

Safe Environment Certification Summary

The below articles are from the USCCB Charter for the Protection of Children and Youth:

Article 12. Dioceses/eparchies will establish “safe environment” programs which the diocesan/eparchial bishop deems to be in accord with Catholic moral principles. They will be conducted cooperatively with parents, civil authorities, educators, and community organizations to provide education and training for children, youth, parents, ministers, educators, volunteers and others about ways to make and maintain a safe environment for children and young people. Dioceses/eparchies are to make clear to clergy and all members of the community the standards of conduct for clergy and other persons in positions of trust with regard to children.

Article 13. Dioceses/eparchies are to evaluate the background of all incardinated and non-incardinated priests and deacons who are engaged in ecclesiastical ministry in the diocese/eparchy and of all diocesan/eparchial and parish/school or other paid personnel and volunteers whose duties include ongoing, unsupervised contact with minors. Specifically, they will utilize the resources of law enforcement and other community agencies. In addition, they will employ adequate screening and evaluative techniques in deciding the fitness of candidates for ordination (cf. National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Program of Priestly Formation*, [Fifth Edition] 2006, no. 39).

Safe Environment Certification is a two part process, consisting of the successful completion of training and a screening/background check. This is required of employee and volunteers who have regular contact with minors.

- The Archdiocese’s new initial adult safe environment training “*Circle of Care*” is a two hour training developed by the Archdiocese and has been implemented since July of 2010. This training is for all individuals who have not been certified in the past. Individuals need to successfully complete this training and background check to be safe environment certified. This certification is valid for five years.
- **The Archdiocese’s new “*Circle of Care*” recertification program is a ninety minute online training developed by the Archdiocese and will be implemented by the end of March 2011.** The prior DVD recertification will not be an approved training once the new recertification is implemented. Recertification must be completed before an individual’s certification card expires. Individuals need to successfully complete the recertification training and background check to be safe environment certified. This certification is valid for five years. **Individuals whose expiration date is from February 1, 2011 through March 30, 2011 will be granted a grace period until the new certification is implemented (March 31, 2011).** Individuals who were certified in the past and have not been in active ministry, but wish to become active again, have a one year grace period from the expiration date of the original certification to be eligible for the online recertification. One must always have a valid certification to be in active ministry with children and youth. After that year, they will need to take the initial training class again.