

Are We Practicing Safe Fundraising?

A 12-question checklist to ensure a fun and safe event.

by Jeff Hanna

Use the following checklist to gauge how your church is doing at creating a physically and financially safe fundraising event.

HOW ARE WE DOING	YES	NO	WORKING ON THIS
Do we have written policies regarding fundraising guidelines?			
When planning a fundraising event, do we consider the safety aspects of the event?			
When using outside vendors, do we check their references and make sure they have adequate insurance?			
If food is served or sold at events, do we have someone responsible for maintaining food?			
Do we have more than enough supervision/security planned for every fundraising event?			
Is equipment inspected by a reputable, qualified person before being used by the public?			
Do we check with our insurance agent to make sure the event will be covered and if specific safeguards need to be followed?			
Do we make sure at least two people are involved in any physical labor (i.e. human auctions) to ensure their safety?			
When we collect cash for an event, do we properly secure it using two people at all times?			
When we tally receipts for an event, do we follow the two-person rule for counting, documenting and securing the funds?			
Do we keep all funds from being taken home and counted by an individual?			
Do we have a qualified, experienced tax-person who has an understanding of nonprofits and can guide us on proper rules of receiving and distributing donated funds and property?			

Before you launch your next fundraising effort, be sure to consider some aspects that may be putting your church and your members at risk. Use the simple tips below as a checklist for your next fundraiser.

Physical Safety

Outside Vendors. Most vendors are reputable. However, some may be inexperienced or unprofessional. Be sure to select vendors who have references. Utilize a written contract outlining their duties and get proof that they have adequate insurance.

Equipment. All equipment, whether owned by the church, rented, or brought in by a vendor should be safe. The only way to insure this is to have it inspected by a certified inspector. Further, all equipment should be run by a trained, responsible person who has safety in mind.

Food Sales. Anytime you are selling food, extra care should be provided. Adults should make sure the food is kept at the proper temperatures and safe to sell.

Financial Safety

Cash. Every effort should be made to secure the funds as soon as possible, even as it accumulates during the event. A responsible security team (of two or more) should take cash to a secure room, and lock it up until it can be counted. Once the money is secured, it should be handled in the same way as the church collection. Use two or more people to count the money, document it, and ensure its safe deposit. Never allow cash to be taken home or counted by just one person.

Tax-Deductible Donations. Some churches raise funds by asking people to donate items to the church. The church then sells or uses these donations, and the donor can receive a tax deduction. Take care to follow proper IRS guidelines for accepting donations and reporting them. Churches should consult a competent tax person who knows the law regarding nonprofits.