



Legion of Mary Toronto Senatus

VOLUNTEER SCREENING

**ANSWERS TO
FREQUENTLY
ASKED
QUESTIONS**

Issued November 29, 2022

Legion of Mary Toronto Senatus

Volunteer Screening - Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

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1. Why is Volunteer Screening required of Legion of Mary members in the Archdiocese of Toronto?

In 1999, the Government of Ontario initiated a project called the Ontario Screening Initiative to protect the most vulnerable from sexual abuse, assault, and misconduct. The project was mandated in the Archdiocese of Toronto in 2001. They committed to a formalized screening process for all volunteers who assist in the parishes. Through the program "Strengthening the Caring Community", parishioners are made to recognize and understand the positive side of screening and the benefit to both the vulnerable and the volunteers within the communities. The goal is the protection and safety of our vulnerable people, volunteers, and the Church.

The Legion of Mary is an organization of volunteers and shall abide by these rules.

Reference: Parish Volunteer Screening Program Brochure
<https://www.archtoronto.org/volunteerscreening>

2. What is Catholic Mutual Canada?

Catholic Mutual Canada is the insurance provider (liability only) of the Archdiocese of Toronto. The risk management policy applies to volunteers who perform parish-based activities under the full direction and control of the Archbishop of Toronto and his delegates.

The Archdiocese of Toronto Risk Management Policy DOES NOT support any lay associations, lay groups or separate organizations, including the Legion of Mary.

The Legion of Mary will seek the approval of their Pastor for permission to host meetings at parish, however they will continue to operate as independent entities.

Reference: Ministry Position Descriptions

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<https://holycrossto.archtoronto.org/siteassets/blocks/rotators--carousels/carousels/cta/bu/ttons/lay-associations-2019.pdf>

<https://www.catholicmutual.org/en-us/home.aspx>

3. *What is Ecclesiastical Insurance?*

Ecclesiastical is the insurance provider (liability only) of the Legion of Mary for active members performing duties in the community on behalf of the praesidium. There is a separate risk management policy, its own screening policies and procedures, including police checks, references, interviews, etc. and retention of volunteer files.

4. *Who screens for Ecclesiastical Insurance?*

The praesidium officers shall perform the screening and provide documentation to the parish priest that volunteers in positions of trust have obtained the appropriate screening.

As soon as the new member moves up from visitor to probationary, screening should begin right away with a Vulnerable Sector Check.

Reference: Ministry Position Descriptions

<https://holycrossto.archtoronto.org/siteassets/blocks/rotators--carousels/carousels/cta/bu/ttons/lay-associations-2019.pdf>

5. *How do we start the Volunteer Screening process?*

Request a meeting with your Spiritual Director (or his representative) and present your recent annual reports detailing the apostolic works of your praesidium. Discuss the various parish ministries and find those that can be considered as Legion of Mary apostolic works. Express the willingness of your praesidium members to join these ministries as Parish Volunteers.

Contact your Parish Volunteer Screening coordinator to start the process as Parish Volunteers, not as Legion of Mary members.

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6. *Why can't I be screened as a Legion of Mary member to do parish based apostolic works?*

Legion of Mary is a separate entity from the Archdiocese of Toronto. The Legion of Mary operates within the Archdiocese of Toronto with the sanction of the Archbishop of Toronto. However, the Archbishop does not control or direct the Legion of Mary.

Only Parish Volunteers are allowed to perform parish based apostolic works e.g. RCIA, Pre-Baptism Seminar, Preparation for First Communion and Confirmation, Catechesis, etc.

Legion of Mary members can be qualified as Parish Volunteers if they apply, pass screening and submit all requirements of the parish-based ministry. By serving directly under, and solely representing the parish, they will have liability coverage under Catholic Mutual for these apostolic works.

7. *Do we lose our identity as Legion of Mary members, as an organization, when we represent the parish in the community as Parish Volunteers?*

The identity of the Legion of Mary as an organization is fully affirmed by the approval of the parish priest to have a Legion of Mary praesidium in his parish.

As Legion of Mary members, introducing yourselves as representatives of the parish priest is a common practice in the performance of apostolic works. From the Handbook, *The Making of the Parish Census*, "**Going in the name of the priest**, visitation should if possible be from door to door." (Ch 37 No. 4). Emphasis added.

It is common for a Legion of Mary member to have a secondary organization in the parish. From the Handbook, "*Apostolate in the Parish*" (g) **Collaboration in every apostolic and missionary undertaking sponsored by the parish and so help to bring every soul in some manner into the protective network of the Church, thus securing the safety alike of the individual and the community...**" (Ch 37 No. 1). Emphasis added.

