



# Safety and Supervision

**W**hile participating in Royal Rangers meetings and activities, boys are exposed to a variety of new experiences and opportunities for learning and growth into Christlike manhood. While these activities are conducted for the benefit of the boys, some activities could be harmful if they are not conducted properly and with adequate supervision. It is the responsibility of every Royal Rangers leader to take every action needed ensure the safety of the boys participating. Keeping boys safe demonstrates the value we hold them in, and helps us to gain the trust and confidence of the boys, their parents, and other church leaders.

### **FOUR STEPS TO KEEPING BOYS SAFE**

To ensure the safety of every boy participating in Royal Rangers meetings and activities, all outposts are encouraged to practice the following four steps to keep boys safe—selection, training, supervision, and response.

#### **Step 1: SELECTION**

The process your church uses to screen and select potential leaders for your Royal Rangers outpost serves as the first line of defense in protecting your boys from harm. The process typically includes:

- Completion of a children and youth workers application
- Contact with personal or institutional references
- Performance of a criminal background check
- Participation in a personal interview with church leadership

#### **Application**

A written application should be required of every individual seeking any volunteer role. At a minimum, the application should include the applicant's name and address, the names of all youth-serving organizations where the applicant

has worked as an employee or volunteer, a full explanation of any prior criminal convictions, and the names of two or more references. Although a personal reference can be used, the best reference is an institutional reference.

### **References**

Institutional references are those from another organization in which the applicant has worked with minors either as a paid employee or an unpaid volunteer. Examples may include Scouts, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCA, youth sports teams, public or private schools, and other churches or religious organizations. The reference should be asked to provide any information that might indicate the applicant poses a risk of harm to minors or is in any other respect not suitable for youth or children's ministry. Obtaining positive references from multiple institutions who have actually observed the applicant interact with minors is the most desirable result.

Once the application is submitted, all references should be contacted and asked to submit a written statement on the suitability of the applicant to work with children or youth. If the references do not respond within the desired period of time, a phone call can suffice. When contacting references by phone, their comments concerning the applicant should be documented and kept with the application.

It is also recommend that you explore any additional legal requirements that may apply in your state. For example, a number of states require church-operated child care facilities to check with the state before hiring any applicant for employment to ensure that each applicant does not have a criminal record involving certain types of crimes. You will need to check with your church's attorney for guidance.

### **Background Check**

A criminal background check consisting of a nationwide search of sex offender registries and a national criminal file search should be performed on all applicants. Criminal record checks are inexpensive and convenient, and they are an essential component of risk management. Preferential pricing may be available from your insurance company or a denominational office.

### **Interview**

All prospective leaders should complete an interview process that provides the church with an opportunity to explore the prospective leader's background, motives, and suitability for the position being considered. This is also a good opportunity to discuss any issues that may have arisen from the background check or reference checks.

## **Step 2: TRAINING**

The second step in protecting boys is the practice of establishing well-defined church policies and practices to govern your outpost and the actions of your leaders, and then training all staff to insure their awareness of the policies and practices.

### **Policies and Practices**

When developing policies and practices for your church, start by obtaining copies of similar policies from well-established and reputable churches and youth-serving organizations in your area. Examples may include the YMCA, Scouts, Girl Scouts, or Big Brothers/Big Sisters. The best source for comparison may be your local public school district. Public schools are agencies of the state, and so by aligning your practices with those of your local public schools you are reducing the risk of negligent selection and training of workers.





