**WORKED EXAMPLE OF A POSITION AUDIT**

**Lay Visitor**

(**NOTE**: You’ll find considerable overlap between the Program Audit of the Lay Visitor Program and this Position Audit. Answers to the “what, where, when, why, how,” etc., questions will be similar, possibly even identical. In addition, some SafeR Church Measures identified in the Program Audit will also be identified here as measures that can make the Position safeR. That is as it should be, and it saves time. But don’t just transfer information from one audit to the other. It’s critical to ask the question “does this all fit?”

Remember, this is a description of a hypothetical position, created by a group of people at a workshop. Change whatever you need to change so that it becomes an accurate picture of the realities of your parish. That’s the only way you can identify SafeR Church Measures that will actually be prudent, reasonable, appropriate and, above all, effective in preventing, avoiding, transferring, or accepting and reducing the risks in your parish.)

**POSITION TITLE: Lay Visitor**

(**TIP**: If you use a different title, substitute it for this one.)

**1. ANALYZE THE POSITION:**

**A. WHY? Describe the nature and purpose(s) of this position. Why does it exist? Who determines that? What kind of ministry is involved in it?**

**Lay Visitors are individuals who spend time, occasionally or regularly, with another person, usually in that person’s home.**

(**TIP**: The purposes listed below are the same as those listed in the Program Audit under “WHY does your parish have a Lay Visitor Program?”)

The purposes of the position of Lay Visitor are established by the parish and include the following:

- To live out Matthew 25:31-46—i.e., the Lay Visitor is participating in the ministry we all share—to visit and comfort those who are sick, alone, lonely, in need of companionship; visiting one another is a “wholly holy” activity

- To remember and care for people and to help them know that they are cared for and remembered; this may be especially important in the case of people who were once part of the parish and now no longer participate

- To “bring the church to people who can’t get there”; to bring community to those who are separate from the community

- To maintain personal contact with people (parishioners, former parishioners, people known to the parish, etc.), especially parishioners who no longer (or no longer can) come to worship services or participate in parish activities; to bring news, information, invitations to parish involvement

- To assist parish clergy, and/or the pastoral care team, to care for and support people, by doing “reconnaissance”—i.e., helping clergy become or remain aware of special circumstances (or changing circumstances), pastoral needs, etc., of people being visited

- To provide support and encouragement to people, especially those who are isolated and/or alone: sometimes, visitors from the parish (lay, clergy, both) may be the only people that someone sees (or the only one other than caregivers, etc.)

- To help develop relationships with newcomers to the parish

- To build, rebuild, maintain, support, and nourish relationships among the people of God. This is a ministry of hospitality, though it does not take place in the home of the Visitor.

**B. WHO? Which individuals and/or groups of people are served by the person in this position? Describe them: Characteristics, needs, etc.?**

**Who are the people served by a Lay Visitor?**

(**TIP**: This list is the same the list found in the Program Audit in response to the question “WHO? Who do Lay Visitors visit?”)

- Any parishioner

- People shut-in, ill, isolated, dealing with a crisis, tragedy, joyful event, etc.

- Newcomers to the parish

- People who are ill, dying, people who are mourning a death

- Families with new babies

- Disaffected parishioners

- Former parishioners

- Anyone in the community who asks for a visit

**Characteristics, needs of the people served by the Lay Visitor?**

(**TIP**: This list is found in the Program Audit in answer to the question “Identify the inherent and foreseeable risks in the Lay Visitor Program.”)

- People of any age; men, women

- People being visited are often elderly and may be in poor or failing health, but that is not necessarily the case

(1) People being visited are often

- Vulnerable (physically, socially emotionally, psychologically, spiritually, etc.)

- Needy (emotionally, psychologically, financially, etc.)

- Fearful

- Isolated, lonely, alone (i.e., little/no family contact, few friends, etc.)

- Person being visited may well be a “captive audience,” too frail or otherwise unable (or unwilling) to tell a visitor to leave or that he/she doesn’t want visits

(2) There are increasing numbers of people with cognitive impairment, dementia, disabilities, etc., seeking or needing visits: These impairments, frailties put individuals at much higher risk—i.e., people may divulge personal information (e.g., re their finances, etc.), make requests that are inappropriate, etc.—and these frailties also put Visitors at higher risk

(3) The living conditions of person being visited may put him/her at risk and raise the question of the obligation of the Visitor to bring concerns to attention of designated person at parish: Visit Coordinator, Rector, Committee Chair, etc.

