



National Council of
Churches in Australia



Safe Church Training Agreement

An initiative of the National Council of Churches in Australia
www.safechurches.org.au

Framework and Standards



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The National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA) began the Safe Church Training initiative in 2007-2008 to assist the churches of Australia to ensure that churches and Christian faith communities are safe environments, with a particular focus on the safety, protection and care of vulnerable people especially for children.

Over 35 different Church traditions, synods, dioceses and Christian organisations across Australia are currently members of the Safe Church Training Agreement (SCTA) and are committed to working together to ensure that church ministries and services to the community are safe at all times for all people.

Training is held throughout the States and Territories of Australia according to National Training Standards developed by SCTA. Over 20,000 people have undertaken a SCTA Awareness workshop.

The SCTA recommends that every Church and ministry leader (volunteer and paid) working with 0-18 year olds, and everyone in senior leadership positions (ministers, ministry team leaders, coordinators, senior church leaders, board/pastoral council members) attend an SCTA Awareness workshop within their first year of ministry and a refresher workshop every 3 years after.

In 2015, the National Training Standards were reviewed to ensure that they meet State, Territory and Federal legislative, insurance and community requirements so that those churches that are part of the SCTA continue to lead the way in ensuring that church and Christian organisations are a safe place.

The standards assist churches to meet workplace health and safety (WH&S) requirements, duty of care responsibilities for those who participate in activities of the church, and the protection and care of children and vulnerable people.

The SCTA National Training Standards apply to all those who are members of the Safe Church Training Agreement that is administered by NCCA. Church training manuals and training workshops need to meet these training standards to be eligible for membership. The SCTA facilitates the training of presenters to ensure consistency and quality in the delivery of training that meets the National Training Standards.

SCTA Training Standards

- 1. Awareness of the Elements of Safe Culture*
- 2. Understand Child Abuse and Indicators*
- 3. Understand Vulnerable Adults and Abuse*
- 4. Respond to Disclosures and Claims*
- 5. Value and Enable Children and Vulnerable Adults to Participate*
- 6. Understand Power Dynamics and Boundaries*
- 7. Awareness of the Criteria for Safe Leaders*
- 8. Understand the Requirements for Safe Church Environments*
- 9. Understand Legal and Insurance Requirements*
- 10. Understand the Expectations of SCTA Training Programs and Presenters*

Standard 1: Awareness of the Elements of Safe Culture

Purpose

To establish a foundational understanding of the Duty of Care required towards those who come in contact with a church and Christian organisation including definitions of 'vulnerable person', and a legal understanding of 'child'; to clarify how the church and Christian organisation protects and cares for those in their care, and the ways churches and Christian organisations are held accountable.

Competencies:

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the definition of a child/young person according to state/territory based definitions
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the definition of a vulnerable person
- Understand the Duty of Care requirements of a Safe Church
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the theological and biblical foundations of a Safe Church
- Demonstrate knowledge of the wider community's expectations of a Safe Church
- Demonstrate awareness of transparency and accountability expectations of the wider community.

Outcomes

SCTA workshop participants will be able to demonstrate awareness of a safe culture and be equipped to show how a safe culture enables and provides effective ministry.

Standard 2: Understand Child Abuse and Indicators

Purpose

To understand the varying definitions of child abuse according to relevant State, Territory and Federal legislation; to understand different types of abuse and indicators.

Competencies:

- Demonstrate an understanding of child abuse and the definition of child abuse according to relevant State, Territory and Federal legislation
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the prevalence of child abuse in Australia and factors influencing the understanding of child abuse
- Demonstrate knowledge of different types and indicators of alleged child abuse
 - Physical Abuse
 - Neglect
 - Emotional Abuse
 - Sexual Abuse
 - Family Violence
 - Bullying (including cyber-bullying)
 - Grooming
 - Spiritual Abuse.

Outcomes

SCTA workshop participants will be able to respond to and support children in an appropriate manner according to relevant legal obligations and their Church/Christian organisation's requirements.

