



Hope Prison Ministries, Inc.
3515 Sycamore School Road
Suite 125, PMB 172
Fort Worth, TX 76133
O: (817) 323-7686
chandler@HopePrisonMinistries.org
www.HopePrisonMinistries.org

CONVICTED SEX OFFENDER GENERAL GUIDELINES

NAME OF YOUR CHURCH is involved in the evangelization and discipleship of those in prison and in their aftercare. From time to time, **NAME OF YOUR CHURCH** will receive requests from convicted sex offenders (CSO) who desire to worship with us. For the protection of its members, and for the protection of the CSO:

1. **Goals.** **NAME OF YOUR CHURCH** goals in connection with the CSO, at a minimum, should include:
 - a. Protect the families of our congregation and honor the needs of all concerned;
 - b. Welcome with the same open embrace that any other visitor should receive; and
 - c. Ensure worship is without distraction (as much as the Lord and the State allows).
 - d. The CSO policy and Covenant shall be kept current at all times and are subject to change at the discretion of NAME OF YOUR CHURCH leadership, changes in laws, and any other public authority with jurisdiction over Registered Sexual Offenders.

2. **Transportation.**
 - a. Transportation can be provided on a rotating schedule, for which a sign-up sheet should be kept by the **APPOINTED MEMBER/ELDER** team.
 - b. Transportation may be timed so that CSO will arrive 10-to-15 minutes early to be seated in then worship service, Bible study or Sunday School.
 - c. Define where the CSO will be allowed to park a self-driven automobile.

3. **Accountability Partners.** Several accountability partners should be signed up to escort CSO while at the church. They will rotate as needed, with one person assigned at any particular time. **APPOINTED MEMBER/ELDER** will keep this list of escorts current and be responsible for seeing this provision of the agreement is kept. Accountability partners will be named on the covenant between CSO and NAME OF YOUR CHURCH.
 - a. **Accountability Partner Guidelines.**
 - i. Meet CSO upon admittance to NAME OF YOUR CHURCH property. Details are to be coordinated prior to CSO's arrival on the premises.
 - ii. Escort will advise **APPOINTED MEMBER/ELDER** immediately of any concerns regarding CSO's behavior or activity.
 - iii. The accountability partners don't have to remain physically alongside of CSO at all times if, for example, CSO is accompanied by family, or desires private



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conversation with an Elder, etc. They must, however, remain within sight distance at all times.

- iv. The accountability partner is useful for both safety/ liability and protection reasons, not just for the church (preventing any harm to NAME OF YOUR CHURCH members or visitors) but also for the benefit of the ex-Offender by preventing false allegations. Untoward behavior towards CSO by members of the congregation will be reported to the **APPOINTED MEMBER/ELDER**.
- v. At conclusion of worship or event, escort CSO to his/her vehicle or off the property.
- vi. Document and submit details of any unusual or questionable contacts to **APPOINTED MEMBER/ELDER**.
- vii. **APPOINTED MEMBER/ELDER** will regularly inform the Session about CSO's progress.
- viii. If CSO is involved in a Small Group, it shall be one in which there are no children.

4. **CRIMES AGAINST CHILDREN.** Any CSO with a non-consensual crime against children shall have the following stipulations added to the CSO Covenant:

- a. CSO will not approach or initiate contact with children/youth (ages 0-17) on church property, at church-sponsored activities, or with any NAME OF YOUR CHURCH children/youth in public places.
- b. CSO will not be allowed in the nursery wing, the playground, or any designated area in which a children's activity is underway. CSO will not be allowed in these areas for any reason even if children are not present.
- c. The Accountability Partner/Escort will remain with CSO always, including trips to restrooms.

5. **Confidentiality/Congregational Communication**

- a. It will be a policy that the Deacons and Staff, including the Director of Children's Ministries, Youth Minister, and Nursery Coordinator will be told that CSO is participating in church activities. They will be told that the CSO has agreed to a covenant with the church that sets limitations on participation, establishes accountability partner oversight, and precludes any contact with children or young people.
- b. Confidentiality will be the principle upon which this aspect of the policy is based. CSO will know that his/her offense is only to be known in detail by a small group of persons to include the Pastor, the Elders, a Deacon, and the **APPOINTED MEMBER/ELDER**.



