



# ABC's of Church Management Newsletter

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This newsletter has been developed to provide compliance guidelines for local congregations concerning state and federal regulations. It is shared as a basic reference newsletter with the understanding that the publisher is not giving legal, financial, or other professional service/advice. The publisher acknowledges that the laws and regulations of each state may vary. If professional assistance is required, the services of a competent professional should be secured.

## Churches & Politics

Oral Roberts University is under investigation for their possible participation in influencing a political race in Tulsa. If this proves accurate, the university could lose its tax exempt status. The rules that govern a nonprofit university's participation in politics also apply to churches.

With the presidential election coming in 2008, churches need to be aware of permitted and prohibited political activities.

Church permitted activities include:

- Public comments made by ministers and other church employees in connection with political campaigns, not made at church facilities or in church publications and accompanied by statements that the comments are strictly personal and are not intended to represent the church.
- A church invites all candidates for a political office to address the congregation, and informs the congregation before each candidate's speech that the views expressed are those of the candidate and not the church and that the church does not endorse any candidate.
- A church distributes a compilation of voting records of all members of Congress on major legislative issues involving a wide range of subjects; the publication contains no editorial opinion and its contents and structure do not imply approval or disapproval of any members or their voting records. Churches should exercise extreme caution before deciding whether or not to distribute campaign materials prepared by other organizations.
- Neutral voter registration drives.

Church prohibited activities include:

- Contributions to political campaign funds.
- Public statements of position (verbal and written) in favor of or in opposition to candidates for office – in official church publications

Churches need to be aware of the rules governing church participation in politics. Now is the time to educate staff and congregants about what will be permissible during the 2008 presidential election.

and at official church sponsored functions.

- Provision of a forum for expression of candidates' views on a partisan basis.
- A church distributes a voters' guide containing questions demonstrating a bias on certain issues.
- The endorsement of candidates.
- Campaign activities by employees within the context of their employment.
- A church fails to "disavow" the campaign activities of persons under "apparent authorization" from the church, by repudiating those acts "in a timely manner equal to the original actions" and taking steps "to ensure that such unauthorized actions do not recur."
- Engaging in fund raising on behalf of a candidate.
- Newspaper ads urging voters for or against a candidate.

If the church participates in any of the prohibited political activities, they could very possibly lose their federal tax exempt status. The importance of maintaining federal tax exempt status is so that all donations coming to the church remain tax deductible.

## Thanksgiving Potlucks

Tis the season for potluck Thanksgiving dinners. To keep those attending safe from foodborne illnesses, follow these food safety tips:

- Keep food cold (below 45° F) or hot (above 140° F) to avoid bacterial growth.
- Never leave foods at room temperature for more than 2 hours, transport time and serving time included.
- Perishable foods that have been prepared ahead of time must be kept refrigerated until it is time to leave and/or serve.
- Hot food should be reheated at the potluck.
- Do not use warming trays or crock-pots to reheat food, use a microwave or oven. If an oven or microwave will not be available, prepare the dish closer to the time of the event, wrap it in blankets and place in an insulated cooler.

- Be sure to provide plenty of places to dispose of garbage. Keeping garbage away will help prevent cross contaminating the food area.
- Prevent “double dipping” by ensuring that there is a spoon available for each dip at all times.

The Center for Disease Control lists the following statistics for foodborne illnesses for each year:

- 1 in 4 Americans (76 million) will develop a foodborne illness
- 325,000 Americans will be hospitalized with a foodborne illness
- 5,000 Americans will die as a result of a foodborne illness

Enjoy the fellowship of the Thanksgiving potlucks but also take precautions to keep those attending safe.

### **Toy Recalls for Lead Paint Levels**

Over the last several months the media has listed recall after recall of children’s toys made in China for excessive lead paint levels. Many of these toys may be in the nursery or children’s classrooms of the church. Some of these recalls include:

- 90,000 Fisher-Price Geo Trax Locomotive
- 675,000 Mattel Various Barbie Accessory Toys
- 8,900 Fisher-Price Big Big World 6-in-1 Bongo Band Toys
- 253,000 Mattel “Sarge” die cast toy cars
- 967,000 Mattel Sesame Street, Dora the Explorer, and other children’s toys.
- 10,000 KB Toys Wooden Pull-Along Alphabet & Math Block Wagons; Wooden Pull-Along Learning Blocks Wagons; 10-in-1 Activity Learning Carts; and Flip-Flop Alphabet Blocks
- 35,000 Kids II, Inc. Baby Einstein Discover & Play Color Blocks
- 79,000 Eveready Battery Co. “Pirates of the Caribbean” Medallion Squeeze Lights
- 1.6 million Kahoot Products Inc. Cub Scouts Totem Badges
- 10,000 Kipp Brothers Bendable Dinosaur Toys
- 49,000 J.C. Penney Disney Deluxe Winnie-the-Pooh 23-piece

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## Play sets

- 19,000 J.C. Penney Deluxe Wood Art Sets
- 5,400 Guidecraft Tabletop Puppet Theaters
- 350,000 Antioch Publishing Cool Clip and Mini Cool Clip bookmarks

To receive more information about these products access the following websites:

[www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov) – Consumer Products Safety Commission

[www.mattel.com/safety/us](http://www.mattel.com/safety/us) - Mattel Toys

It is recommended that time be taken to go through the toys at the church and remove any toys that appear on the various recall lists.

## Snow's on the Way

Shortly, snow will be blanketing many parts of the U.S. Now is the time to make sure the church is prepared. Some issues the church should take into consideration include:

- Shut off water and drain the pipes to buildings that are unoccupied during the winter months.
- Wrap exposed water pipes to help prevent freezing.
- Check all furnaces to insure proper operation.
- Check all carbon monoxide detectors and smoke detectors for proper operation.
- Stock salt or melting products for sidewalks.
- Make arrangements with local media to be able to communicate closures or postponements quickly. Educate the congregation on which media source will provide this information.
- Contact a snow removal company now to make arrangements for how snow will be removed during the winter months.
- Clean out gutters to ensure reduced ice build-up in gutters and down spouts.
- Always, always keep the safety of those attending church activities a priority!