

Responsible Ministry: Screening in Faith Completion of Annual Returns



The *Responsible Ministry: Screening in Faith Policy* has been in place since 2003 to help parishes, diocesan missions (designated under Canon 25) and designated ministries (designated and authorized under Canon 29) ensure that their places of ministry are safe and healthy. All congregations are required as part of their annual Returns to report compliance with screening indicators.

Tips for completing the forms:

- Ensure that the responses on the *Incumbent's Annual Statistical Return* and the *Churchwardens' Parochial Return* match. The Corporation should have a conversation about the congregation's compliance before completing the Returns. If the two Returns do not match, your congregation will be deemed "not in compliance".
- Every congregation has a minimum of 2 people serving in high-risk ministry positions – the Churchwardens. Other positions that must be assessed as high-risk are all clergy including Honorary Assistants; churchwardens (or administrator if appointed under Canon 24); board of management members if designated under Canon 25; organists and music directors; parish employees; lay aointers; and those involved in residential or off-site ministries with children or vulnerable adults.
- The Returns state "as of December 31". This means the completion of screening for those individuals who were in their ministry positions up to and including December 31 of the year in which the return relates. Therefore, congregations have the period from December 31 until the returns are submitted to ensure that screening is completed for those individuals.
- There are [resources and templates](#) available on the Diocesan website which provide guidance for every step in the screening process. Please contact the [Diocesan Screening Coordinator](#) if you need assistance or have questions about completing this section of the Returns.

We want you to know that the Bishop of Toronto could apply possible consequences if your congregation does not submit your returns and/or comply with the screening requirements.

Thank you in advance for your commitment and efforts in completing the returns and the Screening in Faith requirements. These annual reports are an important aspect in the life and ministry of our Diocese and for the pastoral care of vulnerable people.

God of abundance and God of life, infuse your children with courage and love, that we may build communities of hope, which are healthy, thriving and safe. Help us to be responsible with our ministry so that both the weak and the strong find their home in our churches, through the profound love of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.