Standard 3: Understand Vulnerable Adults and Abuse

Purpose

To be able to recognise vulnerable people/adults in your context; different types of abuse that vulnerable adults encounter and the indicators of abuse, develop an understanding of what vulnerability is and to understand options and strategies for responding to abuse of vulnerable adults.

Competencies:

- Demonstrate an understanding of abuse and assault in vulnerable people
- Demonstrate knowledge of the different types and indicators of alleged abuse in adults
 - Family violence
 - Sexual Abuse
 - Elder Abuse
 - Spiritual Abuse
 - Financial Abuse
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of strategies for responding to abuse in vulnerable adults, including reporting abuse (if legally required), providing support and being aware of any ethical issues
- Demonstrate an understanding how past abuse can impact the life of an adult and their relationships with others within the church contexts and wider community.

Outcomes

SCTA workshop participants will be able to respond to and support vulnerable adults in an appropriate manner according to relevant legal obligations and their Church's denominational/diocesan requirements.

Standard 4: Respond to Disclosures and Claims

Purpose

To develop an understanding of the policies, procedures and legal requirements associated with misconduct issues, disclosures and claims of alleged abuse; to provide knowledge of how to appropriately handle complaints to comply with these legal requirements and church policies and procedures.

Competencies:

- Demonstrate knowledge of relevant State/Territory reporting requirements including mandatory reporting
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of your Church/Christian organisation's requirements for how to handle and report disclosures
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of appropriate support for those involved in a report
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how to report in special cases (schools, Ombudsman¹).

Outcomes

SCTA workshop participants will be able to handle disclosures, report any claims of abuse and know the policies and procedures for handling misconduct claims. Participants will understand the legal requirements of reporting, and the denominational or diocesan policies and procedures of their Church/Christian organisation, and the support and guidance that is available to those involved in the reporting process.

1 Ombudsman and the equivalent State/Territory authority for Children's Guardian

Standard 5: Value and Enable Children and Vulnerable Adults to Participate

Purpose

To provide information and understanding on how to responsibly enable children and vulnerable adults to participate in decisions which affect their lives.

Competencies:

- Demonstrate knowledge of how to include children and vulnerable adults in decisions that affect them
- Demonstrate skills and resources to facilitate and support the participation of children and vulnerable adults in decision making
- Demonstrate how to create opportunities for children and vulnerable adults to be involved in policy and program development
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the importance of being transparent and realistic with children and vulnerable adults about the extent of their involvement
- demonstrate how to give feedback on how the views of children and vulnerable adults have been included
- Demonstrate how to establish pathways and mechanisms which enable children and vulnerable adults to raise concerns safely and with confidence
- Demonstrate how to use inclusive and empowering language in documents.

Outcomes

SCTA workshop participants will be able to provide opportunities for vulnerable people to contribute in a meaningful and productive way to the life of the church.

Standard 6: Understand Power Dynamics and Boundaries

Purpose

To provide information and develop understanding of the uses and abuses of power; to develop an understanding of personal and professional boundaries, and the importance of respecting the boundaries of others.

Competencies:

- Demonstrate understanding of Power
 - Positional Power
 - Abuse and Power.
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of boundaries and how to respond when boundaries are crossed.

Outcomes

SCTA workshop participants will be able to identify and manage potential risks, and to promote awareness of and respect for personal and professional boundaries.

Standard 7: Awareness of the Criteria for Safe Leaders

Purpose

To ensure that all leaders involved in ministry undergo a thorough check to determine suitability for ministry; and understand the various policies and procedures in regards to the assessment of suitability.

Competencies:

- Demonstrate understanding of the selection, screening and appointment processes for leaders
- Demonstrate an understanding of and implement State/Territory based child safe requirements (e.g. Working with Children Check) and any other requirements (e.g. Police Check, etc.)
- Demonstrate accountability and support measures for church leaders and ministry/service workers
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of your Church/Christian organisation's misconduct complaints processes.

