

Christian & Missionary Alliance  
Canadian Pacific District

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# Children's Ministry Safety & Risk Management GUIDE

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2013 EDITION



## **PREFACE**

This booklet is the 2nd Edition (2013) of the C&MA Canadian Pacific District Safety & Risk Management Policy, Rationale, and Procedure Guidelines.

This revision has two purposes:

1. to provide PROCEDURE GUIDELINES that have been simplified and clarified for improved ease of usage.
2. to provide necessary updates that reflect both our changing culture and legal demands.

This handbook has been specifically written to provide reasonable PROCEDURE GUIDELINES that will assist you and your church fulfill the mandated S&RM Policy. These GUIDELINES are minimum requirements and should be carefully followed in order to provide a safe environment for your volunteers, church family and community at large. These guidelines can be adapted to fit your context, but in making changes please do so with care and caution, being certain that you are continuing to comply with the CPD S&RM policy standard.

Safety and Risk Management is both a church and community issue. As the S&RM Policy becomes an integral part of your church's DNA, your church will have the growing opportunity to gain the confidence of your community as well as to provide a safe place for those who both volunteer and attend.

Format of this GUIDE:

1. The CPD Safety & Risk Management POLICY is stated in eight sections.
2. Each Policy statement is followed by the RATIONALE for that section.
3. Each Policy section and Rationale is then followed by the PROCEDURE GUIDELINES that when followed, will enable you to carry out the mandated Policy.

Please take time to read, digest and carefully  
apply this GUIDE to your ministry.

It has been provided with the sincere purpose of assisting  
you to minister more effectively and safely to the children, youth  
and vulnerable sector within your church community

# **POLICY: PART 1**

## **SAFETY & RISK MANAGEMENT**

The Canadian Pacific District Safety and Risk Management Policy shall be the recognized standard for implementing safety policies for children's and youth ministries. This Policy may be updated from time to time by action of the District Superintendent or his designate.

The Plan to Protect© Manual, 3rd edition (2007) is not the Policy, but shall be used as our resource and reference manual. This manual may be updated or replaced at the discretion of the District Superintendent or his designate.

### **RATIONALE:**

CPDistrict Safety & Risk Management Policy, mandated by DEXCOM in March 2010 and approved by our insurance carrier is the minimum standard for compliance by all CPDistrict churches. The Plan To Protect© Manual, 3rd edition, includes a fuller explanation of each section along with sample forms and resources.

Some forms are included on the PtoP© disc included in the PtoP© Manual and can be amended and personalized with your church name. Forms can also be downloaded from the CP District website: [www.cmacpd.bc.ca](http://www.cmacpd.bc.ca)

### **PROCEDURE GUIDELINES: 6 steps to implementation.....**

1. Familiarize yourself with this Canadian Pacific District Safety & Risk Management Policy (S&RM) along with the Plan To Protect© Manual, 3rd edition.
2. Understand and support this S&RM Policy.
  - » Pastors, Boards of Elders, and ministry leaders are key to the successful implementation and ongoing consistency of the Plan.
3. Appoint one or two key people, or a Safety & Risk Management Team to oversee ongoing coordination and implementation of your S&RM Policy.
4. Adopt this CPD Safety & Risk Management Policy for your church:

Remember: The Plan to Protect© Manual IS NOT your church's policy, it is a comprehensive guide.

  - » Be reminded that this S&RM policy is for both Children's and Youth ministries (and includes the Vulnerable Sector\* where applicable).
  - » If you rent a meeting place and have no control over the physical space or over some of the protection issues outlined in this document, this should be taken into consideration as you determine your procedures.
  - » In order to make your policy a valid document for insurance coverage, this CPD Safety and Risk Management Protection Policy must be approved by your Board of Elders and included in your BOE Minutes. This action shall then be communicated to the CPDistrict office. Copies shall be distributed to all church leadership, Children's and Youth ministry leaders and volunteers as well as to those who work with the Vulnerable Sector.

5. Keep ongoing records:

Determine your record-keeping system as well as where the records shall be stored.

- » Since legally, the Statute of Limitations does not apply to the ongoing protection of children, youth or the vulnerable sector, **all Safety and Risk Management records shall be kept permanently**, in a safe, secured location. It is acceptable to store these records electronically.

