

OFFICE OF THE VICAR FOR CLERGY

DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT

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To: All Priests
From: Reverend Frank Hoffmann
Date: April 17, 2023
Re: Clarification regarding visiting priests

I want to make clear the requirements for outside priests who come into a parish for **any reason**, e.g., give a talk, run a retreat, the Mission Appeal, vacation.

Put simply, if a priest visits for the day for a ministerial purpose and does not stay overnight, he need only provide a letter of suitability from his bishop or religious superior. If he does stay overnight, he must be fully compliant with our Safe Environment protocols as stated below. If the priest is coming from outside the US, it is important to start this process ASAP because international background checks take considerably longer. We recommend at least four weeks prior to their arrival at minimum, preferably as soon as you know that they will be coming. The visiting priest must be compliant before he arrives.

To begin the process, please contact me as well as Mayte Mayte.Figueroa-Camilo@diobpt.org in the Safe Environment Office

Even more simply:

Priest coming to minister in the parish for the day: letter of suitability

Priest staying overnight at the rectory for any reason: full compliance with our Safe Environment protocols

Please contact me if you have any questions.

The pertinent section from the Priest Personnel Manual may be found below:

1. Any visiting priest or deacon not incardinated in the Diocese of Bridgeport who intends to serve at any ministerial event (e.g., funeral, wedding or both an ordination and Mass of Thanksgiving) and who will not stay overnight in lodging owned by the diocese, by the host parish or institution or by a host family, must provide a testimonial of suitability from his bishop, eparch (for an Eastern Rite priest) or religious superior.
 2. Any visiting priest or deacon who will stay overnight in lodging owned by the diocese, by the host parish or institution or by a host family must also provide proof of background check and VIRTUS training and sign the Executive Summary of the *Safe Environment Handbook*.
 - a) All documents must be sent to the Office of Clergy for archival purposes (See Appendix A: "Authorization and Release for the Procurement of an Investigative Report" and Appendix B: "Executive Summary for Clergy and Men in Formation").
 3. Any visiting priest or deacon not incardinated in the Diocese of Bridgeport who intends to provide regular and consistent ministerial assistance in the Diocese (e.g., regularly scheduled celebration of sacraments) or who will remain for an extended time in the Diocese of Bridgeport, and any priest coming from a foreign country who intends to minister in any capacity (e.g. mission appeal) must:
 - a) Provide a testimonial of suitability from his bishop, eparch (for an Eastern Rite priest) or religious superior.
 - b) Provide proof of background check and for international priests, submit the Authorization and Release for the Procurement of an Investigative Report, a copy of passport (See Appendix C: "Declaration of Consent" form).
 - c) Provide proof of VIRTUS training.
 - d) Sign the Executive Summary of the *Safe Environment Handbook*.
- All of this documentation must be sent to the Office of Clergy for archival purposes.