



TEMPLE TOPICS - NEWSLETTER

PREVENTING SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

The greatest asset of any Temple is our children. We all look for ways to keep our children safe from harm's way.

No claim is more damaging than one of sexual misconduct. If the allegations are true, the effect on the child is devastating and lasts a lifetime. If not true, reputations are damaged - perhaps forever. In either case the Temple's image in the community is irreparably harmed.

The best solution is to prevent the claim, or minimize the opportunity to subject individuals and the Temple to a claim.

While no system is fool proof, the following are minimum guidelines that can act as the basis for protecting your children, the respected people within your congregation, and the Temple's reputation.

The following Employee/Volunteer screening and Risk Management program should be implemented. In some cases implementation and approval by your insurance carrier can result in the offering of higher sexual misconduct limits in your insurance program.

- You should conduct national background checks on all existing and new employees; this should include clergy and both paid and unpaid positions.
- You should conduct national background checks on all existing and new volunteers involved in a nursery, school, overnight activities involving minors, counseling of minors and one-on-one mentorship of minors.
- You should have a formal process for completing reference checks on all new employees and volunteers.
- You must have signed release forms on file for all employees and volunteers that allow you to request criminal background checks.
- You should have a written policy that outlines the organization's risk management program for sexual misconduct. The policy should include documented procedures that address, at a minimum, how to respond to a sexual misconduct allegation.
- You should never allow a minor to be alone with one adult on premises or in any sponsored activity unless it is a counseling situation.
- Volunteer workers should not be considered for any position involving contact with children or youth until they have been involved with the organization for at least six months.

Although no system is fool proof, having the above program implemented and in writing can help protect and minimize the risk for everyone involved. This is just a basic program. More involved procedures can be implemented and are encouraged.

We can help you arrange low cost employee and volunteer screening (non state required). Please call us at (800) BERKETT. We are a leader in providing insurance services to Temples nationwide. We are here to help.

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