The parish-based apostolic works still serve Jesus with the heart of Mary, satisfies the work requirement and can be reported in a meeting.

8. *What are the key elements of a Legion of Mary apostolic work?*

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Remember the acronym **PATH** as a quick guide to Legion of Mary apostolic works. Each letter stands for:

P - Done in *pairs* and with *personal* contact.

A - **Approved** by the Spiritual Director and **assigned** by the president in a meeting

T - **Two** hours of your **time** each week.

H - **Heroic** and guided by **Handbook** Chapter 37

In union with Mary. Follow the path.

9. *We have new members on the probationary stage of their membership. Can they join in performing apostolic works?*

No. They need to be fully screened as a Parish Volunteer before performing any apostolic works.

10. *We have new members on the probationary stage of their membership who could not join any parish ministry. What insurance covers them? Who will do their screening? Can they join in performing apostolic works?*

General Considerations:

- There is an existing policy with Ecclesiastical Insurance.
- Screening is required and will be coordinated at Praesidium Level by the officers.
 - Obtain Vulnerable Sector Check (VSC) Police Clearance – No record found
 - Provide Personal Information, Contact details and Character References
 - Interview
- Cost of Vulnerable Sector Check (VSC) Police Clearance can be taken from the praesidium secret bag funds. If funds are insufficient, the Curia or next council where the praesidium is attached, can take on the cost. (*per latest update and advice from Br. Raymond, Concilium Correspondent*). The new member has the option to pay for his own police check if he voluntarily chooses to do so.
- All documents with personal and confidential information such as Police Check Results , Membership Form (to follow) shall be forwarded to Senatus and shall be stored in a secured filing cabinet at Nazareth House.

Scenario A: New Member on Probationary Period or, Active Member and Never Been Screened or, Active Member Screened more than 5 years ago

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1. Required to obtain a Vulnerable Sector Check (Level 3) Police Clearance. Apply from the Police who have jurisdiction over your place of residence. See answers to Question 13.
2. Required to provide full name, address, phone, email and 2 character references. Consent to use information provided for purposes of screening.
3. During this time, we request the Praesidium Officers to interview and get to know the new member.
While in the 3-months of probationary period, you are learning their character, personality, attitude, behaviour, etc.
Observe and assess whether the new member is suitable for active membership.
4. All members belonging to this category are not allowed to do any apostolic works until the screening process (including police check record) is complete.

Scenario B: Active Member and screened between 2-5 years ago:

1. Required to submit a Letter of Attestation declaring no occurrences that would affect their all clear VSC status.
2. Required to update their full name, address, phone, email.
3. Once all requirements are received and checked, the member can be allowed to continue performing apostolic works.

Members with issues in their Vulnerable Sector Check (Level 3) results will be discussed privately on a case-to-case basis.

11. Do we risk losing members by joining parish-based ministries?

Yes it is possible. When this happens, let your member leave on good terms with your praesidium. Wish the member well in the next chapter of his volunteer life. Be glad that you have been instrumental in his growth in holiness. We rejoice when a brother leaves for the seminary or a sister enters a convent. Adopt the same mindset.

Besides, if the Holy Spirit has set that person apart for another mission, there is no way of preventing him from moving to the intended organization.

But also from another perspective, if a person has committed himself to the Legion, no matter the challenges on membership, he will remain in the Legion of Mary.

Trust that our Blessed Mother will help recruit more members.

12. What are the mandatory screening steps in the Archdiocese of Toronto?

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High Risk (Positions of Trust):

- Application Form
- Ministry Position Description Review
- Interview
- Reference Checks (3 required for adults & 2 for minors)
- Criminal Records & Judicial Matters Check, and Annual Declarations (adults 18+ complete police check through our service provider)
- Orientation & Training (includes Code of Conduct, AODA, OHRC, Parish, and Ministry training)
- Volunteer Acknowledgement and Agreement Form
- Ongoing Supervision and Evaluation

Source:

<https://www.archtoronto.org/en/our-community/volunteering/volunteer-screening/>

13. What is the type of Police Check to get? How much and who will pay for it?

Apply for a Vulnerable Sector Check. The fee can be taken from the praesidium secret bag funds. If funds are insufficient, the Curia or next council where the praesidium is attached, can take on the cost. *(per latest update and advice from Br. Raymond, Concilium Correspondent)*. The new member has the option to pay for his own police check if he voluntarily chooses to do so.