(4) Seem to be more women than men who want (if not need) visits

(5) Often, the people being visited are long-time members of the parish; they may have long memories, preconceived notions about visitors generally, or about individuals specifically.

**C. WHAT? Describe all the types and kinds of things a person does as part of this position.**

(**TIP**: Most of the items on this list are taken from the Program Audit, the responses to the question “WHAT? (i.e., what does a Lay Visitor do?)”)

- A layperson (or more than one) from your parish spends time visiting with someone—an individual, couple, family

- Could be a single visit at a particular time (e.g., post-surgery, on an important anniversary, some other special occasion, etc.)

- Could be a series of visits on some kind of regular, periodic, or irregular schedule, for a short time or a long time

- Visitor seeks to engage people in conversation, to provide support and encouragement, to encourage them to talk about themselves if they wish to do so, to bring people news from the parish and community

- Visitor pays attention to situation of the people being visited, is alert to indications of distress, that individual might need assistance of some kind

-Visits might include prayer, offering home communion\*

(\*lay visitor must be trained, authorized, licensed to offer home communion)

- Visitor is given list of people to visit, suggests names of people, helps develops list of people to visit, with individual or group responsible for Lay Visiting (e.g., Rector, Committee, etc.)

- Visitor contacts people to be visited (typically by phone and/or by e-mail), and sets up date/time for visit.

- Visitor travels (drives or walks or takes public transportation or is driven by someone else) to the residence of person being visited

**D. WHERE? Where does the person in this position do these activities, provide these services, etc.?**

(**TIP**: This list is included in the Program Audit, in response to the question “WHERE? Where do Lay Visitors visit people?”)

- In their homes (houses, apartments, rooms or apartments in places such as seniors’ apartments, residences, nursing homes)

- In hospitals

- In coffee shops, restaurants

**E. WHEN? When does a person in this position do these things?**

(**TIP**: This list is substantially the same as that found in response to the question “WHEN? When do these visits take place?” in the Program Audit.)

- Visits are arranged by phone or e-mail (or both) ahead of time (the length of time this takes may vary considerably)

- Visits can take place whenever it is convenient for the Visitor and the person being visited

- Daytime, evening

- Weekdays, weekends

- Visits approximately 1-2 hours long

- People may receive one or more visits during the year, depending on number of people to be visited, number of Lay Visitors, and whether schedules of each allow for more than one visit; efforts are made to have everyone visited at least once every other month if possible, more often if possible

- If person being visited is in a hospital or nursing home, the day, time, duration, etc., of visits may be governed by their rules

- Visits are made year-round

**F. HOW? How are the duties of this position fulfilled? I.e., does the Lay Visitor have autonomy in carrying out this role? Are some elements fixed—e.g., is there a set program to be followed, etc.?**

- Visits are informal

- Visitors have a great deal of autonomy, and they basically decide, with the people being visited, when, how often, and where they will visit

- The “content” of the visit—i.e., topics of conversation, etc.—up to Visitor and person being visited to choose; it usually includes news of and from the parish

- Visitors will receive orientation/education about topics that should not be discussed (e.g., finances) and about discussing other sensitive topics (e.g., bereavement, terminal illness, etc.)

**G. STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE: Where and how does this position fit, i.e., within which program? Within which ministry area (e.g., outreach, pastoral care, etc.) program or service or activity, etc.? To whom does the person in this position report? How? How is the person in this position supervised? Observed? Monitored? Evaluated?**

- Organized by and overseen by a committee of Parish Council (Pastoral Care, Outreach, Spiritual Development, other?), so Parish Council is ultimately responsible; Committee reports to Council periodically

- Visitors are supervised by a designated person (Visit Co-ordinator? Chair of Committee? Rector? Other clergy?)

- Visitors contact designated person if they have questions or concerns about person being visited

- Visitors keep brief notes about each visit (e.g., date, time, who was there, how the visit went, any questions, concerns, need or desire for pastoral visit, etc.) and forward notes to designated person

- Visitors receive initial orientation to visiting, initial and periodic training and education opportunities, and opportunities to reflect with other Visitors on their experiences, debrief, raise questions, concerns, and to identify resources, information, training that would help them (e.g., re issues of privacy and confidentiality, re visiting with people who are bereaved, etc.)

