

**A Checklist for Congregations and Councils**  
**From Mike Kirk, General Counsel, Legal Services Office**  
**Administrative Services Group**

Over the years the Legal Services Office in the Administrative Services Group at the national offices has gotten many questions and requests for help from mid councils and congregations. In working to provide guidance on those issues the most common problem we deal with is missing or outdated documents. Below is a checklist of documents that all councils and congregations should consider locating and putting in files in their business offices so that they can be quickly summoned when needed.

- Articles of Incorporation for the council or congregation's corporation (Reminder: all councils and congregations shall cause a corporation to be formed and maintained G-4.0101).<sup>1</sup>
- Bylaws of the corporation.
- Manual of Administrative Operations (Reminder: each council shall develop a manual of administrative operations G-3.0106).
- A copy of all insurance policies that are currently providing coverage and copies of all policies dating back at least 10-20 years, including endorsements to policies.
- Copies of certificates of insurance from those who rent or use the council or congregation's property showing that the council or congregation's corporation is named as an additional insured.
- A copy of the sexual misconduct policy, including requirements for boundary training (G-3.0106).
- A copy of the child and youth protection policy (G-3.0106).
- A copy of the anti-racism policy (G-3.0106).
- The Employee Handbook.
- Personnel files including: (a) separate medical files (medical files/records are required to be kept separately and in a locked cabinet with limited access); and (b) terms of call for ministers of Word and Sacrament.
- Copies of all leases with third parties.
- Copies of all covenants and memoranda of understanding with parties who use the council or congregation's buildings or properties (ex. Scouts, AA).
- Tax records.
- Payroll tax records.
- Grant records (of grants applied for and received).
- Gift documents (that show who made a gift to the council or congregation and the restrictions on the use of the gift funds or property, (including pledge receipts, stock gifts, gifts from IRA accounts, wills, and trusts, etc.).

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<sup>1</sup> NOTE: If you are searching for a copy of your Article of Incorporation, in most states you can get a copy from the Secretary of State's office, but in some states, such as New York, your papers may have been filed at the county level, so check with the county clerk.

- Real estate records, including deeds, plats, easements, mortgage and loan documents, and lien records.
- Rolls and registers (G-3.0204).
- Minutes of the council of the ecclesial council or session (G-3.0107; G-3.0204; G-3.0305; G-3.0406), including minutes of congregational meetings.
- Records of any commissions created by a council (G-3.0109).
- Budget and financial records (G-3.0113; G-3.0204).
- If you create registration forms for events for minors, you should keep copies indefinitely in case a claim of sexual misconduct is filed in which it is claimed the minor was injured at a church event.
- Contracts with vendors (ex. Office supplies, mowing and maintenance providers).
- Business Continuity Plan.