



Sexual Abuse Prevention Policy

General Purpose Statement

Seven Acres Ministry seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children, youth and adults who participate in our programs and activities. By implementing the below practices, our goal is to protect each participant of Seven Acres Ministry from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers (workers) from false accusations.

Activities Involving Children and Vulnerable Adults

Definitions

For purposes of this policy, the terms “child” or “children” include all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years. The term “worker” includes both paid and unpaid persons who work with children. The term “volunteer” means anyone involved in providing support for activities of Seven Acres Ministry. The term Vulnerable Adult refers to any adult who, due to mental or emotional state, is dependent upon care or direction of another individual.

Selection of Workers

All persons who work with Seven Acres Ministry will be screened. This screening includes:

- a) Six Month Rule - All workers will be known by existing staff for at least six months either through participation in Seven Acres Ministry, in the same church, or in another community involvement before working with children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults.
- b) Written Application - All adult workers will complete a written application that asks if the applicant has ever participated in, been accused or convicted of, or pleaded guilty or no contest to any abuse or sexual misconduct. **This information will be verified by checking the Megan's Law website.**
- c) Reference Checks - All adult workers will complete and submit criminal background checks as required by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Human Services. **PA Child Abuse History Clearance (Act 151); PA Criminal Record Check (Act 34); FBI Fingerprinting Clearance (Act 114) for anyone NOT a continuous resident of PA the past 10 years or signed written verification by anyone who has been a continuous resident of PA the past 10 years. (See “Clearances for Volunteers Working with Children” on the next page for more information.)**

Rule of Three

At least three individuals (at least one must be a screened adult and the remaining two no younger than 5 years of age) must be present at every function and in each classroom, vehicle, or enclosed area during all activities involving children, youth, or vulnerable adult.

Teenage Workers

Teenage workers under the age 18 must follow these guidelines in order to assist with children's activities:

- Must be at least 14 years of age.
- Must be known by existing staff for at least six months either through participation in Seven Acres Ministry, in the same church, or in another community involvement before working with children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults.
- Must obtain PA Child Abuse History Clearance (Act 151); PA Criminal Record Check (Act 34); FBI Fingerprinting Clearance (Act 114) for anyone NOT a continuous resident of PA the past 10 years or signed written verification by anyone who has been a continuous resident of PA the past 10 years. (See "Clearances for Volunteers Working with Children" on the next page for more information.)
- Will be screened by staff checking the Megan's Law Website.
- Must be under the supervision of a **screened** adult and must never be left alone with children.

Counseling Ministry to Adults

One-on-one counseling sessions will occur only in observable settings, such as:

- In a counseling room with a window or open door providing a passer-by visual access
- In a public room
- In a home where the counselor is accompanied by another screened adult

Clearances for Volunteers Working with Children
Taken from **www.KeepKidsSafe.PA.gov**

Which clearances are needed?

All prospective volunteers must obtain the following clearances:

1. Report of criminal history from the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP); and
2. Child Abuse History Clearance from the Department of Human Services (Child Abuse).

Additionally, a fingerprint based federal criminal history (FBI) submitted through the Pennsylvania State Police or its authorized agent is required if the volunteer has lived outside the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in the last 10 years.

Volunteers who are not required to obtain the FBI Clearance because;

1. They are applying for an unpaid position and
2. have been a continuous resident of Pennsylvania for the past 10 years must swear or affirm in writing that they are not disqualified from service based upon a conviction of an offense under §6344.

When are clearances needed?

All prospective volunteers must submit clearances prior to the commencement of service.

What is the renewal requirement for clearances?

All volunteers will be required to obtain clearances every 60 months. Timeframes for renewed clearances are based upon the date of each individual clearance. If an individual or agency elected to renew all clearances at the same time, the date of the oldest clearance rather than the most recent would be used.

Report of criminal history from the PA State Police

<https://epatch.state.pa.us/Home.jsp>

Child Abuse Clearance

<https://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home>

FBI fingerprint clearance (for those who lived outside of PA in the last 10 years)

<https://www.identogo.com> Use service code 1KG6ZJ

Call (800) 222-2117 with questions. (taken from [pa dhs child care forms](#))