6. Implement your ongoing Safety and Risk Management Policy.

**\* RCMP Definition of Vulnerable Sector:**

"A vulnerable person is defined as a person who, because of their age, a disability, or other circumstances, whether temporary or permanent is (a) in a position of dependence on others or (b) are otherwise at a greater risk than the general population of being harmed by a person in a position of authority or trust relative to them." (This includes minors under the age of 19 in BC, disabled persons of any age or disability, and seniors)

## **POLICY: PART 2 SCREENING AND ASSESSMENT**

Prospective ministry personnel shall submit to the following recruitment and screening process:

1. Minimum of 6 months church attendance required prior to approval of application (some exceptions may apply)
2. Completion of a Ministry Application Form, including the C&MA Statement of Faith
3. Minimum of two reference checks from non-relatives, preferably recent ministry leaders and/or employers
4. Criminal Record Check, to be renewed every 3 years
5. Face to face interaction or interview with the ministry leader or designate
6. Annual training directed toward a clear understanding of the Safety and Risk Management guidelines
7. Final approval

**RATIONALE:** (PtoP© Manual pages 33-36, 38, 40)

**Having a clear recruitment and screening process in place is imperative for the protection not only of the children and youth, but also the protection of the workers, families, and the church itself. It clarifies the reasonable and consistent protocol to be followed.**

**PROCEDURE GUIDELINES:**

1. **6 month rule:** The #1 protection! (PtoP© Manual pages 37, 38)
  - » Perspective volunteers for children's ministries shall have attended our church consistently for six months, are considered to be in good standing, and clearly support the doctrines and direction of our church.

- » Waiving the six month rule can take place only if the prospective volunteer comes from another evangelical church, is known and in good standing in that church for the year prior to coming, and has at least two affirming children's ministry references from the previous pastor and/or ministry leaders.
  - » Names of potential volunteers shall be brought to the pastoral staff or Safety and Risk Management team leader for consideration.
  - » A person for whom some concern is expressed, or who is new to our church shall be directed toward ministries not involving children.
  - » Any person who has been accused or convicted of abuse of minors in any form or, for any other crime, shall not be involved with our children in any way whatsoever.
- 2. Application forms:** (use the CPD Application Forms for Adult and Youth Volunteers - updated January 2013)
- » Applications shall be completed by all youth or adults seeking ministry to our children.
  - » All application forms shall be considered confidential and filed in a permanent, secure location.
- 3. Reference Checks:** (PtoP© Manual pages 41, 42, Appendices 5-7)
- » At least two of the three references shall be contacted. Referees shall be asked to affirm character qualities and their assessment of the applicant's ability to work with children. Previous pastors, ministry leaders or employers provide the most insightful information.
  - » A record of each reference call shall be kept permanently on file and shall include the name of the caller, date of the call, and summary of conversation.
- 4. Interview:** (PtoP© Manual pages 43, 44, Appendix 8)
- » A face-to-face interview or interaction with each potential volunteer shall be carried out prior to the applicant being placed in a ministry setting.
- 5. Criminal Record Checks:** (PtoP© Manual pages 45-47)
- » A Criminal Record Check for all volunteers ages 15 and older, as well as paid workers, shall be carried out through the local Police Department.
  - » The cost of this CRC is normally incurred by the individual, unless the church chooses to assist.
  - » The results of these CRC's shall be returned to the church and kept in the volunteer's confidential file.
- 6. Training:** (PtoP© Manual, Training Outlines pages 55-78)
- » All applicants for Children's ministries shall receive S&RM Training, including instruction on safety, evacuation procedures, medical emergencies and child abuse prevention.
  - » Further, annual S&RM training shall be required for all children's ministry volunteers.

## **7. Final Approval:** (PtoP© Manual pages 50, 51)

- » All ministry personnel shall be approved by church or ministry leadership prior to being placed in a ministry position.

## **POLICY: PART 3 IDENTIFICATION AND SUPERVISION OF VOLUNTEERS**

Ministry personnel shall be intentionally identified and supervised.

**RATIONALE:** Clearly identifying screened volunteers as ‘go to’ persons is an essential part of safety and risk management.

**Supervision of volunteers raises visibility and reduces the risk of unsafe practices.**

### **PROCEDURE GUIDELINES:**

- 1. Identification:** (PtoP© Manual pages 90-91)
  - » Ministry personnel shall wear identifying nametags and/or identifiable clothing.
  - » Guests or occasional observers shall wear an identifying nametag.
- 2. Supervision:** (PtoP© Manual page 85)
  - » Ongoing, proactive and intentional supervision of volunteers shall be carried out.

