

**Archdiocese of Denver  
Safe Environment Program  
Sex Offender Policy**

**A sex offender may become known to the parish leadership in two primary ways:**

A sex offender may come forward and disclose his/her background.

A sex offender may apply to volunteer in the parish. In the course of processing the background check their criminal history is revealed.

**A disclosure in the context of sacramental confession or spiritual direction may not be used in identifying a sex offender for the purposes of this policy.**

**Once a sex offender is made known to parish leadership, it is required that the sex offender policy be implemented. To ensure respect for the rights of the offender and the parish community, the following steps should be taken by the pastor:**

1. Consult with the Office for Child and Youth Protection regarding the particular situation;
2. Meet with the offender and review the policy. Make sure that he/she understands the parameters of what is expected;
3. Complete the Mass Attendance and Parish Involvement Agreement Form.

Additional prohibitions for those that offended against youth, should include:

1. Prohibiting him from being alone with children under 18 years of age (other than his/her own) at all times
2. Prohibiting participating as a volunteer in the parish in any capacity
3. Prohibiting participating as a leader in any activities that are youth-oriented
4. Prohibit access from parish facilities that are reserved for youth activities

**Also, church leadership should be made aware of the circumstance so that they can be vigilant.**

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Safe Environment Program  
Sex Offender Policy for Parish Interaction**

**Limitations:**

Known sex offenders may ordinarily attend scheduled public liturgies and other acts of worship. Participation in specific ministries or apostolate of the parish, or parish activities such as a social hour following mass, parish dinners, or any other activity other than liturgical celebrations may be permitted only at the recommendation of the pastor, and with the approval of the Archbishop or his delegate. Public Ministry will not be allowed. Public Ministry examples include ushering/greeting, choir member, Eucharistic Minister of Holy Communion, ministry leader, etc.

Known sex offenders should not ordinarily be present on parish property at any time other than to attend Mass, another public liturgy or act of worship, during ordinarily scheduled confession times, or for a private meeting with a cleric of the parish which has been scheduled in advance.

Exceptions to this policy will be considered by the Archbishop, or his delegate, on a case by case basis, and with the recommendation of the pastor. Reasonable cause for an exception will include efficacy in a ministerial program for rehabilitation, limited threat to other participants, advanced age, or demonstrable and deeply manifested conversion or healing. A pastor recommending an exception should contact the Office of Child and Youth Protection.

All exceptions must be documented in a Parish Participation Agreement Form, signed by the pastor and the offender.

**Notifications:**

1. The pastor should reserve the right to notify his advisors (typically his parish council) and those who will assist in monitoring the offender (ushers/greeters) regarding the offender's criminal history. The pastor in communicating these issues should balance the needs of parish safety with those rights provided to the offender under Canon Law, (c. 220), in regards to protection of reputation.<sup>1</sup>

**Supervision:**

1. A pastor at his discretion may require that an adult guardian be with the offender during the times he/she attends mass.
2. A pastor may require a known sex offender to sit in a specific spot in the church for monitoring purposes.
3. A pastor may require that a known sex offender attend a specific Mass time in order to provide the best supervision possible.

This Mass is often the early morning Sunday Mass at which typically children and young adult attendance is minimal.

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<sup>1</sup> Canon 220, No one is permitted to harm illegitimately the good reputation which a person possesses nor to injury the right of any person to protect his or her own privacy.

If for legitimate reasons, the offender cannot attend the Mass which the pastor has identified, he should be given reasonable accommodation as required under Canon Law.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Canon 1246-1248.

**Archdiocese of Denver  
Safe Environment Program  
Parish Participation Agreement Form**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parish \_\_\_\_\_

Community Corrections Officer \_\_\_\_\_  
Name/Phone Number

The Sex Offender Policy for Mass Attendance in the Archdiocese of Denver has been clearly explained to me and I agree to comply with each norm.

I understand that failure to comply with the policy may mean that I will no longer be able to attend Mass at this parish or access the parish property.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

Specific Mass Time Required :  Yes  No

Assigned Seating Required :  Yes  No

If yes, please identify the Mass time and/or the location of the assigned seating:

\_\_\_\_\_

Permission for participation in specific activities or ministries of the parish

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Pastor/Priest Administrator Date