



20. Safe Church Committee

1. Title

There shall be a committee of the General Assembly entitled Safe Church Committee, hereafter referred to as the committee.

2. Membership

The committee shall consist of six members, including a convener, appointed by the General Assembly.

3. Meets in private

The committee meets in private unless it determines otherwise.

4. Purpose

The purpose of the committee is to:

- a) assist and encourage the church in its commitment to ensuring that all of its congregations and organisations are safe in respect of everyone within them, specifically helping the church to:
 - i) protect and care for the young and the vulnerable in our church;
 - ii) care for the victims of abuse and the hurting;
 - iii) implement and adhere to the Safe Church Policy and Code of Conduct;
 - iv) comply with all federal and state laws relevant to this matter;
- b) initiate care for a particular victim where the committee considers this to be appropriate.

5. Duties

The committee shall:

- a) have oversight of the Safe Church Unit and its employees;
- b) encourage and support the work of the Safe Church Unit;
- c) advise the Safe Church Unit on any matter that bears on the church's compliance with federal and state laws insofar as they pertain to the purpose of the committee;
- d) advise the Assembly on any matter that bears on the church's compliance with Federal and State laws insofar as they pertain to the purpose of the committee and bring recommendations to update the Safe Church Policy and procedures in response to the legislation;
- e) advise the relevant courts of the church of:
 - i) any instance of material noncompliance with the PCV Safe Church Policy, Code of Conduct and/or the Policy, Procedure and Practice Manual; and
 - ii) any action required to be taken by any congregation or organisation:
 - 1) to comply with federal or state law or liability insurance policies;
 - 2) to implement and adhere to the PCV Safe Church Policy, Code of Conduct and/or the Policy, Procedure and Practice Manual; or
 - 3) to mitigate risk to the young and the vulnerable;
- f) through the Safe Church Unit, in each instance that the church is required by law to appoint an external investigator in respect of matters within the purpose of the committee, appoint such external investigator and notify the Clerk and the Board of Investment and Finance accordingly. Such external investigator will be given the full cooperation (by committees, presbyteries, sessions, individuals etc.) as if appointed by the General Assembly to investigate.

6. Employees

The committee may appoint, under the provision of [Rule 5.32](#), according to need:

- a) the Safe Church Facilitator;
- b) persons to give administrative assistance to the Safe Church Facilitator;
- c) such other workers it considers to be necessary to achieve its purpose under regulation 4 above.

7. Panel of Reference

There shall be a sub-committee entitled Panel of Reference, consisting of at least 3 members, whose principal duty is to consult with the Safe Church Facilitator in reference to particular reports and allegations of abuse and to provide advice on related procedure in such cases. The Safe Church Committee shall appoint the membership of the Panel, from members of the committee plus co-opted members appointed under the provision of [Rule 5.26](#).