As a rule of thumb apply at the Police Force from where you are officially residing:

City of Toronto - \$20

<https://www.tps.ca/services/background-checks/vulnerable-sector-screening/>

City of Barrie - \$35

<https://www.barriepolice.ca/services/records/>

Peel Region - \$35

<https://www.peelpolice.ca/en/services/record-checks-and-suspensions-pardons.aspx#Vulnerable-Sector-Check-Level-3->

Durham Region - \$20

<https://members.drps.ca/PRCOnline/default.aspx>

York Region - \$31

https://event.yrp.ca/OnlineClearance/VSC_Main.aspx

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14. What are the typical apostolic works covered by the Catholic Mutual Canada from the Archdiocese insurance?

Examples of apostolic works covered by Catholic Mutual Canada are, but not limited to:

- Pre-Baptismal Seminars
- First Communion Preparation Classes
- Confirmation Preparation Classes
- RCIA / RCIC
- Sunday School for Children
- Catechism Classes
- Visitation of Shut-ins, Long Term Care Homes to pray and give Holy Communion
- Visitation to Schools

Added closest *references* to the Handbook.

15. What are the typical apostolic works with existing policy under Ecclesiastical?

Examples of apostolic works with existing policy under Ecclesiastical are, but not limited to:

- Door-to-door / Home-to-Home Visitation
- Parish Census
- Peregrinatio Pro Christo / Exploratio Dominicalis
- Pilgrim Virgin Statue to Homes
- Enthronement of the Sacred Heart of Jesus to Homes
- Crowd Contact in Public Spaces
- Book Barrow / Book Table
- Prison Ministry
- Street Apostolate
- Extension Work

Certificate of Insurance may be requested for large events.

16. What is the insurance coverage of Junior Praesidia?

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None as of today. There is an ongoing re-negotiation with Ecclesiastical Insurance (insurance coverage for Toronto Senatus) regarding Junior Praesidium Officering (as this is now changed from previous coverage from Catholic Mutual under the Archdiocese of Toronto). Policies are being drafted and revised and will need some time to come to an agreement. In this regard, effective immediately, Toronto Senatus is putting a temporary hold on all Junior Praesidia meetings, both virtual and in-person, within the Archdiocese of Toronto.

17. I am from a parish different from where my praesidium is based. Which parish should screen me?

You should be screened in the parish where you will do the apostolic work. As an example, you are legionary in Parish A where there is no Legion of Mary so you joined the Legion in Parish B. You chose to be a Eucharistic Lay Minister, for the sick and homebound. Decide on your own to which Parish you will volunteer and respect the parish boundaries. You can still report your work to your praesidium.

There are rare occasions when inter-parish volunteer work will be allowed. This will need to be officially requested and approved by both parish priests.

18. Our praesidium is from a diocese outside of the Archdiocese of Toronto. Does this Volunteer Screening process apply to me?

No, the coverage discussed in this document applies to praesidia based in the parishes within the Archdiocese of Toronto.

Please consult your Spiritual Director for the requirements in your parish.

19. I am not fully vaccinated from Covid 19. Can I still be a member of the Legion of Mary? Can I still perform apostolic works?

There are no vaccination status criteria for membership in the Legion of Mary. The requirements for membership remain the same as outlined in Handbook Chapter 13.

In addition to serving in the Archdiocese of Toronto, Volunteer Screening with Vulnerable Sector Police Check is required. Volunteer Screening depends on the type of apostolic work to be done by the member.

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For apostolic works directly under the parish ministries, follow the instructions of the Parish Volunteer Coordinator.

See related Q&A 14 for some work examples and Q&A 12 for preview of the steps.

For apostolic works done by the Legion of Mary that are not considered parish ministries, please follow the instructions of your Praesidium President.

See related Q&A 15 for some work examples and Q&A 10 for guidelines..

Please follow the health protocols of the institutions where apostolic works are to be done.

Be prepared to be asked to perform a Rapid Test on site for negative results to Covid19, before admission.

Let us continue to respect the rules and regulations of those institutions.

20. What is the Outreach Program Friendly Visitor Ministry Position in the Archdiocese of Toronto?

Under the direction of the Pastor, Friendly Visitors serve those in the parish and surrounding community who are in need of social interaction.

Some Activities and Responsibilities are:

- Visit persons at the request of the Pastor and/or Outreach Program Coordinator
- Remind the person that the parish cares about them and gives them a sense of belonging in the community
- Bring to the attention of the Coordinator any matters related to changes in health and/or spiritual needs of the person(s) being visited
- Observe confidentiality with private matters of those who are visited
- Must always work in pairs or in a group

Legion of Mary members performing Home-to-home Visitation, Pilgrim Virgin Statue & Enthronement of the Sacred Heart apostolic works can request their parish priest to be screened under this parish ministry.