Additional policies may include:

- **Waiting Period.** Churches can reduce the risk of sexual molestation of minors by adopting a policy restricting eligibility for any volunteer position involving the custody or supervision of minors to those persons who have been members in good standing of the church for a minimum period of time, such as six months. Such a policy gives the church an additional opportunity to evaluate applicants, and will help to repel persons seeking immediate access to potential victims.
- **Policy Review by Legal Counsel.** The practice of having an attorney periodically review your worker selection procedures will help to establish the exercise of reasonable care which will reduce the risk of harm to minors as well as a legal judgment of negligence in the event of an incident.
- **Two-Adult Rule.** Consider adopting a “two-adult” policy that requires the presence of two adults during any meeting or activity. Such a policy simply says that no minor is ever

allowed to be alone with an adult during any church activity. This rule reduces the risk of child molestation, and also reduces the risk of false accusations of molestation. It is recommended that two adult leaders be assigned to each age group during weekly meetings. In situations where two leaders are not available, classroom doors should be kept open and/or video monitoring used to provide additional supervision. In situations where a leader needs to meet with boy individually, the meeting should be conducted in a location in clear view of other adults, such as a hallway or another corner of the meeting room.

- **No Private Communications.** One-on-one, private communications between leaders and boys should not be allowed. This includes phone calls, social media, text messages, or any other form of private digital communications. If a leader finds it necessary to communicate with an individual boy, another leader or the boy’s parent should be included in the conversation.

### Facilities and Equipment

All facilities and equipment used by your outpost should be regularly inspected to insure it is in safe working condition. Emergency equipment such as first aid kits or AED defibrillators should be easily accessible and clearly identified, with staff being properly trained and qualified for their use.

### Training the Staff

Churches should conduct periodic training of all employees and volunteers on the latest policies and practices of the church to insure everyone is aware of the expectations placed on them. This training should also include information on recognizing and reporting child abuse and the identification of potentially abused minors. It is helpful for the training to include presentations by legal specialists in your area such as police officers, prosecuting attorneys, or employees of the child abuse hotline agency.

---

## ROYAL RANGERS LEADER MANUAL

Note that this is not Royal Rangers program training, such as completing Ranger Basics or attending NRMC. This is training on policies and practices specific to your church, conducted by your church leadership, with input from local specialists.

### Step 3: SUPERVISION

Established polices have little value or effect if leaders are not adequately supervised in their interactions with boys. The practice of supervision of children and youth workers forms the third step in protecting boys.

Church leadership must have full access to all Royal Rangers meetings and activities to insure church polices are being followed, and all leaders participating have been screened and appointed according to those polices. Church leadership should never be denied participation due to lack of program training, FCF membership, or similar criteria. Private clubs or activities are expressly prohibited in Royal Rangers due to the increased potential for harm resulting from limited supervision.

The installation of video cameras in strategic locations can also serve as a powerful deterrent to child molesters, and can reduce a church's risk of negligent supervision. Video technology has become affordable for most churches, and should be considered by all churches as both a powerful deterrent and a means of proving or disproving alleged misconduct.

### Step 4: RESPONSE

Even when our best efforts have been made to select the right leaders, establish clear polices, and provide adequate supervision, the potential for problems cannot be completely eliminated. But when problems do arise, it is essential that church leadership respond promptly and adequately to correct the situation. Response is the fourth way we protect our boys from harm.

### Thoroughly Document

It is essential that all incidents be adequately documented and kept on file in the church's permanent records. This includes not only suspected incidents of abuse but also any injuries resulting from outpost activities. Documentation should include statements from all witnesses as well as everyone involved. Photos should also be included when physical injury is involved.

### Report Promptly

Prompt reporting of all known or suspected abuse of children must be a central mandate for any children's or youth ministry. It is imperative for church leaders to comply with their state's child abuse reporting law and promptly report all known and reasonably suspected cases of child sexual abuse to the designated state agency. In some states a report must be filed within twenty-four hours. Become familiar with the reporting requirement in your state. Be sure to document any reporting phone calls you make, with a second person listening in on the conversation, when possible. Resolve any and all doubts in favor of reporting. Prompt reporting has several advantages:

- It is required by law (for mandatory reporters).
- You avoid misdemeanor liability for failure to report.
- You avoid civil liability in many states for not reporting.
- Reporters are given immunity from liability in every state (except for malicious behavior).
- You protect the current victim from further harm.
- You are placing the abuser's identity in the criminal justice system, making it more likely that this will be flagged to other churches and youth-serving charities seeking a reference.
- You minimize the risk of public outrage that can be unleashed if your church fails to report the abuse to the state.

