

## Safe Church: Wardens & Diocesan Executive Officer

Wardens in the Diocese of Ontario are responsible for implementing and overseeing the Screening in Faith policy to ensure safe ministry practices, especially for vulnerable persons.

This policy is a proactive measure to uphold trust, safety, and accountability within the Anglican Diocese of Ontario. If you're involved in parish leadership or volunteer coordination, it's essential to stay informed and ensure your practices align with diocesan expectations.

### **Responsibilities of Wardens**

- **Leadership in Safe Church:** Wardens, alongside the Incumbent, provide core leadership for the parish and are responsible for the temporal affairs of the congregation, which includes ensuring compliance with diocesan policies like Screening in Faith.
- **Oversight of Screening Practices:** They help ensure that individuals in positions of trust—whether clergy, staff, or volunteers—are properly screened, trained, and supported.
- **Collaboration with Clergy:** Wardens work closely with the Incumbent to discern ministry roles and ensure that those serving are suitable and trustworthy. This includes shared responsibility for implementing safe practices across spiritual and administrative domains.
- **Implementation of the Policy:** Each parish is expected to actively apply the Screening in Faith policy, which includes conducting background checks (e.g., via XpressChek), maintaining records, and ensuring proper documentation. Documentation includes job description for volunteer ministry positions.
- **Training Requirements:** All adults engaged in ministry to vulnerable persons must attend Screening in Faith training. Parishes are responsible for facilitating and encouraging participation in these sessions.
- **Discernment and Suitability:** Parishes must assess the gifts and suitability of individuals for ministry roles, ensuring that those placed in positions of power and trust are carefully selected and supported.

- **Creating a Safe Environment:** The overarching goal is to foster a healthy and safe church environment where faith can flourish and all individuals—especially vulnerable ones—feel protected and valued.

The Diocesan Executive Officer (DEO) supports and guides wardens in implementing the Screening in Faith policy, ensuring that parishes meet diocesan standards for safe ministry practices. **Here's how the DEO's role connects with wardens and parish leadership:**

### **Oversight and Support**

- **Policy Implementation:** The DEO ensures that the Screening in Faith policy is consistently applied across all parishes. This includes providing resources, training, and guidance to wardens and clergy.
- **Accountability Partner:** Wardens are responsible for the temporal affairs of the parish, including compliance with diocesan policies. The DEO acts as a liaison between the Diocese and parish leadership to ensure that wardens understand and fulfill their responsibilities.
- **Monitoring Compliance:** The DEO may review parish records, confirm that background checks (e.g., via XpressChek) are completed, and verify that training requirements are met for all ministry roles involving vulnerable persons.

### **Collaboration with Wardens**

- **Shared Responsibility:** While wardens and incumbents discern ministry roles and ensure safe practices, the DEO provides oversight and ensures that these efforts align with diocesan expectations.
- **Training and Communication:** The DEO facilitates diocesan-wide training sessions and communicates updates or changes to the Screening in Faith policy, helping wardens stay informed and equipped.
- **Problem Resolution:** If issues arise—such as non-compliance, unclear screening procedures, or concerns about suitability—the DEO may intervene to support resolution and uphold diocesan standards.

### **Practical Examples**

- A warden unsure about screening requirements for a new volunteer role can consult the DEO for clarification.

- If a parish is behind on training or documentation, the DEO may follow up to ensure corrective action is taken.
- The DEO may also assist in reviews to confirm that parishes are maintaining safe ministry environments.