



KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS OFFICE OF YOUTH PROTECTION

GUIDANCE FOR MEMBERS OF THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS ON HOW TO COMPLY WITH THE GALVESTON HOUSTON ARCHDIOCESE'S SAFE ENVIRONMENT REQUIREMENTS NECESSARY TO SERVE AS A VOLUNTEER ON PARISH PROPERTY

- This guidance applies to members of the Knights of Columbus who choose to volunteer on parish property within the Galveston Houston Archdiocese, whether in a church or parish ministry or in the name of the Knights of Columbus.
- According to a joint agreement between the Galveston Houston Archdiocese and the Knights of Columbus, members choosing to volunteer on parish property must complete archdiocesan VIRTUS training, as well complete an archdiocesan background check, in order to be eligible to serve as a volunteer on parish property.
- Members of local councils should work closely together with their pastor and their parish safe environment liaison to make arrangements to complete archdiocesan VIRTUS training at the earliest possible opportunity.
- The Galveston Houston Archdiocese has generously agreed to pay for the training and background checks of members of the Knights of Columbus who wish to serve as volunteers on parish property.
- If payment or any other matters becomes an issue, PLEASE DO NOT get into an argument with parish personnel or a priest.
- All disagreements or disputes should be immediately referred to Bob Goss (bob@gosslaw.com) stating the parish, the member's name and the nature of the problem.
- Bob will forward the conflict to the Texas State Advocate and Knights of Columbus Office of Youth Protection Director, Brian Gedicks.
- Brian will address the issue through discussions directly with the Galveston Houston Archdiocese.

Immediate Action Items for All Parish Based Councils In The Galveston Houston Archdiocese

All Grand Knights and Financial Secretaries of councils within the Galveston Houston Archdiocese shall:

1. Make a list of all members who serve as parish volunteers (e.g., members who volunteer at fish fries taking place on parish property sponsored by the council), which shall be referred to as the "ELIGIBLE MEMBER VOLUNTEER LIST."
2. Ask each member volunteer if they have already completed the archdiocesan VIRTUS training and background check.
3. If the member volunteer has already completed such training, then a check should be placed next to the member volunteer's name.
4. If the member volunteer has NOT completed the archdiocesan safe environment requirements, the member volunteer must complete archdiocesan VIRTUS training and an archdiocesan background check as soon as possible to be eligible to continue to volunteer on parish property.
5. The Grand Knight should promptly provide the ELIGIBLE MEMBER VOLUNTEER LIST to the parish priest, the parish safe environment liaison, and to **Ms. Jeannie Nelson, Office of Child and Youth Protection Director, Galveston Houston Archdiocese** at jnelson@archgh.org.
6. Continually update the ELIGIBLE MEMBER VOLUNTEER LIST with any new member volunteers who become eligible to volunteer on parish property by completing archdiocesan safe environment requirements. Be sure to always provide the updated ELIGIBLE MEMBER VOLUNTEER LIST to the parish priest, the parish safe environment liaison, and to **Ms. Jeannie Nelson, Office of Child and Youth Protection Director, Galveston Houston Archdiocese** at jnelson@archgh.org.

Office of Youth Protection: oyp@kofc.org 203-752-4558 • Member Helpline: youthleader@kofc.org 203-800-4940
855-845-3502 (fax)

1-844-KOFC-SAFE (1-844-563-2723)



FAQS REGARDING KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS' COMPLIANCE WITH GALVESTON HOUSTON ARCHDIOCESE SAFE ENVIRONMENT REQUIREMENTS NECESSARY TO SERVE AS VOLUNTEERS ON PARISH PROPERTY

1. **Must Fourth Degree members complete archdiocesan safe environment training and background checks to serve as Color Corp/Color Guard and/or in any other Fourth Degree volunteer activity at a parish?**
A: YES. All Sir Knights of the Fourth Degree are Third Degree members of a council of the Knights of Columbus that are serving in a volunteer capacity on parish property. As members of their local councils, as well as members of Fourth Degree Assemblies, Sir Knights must complete archdiocesan VIRTUS training and complete an archdiocesan background check.
2. **Who should maintain the ELIGIBLE MEMBER VOLUNTEER LIST for Fourth Degree members?**
A: The council should maintain a list of all its members eligible to serve as volunteers on parish property ("ELIGIBLE MEMBER VOLUNTEER LIST"), including all Sir Knights who are members of the council. Additionally, Fourth Degree Assemblies should maintain their own "ELIGIBLE MEMBER VOLUNTEER LIST" of Color Corp members who have completed archdiocesan safe environment training and background checks to ensure that Fourth Degree members maintain eligibility to volunteer on parish property.
3. **When must members of the Knights of Columbus who choose to serve as volunteers comply with the Galveston Houston Archdiocesan safe environment requirements?**
A: IMMEDIATELY. Councils and Assemblies should begin the process according to the Immediate Action Items for All Parish Based Councils in the Galveston Houston Archdiocese contained in the GUIDANCE FOR MEMBERS OF THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS ON HOW TO COMPLY WITH THE GALVESTON HOUSTON ARCHDIOCESE'S SAFE ENVIRONMENT REQUIREMENTS NECESSARY TO SERVE AS VOLUNTEERS ON PARISH PROPERTY.
4. **Do we cancel fish fries this Lent?**
A: No.
5. **Who is going to enforce the joint agreement between the Galveston Houston Archdiocese and the Knights of Columbus?**
A: Both the Galveston Houston Archdiocese and the Knights of Columbus.
6. **Will this joint agreement be enforced?**
A: Yes.
7. **If a member's family or friends choose to volunteer at a Fish Fry or other activity on parish property, must they first complete the Galveston Houston Archdiocesan safe environment training and background check before volunteering?**
*A: Galveston Houston Archdiocese safe environment policy applies to ANY VOLUNTEER on parish property. **Please Note: do not create a problem or unnecessary conflict; complete the training together as a family.***
8. **Why are members of the Knights of Columbus being singled out and being required to complete safe environment training and background checks to volunteer on parish property when "men's clubs and other groups" do not?**
A: This question falsely assumes that Galveston Houston Archdiocese's safe environment requirements are only being required of members of the Knights of Columbus who choose to volunteer on parish property. This is a false premise. In fact, Galveston Houston Archdiocese's safe environment requirements apply to all parishioners who choose to volunteer on parish property. Brother Knights within the Galveston Houston Archdiocese should lead by example and complete the training and background checks in support of our priests and our Bishop - - just as the Cardinal has asked.
9. **What if a member of the Knights of Columbus refuses to complete the Galveston Houston Archdiocese's safe environment training and background check, but shows up to serve as a volunteer on parish property?**
A: Then that member cannot volunteer on parish property.