

Supplement 02

Background Check Guidelines

Background checks must be done on all employees and volunteers on a regular interval (every 1 or 2 years). Background checks are critical, but they are never a guarantee that a person is safe. Very few cases of sexual abuse are ever reported or prosecuted, so a background check is not likely to uncover potential bad actors unless they are in the very small minority of perpetrators who have been caught, tried, convicted, and have not pled down to a lesser sentence. While it is necessary to complete a background check, it should never be your only screening mechanism.

When choosing a background check provider, it is important to choose a provider that includes the following:

- A social security number verification to validate identity, other names, and develop an address history.
- A multi-state or national criminal database search and county criminal search.
- A check of the National Registry of Sex Offenders
- The scope of the search should be as far back as the records allow.
- The service should provide real-time arrest alerts, which notify you anytime that the person is arrested in the future.

The following is a list of service providers whose services are compliant with the above standards:

- MinistrySafe, www.ministrysafe.com, (833) 737-7233
- Protect My Ministry (Plus Package), www.protectmyministry.com, (800) 319-5581
- Shield Checks, www.shieldscreening.com, (800) 260-3738
- Trak-1 Checks, www.trak-1.com, (800) 600-8999

Do not use the following types of agencies, companies, or individuals to run your background checks:

- Local, county, or state law enforcement agencies (they rarely do a national search).
- Budget (cost-friendly) providers found through a Google search.
- Friends of church members who have a connection to law enforcement or who can “get you a deal.”

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- There are no shortcuts to performing a quality, thorough background check. Remember, the background check is only one mechanism in vetting and verifying a candidate for employment, and it is not perfect. You want to do a background check that will be the most informational and helpful to you.

Alabama Baptists currently reimburses \$200 of the \$250 MinistrySafe subscription for cooperating churches. To apply for reimbursement, please contact the State Board of Missions 800-264-1225.

In addition to utilizing a background check provider, churches should also consult the Southern Baptist Convention “Ministry Check” website (once available) for credible accusations of abuse that may not be revealed through a background check.

Each church should decide beforehand what types of offenses are acceptable and unacceptable for church service and adhere to the same set of policies for each employee and volunteer. Here are some examples of what might be considered **red** flag or **yellow** flag offenses:

Red Flag Offenses

(People who have committed these offenses should not be employed by, or allowed to volunteer in, the church)

- Providing alcohol, tobacco, drugs, or pornography to a minor
- Voyeurism (Peeping Tom)
- Contributing to the delinquency of a minor
- Criminal solicitation of a minor
- Public indecency
- Exhibitionism (flashing)
- Assault
- Sexual Assault (or any crime that is sexual in nature)
- Homicide
- False Imprisonment
- Kidnapping
- Injury to a child/elderly individual/disabled individual
- Abandoning or endangering a child

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- Leaving a child in a vehicle
- Matters related to interference with child custody
- Failure to stop or report the aggravated sexual assault of a child

Yellow Flag Offenses

(Additional screening should be done to determine compatibility with church policy)

- Driving under the influence or driving while intoxicated
- Possession/Distribution of a controlled substance
- Making a firearm accessible to a child
- Theft, including identity theft