY HAVE BEEN REDUCED BY PAID CLAIMS.

INSR LTR	TYPE OF INSURANCE	ADDL INSR	SUBR WVD	POLICY NUMBER	POLICY EFF (MM/DD/YYYY)	POLICY EXP (MM/DD/YYYY)	LIMITS
	GENERAL LIABILITY X COMMERCIAL GENERAL LIABILITY CLAIMS-MADE X OCCUR GEN'L AGGREGATE LIMIT APPLIES PER: POLICY X PROJECT LOC	X		POLICY NUMBER	EFFECTIVE DATE	EXPIRATION DATE	EACH OCCURRENCE $1,000,000 DAMAGE TO RENTED PREMISES (Ea occurrence) $ MED EXP (Any one person) $ PERSONAL & ADV INJURY $ GENERAL AGGREGATE $2,000,000 PRODUCTS - COMP/OP AGG $
	AUTOMOBILE LIABILITY ANY AUTO ALL OWNED AUTOS HIRED AUTOS SCHEDULED AUTOS NON-OWNED AUTOS						COMBINED SINGLE LIMIT (Ea accident) $ BODILY INJURY (Per person) $ BODILY INJURY (Per accident) $ PROPERTY DAMAGE (Per accident) $
	UMBRELLA LIAB OCCUR EXCESS LIAB CLAIMS-MADE DED RETENTION $						EACH OCCURRENCE $ AGGREGATE $
	WORKERS COMPENSATION AND EMPLOYERS' LIABILITY ANY PROPRIETOR/PARTNER/EXECUTIVE OFFICER/MEMBER EXCLUDED? (Mandatory in NH) If yes, describe under DESCRIPTION OF OPERATIONS below Y/N			MUST SHOW PROOF OF WC AND DISABILITY INSURANCE ON SEPARATE FORM			WC STATUTORY LIMITS OTHER $ E.L. EACH ACCIDENT $ E.L. DISEASE - EA EMPLOYEE $ E.L. DISEASE - POLICY LIMIT $

DESCRIPTION OF OPERATIONS / LOCATIONS / VEHICLES

(Enter name of the event) in the (building name and location) on (enter date).

CERTIFICATE HOLDER
Cert Holder Name
Street Address
City, State Zip

CANCELLATION
SHOULD ANY OF THE ABOVE DESCRIBED POLICIES BE CANCELED BEFORE THE EXPIRATION DATE THEREOF, NOTICE WILL BE DELIVERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE POLICY PROVISIONS.

AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE

The Legal Implications of Certificates of Insurance

Certificates of Insurance: Everyone seems to need one these days, and not many of us seem to understand what is on them or how any of it matters. We simply want to check the required box and move on, right? Think again!

It is imperative to understand thoroughly that what is shown on a certificate is deemed to be accurate information. This is crucial for the contract parties involved and their insurance companies, and may be enforced by our legal system. If incorrect information is shown, whether by mistake or by unapproved alteration to the certificate, this could be considered misleading and fraudulent behavior.

Insurance fraud carries steep consequences in all states, including New Jersey, and can result in fines, misdemeanor and felony penalties, and even jail time. This is in addition to the potential civil and criminal ramifications that can lead to expensive lawsuits against our parishes, schools, the Diocese, and the individuals involved.

What are they?

A **Certificates of Insurance (COI)** is evidence of insurance coverage that is in force for an insured party. It is typically issued based on contractual requirements and **contracts** which are legally binding agreements between named parties that are enforceable in a court of law.

Why do they matter?

When a certificate of insurance is issued by your insurance broker or carrier (who must be licensed in the state), it confirms to the requesting person or entity that the insurance coverage and limits shown are available, correct and applicable to the contractual agreement being made. At the time of a loss or injury, the contract signed will be a primary determining factor for much of the claim handling and payment decisions in accordance with the Certificate of Insurance that was issued, providing the contractual requirements were met.

Should a COI be issued just because it is requested?

The answer is NO! There must be a business reason and a contractual obligation, unless the request is only for proof of insurance. If the leasing company used by the business that provides your copy machine requests a COI for property damage coverage from your parish to meet the insurance requirement of the lease contract, it should be issued. (If it is not issued, the leasing company will charge the parish a monthly fee for insurance coverage or a waiver of insurance). A parish doesn't pay any additional premium to the Diocese for the insurance coverage of the copy machine.

If a company unaffiliated with the Diocese plans a presentation for students at a school and requests a COI with additional insured status, it probably should not be issued. In fact, the school should be requesting a COI from the company doing the presentation. If in doubt about a COI request from the Diocesan Insurance Program by a third party, call the Diocesan Risk Management Department for clarification. Beware of contracts that require indemnification and additional insured status from your parish or the Diocese. If any vendor requires insurance coverage, a complete legal review is required to determine if it is a legitimate business need.

How can I get a COI issued quickly?

Easy as 1-2-3!

1) Go to dotinsurance.org
2) Click on **Certificate of Insurance** to complete the **online form** and attach supporting documentation, such as an equipment lease or contract; and
3) **Submit!**

Turnaround time is typically 24 hours but for RUSH needs, you can get it in 2 hours or less.