### Halt High-Risk Behaviors

Promptly address and halt high-risk behaviors.

Often, those who molest minors in churches or church activities have openly engaged in high-risk behaviors, including, but not limited to:

- Minors spending the night in a leader’s home
- An adult leader drives a vehicle with one or more unrelated minors on board, and no other adults
- An adult goes on day trips with an unrelated minor
- An adult goes on overnight trips with an unrelated minor
- A leader spends the night in a hotel with one or more unrelated minors
- A leader meets one or more minors in a mall or other place where minors congregate
- An adult leader sleeps in a tent with an unrelated minor during a campout

These, and similar “grooming” behaviors, are associated with many incidents of child molestation involving youth and children’s ministry leaders and volunteers in churches and must be promptly confronted and stopped.

Violations of other church policies and practices must be addressed as well. Failure to correct violations of policy implies that these policies, and possibly others, may be ignored. Individuals who repeatedly violate established policies should be moved out of children’s and youth work before greater problems develop.

By following these four steps, churches can help to provide safe environments for their boys as well as the leaders involved, providing a platform where boys can be mentored into true Christlike manhood, becoming the men of God they were created to be.

*This content is adapted from the article “Managing the Risk of Child Molestation” by Richard Hammar, legal counsel for The General Council of the Assemblies of God.*

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR SAFETY

These general principles will help your Royal Rangers ministry to provide a safe environment and experience for boys while also establishing barriers to potential abuse or harm.

### Proper Supervision of Boys

It is the responsibility of *every* leader in the outpost to insure that *every* boy is adequately supervised during outpost meetings and activities. Junior leaders may assist in leadership and the supervision of boys, but junior leaders may not assume the exclusive supervision of boys at any time.

### Age-Appropriate Accommodations

Anyone involved in a Royal Rangers activity who is eighteen years old or older must be considered an adult and may not share sleeping accommodations with any boys, ages seventeen and younger, unless they are related.

Boys should not be permitted to share sleeping accommodations with boys who are more than two years older or younger, unless the boys are relatives.

Boys must be provided with separate shower and restroom facilities from adults. If separate facilities are not available, separate times should be designated for the boys’ use.

The privacy of every boy and leader must be respected. Appropriate accommodations for boys must be provided when they are changing clothes, taking showers, sleeping, or similar activities. Adults must protect their own privacy in similar settings. The appropriate use of digital communications and imaging devices such as cell phones and cameras must be monitored. The use of these devices in shower houses, restrooms, or other areas where privacy may be violated must not be allowed.

### Utilize the “Buddy System”

The buddy system is the practice of placing boys into groups of two or three and requiring them to stay together or aware of each other’s location and condition during an activity. This system provides better and more complete supervision of every boy. Whenever possible, boys should be allowed to select their buddies. Boys should not be paired with others who are more than two years older or younger. When enforced consistently, the buddy system plays a significant role in ensuring the safety of boys during Royal Rangers activities.

### No Secret Clubs

The use of secret clubs or acceptance requirements or ceremonies is prohibited in Royal Rangers. All aspects of the Royal Rangers ministry are open to supervision and monitoring by leaders, parents, and church leaders including the pastor.

### Constructive Discipline

Discipline administered in Royal Rangers must be constructive and in keeping with the mission and values of the ministry. Information concerning recommended discipline policies in the outpost can be found in chapter 38.

### Appropriate Clothing

Due to the variety of activities boys may enjoy in Royal Rangers, clothing requirements may vary based on the event. However, boys should remain clothed and modest in their appearance as appropriate for the activity and the setting. Skinny dipping (swimming undressed) should never be allowed during any Royal Rangers activity.

