

Children and Youth Ministries Risk Management Policy and Procedures

Risk management involves two areas: prevention (risk reduction) and response.

Available from the Secretary-Treasurer's office is the Risk Management Policy and Procedures manual that the Rocky Mountain District has adopted. This manual contains everything that you will need to put a Risk Management policy into place and is available on disk or at www.rmdc.org for your convenience. The District Presbytery has directed that every District Affiliated Church Pastor must obtain these materials and implement this policy as soon as possible

Refusal to develop and adhere to a risk management program could result in non-coverage of liability should such a suit be brought against the church, children's worker, youth worker, or church board. As well, any District Affiliated Church Pastor that refuses to cooperate with the District in this matter will be brought before the District Presbytery which may result in his/her removal as pastor. **It is imperative that such a program be put in place.**

Mandatory Reporting Information

In the past, ministers were excluded from mandatory reporting responsibilities. That has changed and we all need to be aware as there are serious legal consequences if we fail to report a case.

There are a few things to highlight for ministers:

1. We are required to report if we **suspect** child abuse. That means we cannot be the ones to determine whether this allegation is true or false. If we **suspect** it then we must report it. We are to report suspected abuse to the local law enforcement or to the local Department of Social Services. The report should be by phone and then followed with a written report.
2. We are required to report **immediately**. Do not delay in your reporting.
3. This new law requires all **credentialed ministers** to report as well as all **volunteer leaders**. This includes all youth workers, children's workers, and care group leaders. It is anyone who would be recognized as a leader in your church. It would be very important to have written policies and procedures as to how you want these matters handled in your church.

This law, Bill 210, was rather quickly written and passed. It raises some questions for you as a minister as to how you can effectively minister to a person or a family where there are allegations, particularly if you have to be the one reporting your concerns. Some attorneys think that this bill will be altered to some degree in the future. However, as it is written now, you must consider yourself a **mandatory reporting agent**. If you have any questions as to the process or your requirements, I would suggest that you consult an attorney.