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- c. Should members of the congregation make enquiry, they will be directed to these CSOs. Factual details concerning CSO's situation will be disclosed according to their prayerful consideration.
6. **Complementary Counseling / Discipleship.** If CSO wishes, we will make available to him the counseling services of the Association of Biblical Counselors, at our expense, to help work through other personal and family issues.
7. **Process.**
- a. The CSO shall make his or her request known by completing and submitting the application to any member in good standing, who shall in turn submit it to: **APPOINTED MEMBER/ELDER.**
 - b. **APPOINTED MEMBER/ELDER** will contact the CSO to discuss the Church's CSO Covenant with the CSO. If the CSO is willing to sign the CSO Covenant as is, the **APPOINTED MEMBER/ELDER** will discuss the CSO with the elders and, provided there are no objections, the **APPOINTED MEMBER/ELDER** shall provide a copy of the **Letter of Tentative Approval** to the CSO for his supervising parole/probation officer and/or therapist. The CSO will then be encouraged to unite with the Congregation in worship as soon as they have obtained the necessary permission from the CSO's supervising officer and/or therapist.
 - c. If the CSO is unwilling to sign the CSO Covenant as is, the CSO has two options: 1) find somewhere else to worship or 2) state the reasons why they are unable to sign the CSO Covenant as is and work through the process with **APPOINTED MEMBER/ELDER**, who will work with the elders to try to come to some agreement. The CSO will not be able to attend any church functions, however, until after a CSO Covenant has been executed by the CSO and **APPOINTED MEMBER/ELDER.**
 - d. Upon completion of the CSO Covenant, the **APPOINTED MEMBER/ELDER** will contact the supervising parole/probation officer and/or the CSO therapist to discuss the CSO's case history in detail. As long as it may be established that the CSO was honest in the completion of his application, the CSO will be able to continue to worship with us pursuant to the CSO Covenant.



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- e. If a CSO is found to have been less than honest and transparent regarding on his application, permission for the CSO to worship with us will be suspended pending a full investigation. **APPOINTED MEMBER/ELDER** will provide a letter to the CSO, supervising officer and therapist requesting additional information regarding the discrepancies and his suspension from worship until such time as the discrepancies may be resolved.



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CSO Application Requesting Permission to Attend/Join NAME OF YOUR CHURCH, page 2

To your knowledge, is there a fee for the class and, if so, how much? Y N \$ _____

How long have you on parole or probation? _____

Have you violated your parole or probation? Y N If so, what was the violation? _____

You MUST provide us with your parole/probation requirements. If you do not have these papers, please obtain them *before* submitting your application.

Were you guilty of the charges against you? Y N

If NO, please explain: _____

Do you now/have you ever struggled with pornography? Y N Past Present

Have you *ever* completed a Sex Offender Therapy Program? Y N

If you know, are you classified as a LOW- MEDIUM- HIGH-RISK offender?

If required, are you currently attending a Sex Offender Therapy Program? Y N

Employed: Y N

If YES, where: _____ Phone: _____

Do you now profess to be a Christian? Y N

If YES, please tells us when and where you became a Christian? _____



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CSO Application Requesting Permission to Attend/Join NAME OF YOUR CHURCH, page 3

What does it mean to be a Christian? _____

How does someone become a Christian? _____

What have you done/are you doing, what books have you read/are you reading that specifically address the sin(s)/crimes which led to your current conviction? _____

Do you have any other needs for which you require assistance?

Housing/Rent Assistance Groceries Clothing Employment

Transportation To/From Church

If you have an immediate financial need, please provide the amount and reason for the need: \$ _____

Reason: _____

What do you desire to gain most out of uniting with us in worship? _____



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CSO Application Requesting Permission to Attend/Join NAME OF YOUR CHURCH, page 4

Please provide three references:

Name: _____ Relation: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Name: _____ Relation: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Name: _____ Relation: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

With your signature below, you affirm that the statements you have made in this application are true and accurate to the best of your knowledge, you hereby grant permission to **NAME OF YOUR CHURCH** to verify the statements you've made and grant permission to all concerned to release information concerning you. You understand that **NAME OF YOUR CHURCH** will be speaking with your parole/probation officer and/or therapist regarding these matters and will report any discrepancies in the statements you've made. You hereby agree to indemnify and hold harmless any and all concerned with the investigation of the statements you've made in this application and any potential consequences arising from it.

 Signature Date

FOR STAFF USE - Was CSO provided with a Tentative Letter of Approval? Y N

Accountability Partners

1. Name/Phone _____
2. Name/Phone _____
3. Name/Phone _____
4. Name/Phone _____



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Letter of Tentative Approval

Re: **CSO NAME**, Offender ID# _____

Dear Supervising Officer AND/OR Therapist:

NAME OF YOUR CHURCH has developed a written policy regarding and application process for convicted sex offenders (CSO).

The above named CSO has completed the application process and is hereby given tentative approval to join us in worship as soon as the CSO is able to do so with your approval.

Pursuant to this policy, **APPOINTED MEMBER/ELDER** will be in contact with you and/or the assigned therapist to verify the contents of the application we have received and to learn of any requirements you may have for us in this regard.