Outcomes

SCTA workshop participants will know the processes and requirements for selecting, screening and recommending the appointment of leaders, and be able to ensure that all legal requirements are met. Participants will also understand how to implement accountability and support measures for leaders, and how to handle any misconduct complaints.

Standard 8: Understand the Requirements for Safe Church Environments

Purpose

To ensure that all leaders involved in ministry understand their social/community/Church responsibilities and the legal requirements for creating safe environments for ministry and service, including physical, emotional and spiritual environments, and understand how to respond to incidents.

Competencies:

- Demonstrate knowledge of systems and structures to support those involved in reporting abuse
- Demonstrate understanding of how to respond to misconduct by a leader or ministry worker in accordance to denominational requirements
- Demonstrate knowledge, understanding and application of safe programs through:
 - Knowledge of risks
 - Understanding physical environments of programs
 - Understanding the emotional environments of programs
 - Understanding the spiritual environments of programs
- Demonstrate knowledge of State, Territory and Federal Work Health and Safety (WH&S) legislation
- Demonstrate knowledge of how to respond to incidents.

Outcomes

SCTA training will enable churches and Christian organisations to meet their legal responsibility to those involved in the ministry of the church. It will assist in managing risks in the programs of the church, and provide knowledge of how to respond to incidents.

Standard 9: Understand Legal and Insurance Requirements

Purpose

To provide an understanding of relevant Work Health and Safety (WH&S) legislation requirements and the insurance implications for ensuring safe leaders and a safe environment.

Competencies:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the relevant legal implications in a church context, in order to fulfil what is required to be a Safe Church
- Demonstrate an understanding of the relevant insurance implications required for developing appropriate policies and procedures for a Safe Church.

Outcomes

SCTA workshop participants will have knowledge of relevant State, Territory and Federal Work Health and Safety legislation and requirements of the insurer in regards to Safe Church matters.

Standard 10: Understand the Expectations of SCTA Programs and Presenters

Purpose

To understand the expectations of endorsed training presenters and the necessity for a regular review of training programs against National Safe Church standards and each Church/Christian organisation's processes.

Competencies:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the SCTA
- Demonstrate knowledge of how often Safe Church training needs to be undertaken
- Demonstrate knowledge of where to access relevant resources to assist in creating a Safe Church/Christian organisation's policies and procedures
- Demonstrate knowledge of how training presenters are co-endorsed

Outcomes

SCTA workshop participants will be aware of the need to remain current in relation to changes to legislation, compliance and insurance policies and aware of the requirement to attend an SCTA workshop every 3 years.

Safe Church Training Agreement Standards Checklist

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| Standard 1: Awareness of the Elements of Safe Culture | | √ |
| 1.1 | Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the definition of a child/young person according to state/territory based definitions | |
| 1.2 | Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the definition of a vulnerable person | |
| 1.3 | Understand the Duty of Care requirements of a Safe Church | |
| 1.4 | Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the theological and biblical foundations of Safe Church | |
| 1.5 | Demonstrate knowledge of the wider community's expectations of a Safe Church | |
| 1.6 | Demonstrate awareness of transparency and accountability expectations of the wider community | |
| Standard 2: Understand Child Abuse and Indicators | | |
| 2.1 | Demonstrate an understanding of child abuse and the definition of child abuse according to relevant State/Territory and Federal legislation | |
| 2.2 | Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the prevalence of child abuse in Australia and factors influencing the understanding of child abuse | |
| 2.3 | Demonstrate knowledge of different types and indicators of alleged child abuse <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Physical Abuse ○ Neglect ○ Emotional Abuse ○ Sexual Abuse ○ Family Violence ○ Bullying (including cyber-bullying) ○ Grooming ○ Spiritual Abuse | |
| Standard 3: Understand Vulnerable Adults and Abuse | | |
| 3.1 | Demonstrate an understanding of abuse and assault in vulnerable people | |
| 3.2 | Demonstrate knowledge of the different types/indicators of alleged abuse in adults <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Domestic/Family violence ○ Sexual Abuse ○ Elder Abuse ○ Spiritual Abuse ○ Financial Abuse | |
| 3.3 | Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of strategies for responding to abuse in vulnerable adults, including reporting abuse (if legally required), providing support and being aware of any ethical issues | |
| 3.4 | Demonstrate an understanding how past abuse can impact the life of an adult and their relationships with others within the church contexts and wider community | |
| Standard 4: Respond to Disclosures and Claims | | |
| 4.1 | Demonstrate knowledge of relevant State/Territory reporting requirements including mandatory reporting | |
| 4.2 | Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of your Church/Christian organisation's requirements for how to handle and report disclosures | |
| 4.3 | Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of appropriate support for those involved in a report | |
| 4.4 | Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how to report in special cases (schools, Ombudsman) | |
| Standard 5: Value and Enable Children and Vulnerable Adults to participate | | |
| 5.1 | Demonstrate knowledge of how to include children and vulnerable adults in decisions that affect them | |