### Restricted Use of Hazardous Tools or Activities

Boys and leaders should only be allowed to use tools or materials they have demonstrated their ability to handle adequately and safely. For example:

- Only boys who have met the requirements for the Cut and Chop Card or Tool Craft Safety Card should be permitted to use edged tools.
- Only leaders who have received certification as instructors in the use of firearms are permitted to facilitate firearm shooting activities.
- Only leaders who are certified instructors for climbing, rappelling, or high ropes activities should be permitted to facilitate such events.

### WEATHER HAZARDS

Weather extremes are cause for extra concern for the boys and leaders at activities outside and sometimes even inside.

- When participating in cold weather activities, boys should be monitored constantly for hypothermia, dehydration, frostnip, and frostbite. Contact your insurance company to determine what activities are permissible. Younger boys should not be exposed to cold weather for outdoor activities.
- If activities in the church or outside the church expose the boys to high temperatures or high humidity, take appropriate steps which might include cancellation of the activity or service, providing fluids to hydrate participants, appropriate shade, and frequent rest times between extended periods of activity.
- High winds can cause flying debris or falls. Review conditions before the activity. Consider the cancellation of activities if high winds may affect the integrity of the building, such as windows breaking or trees falling on the structure.
- Have a plan for tornadoes or hurricanes, if you live in an area where they occur. Be sure the boys know what to do in case of a tornado warning and keep everyone calm as you move to the safest part of the building.



## TRANSPORTATION AND VEHICLES

Established public carriers—such as buses, trains, or commercial airlines—are the safest and most comfortable ways for a group to travel. The use of chartered transportation services is also highly recommended due to their required high standards for safety and vehicle inspection.

When operating vehicles to transport individuals or gear, churches can reduce the risk of injury, death, and potential liability by adopting the following precautions:

- **Prohibit the vehicle from being driven in excess of 60 miles per hour.** Many insurance companies provide GPS-tracking systems that monitor vehicle use such as speed or hard braking, and some devices can be configured to track the driving habits of individual drivers. Contact your insurance company concerning services they may require.
- **Prohibit the towing of heavy or multi-axle trailers, or another vehicle, with vehicles not designed for that purpose.** Due to the significant risk of catastrophic injury or death, never tow a trailer with a vehicle that is also carrying passengers.
- **Passengers should only be transported in vehicles and spaces specifically designed for that purpose.** All passengers must ride in a seat, and the specified passenger capacity of the vehicle must not be exceeded. Seat belts must be used by all passengers and the driver. No passengers may be transported in trailers, in the back of pickup trucks, or in any area not specifically designed to transport passengers.
- **Vehicles owned or rented by the church should only be used only for activities for which they were designed and have been authorized by the church board.** Talk to your church leadership concerning the process to obtain approval for vehicle use.
- **Vehicles must be properly maintained and inspected periodically by a competent mechanic.** Maintain a logbook of all maintenance performed. All vehicles must be licensed, carry a current safety inspection, and be covered by liability insurance that meets or exceeds your state's minimum requirements. When purchasing a new vehicle, insist on laminated glass in all side windows.
- **Vehicles should be inspected prior to the start of every trip.** Inspections should include safety belts, tire condition, brakes, headlights and tail lights, turn signals, windshield wipers, mirrors, and emergency equipment such as spare tires and jacks.
- **Drivers must avoid fatigue and take frequent rest as needed to insure safe driving.** Multiple qualified drivers should be used for trips over six hours in length, with drivers rotating every two hours or less. Driving time may not exceed ten hours in any twenty-four-hour period regardless of the number of drivers available. Shorter driving times may be required in some states.
- **Prohibit the use of cellular phones by the driver while operating the vehicle.** Hands-free units may be used if allowed by state law, but should be used sparingly. It is recommended that every vehicle include another individual who can manage phone calls and text messages for the driver while traveling. A cell phone should be onboard for use in emergencies so long as it is not used by the driver while operating the vehicle. Be sure that drivers have a list of emergency phone numbers.
- **Drivers must consistently demonstrate safe driving habits, including obedience to all traffic laws and speed limits.** The vehicle driver is personally responsible for any and all traffic or parking citations, tickets, and fines incurred while he or she is driving.

