



Thank you!

On behalf of all of us at Shepherd's Watch®, we want to thank you for taking a stand to protect your church.

In today's challenging environment, it's critical to take steps to protect those in your church's care. Properly screening your staff and volunteers is an important step in that process.

To make the background screening process as simple and seamless as possible, we have provided you with clear next steps and easy-to-follow instructions.

1. Register your account with First Advantage.

After purchasing your lifetime membership to Shepherd's Watch, you received an email with a link to register. Please contact us if you did not receive your confirmation email.

NOTE: Once you have registered your account, First Advantage will begin a process called credentialing. This process is a verification of your business information and is required for you to be able to open and review background check reports. They may contact you for additional information if necessary. Credentialing does NOT need to be completed for you to be able to start ordering background checks.

2. Start running background checks.

Within 24 hours of registering your account, you will be ready to start ordering background checks.

In an effort to better serve your church's safety and security needs, we have created a variety of checklists, assessments, and tip sheets that will help guide your efforts. Those materials are contained within this welcome package as well as on your member's page.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your account or our background check services, please feel free to email us at info@group.com or call 800-447-1070.

BACKGROUND SCREENING BASICS

BEST PRACTICES TO HELP KEEP YOUR CHURCH SAFE AND SECURE

While most churches now recognize the need for background screening volunteers and staff, far too many churches are putting their churches at risk because they simply don't understand some basic best practices.

1. The role should determine the type of screening

If the candidate may be serving as a staff member, in children's or youth ministry, handling money, or driving a vehicle on behalf of the church, you'll want to consider performing much more thorough screenings. (Refer to our Applicant Screening Checklist sheet.)

2. Don't scrimp on the interview process

Often in their desperation for staff and volunteers, churches will overlook or scrimp on the interview process. The interview is a great time to ask direct and probing questions that will hopefully confirm that they're a good fit or reveal potential issues that should disqualify them from serving. (Refer to our Volunteer Interview Questions.)

3. References are a must

Now that you've interviewed the candidate, the next important step is to request and actually call references. You'd be surprised by how many situations could have been avoided if the church had only called a past employer or co-worker. (Refer to our References Interview Questions.)

4. What a background screening won't reveal

As thorough as a background check can be, it won't identify a thief or an abuser that hasn't been caught yet. Unfortunately, a sexual predator may have amassed several victims before the crime comes to light. That's why it's imperative that staff and volunteers be vigilant to identify any behaviors or actions that are suspect. (Refer to our Signs of Grooming or Abuse sheet.)

5. Screenings aren't a one-and-done practice

An initial background check is an important first step, but it shouldn't stop there. The reality is that situations can arise at any time, so it's essential that churches perform annual background checks to help ensure that your volunteers and staff are in adherence with church policies.

APPLICANT SCREENING CHECKLIST

Applicant: _____ Desired role: _____

Check all that apply to the role being applied for.

- | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Paid staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greeter | <input type="checkbox"/> Facilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Parking | <input type="checkbox"/> Media/Tech |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nursery | <input type="checkbox"/> Children's Ministry | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Ministry | <input type="checkbox"/> Adult Ministry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Special Needs Ministry | <input type="checkbox"/> Worship Band/Choir | <input type="checkbox"/> Has keys to the church | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Access to money | <input type="checkbox"/> Drives (for the church) | <input type="checkbox"/> Serves in a security role | |

Select the desired screening package based on the role you selected above.

We recommend you consult with an attorney and/or your insurance company to help you determine the background check that's right for the roles you are going to fill.

Background Checks for Volunteers*

The following packages have been designed to fit your volunteer needs ranging from \$9 - \$41:

- Basic Starter, Basic Plus, Vehicle Plus, All-Inclusive, and Motor Vehicle

Background Checks for Staff*

When hiring staff, you will have different needs such as education and employment verification. That's why the following packages have been designed to fit your staffing needs ranging from \$52 - \$120:

- Employment: Basic, Employment: Plus, and Employment: All-Inclusive

**NOTE: All the above packages will search the sex offender registry records for the state in which the applicant resides (excludes MA and NV). However, sex offenders can move from state to state. So, for stronger due diligence, choose the packages that include the National Sex Offender registry which will search the Department of Justice National Registry across all 50 states.*

Check off items accomplished and date when completed.

Screening Task	Date Completed
<input type="checkbox"/> Ministry description provided	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Application for position received	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Personal interview scheduled	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Interview completed	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Select background check package consistent with role plus legally advised church policies	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Authorization and Disclosure forms given to candidate	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Background check ordered	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Background check completed	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> References checked	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Orientation completed	_____

Start date: _____



BACKGROUND SCREENING CHECKLIST

Use this checklist to review your background screening process for staff and volunteers. For items needing attending, complete the recommendations section identifying ways to address the item.