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| 5.2 | Demonstrate skills and resources to facilitate and support the participation of children and vulnerable adults in decision making | |
| 5.3 | Demonstrate how to create opportunities for children and vulnerable adults to be involved in policy and program development | |
| 5.4 | Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the importance of being transparent and realistic with children and vulnerable adults about the extent of their involvement | |
| 5.5 | Demonstrate how to give feedback on how the views of children and vulnerable adults have been included | |
| 5.6 | Demonstrate how to establish pathways and mechanisms which enable children and vulnerable adults to raise concerns safely and with confidence | |
| 5.7 | Demonstrate how to use inclusive and empowering language in documents | |
| <i>Standard 6: Understand Power Dynamics and Boundaries</i> | | |
| 6.1 | Demonstrate an understanding of power <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Positional Power ○ Abuse and Power | |
| 6.2 | Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of boundaries and how to respond when boundaries are crossed | |
| <i>Standard 7: Awareness of the Criteria for Safe Leaders</i> | | |
| 7.1 | Demonstrate understanding of the selection, screening and appointment processes for leaders | |
| 7.2 | Demonstrate an understanding and implement State/Territory based child safe requirements (e.g. Working with Children Check) and any other requirements (e.g. Police Check, etc.) | |
| 7.3 | Demonstrate accountability and support measures for church leaders and ministry/service workers | |
| 7.4 | Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of your Church/Christian organisation's misconduct complaints processes | |
| <i>Standard 8: Understand the Requirements for Safe Church Environments</i> | | |
| 8.1 | Demonstrate knowledge of systems and structures to support those involved in reporting abuse | |
| 8.2 | Demonstrate understanding of how to respond to misconduct by a leader or ministry worker in accordance to denominational requirements | |
| 8.3 | Demonstrate knowledge, understanding and application of safe programs through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Knowledge of risks ○ Understanding physical environments of programs ○ Understanding the emotional environments of programs ○ Understanding the spiritual environments of programs | |
| 8.4 | Demonstrate knowledge of State, Territory and Federal Work Health and Safety (WH&S) legislation | |
| 8.5 | Demonstrate knowledge of how to respond to incidents | |
| <i>Standard 9: Understand Legal and Insurance Requirements</i> | | |
| 9.1 | Demonstrate an understanding of the relevant legal implications in a church context, in order to fulfil what is required to be a Safe Church | |
| 9.2 | Demonstrate an understanding of the relevant insurance implications required for developing appropriate policy and procedures for a Safe Church | |
| <i>Standard 10: Understand the Expectations of SCTA Training Programs and Presenters</i> | | |
| 10.1 | Demonstrate knowledge of the SCTA | |
| 10.2 | Demonstrate knowledge of how often Safe Church training needs to be undertaken | |
| 10.3 | Demonstrate knowledge of where to access relevant resources to assist in creating a Safe Church / Christian organisation's policies and procedures | |
| 10.4 | Demonstrate knowledge of how training presenters are co-endorsed | |

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