



Safe Church Annual Audit Procedure: Congregations and presbyteries

C/2.1.13

Purpose

Provides guidance for the Annual Safe Church Audit and outlines the mandatory minimum requirements to demonstrate compliance with the Synod Wide [Blue Card Policy](#) and the [Safe Church Policy](#), which is the Synod's risk management strategy.

Scope

Applies to all congregations, faith communities and presbyteries ('organisations') within the Synod.

Risk management strategy

1. Safe Church Annual Audit

- 1.1. To ensure we conduct child safe activities, each year the General Secretary requests information as part of a Safe Church Annual Audit, to demonstrate compliance with the Safe Church Policy.
- 1.2. The information assessed for the Annual Safe Church audit has been categorised to align with the 8 mandatory requirements of state legislation.

Legislative Requirement	Safe Church Compliance Test	Information required
1. A statement of commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and the protection of children from harm	All organisations make a statement of commitment to adopt the Safe Church Policy	Templates available for use; or Copy of minutes showing the decision to adopt the policy
2. A code of conduct for interacting with children	All workers sign a Statement of Personal Commitment (SOPC) annually All ministry agents have a current Statement of Commitment (SOC) and re-sign annually	Register of Workers (RoW), records on <i>UCare</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Date the SOPC was signed <input type="checkbox"/> Date the SOC was signed
3. Written procedures for recruiting, selecting, training, and managing staff and volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All workers have evidence of pre-appointment screening: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pre-2020 screening ○ Interview ○ Reference checks ○ Church Council Appointed ○ New Starter Check-In • All workers have evidence of current training and comply with the Safe Church Training procedure 	RoW, records on <i>UCare</i> , Training registers <input type="checkbox"/> All training is up to date & complies with the Safe Church Training Policy <input type="checkbox"/> Date of the initial interview <input type="checkbox"/> Date of referee checks <input type="checkbox"/> Date of the New Starter Check-In <input type="checkbox"/> Date of appointment by the Church Council
4. Policies and procedures for handling disclosures or suspicions of harm, including reporting guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory reporting • Template for Complaints & Allegations • Child Protection Reporting Guide 	Central registers (Synod Office) <input type="checkbox"/> Provide a copy of the Performance Improvement register for the audit year
5. A plan for managing breaches of your risk management strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breach Procedure • Breach Report • Breach Register 	<input type="checkbox"/> Provide a copy of the Breach Register for the audit year

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Legislative Requirement	Safe Church Compliance Test	Information required
6. Risk management plans for high-risk activities and special events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Safe Programs • Safe Programs Planning Tool • Risk Assessment Template 	<input type="checkbox"/> Provide a copy of an approved risk assessment from the audit year
7. Policies and procedures for managing compliance with the blue card system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screening and appointment of all workers complies with the Synod Blue Card Policy. 	Use of the Blue Card Services Portal; or Validation and linking of all blue cards and exemption cards in the RoW, <i>UCare</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Date that the initial positive notice was received, or the date that the Blue Card check was validated online. <input type="checkbox"/> Blue Card or Exemption Card expiry date <input type="checkbox"/> Type of card <input type="checkbox"/> The card is linked to the organisation. <input type="checkbox"/> A card is required for the role
8. Strategies for communication and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All workers have evidence of ongoing support 	RoW or records on <i>UCare</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Date of the Annual Well-Being Check-In

1.3. Resources are available, including templates to assist in recording, collating, and reporting the information required to demonstrate compliance:

- 1.3.1. [Blue Card Requirements](#) for the Annual Safe Church audit
- 1.3.2. [Pre-screening](#) requirements for the Annual Safe Church audit
- 1.3.3. [Template: Register of Workers](#)

Review Procedure

2. Initiation and timing

- 2.1. A 'Request from the General Secretary for information' initiates the Annual Safe Church Audit.
 - 2.1.1. A copy of the Safe Church Audit Template, this Review Procedure and any template or resources to assist with the Annual Safe Church Audit will accompany the General Secretary's request.
- 2.2. The Annual review is for the past calendar year. Each review commences on or around the 31 January in reviewing the previous year.
- 2.3. The Annual Safe Church Audit correspondence must include a clear return date. The return date must provide a minimum of six (6) weeks between the commencement date and the requested return date.

3. Responsibilities

- 3.1. Each presbytery is to communicate the 'Request from the General Secretary for information', and any templates or resources to assist with the Annual Safe Church Audit to each church council and faith community within their presbytery.
 - 3.1.1. Each church council is responsible for ensuring that a response is provided to the Annual Safe Church Audit, demonstrating their compliance with the Synod's Safe Church Policy.
 - 3.1.2. Each presbytery is responsible for ensuring that a response is provided to the Annual Safe Church Audit for completion by each faith community, demonstrating their compliance with the Synod's Safe Church Policy.

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3.1.3. Refer to Obligations of Church Councils and Presbytery Committees for information about your responsibilities under the Safe Church Policy.

3.1.4. The Safe Church Assurance and Support Officer is to collate all responses received from each organisation.

4. Reporting and feedback

4.1. The Safe Church Assurance and Support Officer will facilitate the compilation of an Annual Review Report to the General Secretary, after analysis of the data obtained from each organisation.

4.2. The Annual Review Report will provide:

4.2.1. An assessment of individual congregations and each presbytery's compliance with the risk management strategy; and

4.2.2. An assessment of the effectiveness of the risk management strategy providing recommendations for any identified areas of improvement.

4.3. The Annual Review Report will be tabled at the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) and any comments, recommendations or feedback from ARC recorded.

4.3.1. Following the acceptance of the Annual Review Report by ARC, any comment, feedback, or recommendations from ARC will be incorporated with the Annual Review Report, prior to summaries being supplied to each presbytery.

4.4. An individual Summary Report will be compiled for each presbytery, by the Safe Church Assurance and Support Officer.

4.4.1. This report will be provided to each presbytery within four (4) weeks of the Annual Review report being accepted at ARC.

4.4.2. The Annual Review of the risk management strategy will be deemed to have been finalised once the individual Summary Reports have been provided.

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

The preferred method of completing Safe Church training is online, using the Synod learning platform, [edUCate](https://edUCate.com.au). Please contact the Learning and Development Team at learning@ucaqld.com.au or 07 3377 9734, for more information or to obtain this access.

Revisions

Document number		C/2.1.13			
Version	Approval date	Approved by	Effective date	Policy owner	Policy contact
5.0	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			