



Parish Guidelines: Safe Environment Compliance Considerations for Cemetery Employees

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines for parishes in regard to Safe Environment compliance for cemetery employees.

Corporate Structure Models

The Office of Safe Environment recognizes that there may be different corporate structure models in regard to how parishes are aligned with their associated cemetery. Safe Environment does not provide direction on corporate structure as that is clearly the responsibility of the parish or parishes involved. This document simply clarifies the Safe Environment compliance implications regardless of the business model chosen.

Parish Model

In those cases where the cemetery falls within the normal business operation of the parish and there are cemetery employees, the designated parish LoSEC is responsible for ensuring that all Safe Environment requirements are followed by cemetery employees. Most cemeteries currently fall under this model.

Standalone Model

There are a few instances where parishes in a city or geographic region have rolled all of their cemeteries into standalone entity for business purposes. Typically one of the parishes is designated to oversee cemetery operations. In such cases the LoSEC of the parish designated for oversight may also provide Safe Environment compliance oversight of the cemetery.

If the standalone cemetery and associated parishes prefer, the cemetery can be a standalone entity for Safe Environment purposes as well. In such cases, a LoSEC must be designated and trained for the cemetery. The cemetery also must pay all of the invoices for criminal background checks and Safe Environment awareness training directly to the appropriate vendors. Please contact the Office of Safe Environment to help coordinate this option if selected.

Vendor Model

There also may be instances where a parish has contracted with an outside vendor to supply contracted services for all of the cemetery work. As of the date of the writing of this guideline the *Charter* is silent on contracted labor, so in these situations, at this time, the vendor's employees are not required to follow Safe Environment requirements.

Charter Application

The *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* is clear that all employees of any diocesan entity must have a criminal background check. A person is considered an employee for the purpose of the Charter if they are compensated in any manner for the work that they provide to the Cemetery. That is regardless if the parish pays the person through its normal payroll process or makes any kind of direct payment such as a stipend.

Employee Requirements

Criminal Background Check

All employees over the age of 18 are required to have a Diocesan criminal background check prior to hire. The proper point in the hiring process is prior to extension of the final job offer and confirmation of start date.

Employees under the age of 18 also undergo a criminal background check process; please contact the Office of Safe Environment if you are unfamiliar with this process.

Safe Environment Awareness Training

All employees over the age of 18, whether they are considered seasonal, part time, or full time are required complete designated safe environment awareness training. The Diocese offers training through VIRTUS in either online or in-person formats. All employees, including cemetery employees, are required to complete this training regardless if they come in contact with children as part of their job or not.

Any employees under the age of 18 are not required to complete this training and should not do so.

As cemetery employees would not minister to children they would have up to 30 days from the beginning of employment to complete VIRTUS. However, it is strongly recommended to complete the training as soon as possible. With the online option you can easily make the training part of the initial orientation day.

Charter Audit Implications

Cemetery employees are counted in the annual Charter audit process. In most cases they are included with all other parish employees. In the case of a standalone model, the designated LoSEC must provide the required data for the cemetery directly to the Office of Safe Environment.

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