

**COMMUNICATION POLICY AND PROCEDURES REGARDING:
SEXUAL ABUSE OF MINORS AND PERSONS WHO HABITUALLY LACK THE USE OF REASON, BY PERSONS WORKING IN OR
MINISTERING ON BEHALF OF THE DIOCESE OF SPOKANE**

Communication Policy

The Diocese of Spokane's communications policy reflects a commitment to transparency and openness regarding credible allegations of sexual abuse of minors and persons who habitually lack the use of reason by Church personnel – clerics, religious, seminarians, employees and volunteers working on behalf of the Church.

This commitment will be carried out with due respect for the privacy and reputations of all persons involved – accused, alleged victims, and others – and with respect to Church Law.

Communication Procedures

Generally, the Diocese will make only the following information public:

- Name of accused
- Current ministry of accused
- Biographical information of accused (age, date of ordination, if applicable)
- Designation of allegation as sexual abuse of a minor, including child pornography
- Approximate timeframe of the alleged sexual abuse
- Whether the accused denies or admits the allegation
- Action taken by the Diocese (e.g., administrative leave, report to authorities, exoneration), if public

The Diocese will make every effort to promptly communicate this information:

1. first and directly (in person) to the parish, parish communities, or other constituencies directly affected by the accused person's ministry.
2. second, to others (priests, pastoral administrators, employees, diocesan offices and agencies) affected and to parishioners at large through the diocesan website and the *Inland Catholic*, the official magazine of the Diocese.

Once the above has been completed, the information may be reported to the greater community through the secular news media.

The communication process will ordinarily begin when:

- A priest, deacon, religious, employee or volunteer voluntarily resigns as the result of an allegation, or
- The Bishop takes action against the accused, or
- The allegation or action becomes public.

The Vicar General will make every effort to guard the anonymity of the alleged victim.

Generally, the location of alleged misconduct will be made public only if this information will be helpful in bringing other victims forward. (Often, revealing this information places the anonymity of the victim in jeopardy).

Ordinarily, no additional information will be communicated to the general public than is communicated to parishes and other constituencies.

The Vicar General may issue a prepared statement for radio and television news outlets. No questions regarding individual cases – other than strictly clarifying questions – will be answered.

To respect the privacy of victims and the reputation of the accused, the Diocese will not ordinarily release information to the news media about allegations before diocesan officials have had an opportunity to meet with both the victim and the accused.

If the Diocesan Review Board makes a recommendation to the Bishop, the Bishop's action may be publicized in a statement released in the following order, when possible, through:

- internal communications (affected parishes, clergy, pastoral administrators, etc.)
- diocesan website
- social media (link to website)
- secular news media

Generally, while an investigation is underway, the Diocese will not publicize any further details about the allegations other than the information outlined above, even if the victim or the accused make public statements.

News media inquiries regarding allegations of sexual abuse of minors by Church personnel should be directed to the Vicar General of the Diocese of Spokane, 509-358-7305.