- **Drivers should be at least twenty-one (21) years of age and must have the appropriate class of license for the vehicle in use.** The church should conduct a check of the driving record of each driver for traffic offenses or license restrictions to determine if the driver is suitable. This review should be updated annually.

The use of fifteen-passenger vans should be avoided whenever possible due to the inherent risks involved and the numerous safety advisories issued by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, warning of their use. However, if outposts find it necessary to use these vehicles, the following standards should be followed, in addition to those noted above:

- No fifteen-passenger vans manufactured prior to 2005 should be used, and any vans manufactured in 2005 or later must be equipped with electronic stability control.
- No fifteen-passenger van should be used to tow a trailer while transporting passengers at any time due to the significant risk of catastrophic injury. Trailers should be towed separately, by vehicles designed for that purpose that are not also transporting passengers.
- Churches are encouraged to comply with all safety recommendations provided by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration ([www.nhtsa.gov](http://www.nhtsa.gov)).
- Consult your vehicle insurance provider concerning any additional limitations they may require on the use of fifteen-passenger vans.

The following practices are also recommended for all Royal Rangers groups while traveling:

- Always obtain written parental permission and medical release forms for everyone on board. Updated forms should be collected for every activity involving travel. Copies of these forms

should be left at the church and with the outpost coordinator (if not attending the activity). The original forms should be kept with the group while traveling, for the duration of the event.

- Clearly communicate the times of departures and arrivals. Every departure time and arrival time should be provided to parents and the church.
- Provide a map of the route to be taken. A map should be given to every driver, parent, and the church. It should be clearly detailed, written, and legible.
- Inspect the vehicle prior to departure. Inspect tires for damage or wear, headlights, brake lights, turn signals, seat belts, and fluid levels.
- The vehicle should be kept clean at all times and should be returned to the church clean and uncluttered.
- Have emergency procedures in place. Devise a plan, agreeable to and understood by all leaders, which would be put into effect in the case of an emergency. This includes what to do in case of vehicle separation, an accident, or bad weather.





## Child Safety Practices and Guidelines

Richard Hammar

Legal Counsel, The General Council of the Assemblies of God

The public revulsion at accounts of sexual misconduct by clergy and lay volunteers has reached a new and increasingly palpable level. The public is increasingly intolerant of the inadequate response by churches to incidents of sexual abuse. Church leaders need to review current policies and be prepared to take additional steps to protect minors.

There are many steps that churches can take to reduce the risk of child sexual abuse on church premises and during church programs and activities. Here are thirteen of them based on a comprehensive examination of all relevant court rulings.

1. **Interview.** Interview all applicants for youth and children's ministry positions. This applies to both paid employee and unpaid volunteer positions. Interviews provide the church with an opportunity to inquire into each applicant's background and make a determination as to each

person's suitability for the position under consideration.

2. **A written application.** Every applicant for youth or children's ministry (volunteer or compensated) should complete an application. At a minimum, the application should ask for the applicant's name and address, the names of other youth-serving organizations in which the applicant has worked as an employee or volunteer, a full explanation of any prior criminal convictions, and the names of two or more personal references.
3. **"Institutional references."** The best reference is an institutional reference. This is a reference from another institution or organization in which the applicant has worked with minors either as a paid employee or an unpaid volunteer. The key question to ask is whether the institution is aware of any information indicating that the applicant poses a risk of harm

to minors or is in any other respect not suitable for youth or children's ministry. Obviously, obtaining a positive reference from one or more other institutions that have actually observed the applicant interact with minors is the gold standard in screening prospective youth and children's workers. Some applicants have not worked with other youth-serving institutions in the past, and so no institutional reference is available. In such cases, a church's only option is to obtain personal references. However, risk can be reduced by limiting personal references to members of the church.