1. Do we require all staff and volunteers to consent to a background screening before being hired or serving?

Yes Needs Attention Recommendations: _____

2. Do we require that individuals attend our church for a minimum of six months before applying for a volunteer role?

Yes Needs Attention Recommendations: _____

3. Do we conduct different background screenings based on the ministry role being served?

Yes Needs Attention Recommendations: _____

4. Do our background screenings include at least the four basics: a nationwide criminal-records database search, an address history, Social Security number verification, and county court records searches in counties where the applicant has lived?

Yes Needs Attention Recommendations: _____

5. Do we require a background screening authorization from the candidate, and is the language of that form clear and easy to understand?

Yes Needs Attention Recommendations: _____

6. Do we require all staff and volunteers sign a release granting consent to call references?

Yes Needs Attention Recommendations: _____

7. Do we have clear policies for what would disqualify a candidate from being able to serve?

Yes Needs Attention Recommendations: _____

8. Do we have written procedures for responding to candidates that do not pass the background screening process?

Yes Needs Attention Recommendations: _____

9. Do we store all confidential staff and volunteer documentation in a locked file for at least a period of three years?

Yes Needs Attention Recommendations: _____

10. Do we permanently maintain in a locked, confidential file all documents pertaining to volunteers who work with children or youth?

Yes Needs Attention Recommendations: _____

VOLUNTEER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP code: _____

Email: _____ Primary phone: _____

Desired role: _____

Note: Explain to the candidate that the following interview questions are not intended to be overly intrusive or in any way accusatory. ALL individuals wishing to serve are asked the same questions.

How long have you been attending our church?

Why do you wish to serve in this role?

Do you have a time frame in mind when you can start?

(If applicable) Why are you interested in working with children?

(If applicable) Are there certain children or types of children whom you prefer not to work with and why?

Have you volunteered in the past at another church? If so, in what capacity?

What did you enjoy the most about serving as a volunteer? Enjoy the least?

VOLUNTEER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS ...CONTINUED

Do you have any physical limitations that may preclude certain activities in this role?

When it comes to conflict resolution, tell me about a time that you had a disagreement with a co-worker or leader. How was it resolved?

What strategies do you use to respond to challenging behaviors?

Have you ever been accused of, plead guilty to, or been a party to any child abuse, neglect, or any other crime against a minor?

Have you ever consumed alcohol or drugs while you were caring for or working with children?

Do you have any questions for me?

May I have the names of three references who aren't family members that we can contact?

Name _____ Relationship _____ Phone _____

Name _____ Relationship _____ Phone _____

Name _____ Relationship _____ Phone _____

REFERENCE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

This can serve as a telephone conversation guide when calling references.

Reference's name: _____

We have recently received a request from _____ to join our _____ team. As part of our process, we ask each person to provide three references, and you are one who was listed.

How long have you known this person?

What is your relationship to them?

Have you ever worked with them in this ministry role before? If so, in what way?

In your opinion, is this person qualified to work in this ministry?

Please let us know one or more areas of strength you believe this person would bring to this ministry.

Do you have any concerns about this person being involved in our ministry? If so, please share them.

On a scale from 1 to 5 (5 being outstanding) how would you rate this person in:

Attendance _____ Productivity _____ Teamwork _____ Cooperation _____

Reliability _____ Communication _____ Handling conflict _____ Initiative _____

Do you have any additional comments or explanations you can offer regarding this person?

Name of caller: _____ Date of call: _____

RISK MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT

Use this checklist to review your church's risk management process. For items needing attending, complete the recommendations section identifying ways to address the item.

General Liability and Risk Management

Does your church have an ongoing risk management team?

Yes Needs Attention Recommendations: _____

Have we performed a risk assessment within the last two years?

Yes Needs Attention Recommendations: _____

Do we have a policies and procedures manual for staff and volunteers?

Yes Needs Attention Recommendations: _____

Do we formally review the manual every year?

Yes Needs Attention Recommendations: _____

Do we have general liability coverage for staff and volunteers?

Yes Needs Attention Recommendations: _____

Do we have someone who reviews and updates the liability coverage?

Yes Needs Attention Recommendations: _____

Do we have events throughout the year that put us at greater risk for liability, and if so, do we obtain coverage?

Yes Needs Attention Recommendations: _____

Management of Risks of Interviewing, Screening, and Terminating Staff and Volunteers

Does your church have an ongoing risk management team?

Yes Needs Attention Recommendations: _____

Do we have current ministry descriptions for staff, volunteers, and board members?

Yes Needs Attention Recommendations: _____

Do ministry descriptions clearly indicate what qualifications are needed to fill each position?

