



Safe Sanctuary Policy

The Texas Annual Conference has a Safe Sanctuary Policy which went into effect in 2005. All teams whether they include youth or not must review these Guidelines and have back ground checks run prior to arrival at the host site. Since our mission teams will be staying in church facilities and these facilities will continue with their normal programming, there will be children around the teams during their stay.

To insure that the whole team is safe, all team members must read through this information and understand the content. We do not assume that problems will arise, but we also know that there are times that rumors get started and we need to be able to say "the Two Adult Rule" was in place. Everyone needs to understand that children and youth will be around the team even at the worksite. Therefore, we must follow the rules to protect our team members against accusations by people at the host site as well as protect the children.

If your Conference has a Safe Sanctuary procedure in place, please use it and inform the Disaster Office that all team members have been trained and back ground checks have been run. If you do not have access to Safe Sanctuary training, then a short training will be given at the church hosting your team.

Please go over these simple rules with each team member and make sure they are understood.

1. The "Two-Adult Rule" will apply during all Texas Annual Conference Disaster Recovery sponsored teams. The definition of "youth" for the team guidelines purposes is a young person under 18 years of age.
 - One adult will not be alone with a youth (less the child's parent is present) or group of youth during the mission.
 - For small group activities where one adult supervises one group, two or more groups may meet in an open space in sight and sound of each other. This meets the "Two-Adult" rule criteria.

- No Adult will be alone at anytime at the work site or away from the worksite. There will always be two adults together.
 - **No youth team member will be allowed to be alone with an adult from the host mission during the mission.** This includes host pastors, congregation members, homeowners, clients of mission agencies, etc.
 - **NO adult team member** is to be alone with a youth from the mission team.
2. The "Four-Years-Older Rule" will apply during the Disaster Recovery team experience. Adults supervising youth will be at least four years older than the oldest youth. When college-age persons are participating in a mission with "youth", they will be paired with another adult.
3. Sleeping arrangements -
- Adults and youth will not share motel/hotel rooms unless the adult is a parent/grandparent of the youth with whom they share the room. All youth must have someone on the team who is accountable for them if they are not traveling with a parent/grandparent.
 - Use of dorm rooms with a combination of youth and adults is acceptable when all persons sharing the room are of the same gender.
 - Use of a church facility when the team is in one room is acceptable if men sleep on one side of the room and females on the other. Separate dressing rooms need to be used.
4. ALL Disaster Recovery teams will have at least two adults at each work site. This is to assure safety in case of an accident. No Adult will be left alone at the site. Youth teams should never be left alone at a work site.
5. **All Adult team members** must be "Safe Sanctuary" certified through the conference certification process. This includes background checks, references and application, and the Safe Sanctuary training through their conference, district and/or local church training. If no Safe Sanctuary training is available, the Team Leader will contact Verronda Flanagan at vflanagan@txcumc.org. You can also access the online Safe Sanctuary training @ www.txcumc.org. Click on the resource tab and select Safe Sanctuary. There will be a drop down box and you will select online training. It is important that you follow the instructions printed in this site to successfully complete the training and receive a certificate.