

RCSM: Mission Trip Recommendations

Mission trips are wonderful opportunities for gospel ministry and partnership. As Pastors, we must exercise wisdom and oversight in ways that protect, guard, and serve everyone involved. There can be unique elements that exist on a mission trip that we need to take into account. Such as:

- ◆ Differences in laws, culture, awareness, and expectations that impact how we guard against sexual misconduct.
- ◆ We may have less control over policies, procedures, and facilities.

Part of how we represent Christ on mission trips is how we are intentional in protecting our teams and those we travel to serve. These recommendations are for when you are taking youth, or if you will be working with youth or children.

Recommendations to Consider:

- ◆ Carefully screen all adult team members. When a team member is from another church, verify that all individuals have been similarly screened and approved by their sending church.
- ◆ Have all members go through the MinistrySafe awareness training.
- ◆ Have all leaders and adults go through a background check.
- ◆ Use applications similar to children's ministry that uncover potential struggle areas. Require recommendations from a pastor, small group or other ministry leader.
- ◆ Have clear policies and expectations about behavior for leaders, chaperones, and team members.
- ◆ Designate leaders /chaperones to watch the MinistrySafe Peer to Peer Abuse video (one hour) in order to create team awareness on this significant category of sexual abuse.
- ◆ Communicate that trip policies begin the moment the team assembles for travel until the moment they leave the team for home.
- ◆ Communicate your team policies with your mission partners and acquire their policies that you might minimize risks during your trip.

Be aware of the "Areas of High Risk" where policies are necessary:

- ◆ Bathrooms
- ◆ Areas where clothing is changed
- ◆ Overnight / sleeping arrangements
- ◆ Places that are off limits (hidden places that cannot be observed)
- ◆ Water activities (where body parts and interactions are not directly visible)
- ◆ Isolation from the team
- ◆ Leaders, team members or youth pairing off with youth who are of the opposite sex.

In your policies, include clarity about consequences for violating those policies. When these violations include clear sexual misconduct, make clear beforehand that parents and appropriate authorities will be informed.

Please contact a member of the Response Committee for Sexual Misconduct if you have any questions.