

Safe Environment Certification Summary

From the USCCB Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People

ARTICLE 12: Dioceses/eparchies are to maintain “safe environment” programs which the diocesan/eparchial bishop deems to be in accord with Catholic moral principles. They are to be conducted cooperatively with parents, civil authorities, educators, and community organizations to provide education and training for children, youth, parents, ministers, educators, volunteers, and others about ways to make and maintain a safe environment for children and young people. Dioceses/eparchies are to make clear to clergy and all members of the community the standards of conduct for clergy and other persons in positions of trust with regard to children.

ARTICLE 13. Dioceses/eparchies are to evaluate the background of all incardinated and non-incardinated priests and deacons who are engaged in ecclesiastical ministry in the diocese/eparchy and of all diocesan/eparchial and parish/school or other paid personnel and volunteers whose duties include ongoing, unsupervised contact with minors. Specifically, they are to utilize the resources of law enforcement and other community agencies. In addition, they are to employ adequate screening and evaluative techniques in deciding the fitness of candidates for ordination (cf. National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Program of Priestly Formation, [Fifth Edition], 2006, no. 39).

- The Archdiocese Adult safe environment training, “Respecting all God’s People,” is a three-hour training established in 2003. Since then over 15,000 staff, clergy and volunteers have been trained, screened, and certified. The certification is valid for five years.
- The Archdiocese Adult Safe Environment recertification Program (using a DVD) was established in 2006. The screening process is the same as above. The recertification is also valid for five years.
- Safe Environment Certification is a two-part process, consisting of training and a screening/background check, affecting:
 - **Employees** (clergy and all others being paid by the Archdiocese, its parishes, and schools)
 - Background checks are a condition for employment throughout the archdiocese.
 - Complete Certification (including training) is required for those whose duties include ongoing, unsupervised contact with minors
 - **Volunteers** whose duties include ongoing, unsupervised contact with minors.