

Procedure for Background Checks

Using SAFECHURCHES.COM First Advantage Background Services

Preparing to Use the System

- The NT-NL Synod recommends that each Congregation Council carefully consider the need for the services offered by First Advantage and, if the Congregation Council chooses to join, undertake to adopt a policy and procedure to govern the congregation's participation in the Safe Churches Project.
- A congregation gains access to the Safe Churches Project by signing a Subscriber Agreement with First Advantage
- Each participating congregation will need to appoint an administrator who will have permission to access the SafeChurches.com web site on behalf of the congregation.
- Upon receipt of your congregation's Subscriber Agreement, First Advantage will issue a password to the administrator.
- The congregation will be billed directly for usage of the system.

Performing a Background Check

- Secure from the prospective employee or volunteer permission to conduct a background check by having them complete the *Consent Form*.
 - All persons should fill out Part A and sign at the end of the form.
 - Those persons who will be subjected to the full Nationwide Search should fill out Part B as well.
- Give the completed *Consent Form* to the person designated by the Congregation Council to use the SafeChurch.com system (the "administrator").
- Give the applicant a copy of the *Summary of Your Rights*. You may also attach a letter from the congregation explaining the reason that the congregation asks for the background information, how the information will be used, and that all results will be treated confidentially.

Use of the Background Information

- The administrator may share the results of the background check with the person(s) responsible for making the employment decision (paid or volunteer).
- The applicant has a right to a copy of the results if requested.

If there is a favorable decision on employment

- The results of the background check may be shared with the new employee upon their request.
- Results of the background check should be placed in a secure personnel file.

If there is an unfavorable decision on employment

- If the unfavorable decision is based on information found within the background check, the applicant should receive the *Notice of Unfavorable Report*, a copy of their *Background Report*, and a copy of *A Summary of Your Rights*.
- The representative of the congregation signing the *Notice* will represent the congregation in conversations with the applicant.
- The applicant should contact First Advantage directly to challenge any aspect of the report.
- Results of the background check should be placed in a secure employment search file.

On-Going Use

- First Advantage recommends that congregations establish a process for repeating background checks on all paid and volunteer personnel on at least an annual basis.
- Background checks should be performed equally – not just for new staff, but for all existing staff.
- No background check should be performed without a person’s knowledge and written consent.
- All information should be treated in a strictly confidential manner.