

## Familiar Legal Concerns

- A) Permission slips – should include medical-release forms – although they may not free you from all responsibility, they do show that you took preventive steps.
- B) Insurance – never assume anything – just because you are a church employee or on church grounds or on a church-sponsored ministry event does not necessarily mean you are adequately covered by the church’s insurance policy – try to get a statement in writing from the insurance carrier clearly stating what it covers – submit questions on a situation by situation basis (Are we covered at an event away from church? What will our insurance cover if we have to take a student to the emergency room?) – Never broadcast your insurance coverage. Unfortunately, all some folks have to know is that you have coverage to prompt them to look for a reason to sue.
- C) Vehicles – what is considered the “legal” age of drivers – do you have enough seat belts and do they really work – never carry more than the vehicle was designed to carry – do you know the real driving record of that person behind the wheel – is the vehicle properly maintained and regularly checked (prove it), best to have some type of maintenance log.
- D) Contracts – facility rental, concert bands, hotels, transportation, etc. – no matter how well you know or trust someone, “get it in writing”.
- E) Copyrights – don’t throw Christian ethics out the window – if you use song sheets, transparencies, slides, movies, videos, or other created works, you need to make sure you have obtained proper permission – a good place to check it out is with Christian Copyright Licensing International (CCLI), [www.ccli.com](http://www.ccli.com) - who will know? God will of course!
- F) Finances – if you are not good with accounting, become friends with someone who is – one of the top two areas that causes the fall of church leaders (right after sexual immorality) – develop checks and balances – avoid directly handling funds as much as possible – demand receipts for reimbursements – be fair with honorariums – play by your church’s rules on requesting checks and spending funds – become best friends with the financial secretary.
- G) Policies – that does not have to be a dirty word, it may save your skin – put it in writing – no just do’s and don’ts, but suitable discipline, unacceptable activities, personal behavioral standards, consequences for ignoring policies.
- H) Relationships – let “above reproach” be your guiding theme.  
The Big 4
  - (1) Confidentiality – define your limits and stick to them.
  - (2) Mandatory reporting – abuse, suicide threat, homicide threat, criminal activity, etc. – know your state and local requirements and follow them.
  - (3) Liability – check with lawyer and insurance company to see if you need to carry liability insurance as it relates to counseling, whether done formally or informally – some states offer malpractice insurance for clergy.
  - (4) Boundaries – one-on-one meetings with opposite sex only in public places – never agree to transport opposite sex without another person – be careful in situations with youth of the same sex.