Yes Needs Attention Recommendations: _____

RISK MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT ...CONTINUED

Use this checklist to review your church's risk management process. For items needing attending, complete the recommendations section identifying ways to address the item.

Do our ministry descriptions specify what physical requirements are needed for the position?

Yes Needs Attention Recommendations: _____

Do we write our position descriptions in a way that's clear and protects us from being unintentionally discriminatory?

Yes Needs Attention Recommendations: _____

Do we complete annual background checks on all staff and volunteers?

Yes Needs Attention Recommendations: _____

Do we regularly review performance with staff and volunteers and document it?

Yes Needs Attention Recommendations: _____

Do we tell volunteers in their initial orientation they'll have performance reviews, when those will be conducted, and what will be covered?

Yes Needs Attention Recommendations: _____

Do we immediately handle complaints or concerns about a volunteer's behavior?

Yes Needs Attention Recommendations: _____

Do we have written policies for termination of volunteers?

Yes Needs Attention Recommendations: _____

Do we provide volunteers with a written handbook regarding our policies and procedures?

Yes Needs Attention Recommendations: _____

Do we clearly explain who will supervise volunteers and to whom they will be responsible?

Yes Needs Attention Recommendations: _____

Do we ask volunteers to sign a statement that they've received orientation and training and understand our expectations of them?

Yes Needs Attention Recommendations: _____

Do volunteers understand the boundaries of their job descriptions, what they can and cannot do, and where they should or should not be?

Yes Needs Attention Recommendations: _____

SIGNS OF GROOMING OR ABUSE

According to statistics, about one in 10 children will be sexually abused before their 18th birthday. And about 90% of children who are victims of sexual abuse know their abuser.

For the last several years, claims of sexual abuse are one of the top reasons why churches go to court. It's imperative that ministry leaders are vigilant to watch for grooming behaviors and report any concerns immediately.

What is grooming?

Grooming is the process that a sexual predator may use in order to develop trust with a child or young person for the purpose of manipulating, exploiting, and abusing them.

Grooming can be perpetrated by a stranger or someone they know and can occur online, in person, or both.

Potential signs of grooming

- The individual seeks out opportunities to take special interest in a child.
- They look for ways to be alone with the child.
- They try to find out what the child is interested in and claims to have similar interests.
- They touch or hug the child in front of others for the purpose of making the child feel that it's all right.
- They give the child gifts and or treats in order to develop trust with the child.
- They might create opportunities to be a sympathetic listener or claim to be their friend if the child is disappointed or discouraged about something.
- They may make inappropriate or sexually explicit comments in front of the child.
- They may keep secrets with the child.

Potential signs of physical abuse

- Unexplained bruises, burns, fractures, or abrasions (often various stages of healing)
- Marks that look like human hands or bites
- Consistent lack of supervision
- Consistent hunger, inappropriate dress, poor hygiene, or unattended medical needs
- Self-destructive behavior
- Extremes of aggression or withdrawal
- Dislike of physical contact
- Inappropriate clothing for the weather to cover body
- Report that no caretaker is at home
- Fatigue and listlessness
- Stealing or begging for food

SIGNS OF GROOMING OR ABUSE ...CONTINUED

Potential signs of emotional abuse

- Delayed physical development
- Speech disorders
- Substance abuse
- Developmental delays
- Withdrawal, depression, or listlessness
- Inability to trust adults or peers
- Passive or aggressive behavioral extremes

Potential signs of sexual abuse

- Inappropriate sex play, acting out, seductiveness, or promiscuity
- Sudden changes in school performance, appetite, or self-worth
- Excessive clinging, fear of being left alone, or impaired trust
- Withdrawal, depression, or hysteria
- Suicide attempts or running away

DRIVER'S SAFETY CHECKLIST FOR VOLUNTEERS

- **Your information:** Provide your church with copies of your current driver's license, insurance card, and your cellphone number.
- **Background check:** Help your church comply with safety standards by saying yes to a background check.
- **Exterior check:** Walk around the vehicle. Check the tires, look for anything loose, and any obvious problems.
- **Lights:** Are they all working?
- **Fluids:** All fluids need to be at correct levels.
- **Seat belts:** You'll need enough for every passenger.
- **Emergency items:** Jack? First-aid kit? Extra supplies in case of bad weather?
- **Driving buddy:** It's better for safety and for your reputation if you have another adult in the car with you.
- **Focus:** Are you well-rested and alert? Is your phone put away? Drowsy or distracted driving contributes to thousands of traffic fatalities each year.
- **Last details:** A map or GPS? Contact information for medical consent forms on your passengers? Be sure you have what you need to make this a safe and enjoyable journey.