



# Obligations of Church Councils and Presbytery Committees

C/2.1.10.3

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## Purpose

Outlines the specific obligations to comply with the Safe Church Policy, Privacy Policy, and Synod Wide Blue Card Policy, for church councils (councils) and committees of the Church.

## Scope

Applies to all members of councils and committees in congregations, faith communities, and presbyteries of the Church.

## Obligations

1. **Annually adopt or re-affirm their commitment to the Safe Church Policy**
  - 1.1. All Every year, councils and presbytery committees must officially adopt or reaffirm their dedication to the Safe Church Policy and record this commitment in council meeting minutes. Congregations can use a provided template for this purpose.
    - 1.1.1. Annually, either the template or the meeting minutes must be given to the presbytery as part of the Annual Safe Church Audit.
    - 1.1.2. Not formally adopting or reaffirming the commitment to the Safe Church Policy is against the policy itself. If this happens, follow the Safe Church Breach Procedure, fill out a Breach Report, and record the breach in a register. Refer to Section 9.
2. **Governance requirements**
  - 2.1. Every year, fill out and sign a Statement of Personal Commitment (SOPC). Not doing this yearly is against the Safe Church Policy and must be recorded as a breach.
3. **Blue cards requirements**
  - 3.1. Follow the Synod Wide Blue Card Policy and have a valid linked blue card because all council and committee members make decisions about programs and activities. These decisions include approving programs for young and vulnerable people. (Refer to Blue Card Requirements of Lay Preachers and lay workers)
  - 3.2. Council and Committee members also appoint people to roles working or volunteering with young and vulnerable people and make decisions about sensitive matters involving young and vulnerable people. This means that anyone This means that anyone ineligible for a blue card or without a valid linked blue card cannot be a member or Chair of the Church Council or Presbytery Committee.
    - 3.2.1. Each church council may maintain their blue card register via the free Blue Card Services Portal.
4. **Training**
  - 4.1. Follow the Safe Church Training process. The training can be completed online using the Synod learning platform, edUCate. Please contact the Learning and Development Team at [learning@ucaqld.com.au](mailto:learning@ucaqld.com.au) or 07 3377 9990, for more information or to obtain this access.



4.1.1. Church Council and Presbytery Chairpersons have additional training requirements. Not following Safe Church Training is against the Safe Church Policy. Fill out a Breach Report and record it. (Refer to the Breach Procedure)

### 5. **Approving all activities, events, and programs**

5.1. Every time activities, programs, or events are planned, a risk assessment tool must be utilised. Activity leaders are responsible for presenting documentation of planned activities to the council or presbytery committee for approval, including completed risk assessment documents. Refer to Planning Safe Programs.

### 6. **Pre-appointment screening for all lay workers**

6.1. All lay workers within the Church must undergo the following screening:

- 6.1.1. Application
- 6.1.2. Interview
- 6.1.3. Referee Checks
- 6.1.4. Statement of Personal Commitment (SOPC) signed annually

6.2. Additional suitability checks are required for the following roles:

- 6.2.1. Working or volunteering with children
- 6.2.2. Working or volunteering with anyone vulnerable

6.3. A copy of each document must be kept and recorded in the Register of Workers (RoW). Refer to Managing People.

### 7. **Appointing and approving all roles**

7.1. After completing all interviews, referee checks, and suitability assessments, a decision must be made regarding the person's suitability for the role. Once deemed suitable, formally appoint the person to the role and document the appointment in the Church Council or Presbytery minutes, and record in the RoW.

### 8. **Responding to concerns**

8.1. 'Responding to Complaints and Concerns' is the Synod's process for addressing performance issues and complaints. This system involves providing continuous training and support for all lay workers. All concerns and complaints must be documented in a register.

### 9. **Managing breaches of the Safe Church/ SMC Policy**

9.1. The Safe Church Policy requires all lay workers to undergo pre-appointment screening, suitability checks and relevant Safe Church Training. Breaches of the policy occur when these requirements are not met or followed. Refer to the Breach Procedure.

### 10. **Safe spaces**

10.1. When dealing with individuals whose behaviour poses a risk or in locations that may expose others to potential harm, the Providing Safe Spaces process must be put in place. This process establishes safety protocols via a Safe Spaces Agreement. This agreement enables the Church to provide support and ministry to everyone while ensuring the safety of young and vulnerable individuals.

### 11. **Person of Concern**

11.1. When individuals with behaviour or a criminal history that may pose a risk to others desire to participate in Church or worship activities, the Person of Concern (POC) process is activated. This process enforces safety protocols through a Safety Agreement, ensuring the safe inclusion of all individuals in Church activities.



### 12. Storage and sharing of records

- 12.1. All records must adhere to the guidelines outlined in the Synod Wide Blue Card Policy and the Synod Privacy Policy regarding collection, usage, and storage. Templates and tools available on the Safe Church website and the Workplace Health and Safety website can aid in fulfilling these requirements.

### 13. Annual Safe Church Audit

- 13.1. Each presbytery should communicate the 'Request from the General Secretary for information,' along with any templates or resources needed for the Annual Safe Church Audit, to every church council and faith community within their presbytery.

13.1.1. Each church council is accountable for ensuring a response is submitted for the Annual Safe Church Audit.

13.1.2. Each presbytery is tasked with ensuring a response is given to the Annual Safe Church Audit for their presbytery workers and for each faith community.

## Information and support

Information and support can be obtained from the Safe Church Assurance and Support Officer on 07 3377 9833 or [safechurch@ucaqld.com.au](mailto:safechurch@ucaqld.com.au)

## Revisions

Document number		C/2.1.10.3			
Version	Approval date	Approved by	Effective date	Policy owner	Policy contact
6.0	16.05.2024	General Manager Risk and Safeguarding	16.05.2024	General Manager Risk and Safeguarding	Safe Church Assurance and Support Officer
Next scheduled review		16.05.2026			