If you have any questions or need help, you can contact Erica Baker Erica.Baker@wtwco.com or Joe Cahill at the Chancery Office, jcahill@dioceseoftrenton.org. ■



Fall to Winter Maintenance

Winter weather leads to all sorts of injuries and property damage, from slips, trips and falls to frozen pipes. You can prevent loss and injury by taking pro-active steps to prepare your facilities before the cold sets in. Visit https://dotinsurance.org/knowledgebase/fall-to-winter-maintenance for more information. ■

Items of Importance

S2260 and Pro-Life Activities - Knowing the Law, Living Our Witness

On August 20, Governor Sherrill signed S2260/A2218 into law. Among its provisions, the law makes it an offense to physically obstruct, injure, threaten, intimidate, or coerce people entering or leaving a reproductive health care facility, or to damage property because of its connection to those services.

This law does not stop us from praying, sidewalk counseling, or offering help and hope to those in need. It simply draws a clear line around specific actions that have never been part of our witness. By knowing that line and staying confidently on the right side of it, we can continue this vital ministry with peace and courage, not fear.

This law has generated legitimate concerns in the pro-life community. For this reason, the New Jersey Catholic Conference has prepared an FAQ page: **https://njcatholic.org/s2260-and-pro-life-activities**

Worker Classification - New Requirements

On October 1, 2026, New Jersey implemented new requirements for determining whether a worker should be classified as an employee or an independent contractor. To ensure our compliance with these new regulations, conduct a thorough assessment of all vendors, musicians, freelancers, consultants, and other individuals or businesses currently classified as 1099. Under the ABC Test, a contractor must satisfy all three criteria outlined in the guidelines to qualify as an independent contractor. If any of the three requirements cannot be clearly demonstrated, then the individual or business must be reclassified as an employee. This review is required and must be completed as soon as possible to help mitigate potential legal, tax, and employment related risks. Go to: **https://www.nj.gov/labor/ea/audit/independent-contractor-vs-employees/**

If you have any questions about a specific classification or need help understanding the ABC Test requirements, please contact Angela Gitto, Director of Human Resources, before making a final determination.

Volunteer Work by Employees

On September 7, 2026, the U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division (WHD) issued Opinion Letter FLSA2026-12, addressing when employees of a nonprofit organization may volunteer for their employer and when those activities become compensable work. Relying on the principles it applies to public-sector volunteers, the WHD concluded that an employee may volunteer for their nonprofit employer when the employee:

- Offers the services freely and without pressure or coercion, direct or implied;
- Has no expectation of compensation for the volunteer services; and
- Performs services that are not the same as, or similar to, the work the employee is employed to perform.

As with public-sector employees, the WHD takes the position that a nonprofit employee cannot serve as both a paid employee and an unpaid volunteer while performing the same or similar services for the same employer. Where an employee volunteers to perform the same type of work the employee is hired to perform, the WHD views that volunteer work as an indivisible part of the employment relationship and, therefore, it may constitute hours worked under the FLSA.

Nor can an employee agree to waive their rights to compensation under the guise of volunteering. Any questions should be directed to Angela Gitto, Director of Human Resources.

NJOHSP Reaches Milestone in Statewide Bleeding Control Kit Distribution

NJOHSP has distributed more than 3,000 bleeding control kits to houses of worship and religious schools across New Jersey, recently reaching a significant milestone in its ongoing effort to expand access to lifesaving preparedness resources.

Launched in 2024, the NJOHSP Bleeding Control Kits Initiative provides bleeding control kits and STOP THE BLEED® training to help community members respond to life-threatening bleeding while waiting for first responders.

The initiative expanded in January 2026 to include religious schools, with NJOHSP working with law enforcement, county prosecutors, emergency management offices, the interfaith community, and other partners to reach populations statewide. More than 60 STOP THE BLEED® training courses have been conducted to date.

Religious communities interested in receiving bleeding control kits or STOP THE BLEED® training can register through the Houses of Worship and Religious Schools Distribution Survey. The initiative is funded through the Homeland Security Grant Program and is based on the national STOP THE BLEED awareness campaign.

For more information, visit Houses of Worship Bleeding Control Kits web page or contact **bleedkits@njohsp.gov**. ■

Child Protection: Training & Monitoring the Environment, *continued from page 1*

- Always communicate with youth during appropriate timeframes and only through approved means.
- Never take or post photos of youth without the proper approvals of both the organization and the youth's family- typically this is resolved through photo releases that are kept on file at the organization (even with permission, photos should only be posted on an organization-approved forum).
- Install and use appropriate blocking/ filtering software.
- Include additional adult oversight for any communication or online meetings with children or youth. This helps to ensure that the interaction online doesn't become isolated.1

Ensuring the safety of children does not begin and end with the required VIRTUS training and criminal background check and monitoring.

Child safety begins with VIRTUS training and continues with the use of sound and practical monitoring practices and policies. ■

1 "How Monitoring All Environments Contributes to Safety", The National Catholic Risk Retention Group, Inc., VIRTUS Online. 2/6/2022 pp. 1-2.

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