

Responsible Ministry: Screening in Faith

Completion of Annual Returns

God of abundance and God of life, infuse your children with courage and love, that we may build communities of hope, which are healthy, thriving and safe. Help us to be responsible with our ministry so that both the weak and the strong find their home in our churches, through the profound love of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

The *Responsible Ministry: Screening in Faith* policy has been in place since February, 2003 to help parishes ensure that their places of ministry are safe and healthy. Through our Baptismal Covenant we are obligated to look after the welfare of all members of our community but especially those who are vulnerable through age, infirmity or particular circumstances of dependency. This is a sacred trust which must be responsibly and safely managed.

The Diocese of Toronto is abundantly blessed with gifted and committed clergy, employees and volunteers who offer their talents in full recognition of their obligations. In fact, the church could not operate without the work of thousands of individuals throughout the Diocese who exercise a variety of ministries to persons within the church community and beyond.

It is critical for all of us to ensure that those we place in positions of power and trust be selected, trained and supported so that their ministry may be life-giving. As such, since 2006 all congregations have been required, as part of their annual Churchwardens' and Incumbent's Returns (the "Returns"), to report compliance with screening indicators.

Tips for completing the forms:

1. Ensure that the responses on the Churchwardens' and Incumbent's Returns match. The Corporation should have a conversation about the congregation's compliance before completing the Returns. If the two Returns do not match, your congregation will be deemed "not in compliance".
2. Every congregation has a minimum of 2 people serving in high-risk ministry positions – the Churchwardens. Other positions that must be assessed as high-risk are all clergy including Honorary Assistants; churchwardens; organists and music directors; parish employees; lay anointers; and also those involved in residential or off-site ministries with children or vulnerable adults.
3. The Returns state "as of December 31st". This means the completion of screening for those individuals who were in their ministry positions up to and including December 31st of the year the return relates to. Therefore, congregations have the period from December 31st until the returns are submitted to ensure that screening is completed for those individuals.
4. There are resources and templates available on the Diocesan website which provide guidance for every step in the screening process (www.toronto.anglican.ca/parish-administration/screening/forms-and-resources).
5. If you have any questions about completing this section of the Returns, please contact the Diocesan Screening Coordinator, Aneita Chang at achang@toronto.anglican.ca or at 1-800-668-8932 ext. 233.

The Compliance Questions are:

1. Are all ministry activities of the congregation listed and assessed for risk (high, medium, or low)?
2. Have all individuals in medium and high risk positions attended Sexual Misconduct Policy training at the beginning of the ministry and every three years thereafter?
3. Have all individuals in high risk positions completed a Police Record Check, using the Diocesan approved process, at the beginning of the ministry and every three years thereafter?
4. Is the congregation, to the best of your knowledge, fully compliant with the standards and procedures of the *Responsible Ministry: Screening in Faith* policy?