- At each visit, Visitor leaves weekly bulletin and other parish information with person visited (sources of news about as well as contact information for the parish)

**H. INTANGIBLES: What are the intangible realities related to this position?**

The most significant intangibles in this situation are trust, power, and reliance. A Lay Visitor is in a position of trust. The level of trust may vary, but in many cases an individual will be going into someone else’s home, possibly many times, possibly alone. Individuals who are being visited are often vulnerable in some one or more ways: They may be ill, isolated, frail, grieving, etc.; they may have no or little family and few or no other visitors. Lay Visitors therefore can have power, sometimes significant power (though they may not realize it or ever think of abusing it) over the person being visited. The individuals being visited place their trust in the Visitor and in the parish; they rely on the parish to choose Visitors carefully, to define appropriate boundaries for their activities, to supervise their activities, etc.

**I. EMPLOYMENT “STATUS”: Is this a paid position? Unpaid? Filled by a volunteer? A student? A layperson? Ordained clergy? Is it part-time or full-time? Seasonal? Continuous? Permanent? Temporary? Contract? Does this person have to be licensed by the diocese?**

- Lay Visitors are volunteers; they may receive reimbursement for travel expenses (e.g., gas, parking, etc.), but they do not receive any other financial remuneration

- Part-time, occasional position, but because it is a position of trust whose success depends on visitors developing good relationships with the people they visit, the parish will look first for people who are interested in doing this for some extended period of time

- Lay Visitors don’t need to be licensed by the diocese, unless they also wish to be able to offer home communion, in which case they must be trained, authorized, and licensed to do so

**J. MISCELLANEOUS: Is there anything else that should be noted about this position that hasn’t been identified above?**

**2. IDENTIFY AND ASSESS THE RISKS:**

**What are the inherent and foreseeable risks related to this position?**

(**TIP**: The list below identifies negative risks—i.e., threats and possibilities of harm. It is built on the list of risks identified in the Lay Visitor Program Audit. **The “positive risks”—i.e., the opportunities to build SafeR Church inherent and foreseeable in this position—are essentially the purposes of the position, listed above**.)

**Risks to person being visited:**

**(1) Bodily Harm (physical injury)**

- Physical injury (e.g., person being visited is frail; Visitor doesn’t know how to help person stand or move, etc., and person is physically injured; Visitor is ill, inadvertently infects person being visited, etc.)

- Physical abuse

**(2) Personal Injury (non-physical harm)**

- Spiritual, psychological, emotional harm (e.g., person being visited may become inappropriately attached to, or dependent on, Visitor; Visitor may overstep boundaries, etc.)

- Sexual abuse

- Misunderstandings causing distress (exacerbated by cognitive impairments, physical disabilities (e.g., hearing loss), etc.)

**(3) Financial Loss, Property Damage**

- Theft of, or damage to, personal property

- Loss of assets (e.g., person is persuaded to invest money, change will, etc.)

**Risks to Visitors:**

**(1) Bodily Harm (physical injury)**

- Physical injury (e.g., Visitor helps person move, doesn’t know how, and is injured doing so; Visitor is physically assaulted; Visitor is in car accident on way to or home from visit, etc.; Visitor slips and falls on ice at home of person being visited; infection sustained at hospital or nursing home, etc.)

**(2) Personal Injury (non-physical harm); Loss of Reputation, Credibility, Support**

- Emotional harm (e.g., Visitor becomes inappropriately attached to person being visited and/or may not know how to deal with inappropriate attachment on part of person being visited, etc.)

- Loss of reputation, credibility (e.g., as result of misunderstanding with person being visited (or family), allegations of wrongdoing (even if inadvertent), etc.)

**(3) Financial Loss; Property Damage**

- Financial loss (e.g., Visitor is in car accident on way to or from visit; Visitor is injured and unable to work; Visitor’s car is damaged; etc.)

**(4) Legal Liability**

- Visitor might be accused of wrongdoing or causing harm, might have to defend against criminal charges, lawsuit

**Risks to Parish:**

**(1) Loss of Reputation, Credibility, Support**

- Parish’s reputation and credibility are harmed as result of an injury to someone being visited and/or to Visitors

**(2) Legal Liability; Financial Loss**

- Parish is potentially liable for the actions, inaction, wrong action of Visitors as they are acting on its behalf; parish might therefore be liable if the person being visited is harmed by the Visitor

- Parish might be liable if the Visitor is harmed in the course of a visit

- Financial loss might ensue from being found legally liable in either situation

**3. IDENTIFY THE BONA FIDE OCCUPATIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

**(BFORs) OF THIS POSITION**

**Based on this analysis of the position, identify the Bona Fide Occupational Requirements (BFORs) of this position, i.e., the qualities, characteristics, skills, talents, abilities, etc., an individual needs to have (or develop) in order to faithfully and competently fulfill the duties of this position.**

 NOTES AND TIPS: The red flag signals a warning to avoid two common traps.

