



Archdiocese of Seattle

## SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM

Protecting the Young and Vulnerable

SEP Newsletter ~ January 2024

Winter is not a season, it's a celebration! Read on for Old Man Winter's Top Ten frosty tips from SEP!!

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For more information or questions please email [sep@seattlearch.org](mailto:sep@seattlearch.org) or call 206-274-3188



## Winter Tip #1 ~ Local Coordinators Handbook & Toolkit

Are you aware that you have tons of SEP information at your fingertips right on our website?

- **Local Coordinators Handbook:** [Click Here](#) for the current Coordinator's Handbook which was updated in July 2023 and has all current/revised protocols! This is a helpful document to keep handy!
- **Local Coordinators Toolkit** has everything you can imagine. [Click here](#) for quick access to Virtus users guides, manual background check forms, Code of Conduct form for minors, and much more!

Refer volunteers, employees, facilitators, faith formation staff, school staff and parents to their respective toolkits for information. This website is a great tool!!

## Winter Tip #2 ~ Compliance Management - Best Practices

Thanks to all local administrators who have adopted the habit of **regular and ongoing compliance management**. Good work! It's extremely important that ALL locations begin doing this, monthly at a minimum. We have to know that our active Church personnel are current on their SEP requirements and follow up with them if they are not!

So, what are the recommended *Best Practices*?

- **Create a [Master Report](#)** every 2-4 weeks. The first one will be a bit of work, but once you have it in order, each one moving forward will be easier. This gives you the status of all your active staff and volunteers on a single report.
- **Create a [Background Check Report](#)** every 2-4 weeks to catch those that didn't go through to Trak-1 and to clean up profiles for any outstanding errors. *Email [sep@seattlearch.org](mailto:sep@seattlearch.org) for errors that need to be deleted.*
- **Follow up promptly** with staff and volunteers who are out of compliance. Remind them that they risk suspension from work if they do not get their outdated requirements met as soon as possible.

COMPLIANCE



Each location will be getting a Compliance Review Memo/ Report from SEP over the coming months if you haven't received one already. Boy, it would be great to see locations really in order when I do my review!! Then I can give you a 'well done my good and faithful servant!' *Thank you for your good efforts everyone!*





### Winter Tip #3 ~ Initial Training - How Does it Work Again...?

There still seems to be confusion about the **Online Awareness 4.0 module** and when it is used. Winter months see a huge decrease in the number of in-person classes offered; but the number of people needing to fulfill the initial training requirement remains steady! Remember, there is only a 30-day window for new users to complete their initial training, so having the online module option is a huge benefit.

The **two options for initial training** for *Protecting God's Children for Adults* sessions include:

- **In-person group session** in a parish or school facility ~ 3 hour class led by the facilitator
- **Internet-based at-home personal session** ~ *Protecting God's Children for Adults Online Awareness 4.0* for individuals who are unable to attend an in-person session due to scheduling or other conflicts.

Both options fulfill the requirement for initial training; **a user need only choose one or the other**, not both (which some locations have been confused about); a new user can register for either format when they create their Virtus profile. **Reminder:** *initial training is a one-time requirement and renewal is completed every three years as refresher training modules.*

### Winter Tip #4 ~ New Users - Accessing Their New Profiles

It's amazing, the number of people who do not complete their initial training at the time they create their Virtus profile. Sometimes people register for the in-person class but promptly forget about it; or they assign themselves the *Online Awareness* module but don't realize they then have to access their new profile to watch the video. Result: the profile sits in PROCESS USER status in "New User Signups" in Virtus!

- **Remind new users** that they should access their newly-created profile to be sure all is in order.
  - **Registered** for an old in-person class but awaiting approval - *verify attendance with SEP office - if on roster then we'll approve the class, if not they'll need to re-register for initial training*
  - **Assigned** Online Awareness 4.0 **but never completed it** - *ask them to complete it*
  - **Completed** Online Awareness but never got approved - *contact SEP office to push through the completed training - it's an auto-approval but sometimes hits a glitch!*
  - **Training not required** - *ushers, money counters and the like - notify SEP to push through*

Location administrators are notified by email when new profiles have been created. Review new profiles right away; monitor over the coming days for completion of initial training if they are subject to the requirement. Those with incomplete training - if it is required of them - should not be serving if they haven't completed initial training within 30 days of starting their work.





## Winter Tip #5 ~ Outside Organizations ~ SEP & Insurance Requirements

There is an Archdiocesan committee working to improve the Insurance and SEP matrix that has been in use for years. We're aiming to simplify the information and give clear guidance about what is needed for anyone who is not a parish/school volunteer or employee. We still have some tweaking to do, but hopefully the new matrix will be ready by the end of January!



Stay Tuned!!



## Winter Tip #6 ~ Promote/Publicize the need for new Facilitators

*Protecting God's Children for Adults* in-person classes require a Facilitator to conduct the training sessions. Please advertise in your bulletin quarterly and as needed. Each parish should have at least one trained Facilitator who is available to conduct classes on a regular cycle - every two to three months depending on the demand at your location.

