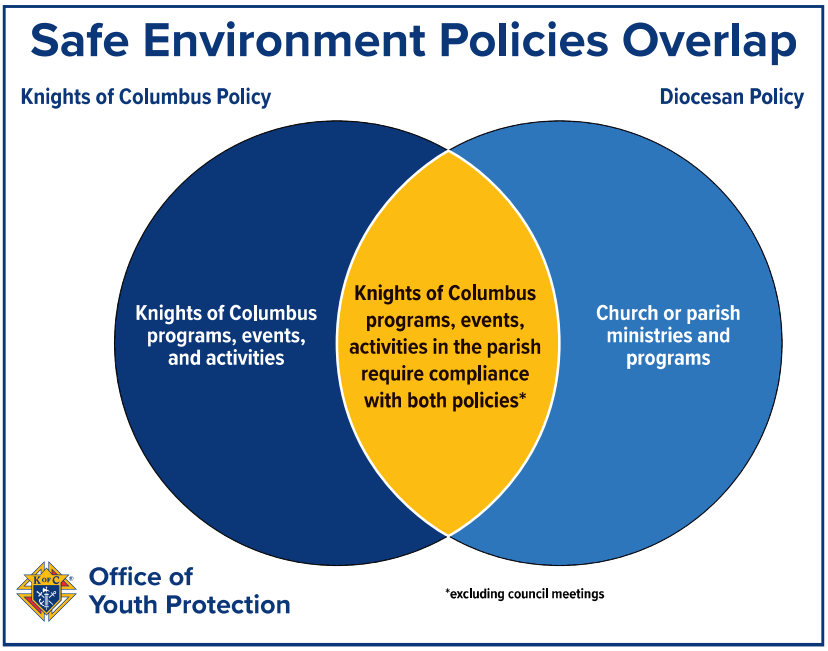
Knights of Columbus

Working Together with Dioceses to Protect Our Children

The Knights of Columbus takes very seriously its commitment to protect children and other vulnerable persons. When Brother Knights protect children and other vulnerable persons they serve, they live out their VOCATION of FATHERHOOD. In the words of Supreme Knight Patrick Kelly: "Protecting our children is the sacred duty of every Knight." This is why the Knights of Columbus has a policy of ZERO TOLERANCE with respect to abuse. This crime directly contradicts the identity and mission of the Knights of Columbus and has no place in the Order.



The Knights of Columbus has its own Office of Youth Protection to administer its Safe Environment Program. This program consists of abuse awareness and prevention training as well as appropriate screening, including a background check, for members holding key leadership and lead volunteer roles. Training includes how to report in cases of suspected or known abuse: (1) Report to Law Enforcement; (2) Notify the Local Diocese, and (3) Notify the Knights of Columbus.

A critical part of our commitment to protect children and other vulnerable persons is to work together with local dioceses to ensure that we all meet our respective duties to protect. Our members are "Parishioners First, Knights Second." That is why the first requirement of our safe environment program is for our members to follow diocesan safe environment requirements applicable to members' volunteer activities in their parish. Our policy on diocesan requirements is straightforward - if members of the Knights of Columbus volunteer in their parish, whether in activities sponsored by the Knights of Columbus or in Church or parish ministry, they are not only volunteering with the Knights of Columbus, but they are also serving as parish volunteers. Our members must complete diocesan safe environment requirements applicable to parish volunteers in their respective parishes and dioceses.

On the reverse is guidance we provide to our key leaders to assist diocesan *Offices of Child and Youth Protection* to ensure that members serving as volunteers in their parishes complete all diocesan safe environment requirements applicable to parish volunteers.

Email: oyp@kofc.org
Call: (203) 752-4558
Visit: kofc.org/safe

Knights of Columbus

Office of Youth Protection

kofc.org/safe • (203) 752-4558 • oyp@kofc.org

Member Compliance with Diocesan Safe Environment Requirements

The first requirement of the Knights of Columbus Safe Environment Program is for our members to be compliant with diocesan safe environment requirements applicable to members' volunteer activities in their parish.* When members volunteer at an activity sponsored by a Knights of Columbus council in their parish* they not only volunteer for the Knights of Columbus, but they also serve as parish volunteers. Knights of Columbus asks no more and no less than for its members to be treated just like any other parish volunteers. Just like any other parish volunteers, members volunteering in their parish* must comply with all safe environment requirements applicable to parish volunteers in their diocese.

To assist parishes in helping members comply with diocesan safe environment requirements, grand knights and financial secretaries should follow these best practices:

1. Make a list of all members who serve as volunteers in their parish* for one or more Knights of Columbus programs, events, and activities. ("Eligible Member Volunteer List").
2. Ask each member on the list whether he has completed the diocesan safe environment training and background screening.
3. If the member volunteer has already completed the diocesan requirements, then the date of completion of the diocesan requirements should be recorded next to the member volunteer's name on the council's Eligible Member Volunteer List.
4. If the member volunteer has not completed the diocesan requirements, he must do so as soon as possible to maintain his eligibility to continue to volunteer for the Knights of Columbus in their parish.*
5. The council should provide its Eligible Member Volunteer List to the parish priest, the parish safe environment liaison, and to the diocesan safe environment coordinator upon request.
6. The council should update its the Eligible Member Volunteer List with new member volunteers who become eligible to volunteer in their parish.*
7. The council should confirm the names on its Eligible Member Volunteer List regularly throughout the fraternal year.

Membership alone does not constitute volunteer activity. Membership does not require volunteer activity in a parish.* Members are not exempt from diocesan safe environment requirements applicable to parish volunteers by virtue of their being members. Council business meetings are limited to members over 18 years old, and are not a parish or church ministry. The table below shows how diocesan and Knights of Columbus safe environment requirements generally relate to members:

Knights of Columbus Activity	Diocesan Safe Environment Program	KofC Safe Environment Program
Membership Only	**n/a**	n/a
Council Meetings – (closed, members-only business meetings)	**n/a -** (*unless* a parish is unable to reserve a dedicated time and place for council meetings where it is unavoidable that council meetings share the same time and place as parish ministries at which minors are present (e.g. Religious Education, youth ministry, etc.))	n/a
Church, Diocesan, and Parish Ministries	✓	n/a
KofC Volunteer Activities on Parish Property, OR off Parish Property when related to a Diocesan/Parish Ministry where minors are present	✓	✓
Non-Diocesan/Parish Volunteer Activities Off Parish Property where minors are present	**n/a**	✓

*Or off parish property when related to a diocesan/parish ministry.