

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

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

1. An offender may come forward and disclose his/her background.
2. An offender may apply to volunteer in the parish and their offending status is discovered through the background check performed for all Church Workers. As set forth in Section III(C) of the Archdiocesan Code of Conduct, offenses of this nature would disqualify them from serving as a Church Worker but may not disqualify them from participating in parish life under appropriate conditions.

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

Pastors who receive information about an offender within their congregation from a third party or by some other means should contact the Office of Minor and At-Risk Adult Protection for further guidance.

Implementation. To ensure respect for the rights of the offender and for the parish community, the following steps should be taken by the pastor:

1. Consult with the Office of Minor and At-Risk Adult Protection regarding the particular situation.
2. Meet with the offender and review the policy to be sure that he/she understands the parameters of what is expected and to gather pertinent information, including whether there are any temporary or permanent legal restrictions in place for the offender;
3. Complete the Mass Attendance and Parish Involvement Agreement Form.

Limitations. Pastors should use the following guidelines for an offender's participation in parish life to develop the terms of an offender's Agreement Form.

1. Known sex offenders may ordinarily attend scheduled public liturgies and other acts of worship. They 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.
2. Participation in public ministry, other specific ministries or apostolate of the parish, parish activities such as a social hour following Mass or a parish dinner, or any other activity other than liturgical celebrations may be permitted only at the recommendation of the pastor after he has consulted the Office of Minor and At-Risk Adult Protection. Examples of public ministry include serving as an usher/greeter, lector, choir member, Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, ministry leader, etc.
3. Additional limitations for those that offended against minors include:
 - a. Prohibition from being alone with children under 18 years of age (other than his/her own) at all times;
 - b. Prohibition from serving as a volunteer in the parish in any capacity;
 - c. Prohibition from participating as a leader in any activities that are youth-oriented; and
 - d. Prohibition from access to parish facilities that are designated for youth activities.

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 parishioners, advanced age, or demonstrable and deeply manifested conversion or healing.

A pastor recommending an exception should contact the Office of Minor and At-Risk Adult Protection. All approved exceptions must be documented in an Agreement Form, signed by the pastor and the offender.

Additional 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. 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.¹

Notifications: 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.²

Reporting and Monitoring. Pastors shall adhere to the following procedures when an offender is identified within their congregations:

1. Inform the Office of Minor and At-Risk Adult Protection within forty-eight (48) hours of becoming aware of an offender who is part of the congregation.
2. Meet with the offender pursuant to Section IV(C)(2) as soon as reasonably possible, but not more than ten (10) days after becoming aware of the offender's status.
3. Keep the Office of Minor and At-Risk Adult Protection apprised if the issue is not easily resolved by executing an Agreement Form.
4. Provide the Office of Minor and At-Risk Adult Protection with a copy of the fully executed Agreement Form within three (3) days of completion, where it will be retained for seven (7) years from the date of execution.
5. Check in with the offender annually and promptly inform the Office of Minor and At-Risk Adult Protection of any changes in the offender's attendance at the parish or his or her legal status with respect to the offense.
6. Maintain a copy of the fully executed Agreement Form in a secure file at the parish, in accordance with the parish's record retention schedule.
7. The Agreement Form should be renewed when there is a change in pastor, with an executed copy of the new Agreement Form sent to the Office of Minor and At-Risk Adult Protection for retention through the end of the original seven (7) year period.

¹ Canon 1246-1248.

² 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.

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

Name of Offender _____

Name of Corrections Officer and Phone Number _____

Parish _____

Name of Priest or Parish Official _____

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

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.

Was sex offense against minors such that additional limitations apply? Yes No

Specific Mass time required? Yes No If yes, day and time: _____

Assigned seating required? Yes No If yes, describe location: _____

Assigned adult guardian? Yes No If yes, guardian's name: _____

Are there any permissions for participation in specific activities or ministries of the parish? Yes No

If yes, please describe the permissions: _____

Signature of Offender

Date

Signature of Priest or Parish Official

Date