

Standard Setting and Monitoring

National administrative standards are developed by task groups comprised of individuals with knowledge of the specific sector.

Once standards are developed, organizations are provided with orientation to and training on the standards for their specific sector. Organizations are then ready to begin implementation.

Following set criteria, accreditation visits are completed and a decision of accreditation standing is granted. Monitoring through annual reporting and revisits maintains the process.

Practical Steps You Can Take Now

1. Conduct an internal audit of the following:
 - job descriptions/risk assessments
 - employment practices
 - employee relations
 - safety inspections
 - emergency procedures
 - health inspections
 - insurance—type and level of coverage
 - financial management practices
 - rental agreements
2. Develop a screening policy for staff and volunteers, including reference checks and police record checks.
3. Review and revise policies to meet the needs of your organization. Where necessary, write policies to formalize current practices.
4. Review your programs and activities with your insurance broker to ensure adequate and appropriate coverage.
5. Connect with other sector-related ministries to share your learning.
6. Celebrate the contribution of non-congregational ministries to the whole church.

Resources

- *Employment Guidelines for Lay Employees.* www.united-church.ca/minstaff/hr
- *Faithful Footsteps: Screening Procedures for Positions of Trust and Authority in The United Church of Canada.* www.united-church.ca/local/duty/environments
- *Financial Handbook for Congregations* (biennial). www.united-church.ca/local/congfin
- *Administrative Standards Manuals: Camping, Community Ministries, and Seniors' Facilities.* www.united-church.ca/local/duty/standards

For More Information

See www.united-church.ca/local/duty or contact dutyofcare@united-church.ca.



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Introducing



A Program to Strengthen the Quality and Integrity of United Church Ministries

www.united-church.ca/local/duty

Background

Almost 400 non-congregational ministries across Canada provide a wide variety of programs and services in

- camps
- community ministries
- seniors' facilities
- theological schools and training centres
- non-profit and assisted housing
- education centres
- financial trusts
- chaplaincies
- hospitals

The church, like all non-profit and voluntary agencies working with in-need and vulnerable people, must exercise a duty of care to ensure the quality and integrity of its programs and services.

What Is a "Duty of Care"?

With respect to staff, volunteers, and participants in a ministry, a duty of care is the obligation to take reasonable care to avoid causing foreseeable harm to another person or his or her property.

In the administration of specific ministries, it is the responsibility of senior staff and board members or directors to exercise the care, diligence, and skill of a reasonably prudent person in the oversight of the organization's governance.

What Is the Duty of Care Program?

The United Church of Canada has developed the Duty of Care Program to demonstrate that we take seriously our obligation to provide a safe and nurturing environment to our communities engaged in study, service, worship, and personal growth.

The church has a legal, moral, and spiritual obligation to care for and protect all individuals who receive services in United Church-related institutions or who participate in United Church programs.

This brochure explains how the Duty of Care Program of the General Council is working with non-congregational ministries to set appropriate standards and to administer a cycle of monitoring and compliance with those standards.

Theological Statement

Jesus came into the world to bring life in all its fullness. As followers of Jesus we are called to love one another (John 13:34-35), to share our gifts and resources, and to build a community of mutuality and respect (Acts 2:44-47). As a church, we have a primary duty to care for those who are marginalized, less powerful, or more vulnerable in our community (Deuteronomy 10:17-19; Isaiah 61:1-2).

God intends that all people enjoy a life free from exploitation and abuse. Created in the image of God, everyone has a right to be treated with respect and protected from harm.

Faith and Hope

People of good will generally do most of the things they should do most of the time. The goal of the Duty of Care Program is to assist United Church-related organizations to do all of the things they should do all of the time.

This is a tall order, we are human, and there are risks, particularly in working with people who are vulnerable or have many immediate needs. But people of faith are called to step out in faith, acknowledging the risks, because the heart of God's mission is to serve others.

How Is a "Duty of Care" Demonstrated?

How an organization demonstrates a duty of care varies depending on the type of ministry being undertaken. Here are some examples:

- A screening policy is implemented for staff and volunteers.
- Staff are treated with dignity and in compliance with the appropriate rights, protections, and obligations under employment standards and human rights codes.
- Organizations are members of and comply with accrediting bodies such as the Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation or a provincial camping organization
- Facilities are in compliance with building, fire, public health, and other codes.
- Safety and emergency procedures are in place, with regular staff training and upgrading.
- The right types of insurance coverage are purchased in the right amounts.
- Sound financial management is practised and books are regularly audited.

The United Church of Canada

Duty
of
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