## **POLICY: PART 4 RECORD KEEPING**

Legally, the Statute of Limitations does not apply to the ongoing protection of children, youth or the vulnerable sector. Therefore, **all** Safety & Risk Management records are confidential and shall be permanently stored in a safe, secured location.

**RATIONALE:** All records shall be available indefinitely for scrutiny in the event that a legal question arises regarding an activity or the attendance of a specific child, youth or volunteer.

### **PROCEDURE GUIDELINES:**

- 1. Record Files:** (PtoP© Manual pages 45, 46, 86, Appendix 22)
  - » Criminal Record Checks of volunteers shall be updated every three years.
  - » Taking attendance of volunteers and children is mandatory.
  - » Confidential records to be permanently and securely stored shall be, but not limited to:

- » All records of attendance, either hard copy or digital, of children and volunteers
- » All volunteer applications, criminal record checks, reference checks, interview notes
- » All children's registrations, authorization and medical consents, acknowledgement/permission forms
- » All off-site event details, billeting details, transportation and driver forms
- » All incident reports
- » All documentation re suspected and/or allegations of abuse

## **POLICY: PART 5 PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

**CHILDREN** and youth shall be protected through intentional practices, including appropriate:

1. Leader/student ratio
2. Leader/student interactions
3. Display of affection guidelines
4. Safe receiving and dismissal procedures
5. Attendance records of students and volunteers
6. Diaper changing/bathroom procedures
7. Registration, Medical Consent, Acknowledgement/Permission Forms
8. Off-site activities, overnight and event procedures
9. Transportation guidelines
10. Anti-bullying guidelines
11. Social networking guidelines

**RATIONALE: Visibility and Supervision are KEYS to risk management!**

**"As risk increases, supervision must increase**

**Risk increases as isolation increases**

**Risk increases as accountability decreases**

**Risk increases when there is an imbalance of power, authority, influence or control between a potential abuser and a potential victim."**

"Reducing the Risk" Training DVD, Christianity Today 2008

**PROCEDURE GUIDELINES:**

1. **Leader/student ratio:** (PtoP© Manual pages 87-89)
  - » Wherever possible, at least two leaders, not related, shall be with groups of children. This can include teenage assistants or parents. At least one worker shall be screened via the S&RM policy, and only that

worker shall be placed in a position of trust.....including accompanying children to the bathroom.

- » Should it not be possible to have at least two screened workers present, or if the workers present are related, an open-door policy shall be adhered to. Children shall then be taken to the bathroom as a group. In this scenario, having a hall monitor is the preferred option.

**2. Leader-Child Interactions:** (PtoP© Manual pages 106, 107)

- » Children shall be encouraged and treated with respect in every situation.
- » Discipline shall be positive, patient and loving.
- » Parents shall be informed and/or involved should any disciplinary action be necessary.

**3. Display of Affection Guidelines:** (PtoP© Manual pages 106-109, 121)

- » Displays of affection appropriate to the child's age, that reflect God's love and care shall be encouraged.
- » Appropriate and positive physical touch of children shall always be in view of others and in ways that cannot be easily misunderstood.
- » Inappropriate touch of children includes extended physical contact such as hugging, tickling, kissing, carrying or setting older children on your lap, touching an area that would be covered by a bathing suit, or making them uncomfortable in the presence of others.
- » Being alone with a child of either sex is strongly discouraged unless in clear sight of others.
- » It is decidedly inappropriate to be alone in a vehicle at any time with a child.

**4. Safe receiving and dismissal procedures:** (PtoP© Manual pages 94, 95)

- » Babies and children shall not be dropped off unless a screened volunteer is present.
- » All babies and preschoolers shall be signed in and out by a parent or approved designate.
- » Babies and preschoolers shall be released only into the care of a parent or designate through the utilization of a signature, security number, photo ID card or digital ID.
- » Younger school age and new children shall remain in their classroom until picked up by a parent or designate.
- » Children of any age shall not be left unsupervised **at any time.**

**5. Attendance records of students and volunteers:** (PtoP© Manual page 96, Appendix 22)

- » Recording attendance of all volunteers, babies and children is mandatory each time a program or activity is in session.

- » These attendance records shall be kept permanently on file. (S&RM Policy Part 4)
- 6. Diaper-Changing/Bathroom procedures:** (PtoP© Manual pages 97, 98, Appendix 10)

- » Wisdom and discretion shall be used in providing every measure of security possible!

**Diaper changing shall take place:**

- » In an open area of the nursery and in the presence of another volunteer
- » By adult female workers only
- » OR, a non-diaper changing rule shall be established - the safest procedure is to call the parent.