Bona Fide Occupational Requirements (BFORs) are the skills, qualities, characteristics, aptitudes, talents, and abilities that someone needs to have (or needs to acquire or develop) in order to fulfill the demands of a specific position faithfully and competently—for example, the ability to speak a particular language, or to teach children; an aptitude for working with teenagers; personal qualities and characteristics such as patience, honesty, trustworthiness, integrity, etc.

**(1) One common trap to avoid is confusing BFORs with screening measures**. For example, it’s a mistake to identify a specific degree or diploma (e.g., an MDiv or an ECE Diploma) as a BFOR. It is **not** a BFOR; it’s a screening measure. The BFOR is the ability to do something or the competence to teach something, etc. Screening measures are the tools you use to test whether someone actually has that skill or that competence. Having a specific degree or diploma is one screening measure or tool (but not the only one) that can help you decide this. The danger here is that if you identify the degree or diploma as the BFOR, then you might end up with someone who has the qualification but not the ability or competence.

**(2) The second trap to avoid is thinking that qualities and characteristics like honesty, integrity, dependability, trustworthiness, patience, understanding, etc., shouldn’t be identified as BFORs.** **In fact, they are often absolutely essential, and often the most important, BFORs, especially for positions of trust.** If you look back over the analysis of this position, you can easily see why. Lay Visitors are people placed in significant positions of trust. They have power over people who are often quite vulnerable. The inherent and foreseeable risks of harm that they might do—even inadvertently or unintentionally—are considerable (as is the risk of harm to themselves and the parish).

It is critical that people who are Lay Visitors are people of integrity, people who are trustworthy, dependable, honest, etc. But because honesty and dependability, etc., are intangible qualities and characteristics, people often think that you cannot identify them as requirements for a position. That is absolutely untrue. Not only can you, you must, if the analysis of the position establishes that they **are**, in fact, required in order for someone to fulfill a position faithfully and competently (and the relevant law upholds—in fact, it demands—the identification of such intangibles as BFORs in these situations).

In addition, people don’t identify these characteristics and qualities as BFORs because they think you can’t assess them. In fact, you can, through such screening measures as interviews, serious reference checks, police records checks, case studies, a trial run, probation periods, etc. Will the assessment be totally objective? No. It’s not possible to have a totally objective assessment in any case. The more important question is whether these criteria, the BFORs, have been determined objectively, based on a thorough analysis of the position. Is it possible to defend assessing someone’s honesty, dependability, trustworthiness, etc.? Absolutely—when and if the analysis of the position clearly demonstrates that they are in fact BFORs.

**Bona Fide Occupational Requirements: Lay Visitor**

- Real interest in, enthusiasm for, and commitment to visiting people

- Empathy, care, and concern for others

- Sensitivity to the needs, concerns, frailties of others, in particular those who are vulnerable, who may be going through a difficult time

- Commitment to maintaining and supporting the dignity and privacy of the people being visited

- Trustworthiness, honesty

- Reliability, dependability

- Common sense, discretion, good judgment (e.g., about boundaries)

- Ability to be non-judgmental about other people, the way they live, their decisions, etc.

- Good communication skills, ability to listen well, pick up on people’s interests, concerns, questions, needs; ability to generate conversation

- Patience, sense of humour, flexibility

- Commitment to working as part of team—i.e., even if Visitor conducts visits alone, this is a parish activity, and Visitor must understand and meet obligations to parish around visiting: e.g., contacting responsible person to discuss concerns about person being visited, etc.