For nonminister employees and volunteers, the best references will be from other churches or charities in which the applicant has worked with minors. Examples include Boy/Girl Scouts, Big Brothers/Sisters, Boys/Girls Clubs, YMCA, Little League, Catholic Charities, public or private schools, youth sports, or other churches or religious organizations. Seek a reference from every such organization in which the applicant has served. Your application form should ask applicants to list all such organizations, including contact information.

For persons seeking a position as a youth or children's pastor, institutional references include other churches in which the applicant has worked in youth or children's ministry, and the church or denominational agency with which the applicant is credentialed.

Often, a church will not receive a response to a written reference request. In such a case, contact the reference by phone and prepare a written memoran-

dum noting the questions asked and the reference's responses. Show the date and method of the contact, the person making the contact, the reference's identity, and a summary of the reference's remarks. Such forms, when completed, should be kept with an applicant's original application. They should be kept permanently.

**Caution.** Be sure you are aware of any additional legal requirements that apply in your state. For example, a number of states have passed laws requiring church-operated child-care facilities to check with the state before hiring any applicant for employment to ensure that each applicant does not have a criminal record involving certain types of crimes. You will need to check with an attorney for guidance.

4. **A six-month rule.** Churches can reduce the risk of sexual molestation of minors by adopting a policy restricting eligibility for any volunteer position involving the custody or supervision of minors to those persons who have been members in good standing of the church for a minimum period of time, such as six months. Such a policy gives the church an additional opportunity to evaluate applicants, and will help to repel persons seeking immediate access to potential victims.
5. **“Benchmark” church policies by comparing them with the policies of other charities and the public schools.** Check with other churches and youth-serving charities (i.e., YMCA, Boy/Girl Scouts, Big Brothers/Sisters) to see how your procedures compare. Most importantly, check with your public school district. Public schools are agencies of the state, and therefore by aligning your procedures

to those of public schools you are going a long way in demonstrating that your procedures are reasonable and not negligent.

6. **Periodic review of your policies by legal counsel.** Like benchmarking, having an attorney periodically review your worker selection procedures will help to establish the exercise of reasonable care which will reduce the risk of both harm and a finding of negligence.
7. **Adopt a two-adult policy prohibiting a child from being alone with an unrelated adult.** Adopt a “two-adult” policy. Such a policy simply says that no minor is ever allowed to be alone with an adult during any church activity. This rule reduces the risk of child molestation, and also reduces the risk of false accusations of molestation

**Example.** *A church has a policy requiring two adults to work in the nursery. However, the policy does not prohibit children from being in the custody of less than two adults. On a Sunday morning during worship services, one adult temporarily leaves the nursery for ten minutes to speak with another church member. A few days later the parents of one of the infants in the nursery suspect that their child has been molested. Suspicion is focused on the church nursery. Since the two nursery workers cannot prove that they both were present with the child throughout the entire worship service, they cannot “prove their innocence.” The worker who was present in the nursery while the other worker was temporarily absent is suspected of wrongdoing, even though she is completely innocent.*

**Example.** *A church sponsors a campout for young boys. Some of the boys are accompanied by their fathers, but several are not. One tent is occupied by an adult volunteer*

*worker and one boy. This arrangement violates the two-adult rule.*

**Example.** *A youth pastor takes home a group of five teenagers following an activity at church. After taking four of the teenagers to their homes, he is left in his car with a fifteen-year-old female. This arrangement violates the two-adult rule.*