- **Applications** Applications are required for anyone wishing to become a new Facilitator. The individual must be endorsed by the pastor.
- **Training** New Facilitator training is offered as a webinar by our Virtus trainer 3-4 times per year. Training sessions are available in English and Spanish. Full attendance is required and typically involves approximately 3 hours a day for five days. The Archdiocese covers all costs associated with the training. A manual and DVD/USB drive are included with the training.

Interested individuals may email [sep@seattlearch.org](mailto:sep@seattlearch.org) for more information and an application.



### **Winter Tip #7 ~ Sex Offender Guidelines**

**A Sex Offender may become known to the parish leadership in three primary ways:**

A sex offender may come forward and disclose his/her criminal background.

A sex offender may apply to volunteer in the parish. In the course of processing the background check, their criminal history is revealed.

A member of your parish/school community may be aware of the sex offender's status and come forward with information.

**Once a sex offender is made known to parish leadership, the *Sex Offender Guidelines* must be implemented.**

This allows a sex offender to return to the sacraments in a very limited but controlled way.

The guidelines include restricted access for Mass and Confession in the company of a guardian only after notifying the individual's Community Corrections Officer.

Please contact the [Safe Environment Program](#) for further information.

*PLEASE NOTE: This policy is not meant to isolate or discriminate against any individual but to set in place protective boundaries in the parish environment for the safety of all children, teens, and adults.*





### Winter Tip #8 ~ Help with ongoing Virtus clean-up

As you know, we're on a mission to clean up our Virtus database and get it in better order! Throughout the year we'll provide some helpful and important instructions that should become an integral part of your ongoing compliance management. THANK YOU for your efforts at helping make our SEP Virtus database the best and most accurate database ever!!



### Featured Instruction: Compliance Reports

The "Compliance Report" is a great at-a-glance report for the compliance or non-compliance of your staff and volunteers.

1. Click on your Administration Tab in Virtus and in the quick links click "Compliance Report".
2. Choose your location.
3. Click "Run Report"

#### Compliance Report

Use this page to see user compliance status

First Name:  Last Name:  Compliant:  Active:  Expires:

Location:  Role:  Profile:

BGC  Bulletins  
 Documents  Training

4. You'll see a list of all your active users, their role and your location (excluded in this screen shot) and then off to the right an indicator of their compliance and the details for those who are not compliant. It'll even give a "warning" icon for those who have requirements that expire soon!
5. Each name is actually a link, so when you click on it you'll be taken directly to the user's profile. Remember: inactivate people if they are no longer active. Get them off your radar!

This is a great tool for monitoring compliance in a quick and easy manner. Please consider using this report if you haven't tried it yet.

**IMPORTANT:** anyone who is non-compliant must be followed up on promptly. Please be sure to keep up on this regularly, monthly at a minimum.

-	Needs Attention • BGC
+	
-	Needs Attention • Training • BGC
+	
!	Expires • BGC (02/03/24)
+	
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Contact the Safe Environment Program if you have questions!



## Winter Tip #9 ~ Gentle Reminders!

We're all super-busy but please keep in mind a few important things:



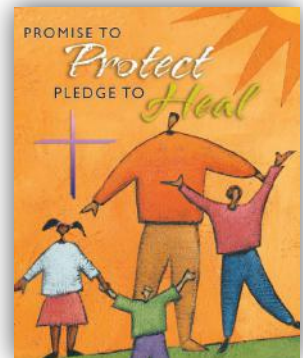
- **SEC Training** Do you have a new local coordinator who needs training, or an SEC who would like some refresher training? Please email [sep@seattlearch.org](mailto:sep@seattlearch.org) and get some training on the calendar!! Those who have had SEC training are much more confident in their role!
- **Newletters** SEP Newsletters are now being posted on the SEP Website in the Local Coordinator Toolkit in the "Other Resources" section. Please [click here](#) to access previous SEP Newsletters.
- **Staff Changes** Please always email [sep@seattlearch.org](mailto:sep@seattlearch.org) if there are any changes in SEP local coordinator or PAA. The SEP communication contact list will be updated accordingly.

## Winter Tip #10 ~ Our New Victim Assistance Coordinator

Victim Assistance is the "other half" of our Safe Environment Program, and a really important one. The Victim Assistance Coordinator (VAC) assists those who call in with allegations of sexual abuse or misconduct on the part of any Archdiocesan personnel, including clergy and laity.

Denise Aubuchon, our VAC for many years, retired at the end of December and Cathy Wiswell has taken on the role. For more information please visit our [Protect and Heal](#) website which has excellent information and resources.

Thank you for all your help with the Safe Environment Program, which encompasses our efforts in *prevention* as a first step. Your efforts with compliance management help ensure that we are keeping all locations safe for children, youth and adults.





*Have a  
"winterful" day!!*



*You guys are the best! Thank you  
for all you do to help make our Safe  
Environment Program one of the  
best in the US!*