**Bathroom procedures for preschoolers or young children:**

- » No child shall go to the bathroom alone.
- » A worker shall not be alone with a child in an unsupervised bathroom.
- » Only female workers shall assist children in the bathroom.
- » A worker shall stand in doorway of bathroom in clear sight, or.....
- » Two volunteers shall be present when a child needs assistance in a stall, or.....
- » Bathroom breaks shall be taken as a group, or.....
- » Parent/Guardian shall be called to care for the child.

**Bathroom procedures for older children ages 7 to 12**

- » Children of same sex shall go to the bathroom in groups of 2 or 3.
- » Visible female adult supervision shall be a priority.

**7. Registration, Medical Consent, Acknowledgement/Permission Forms:** (PtoP© Manual pages 92, 93, Appendices 14, 15 )

- » Registration of all children, including medical consent forms, shall be completed by the parent or guardian at the time of a child's entrance into a program or activity. These records shall be kept on file permanently and updated as needed.
- » Parent/Guardian Acknowledgement and/or Consent Forms shall be completed prior to an event or outing.

**Please note:** A properly completed Acknowledgment or Permission Form may be used in place of a Release Form.

"An effectively drafted acknowledgement or permission form will provide both parental notice and informed consent, but not waive negligence".

Permission or acknowledgment forms should include all details of the recreational activity or field trip, including, very importantly, transportation information, if the activity is off site. The document should contain a clear description of the activity along with a full explanation of the inherent risks. Higher risk activities should be objectively assessed as such. These documents do not seek to avoid responsibility for negligence, but to transfer to the participant all inherent risks of participation."

"In BC, releases covering accidental injuries to minors are still valid. Releases covering negligent injuries are not. **Consequently, due diligence to avoid**

**negligence is paramount!**" (CCCC bulletin, August 2010, used by permission [http://www.cccc.org/bulletin\\_article/297](http://www.cccc.org/bulletin_article/297))

- » All information shall be received and kept in compliance with the Privacy Act (PIPEDA - the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act).

**8. Off-site activities, overnight and event and procedures, and...**

**9. Transportation Guidelines:** (PtoP© Manual pages 104, 105, 131-138, Appendix 17 check list, Appendices 18-21, 30)

- » All special events and/or overnight trips shall be approved by church leadership.
- » Mandatory Acknowledgement or Permission Forms shall be completed by parent/guardian prior to each off-site event.
- » Every event or activity shall be adequately supervised.
- » Plan to Protect© manual, Appendix 17, shall be utilized as a check list to make sure all forms are filled out and bases covered.
- » Drivers shall have at least a Class 5 license (not restricted by an "L" or an "N" rating).
- » Prior to driving for any CM outing, drivers shall provide the CM leadership with an up-to-date copy of his/her "Driver's Abstract", provided by ICBC at no charge.
- » Event, travel plans, driver information, driver Abstract, and driver contract shall be photocopied, one copy provided for the event leaders and one copy left at church office.
- » Transportation to and from special events as well as overnight billeting shall take into account safety of the children as a primary concern and shall avoid inappropriate mixing of the sexes.

**Forms to be completed and signed on a yearly basis are:**

- » Authorization and Medical Consent Form (Appendix 14)
- » Emergency Information (Appendix 20)
- » Driving Contract (Appendix 21)

**Forms to be completed and signed for each off-site or overnight activity are:**

- » Parent/Guardian Acknowledgement and/or Permission Forms (Appendix 15)
- » Off-site Activity Report Form (Appendix 18)
- » Trips and Off-site Travel Form (Appendix 19)

**10. Anti-Bullying Guidelines:** (PtoP© Manual pages 110, 111)

- » Bullying in any form shall not be tolerated.
- » Children shall be treated with respect and dignity in a safe and inclusive environment.
- » Should a bullying incident occur, it shall be reported to both the parents

of the perpetrator as well as the parents of the victim.

- » **G-R-A-C-E - a positive behavioural guideline:**
  - G - Use Godly language and actions**
  - R - Respect others**
  - A - Ask for help**
  - C - Control yourself, play fair**
  - E - Everyone deserves to be safe**

#### **11. Social Networking Guidelines: Extra caution needed!**

- » Caution shall be used when leaders are contacting children via any social networking device.
- » As much as possible, parents shall be informed and/or included in these conversations.
- » Photos, videos and information may not be used in any format without proper parental consent. (PIPIDA)

## **POLICY: PART 6 FACILITY**

The church leadership shall provide a safe physical environment, conducive to effective programming and supervision.