8. A criminal background check consisting of a nationwide search of sex offender registries, and a national criminal file search. Criminal records checks are inexpensive and convenient, and they are an essential component of risk management. Preferential pricing often is available from your insurance company. Never hire anyone in a youth or children’s ministry position, as either an employee or volunteer, who was or is on a sex offender registry in any state. Other crimes are disqualifying as well if they suggest that a person poses a risk of harm to minors. If in doubt about the relevance of a particular crime, a good practice is to bar persons from youth or children’s ministry who would not be eligible to work as a public school employee. Your local public school district offices should be able to provide you with a list of disqualifying crimes.
9. **Prompt reporting of child abuse (known and suspected).** It is imperative for church leaders to comply with their state’s child abuse reporting law. Promptly report all known and reasonably suspected cases of child sexual abuse to the designated state agency. In some states a report must be filed within twenty-four hours. Know the reporting requirement in your state. Be sure to make a telephone memorandum of your call, and ideally have a second person listening in on the conver-

sation who can sign the memorandum as a witness. Resolve any and all doubts in favor of reporting. Prompt reporting has several advantages:

- It is required by law (for mandatory reporters).
- You avoid misdemeanor liability for failure to report.
- You avoid civil liability in many states for not reporting.
- Reporters are given immunity from liability in every state (except for malicious behavior).
- You protect the current victim from further harm.
- You are placing the abuser's identity in the criminal justice system, making it more likely that this information will be flagged to other churches and youth-serving charities seeking a reference.
- You minimize the risk of public outrage that can be unleashed if your church failed to report the abuse to the state and the offender molests other minors.

10. Promptly address and halt high-risk behaviors. Often, those who molest minors in churches or church activities have openly engaged in high-risk behaviors, including:

- Minors spending the night in a leader's home.
- An adult leader drives a vehicle with one or more unrelated minors on board, and no other adults.
- An adult goes on day trips with an unrelated minor.
- An adult goes on overnight trips with an unrelated minor.

- A leader spends the night in a hotel with one or more unrelated minors.
- A leader meets one or more minors in malls or other places where minors congregate.
- An adult leader sleeps in a tent with an unrelated minor during a campout

These, and similar, "grooming" behaviors are associated with many incidents of sexual abuse involving youth and children's ministry leaders in churches. It is imperative that they be promptly confronted and stopped.

- 11. Social media.** As a "best practice," churches should prohibit any direct or private messaging on any social media platform by a youth or children's pastor or lay volunteer with unrelated minors. For support, contact your local public school district and find out what if any restrictions they place on communications between teachers and students.
- 12. Training.** Churches should conduct periodic training of employees and volunteers on recognizing and reporting child abuse, the identification of abused minors, and the importance of familiarity with the 13 recommendations summarized in this document.
- 13. Negligent supervision.** Churches can use reasonable care in selecting workers, but still be liable for injuries sustained during church activities on the basis of negligent supervision. The term negligence means carelessness or a failure to exercise reasonable care. Negligent supervision, then, refers to a failure to exercise reasonable care in the supervision of church workers and church activities. Churches have been sued on the basis of negligent supervision in a variety of contexts, but most often in



child abuse cases. Adequate supervision involves a number of safeguards, including:

- Lock rooms and hallways that are not being used.
- Use video technology (see above).
- Have an adequate number of adults present during youth and children's activities to monitor workers and activities.
- Enforce a two-adult policy prohibiting one adult worker from being alone with one minor.
- No "early releases" of minors are allowed.
- Only release minors to the parent or other adult who brought them.
- Be especially vigilant with off-site activities such as field trips and camping since they present potential opportunities for sexual abuse due to the difficulty of adequate supervision.
- Exclude known or registered sex offenders from any youth or children's activity.
- In formulating policies, "benchmark" by examining the policies of other charities and the public schools.

\*Richard R. Hammar is an attorney, CPA, and author specializing in legal and tax issues for churches and clergy. He is a graduate of Harvard Law School and attended Harvard Divinity School. He is the author of several books, including *Pastor, Church & Law*, the annual *Church & Clergy Tax Guide*, *Reducing the Risk*, the biannual *Compensation Handbook for Church Staff*, and the *Essential Guide to Copy-right Law for Churches*.

**Key point.** Look at these thirteen steps as ways to protect minors rather than as a risk management tool. If your goal is risk reduction, compliance is likely to suffer. Compliance is higher and of longer duration when leaders are motivated primarily by a desire to protect minors.