



**EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO
KNOW ABOUT BACKGROUND
CHECKS, MANDATORY
REPORTING AND PROVIDING A
SAFE SPACE FOR MINISTRY.**

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TOP THREE BACKGROUND CHECK COMPANIES AND WHY WE LOVE THEM



#1 Protect my Ministry

Protect My Ministry is more than a background company. They are a comprehensive Church Safety company with many benefits to the local church. They are the only company with an exclusive partnership with the Rocky Mountain Ministry Network. With this partnership comes discounted rates for RMMN Churches. They integrate with the planning center so you will have the same benefits as other background check companies. Protect My Ministry has Videos and pieces of training included with your membership and will host free webinars through our Network Office. Protect My Ministry is a membership-based system and although you can purchase background checks individually at an increased cost.

#2 CheckR

CheckR is a comprehensive background check company. They fully integrate with Planning Center and they are easy to use. They are fully digital and can be completed easily by any candidate. They have various background checks as well as other searches such as driving records and drug testing for example with various prices. CheckR offers various resources as well such as webinars, blogs, and a Resource Library. CheckR does integrate fully with the planning center.

#3 Ministry Safe

Ministry Safe offers custom background checks for local organizations needing to protect children and others. They offer seven different background check levels with higher levels offering more than lower levels. Ministry Safe offers awareness and risk management training. They are the largest church safety company and partners with many districts, universities, and insurance companies. With a Ministry Safe Membership, you have access to policies and procedures for Children and Student Ministries, camp policies, and more. Their pricing is higher than other background companies but still affordable.

5 BEST PRACTICES FOR SCREENING VOLUNTEERS THROUGH BACKGROUND CHECKS

Screening church volunteers, especially those who will work with minors, is a crucial step in ensuring a safe and secure environment. Here are five best practices for conducting background checks:

1. Define Clear Volunteer Requirements

- **Establish Criteria:** Outline specific qualifications and characteristics needed for volunteers working with minors. This might include age, experience, references, and a clean background check.
- **Role-Specific Checks:** Tailor background checks to the responsibilities of the volunteer role. For example, volunteers working directly with minors may require more rigorous checks.

2. Conduct Comprehensive Background Checks

- **Use Reputable Services:** Partner with a professional and reliable background check service that specializes in working with non-profits or religious organizations.
- **Multiple Checks:** Conduct a variety of checks, including criminal records, sex offender registry, and child abuse history. Ensure that these checks cover both national and state and especially county and local levels.

3. Implement a Consistent Screening Process

- **Standardized Procedures:** Develop a consistent process for all volunteers, ensuring fairness and thoroughness in screening. This includes submitting applications, interviews, reference checks, and background checks.
- **Document Everything:** Keep detailed records of the screening process, including who conducted the checks, when they were done, and the results. This documentation is crucial for accountability and future reference.

4. Provide Training and Education

- **Pre-Check Training:** Offer training on the importance of background checks and the church's commitment to child safety. This can help set expectations and emphasize the seriousness of the process.
- **Ongoing Education:** Ensure that volunteers receive regular training on child protection policies, recognizing signs of abuse, and reporting procedures. This should be part of their ongoing commitment to the ministry.

5. Regularly Update and Reassess Checks

- **Periodic Rechecks:** Conduct regular background rechecks for all volunteers, especially those who have been with the church for an extended period. Our recommendation is every 2-3 years.
- **Policy Reviews:** Regularly review and update the church's screening and background check policies to reflect changes in law, technology, or best practices in child protection.

By following these best practices, churches can create a safer environment for minors and build trust within the community.



WHAT ARE THE 5 BACKGROUND CHECKS WE MUST RUN AND WHY

County Search - County vs.State background checks - A state criminal background check can return criminal records throughout the state, including those outside the candidate’s county of residence, so it might seem like the logical place to start before delving into county records. However, the accuracy of state criminal records can vary depending on state laws, record-keeping systems, when and how state records are updated, and other factors. For instance, a state may not search every county’s database, or state and county criminal records databases may not be connected.

SSN Trace - SSN Trace doesn't confirm the identity of the candidate – it can only provide an indication of the validity of the SSN provided. For example, if the SSN is associated with any other names or is listed on the Social Security Administration’s Death Master File. As a result, employers may wish to perform additional identity checks, such as Knowledge-Based Authentication, as part of their onboarding process.

Sex Offender Search - This will pull up any registered sex offenders whether their crime happened in your state or not.

Global Watchlist Search - To catch any known criminals with warrants or any crimes

National Search - Pulls any felonies from anywhere in the nation

HOW TO APPROACH SOMEONE WHEN YOU HAVE A DING ON THEIR BACKGROUND CHECK?



When you run a background check on an individual you then must notify them of the search results. Occasionally you will have a search that comes back with questionable content. It could be as minimal as unpaid tickets to as serious as major felonies. When this happens, it is best practice to have a conversation with the candidate and let them know why, why not, or how you will let them serve in a specific capacity.