Full description:

<https://www.archtoronto.org/siteassets/blocks/offices--ministries/administrative-offices/volunteer-screening/mpds---english/outreach-program-friendly-visitor.pdf>

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21. What is the Outreach Program Coordinator Ministry Position in the Archdiocese of Toronto?

Under the direction of the Pastor, the Outreach Program Coordinator is responsible for organising and supervising Outreach Program volunteers including Friendly Visitors (See Question 20).

Some Activities and Responsibilities are:

- Maintain a current contact list of Outreach Program Volunteers
- Contact the parishioners to arrange a convenient time and date for friendly visits once the Pastor has provided this information
- Arrange for training and orientation for new volunteers to familiarise them with the requirements of the position
- Available to receive any information that arises related to changes in health and/or spiritual needs of the person(s) being served
- Observe confidentiality with private matters of those who are being served

Presidents of Legion of Mary Praesidia performing Home-to-Home Visitation, Pilgrim Virgin Statue & Enthronement of the Sacred Heart apostolic works can request their parish priest to be screened under this parish ministry. See also Question 23.

Full description:

<https://www.archtoronto.org/siteassets/blocks/offices--ministries/administrative-offices/volunteer-screening/mpds---english/outreach-program-coordinator.pdf>

22. What is the Lay Pastoral Visitor Ministry Position in the Archdiocese of Toronto?

The Lay Pastoral Visitor makes regularly scheduled visits to assigned homebound and/or institutionalised parishioners, providing them pastoral visits and/or bring Holy Communion. Lay Pastoral Visitors who bring Communion to the sick must be commissioned Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion who have participated in the Lay Pastoral Visitors Training Program and are mandated by their Pastor.

Some Activities and Responsibilities are:

- Prayerfully meditate in preparation for a meaningful visit
- Always work in pairs for home visitations. This is also recommended for visitations to institutions (hospitals, nursing homes, long-term care facility)
- All pastoral visitors must exercise good judgement with a respect for safety, privacy and confidentiality

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- Available to listen to the concerns of the sick/homebound, supporting them through empathetic listening and prayer but not giving advice
- Serve as an important link between the community of faith and the sick/homebound,

Legion of Mary members visiting and/or bringing Holy Communion to home-bound parishioners, hospitals, nursing homes and long term care facilities as their apostolic work assignments can request their parish priest to be screened under this parish ministry.

Full description:

<https://www.archtoronto.org/siteassets/blocks/offices--ministries/administrative-offices/volunteer-screening/mpds---english/lay-pastoral-visitor.pdf>

23. What is the Lay Pastoral Visitor Coordinator Ministry Position in the Archdiocese of Toronto?

The Lay Pastoral Visitor Coordinator, under the direction of the Pastor, is responsible for organising and training the Lay Pastoral Visitors and ensuring that they make regular scheduled visits to homebound and/or institutionalised parishioners. The Coordinator introduces and follows up on a regular basis with both the Lay Pastoral Visitor and the homebound to ensure that the arrangement works satisfactorily. The Coordinator must be available to the Lay Pastoral Visitors when needed, and regularly keeps the Pastor informed.

Some Activities and Responsibilities are:

- Maintain a current contact list of Lay Pastoral Visitors
- Prepare and maintain a schedule for the Lay Pastoral Visitors
- Provide training and orientation for new Lay Pastoral Visitors to familiarize them with the requirements of the position
- Contact the parishioners to arrange a convenient time and date for the visit once the information has been received by the Pastor
- Be available to receive any information that arises related to changes in health and/or spiritual needs of the person(s) being visited
- Observe confidentiality with private matters of those who are visited
- Meet regularly with the Lay Pastoral Visitors for support, supervision, on-going training and formation, and evaluation

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Presidents of Legion of Mary Praesidia visiting and/or bringing Holy Communion to home-bound parishioners, hospitals, nursing homes and long term care facilities as their apostolic work assignments, can request their parish priest to be screened under this parish ministry. See also Question 21.

Full description:

<https://www.archtoronto.org/siteassets/blocks/offices--ministries/administrative-offices/volunteer-screening/mpds---english/lay-pastoral-visitor-coordinator.pdf>

24. I have more questions, who do I contact first?

Please email Toronto Senatus at toronto.senatus@gmail.com and include your full name, your praesidium's name and the parish. The question can be asked within the body of email or a request for a call back. A phone number and a convenient day/time range should be given for the call back option.

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