Pending that review, we expect to grant him permission to worship with us regularly. In view of this, please accept this as our letter of approval for the CSO to join us in worship while we exercise due diligence to verify his/her application.

APPOINTED MEMBER/ELDER will contact you if, for whatever reason, the church decides not to permit the above-named CSO to worship with us, now or in the future. Until then, for your records, please accept this letter as formal acknowledgement that we are aware of the CSO's specific charges and hereby grant him permission to join us in worship from this Sunday forward unless you are informed otherwise.

Do not hesitate to contact me with your comments or questions. Please call me at (555) 555-1212.

Sincerely,

APPOINTED MEMBER/ELDER

Title



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CSO Covenant Introduction

At the outset, it must be noted that the following Covenant must be understood as being established in the best interest of and for the protection of the congregation *and* the CSO. **NAME OF YOUR CHURCH**, its elders and members, believe in forgiveness, redemption, and the power of the Word and Spirit to change anyone! We believe that all who are truly in Christ are new creations; the old has passed away and the new has come! The Scripture also teaches that the civil authority do not bear the sword in vain, however; Christians must respect and obey it as such (Romans 13). For these reasons, as noted at the outset, we have established the CSO policy and Covenant in the best interest of and for the protection of the congregation *and* the CSO.

NAME OF CSO desires to attend **NAME OF YOUR CHURCH**. **NAME OF YOUR CHURCH** desires that all men, everywhere, would come to Christ! Therefore, the parties Covenant as follows:

NAME OF CSO DID DID NOT involve children.

NAME OF YOUR CHURCH, insofar as the State and this Covenant permit, desires to provide the same shepherding care, oversight, accountability and opportunity for fellowship available to all of its visitors and members to **NAME OF CSO**. **NAME OF CSO** desires this and therefore Covenants to:

I, **NAME OF CSO**, hereby covenant with you to abide by all the requirements made of me by this covenant while attending **NAME OF YOUR CHURCH**, to wit:

- I agree to adhere to the guidance, counsel and requests made of me by the leadership of **NAME OF YOUR CHURCH**, not only while in attendance at church functions, but in my personal life as well.
- I agree this will require submission by me to the leadership of the church and make myself subject to its discipline.
- The following guidelines are set as parameters in order that I may establish a relationship with **NAME OF YOUR CHURCH**. In time, I hope in time to show myself worthy of its trust.
- I will meet with the **APPOINTED MEMBER/ELDER**, pastor and elders and members of the core ministry team (consisting of the Pastor, an Elder, a Deacon and the Reformed Prison Ministry (RPM) team Chairman) to discuss this covenant and begin to build mutual understanding and trust.
- I agree that designated members of FWPC can contact my parole officer and treatment provider on a periodic basis, to give/receive information with regard to my situation and progress.
- I will regularly attend Sunday worship services.



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- I agree to allow one of the official church accountability partners to escort me at all times while on the church premises and at designated church functions. I will work out details of connecting with my assigned accountability partner prior to arriving at church.
- I give permission to **APPOINTED MEMBER/ELDER** to convey factual information about my situation to others in the congregation on a 'need-to-know' basis to help maintain peace in the body.
- I understand that if I violate any of the provisions of this covenant, I will be subject to church discipline that could include expulsion as one outcome. I understand that I will be denied all access to church property if I fail to comply with the terms of the covenant.
- I will comply with all the provisions of my probation/parole, treatment and registration requirements.
- From time to time at their request I will meet individually with **APPOINTED MEMBER/ELDER**, the Pastor or elders to review this covenant and for our mutual edification.
- I understand that a report will be given regularly to the church leadership regarding my situation and progress.
- I agree that a copy of this covenant will be provided to my parole officer.
- I will inform the Chairman of the RPM team of meetings with my parole officer, on a monthly basis or as requested.
- The above terms are subject to change at the discretion of FWPC leadership, changes in laws, and any other public authority with jurisdiction over Registered Sexual Offenders.
- I will commit to being honest with myself, my church leaders, parole officer, treatment provider and others involved in this work of service towards my family and me.

If my crime was against children and was non-consensual (as deemed by the state):

- I agree to be escorted to the restroom and that restroom use is limited to one location.
- I will not approach or initiate contact with children/youth (ages 0-17) on church property or at church-sponsored activities, or with any FWPC children/youth in a public place.
- I will not enter the nursery wing, the playground, or any designated area in which a children's activity is underway. I will not go through those places for any reason even if children are not present.
- I may participate in Sunday School, Sunday worship, selected churchwide events, and other adult-only activities. I understand that church leadership through the core ministry team must provide approval to attend any other functions, in addition to those already approved.

Signed (Name/Date) _____

Church Leader: (Name/Title/Date) _____