These conversations can be difficult to have but will be easier if you already have policies and procedures in place. For instance, maybe if the candidate has a very old theft charge, you may let him work in a ministry that doesn't involve money. If there is a felony dealing with a minor, you are obligated to ensure that the candidate is not allowed in kids or student ministries or the areas of the building that minors may be in or work events involving minors. Policy needs to be set on who is notified of the background check. At the Network Office, we have a no-tolerance policy for camps and events.

Handling a conversation with someone who failed a background check requires sensitivity, respect, and clarity. Here's an example of how such a conversation might go:

Youth Pastor: Hi [Name], I hope you're doing well. Thank you for taking the time to meet with me today.

Team Member: Sure, no problem. What's up?

Youth Pastor: I want to start by saying how much we appreciate your interest in serving on the Youth Leader team. Your passion for student ministry and your desire to be involved means a lot to us.

Team Member: Thank you, that means a lot to me.

Youth Pastor: As part of our standard process, we conduct background checks for all team members to ensure the safety and well-being of our congregation. Unfortunately, some concerns came up during your background check.

Team Member: Oh... I wasn't expecting that. What kind of concerns?

Youth Pastor: A copy of the background check should have been emailed to the email you provided. Based on the information we received, it's our policy that we cannot move forward with your involvement on the team at this time.

Team Member: I see... That's disappointing. I didn't think anything in my past would be an issue.

Youth Pastor: I understand that this is difficult news to hear, and I'm sorry for any disappointment or frustration this may cause. Please know that this decision is made with careful consideration and is in line with our commitment to maintaining a safe environment for everyone involved.

Team Member: Is there anything I can do to appeal this decision or provide more information?

Youth Pastor: I appreciate your willingness to discuss this further. Unfortunately, once a decision is made based on the background check, it is final. However, this doesn't change our respect and care for you as a member of our church community. We're here to support you in other ways, and if you'd like to explore other areas of involvement that don't require this kind of screening, I'd be happy to discuss those options with you.

Team Member: I understand. I'll think about it and let you know. Thanks for being honest with me.

Youth Pastor: Thank you for understanding, and please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or need to talk further. We value you, and we're here for you.



WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT MANDATORY REPORTING?

WHAT do I have to mandatory report in CO and UT?

Suicide Ideation

Physical Abuse

Sexual Abuse

A child being subjected to circumstances or conditions that would reasonably result in abuse or neglect.

Elder Abuse

Intimate Partner Violence

Adults with Disabilities

WHERE do I report it?

CO - 844-CO-4-Kids. OR co4kids.org

UT - 1-855-323-DCFS OR [Add a little bit of body text](#)

HOW do I report it?

A phone call or online

WHEN do I report it (How long do I have to report?)

Within 24 hours

COMMON QUESTIONS AND STRAIGHT ANSWERS



How often should I update and run background checks?

Background checks should generally be updated and run every 1-2 years, depending on the role's level of responsibility and any applicable legal or organizational requirements.

For those working with vulnerable populations, like children or youth, a yearly check might be more appropriate. However, many organizations opt for every two years unless there is a significant reason to conduct one sooner, such as a report of concerning behavior.

It's also wise to have a policy in place for running background checks when someone is first considered for a role.

Who Needs to Report?

A mandatory reporter is defined as a professional who is obligated by law to report known or suspected incidents of child abuse and/or neglect. Mandatory reporters are part of the safety net that protects children and youth and can provide life-saving help to child victims in our community. Any person specified in C.R.S. 19-3-304 is by law a mandatory reporter in Colorado. If a mandatory reporter has reasonable cause to know or suspect that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect, or observed the child being subjected to circumstances or conditions that would reasonably result in abuse or neglect, the mandatory reporter shall immediately upon receiving such information report or cause a report to be made of such fact to the county department, the local law enforcement agency, or through the child abuse reporting hotline system.

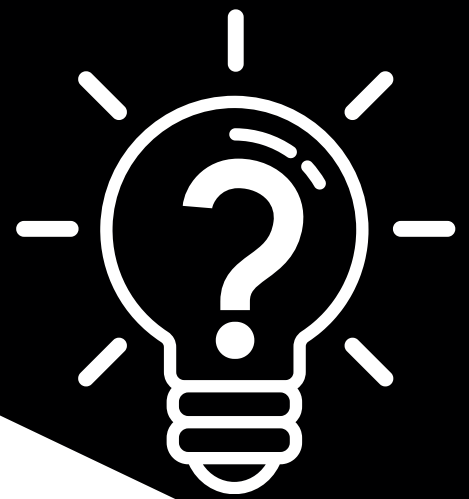
Mandatory reporters include

- *School Personnel
- *Childcare and Youth Program Personnel
- *Healthcare Professionals
- *Mental Health and Social Workers
- *Law Enforcement and Public Safety Professionals
- *Clergy

How can I document that I made a report of possible child abuse and neglect?

Every time you make a call, you should request – and write down – a hotline ID number. As a mandatory reporter with a legal requirement to report concerns about child abuse or neglect, you can use the hotline ID as documentation for the call.

COMMON QUESTIONS AND STRAIGHT ANSWERS



Can I remain anonymous?

Yes. Child Protective Services and its employees are required by law not to disclose the name of the mandatory reporter to the family. However, this confidentiality does not apply to reports made to law enforcement.

