

Policy on Regular Background Checks for Clergy
FIRST READING – May 8, 2019

POLICY

New Clergy Members requesting membership in the Presbytery of Southern New England, and all clergy of other denominations beginning service in installed or temporary pastoral relationship with congregations of the Presbytery. ~~Active Clergy Members of the Presbytery of Southern New England~~ are required to undergo a background check ~~at least once every three years.~~

Background checks include an independent investigation of the person's background, references, character, past employment, education, ~~credit~~, motor vehicles, criminal or police record, sexual abuse registry records, including those maintained by both public and private organizations, and all public records for the purpose of confirming information and/or obtaining other information which may be material to their qualifications for serving as a Minister of Word and Sacrament in the Presbytery of Southern New England. ~~Active Clergy Members~~ Clergy members who are required to undergo a background check prior to membership are considered parish clergy and non-parish clergy including specialized clergy, members-at-large, and honorably retired clergy who are active in some form of ministry, e.g. funerals, weddings, Bible study, preaching, pastoral associate, volunteering in other forms of service where their pastoral skills may be seen or used.

Clergy who are Honorably Retired and inactive are excluded from this requirement.

PROCEDURE

1. Background checks are conducted by the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery as scheduled and paid for by the Presbytery of Southern New England.
- ~~2. Each clergy scheduled for a background check will be notified by the Presbytery when they are due for a check.~~
3. ~~Each~~ Clergy scheduled for this process must complete an a signed Authorization for Background Check form and send it to the Stated Clerk upon notification.
4. Results of background checks:
 - a. For "clean" results, the Stated Clerk will notify the clergy person of the results.
 - b. For results where an issue has been identified, the Stated Clerk will confer with the General Presbyter to determine who will speak with the candidate and determine a further course of action.

Approved by COM on 4/5/18
 Approved by PSNE on 9/12/18

NOTE: Active clergy without having had a background check done at the time of membership in the Presbytery of Southern New England will have a background check completed and brought into compliance with this policy.