**RATIONALE: Clean, safe facility and equipment help provide an environment that is conducive to effective ministry.**

#### **PROCEDURE GUIDELINES:**

- 1. The meeting facility:** (PtoP© Manual pages 99, 100)
  - » The facility shall be well-maintained, clean and safe.
  - » High visibility and clear sight-lines shall be provided via half doors or windows in doors of classrooms.
  - » The facility shall be regularly inspected for safety and cleanliness.
- 2. Equipment:**
  - » Equipment shall meet up-to-date safety standards and be well maintained.

## **POLICY: PART 7 SAFETY, FIRST AID & EMERGENCIES**

Safety and first aid procedures shall be in place, including but not limited to:

1. Emergency evacuation plan; lock-down procedures
2. Injuries, infection, blood-borne pathogens, infectious disease control
3. Medical emergency response plan
4. Incident reporting and follow-up

**RATIONALE: Safety measures in all aspects are both expected and necessary.**

**PROCEDURE GUIDELINES:**

- 1. Emergency Evacuation Plan:** (PtoP© Manual Appendix 27)
  - » Facility map and evacuation procedures shall be posted, visible at all exits; procedures shall be communicated to all staff, volunteers and program participants.
  - » Lock down procedures shall be clearly set out and communicated to all staff, volunteers and program participants. (The best resource for determining appropriate lock-down procedures will be one of the local school administrators).
- 2. Injuries, infections, blood-borne pathogens, infectious disease control:** (PtoP© Manual Appendices 11, 12, 13)
  - » Steps in dealing with above shall be followed as outlined in the PtoP© Manual
- 3. Medical Emergency Response Plan, including Safety and First Aid:** (PtoP© Manual pages 101-103,130, Appendices 11-13)
  - » Electrical outlet covers shall be placed in all pre-school classroom outlets.
  - » First-aid kits shall be kept up-to-date and conveniently available. It is advisable to place a small first-aid kit in each classroom.
  - » All incidents where an injury takes place shall be reported to ministry leadership.
  - » In the event of an injury, the incident shall be dealt with swiftly and appropriately. The parents shall be contacted immediately.
  - » 911 shall be called immediately for medical assistance if there is any doubt as to the severity of the injury.
- 4. Incident Reporting and Follow-up:** (PtoP© Manual Appendix 16)
  - » An Incident Report Form shall be completed and signed by both the worker involved and a witness to the incident.
  - » It is advisable to have a binder with Incident Report forms located with the First Aid kits.
  - » Follow up of those affected by the incident shall continue at least until recovery.
  - » It is important to carefully journal dates, times and conversations, re all incidents and ongoing contacts with the ministry leader, the injured, his/her family and anyone else who is party to the incident.

## **POLICY: PART 8 SUSPECTED ABUSE**

All incidents of suspected abuse shall be reported and followed up as per requirements of the BC Ministry of Children and Family Development.

The Senior Pastor or designate shall work with the person reporting the incident to ensure that the appropriate process is observed and shall immediately report the incident or alleged abuse to the CPD office.

Confidentiality of all persons involved shall be carefully protected.

ONE SPOKESPERSON ONLY! One appointed spokesperson shall present a carefully prepared response statement as needed.

**RATIONALE: Reporting is not only a legal requirement but also protects the church and all those involved in the allegation.**

### **PROCEDURE GUIDELINES:**

**Reporting:** (PtoP© Manual pages 147-167, Appendices 23-26, 29, 31)

#### **1. When to Report:**

- » Workers shall be trained to understand and recognize the indicators of abuse (PtoP© Appendix 23)
- » It is our legal duty to report any incident of suspected or known abuse to the BC Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD). Any person believing that a child is in need of protection shall immediately report the situation to the MCFD.
- » The children's ministry team leader and Senior Pastor shall be informed of the report being made. They shall provide support to the person reporting the incident to the MCFD.
- » Reporting shall be made according to the protocol laid out by the Child, Family and Community Service Act.
- » The CP District Office shall immediately be notified regarding the report.

#### **2. Confidentiality:**

- » Any allegation of abuse shall be taken seriously. The alleged victim(s), perpetrator(s), and the families involved shall be treated with confidentiality, respect and dignity.

#### **3. Handling the Allegation:**

- » One appointed spokesperson shall present a carefully prepared response statement for the church, public inquiries, media, etc. This is of high importance. ONE SPOKESPERSON ONLY!





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