In addition, it is possible that as a reporter of child abuse and/or neglect, you may be called to testify at a civil or criminal trial regarding the allegations. The victim's parent and/or family members may be present at that hearing. Remember, you must act as the eyes and ears for the child protection safety net. If reports of maltreatment are not made, appropriate services will not be delivered to the children and families who need them. Without your call, the abuse and/or neglect may continue.

How do I report my concerns?

If it is an emergency, call 911. They can ensure the immediate safety of a child and get medical attention if needed. If it is not an emergency, call [844-CO-4-KIDS](tel:844-CO-4-KIDS).

Are there consequences if I don't report my concerns?

Yes, there are legal consequences for not reporting. You could be charged with a class 3 misdemeanor, receive a fine of \$750 and/or imprisonment up to six months, and be liable for what the law terms "damages approximately caused" if you fail to report a suspicion of child abuse or neglect.



WHAT ARE THE MAJOR TYPES OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT?

Most states recognize four major types of maltreatment: physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse. Additionally, many states identify abandonment, parental substance use, and human trafficking as abuse or neglect.

Physical Abuse:

Physical abuse is a nonaccidental bodily injury to a child caused by a parent, caregiver, or another person responsible for a child. Injuries from physical abuse could range from minor bruises to severe fractures or death. Physical abuse can include:

- punching
- beating
- kicking
- biting
- shaking
- throwing
- stabbing
- choking
- hitting (with hand or other object)
- burning
- otherwise causing physical harm

Discipline vs. Abuse:

Physical discipline actions, such as spanking, are not considered abuse as long as the discipline is reasonable and causes no bodily injury to the child. Learn more about the differences between [corporal punishment vs. physical abuse](#).

Neglect:

Neglect is the failure of a parent or other caregiver to provide for a child's basic needs. Neglect typically includes the following categories:

Physical: failure to provide necessary food, shelter, supervision, or allowing them access to dangerous substances/objects.

Medical: failure to provide necessary medical or mental health treatment or withholding medically indicated treatment from a child with life-threatening conditions.

Educational: failure to educate/provide education for a child or tend to special education needs.

Emotional: inattention to a child's emotional needs, failure to provide psychological care, isolating them from friends/family.

Many states also consider abandonment as a form of neglect. In general, a child is considered abandoned when:

- the parent's identity or whereabouts are unknown
- the child has been left alone in circumstances where the child could or has suffered serious harm
- the child has been deserted with no regard for their health or safety
- the parent has failed to maintain contact with the child or provide reasonable support for a specified time

WHAT ARE THE MAJOR TYPES OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT?



Exceptions to Neglect:

Living in poverty is not considered child abuse or neglect; however, if a family's failure to use available resources puts the child's health or safety at risk, child welfare intervention could be required.

Many states provide an exception to the definition of medical neglect for parents who choose not to seek medical care for their children due to religious beliefs.

[Learn the difference between poverty and neglect. Complete your Mandated Reporter Training Course today.](#)

Sexual Abuse

CAPTA defines sexual abuse as “the employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any child to engage in or assist any other person to engage in, any sexually explicit conduct or simulation of such conduct to produce a visual depiction of such conduct; or the rape, and in cases of a caretaker or interfamilial relationships, statutory rape, molestation, prostitution, or another form of sexual exploitation of children, or incest with children.”

Human Trafficking:

Human trafficking is considered a form of modern slavery and includes both sex trafficking and labor trafficking. Sex trafficking is recruiting, harboring, transporting, providing, or obtaining someone for a commercial sex act, such as prostitution, pornography, or stripping.

Labor trafficking is forced labor, including drug dealing, begging, or working long hours for little pay. Human trafficking includes victims of any sex, age, race/ ethnicity, or socioeconomic status; however, children involved in child welfare, including children in out-of-home care, are especially vulnerable.

Emotional Abuse:

Emotional or psychological abuse is behavior that impairs a child's emotional development or sense of self-worth. Examples may include constant criticism, threats, rejection, or withholding love, support, or guidance. Emotional abuse is often difficult to prove, and, as a result, child protective services may not be able to intervene without evidence of harm or mental injury to the child.

Parental Substance Use:

Many states include parental substance use in their definition of child abuse or neglect and related circumstances, such as:

exposing a child to harm prenatally (mother's use of substances or illegal drugs)

manufacturing synthetic drugs in the presence of a child

selling, distributing, or giving illicit drugs or alcohol to a child

caregiver use of a controlled substance that impairs the ability to care for a child adequately



OTHER RESOURCES

FREE Training for CO mandatory reporting

<https://coloradocwts.com/mandated-reporter-training/>

Brotherhood Mutual

<https://www.brotherhoodmutual.com/resources/background-screening>

Guide one / Safe Church

<https://www.guideone.com/resources/guidevantage/safechurch/safechurch-resource-library>

3 BEST BACKGROUND CHECK SITES

Protect my Ministry

<https://www.protectmyministry.com/integrated-partners/partner-rocky-mountain-ministry-network/>

Checkr

<https://checkr.com>

Ministry Safe

<https://ministrysafe.com>