- Self-awareness, clear understanding of one’s own skills, abilities, competencies, limits, needs;

- Ability to ask for and receive help, feedback, support as needed

- Clear understanding of the need for relevant orientation, training, education, reflection and debriefing opportunities, and openness, willingness, commitment to participating in them

- Commitment to maintaining confidentiality of information learned or obtained during visits, except for concerns about the well-being of the individual, which should be communicated as soon as possible to the person designated

- Mobility (able to walk, take public transportation, drive, or drive with someone else)

- Clear understanding of role of Visitor (i.e., friendly visitor not pastoral counsellor, etc.) and appropriate boundaries (e.g., need to refuse to become involved in matters of family or finances, etc.) and commitment to playing that role and maintaining those boundaries

- Willingness to visit as part of a team (if parish decides on that arrangement)

- Availability—i.e., enough free time on regular basis to devote to parish visiting

- Ability to organize and coordinate visits and reports of visits—with people being visited, with designated person

**4. IDENTIFY PRE-HIRING SCREENING MEASURES: Given the**

**BFORs named above, identify appropriate screening measures/tools that will allow you to identify whether (and to what degree) an applicant meets the BFORs of the position.**

(**NOTE**: In using any, some, or all of these screening measures, the object is to assess whether the applicant meets the specific BFORs identified above—i.e., has the characteristics, qualities, skills, abilities, competencies, etc., or can learn or develop them—to fulfill this position faithfully and competently,

**Conditions that must be met:**

- Applicant must have been a member and/or active participant in the parish for at least one year prior to being considered for the position of Lay Visitor

- If individual is going to drive to visits, valid driver’s license, clear driver’s abstract for previous five-year period, current insurance coverage (NOTE: Arguably, this might only be an appropriate screening measure/condition if the individual is going to drive other visitors and/or the person being visited.)

**Screening measures:**

- Complete and accurate description of the position, drawn from this audit, given to applicants when they indicate their interest, so they have a true picture of what the position involves

- Application form and initial interview (discuss applicant’s interest in visiting, ask questions, raise issues that get at the BFORs)

- Reference check (especially with respect to character issues, involvement in similar activities elsewhere (e.g., visitor at nursing home), etc.)

- Mock or trial visit (e.g., individual could go out on a visit with an experienced Lay Visitor, etc.) or more than one

- Participation in initial orientation/training

- Police records check, including vulnerable sector check, that reveals no convictions or charges outstanding for relevant offences (e.g., assault, sexual assault, theft, vandalism, fraud, etc.)

- Successful completion of Care 2 Screen process

- \*If people are to be visited in nursing homes and/or hospitals, applicants must meet requirements (if any) established by these institutions.

**5. IDENTIFY POST-HIRING SCREENING MEASURES: Given the**

**BFORs named above, identify appropriate screening measures/tools that will allow you to identify whether, and to what degree, a person who holds the position actually does meet its BFORs.**

3c – post-hiring

Probationary period of six months and regular review

Annnual review and regular debriefings

Check out what has been happening from the point of view of the visitors and the people being visited. When visits not happening, make sure there is a plan b.

Probation period with assessments from partner and from person visited.

Discussed having a brochure , business card or bookmark that had parish contact information or maybe a standard one that the Diocese could offer and people could download and personalize that would make sure that family members knew who had been by to visit and who to contact for more information.

v

**6. MANAGE RISK THROUGH POSITION AND ENVIRONMENT**

**DESIGN: What could be done to change this position or the environment (physical, structural, etc.) in which the work associated with it is done to reduce its inherent and foreseeable threats and increase its inherent and foreseeable opportunities?**

**Parish could secure extra insurance to cover injury to person being visited, and injury to Lay Visitor**

Identification desirable

1. Home visit travelling by car:

Snow day travel policy understood and agreed to by all

Vehicle in good working order with adequate insurance

Call ahead to ensure the visit is necessary/needed/wanted/etc.

Licensed experienced driver

Not travelling alone

2. Home visit travelling on foot:

Visible bright clothing

Good footwear

Dress for the weather – layers, etc.

Carry a walking stick – flashlight when necessary

Know the easiest route to the destination

3. Hospital Visiting

Reduce risks by following the policies of the institution re: visitors – references, length of time known, covenant/contract, police screening

Familiarity with the particular hospital’s policies and procedures

Training for visitors in a particular facility

Flu shots and other innoculation as recommended

Good general health

Don’t offer medical advice/questions

4. Home visits

Visit in teams (male and female) make arrangements with a family member and find out information ahead of time

Control animals

Check on insurance rates – re. are people visiting covered by the parish insurance policy? Needs to be followed up on.

Don not be confrontational or condescending

Go with your gut (not sure what this means!)

Nursing home visits

Training session by facility or information re. who you visit

Have a second person available – protection for them and for you

Legal liability – have a second person available – keep a written record of visits

Training – caution re confidentiality, privacy issues, safety, boundary issues