CLERGY POLICY FOR SAFE ENVIRONMENT TRAINING AND DOCUMENTATION
REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION TO COMPLY WITH THE DIOCESAN SEXUAL ABUSE TRAINING AND SAFE ENVIRONMENT STANDARDS FOR CLERGY

CLERGY CATEGORIES

A. Incardinated Clergy in the Diocese of Spokane must comply with all safe environment requirements consisting of documents and required training. Priests and permanent deacons ordained for service in the Diocese of Spokane will normally satisfy these requirements during their formation and before ordination.

Safe Environment compliance documents and training consist of:

1. A signed Code of Conduct and Commitment for Church Persons (Form 302). The Code is reviewed and signed annually.

2. A signed Disclosure Statement (Form 206) regarding crimes against persons.

3. A signed Background Check Consent Form (Form 303) authorizing the Diocese and its agent to conduct a criminal background check. Disclosure of crimes against persons and/or discrepancies between the Disclosure Statement and a criminal background check will affect one's suitability for ministry. Disclosure and Consent forms must be renewed every five years.

4. Participating in the diocesan virtual and on-line safe environment program, Protecting God's Children (VIRTUS) and New Employee Orientation within thirty (30) days of assignment or employment. Clerics must update safe environment training in VIRTUS annually.

B. Extern Clergy:

B1. A Secular Priest not incardinated in the Diocese of Spokane to whom Bishop grants a ministerial appointment or employment in a parish or a church-related entity (e.g., K-12 Catholic school or hospital) in the Diocese is bound by the same training and documentation as (A) above. Additionally, "When a priest or deacon, not incardinated in the diocese/eparchy, is to engage in ministry in the diocese, regardless of the length of time, the evaluation of his background may be satisfied through a written attestation of suitability for ministry supplied by his proper ordinary/major superior to the diocese/eparchy." [i.e. Testimonial letter, Testimonial of Suitability for Ministry, Charter for Protection of Children and Youth, Art. 13]. The Letter must attest that:

- the priest is of good moral character and reputation and is in good standing;
- he has received safe environment training (CPCY, Art. 12);
- an evaluation of his background does not preclude ministry with minors (Art. 13);
- he has undergone a criminal background check and is not guilty a crime against persons.

After the Bishop receives the Testimonial letter, he issues an appointment letter.
**B2. Religious Priests:** When a priest belonging to a religious institute is assigned to ministry in accord with canons 681-682 (i.e. “works which a diocesan bishop entrusts to religious”) he is bound by the same training and documentation as (A) above. The priest must provide a Testimonial letter from his proper Ordinary. The Bishop makes or confirms the appointment after fulfillment of (A) and acceptance of the Testimonial letter.

**B3. Religious Priests incardinated in a religious institute** or equivalent ecclesiastical entity, assigned by the proper Ordinary to a house of the institute within the Diocese of Spokane (e.g., Della Strada House) and exercising the apostolate proper to the institute are governed by the institute’s safe environment norms and protocols. The priest must provide a Testimonial letter from his proper Ordinary and have passed a criminal background check within the last five years. The priest may exercise the care of souls through occasional parochial ministry.

The Bishop signs the Testimonial letter.

**B4. Priests present in the Diocese to exercise ministry** on a temporary, short-term basis.

A priest coming to the diocese for a particular occasion (e.g., celebrate a wedding or funeral, weekend substitution, presenting at a retreat or conference) must provide a Testimonial Letter from his proper ordinary.

The Bishop of Spokane signs the Testimonial Letter and conveys acceptance to the place of ministry and to the priest.

**B5. Priests engaged in studies:** A non-incardinated priest temporarily residing in the Diocese for a program of studies, a sabbatical or other definite purpose (e.g. a leave of absence, assisting a family member) must provide a Testimonial Letter from his proper ordinary that the Bishop of Spokane must review and sign. He may engage in occasional priestly ministry in the diocese.

**B6. Other Non-incardinated priests residing in the Diocese of Spokane:** due to retirement, ill health or other circumstances, a priest who resides in the Diocese may wish to exercise ministry occasionally. The priest must provide a Testimonial Letter from his proper ordinary that is reviewed and signed by the Bishop of Spokane.

A priest in good standing and not under any prohibition, but who does not intend to exercise ministry in the Diocese must provide a Testimonial letter from his proper Ordinary that is reviewed and signed by the Bishop of Spokane.

**B7.** The priest’s proper ordinary must inform the Bishop of Spokane concerning a priest who is prohibited from the exercise of sacred ministry, but will reside in the Diocese of Spokane (Cf. CPCY, norm 12).

**C. Non-incardinated Permanent Deacons** within the Diocese of Spokane are bound by the same documentation and training requirements of (A) above.