

Society of Saint Vincent de Paul Toronto Central Council

Privacy, Personal Information, Confidentiality, Disclosure and Records: Guidelines for Vincentians and Conferences

This guideline is intended to be a practical reference for Vincentians and conferences to assist in following the Rule and Statutes of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul: [Confidentiality and Disclosure](#) (Section 3.6) and the following Toronto Central Council Policies and Guidelines:

- [Vincentian Service Covenant](#)
- [Privacy – Policy](#)
- [Confidentiality and Professionalism – Policy](#)

Usage:

Include this guideline in the conference's new Vincentian orientation and for annual review by everyone in the conference.

Safeguarding Personal Information

Personal information (either spoken or written) includes any identifying information about a person or family member including people's names, dates of birth, contact information, financial and health information as well as information that identifies the person as being an individual who receives assistance from the Society.

Vincentians are responsible for protecting the personal information of everyone we help. Vincentians must treat **ALL** personal information with strict confidentiality and safeguard this information through every encounter and interaction.

Recording and Treatment of Confidential Information on Home Visitations

The goal is to record the minimal amount of personal information needed to satisfy good record keeping and stewardship of conference funds.

Neighbour-in-Need Record Form

The Neighbour-in-Need Record Form is meant to bring consistency to information gathering and to guide conferences in collecting only information that is necessary and appropriate. The revised Neighbour-in-Need Record Form is available for download on the TCC website.

<http://svdptoronto.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/NEW-NIN-Information-Form-5.pdf>

Important Considerations:

- When a visit is not in the home, the location should be appropriately private to ensure the confidentiality of the information shared by the neighbour being served.
- Documentation of home visits should be fact based. Opinions or suspicions have no place in this documentation.
- If they request it, our neighbours have a right to see what is in their record and to expect that information to be accurate.

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- Vincentians may share confidential information with social service agencies or other professionals only with the knowledge and permission of their neighbour-in-need.

Important Exceptions:

1. **All persons have an obligation under the law to report any suspected or confirmed incidences of child abuse. For further details, please see [Child Welfare Legislation](#).**
2. **Life-Threatening Issues: Call 911**

Conferences are expected:

1. To instruct their members on the handling of confidential information and material.
2. To ensure confidential information is accessible only to those authorized to have access. Confidential information should be easily accessed by members as required for home visits and updating information. Conferences are required to find effective and appropriate ways to store and access confidential information.
3. To not discuss confidential information in situations where they might be overheard (e.g. elevators, hallways, restaurants, taxis, public transit, church lobbies, etc.).
4. To never record full names and addresses in meeting minutes.
5. To keep confidential information in safe and secure places, and be accessible only to those whose work requires them to access it.
6. To ensure confidential information is never left on telephone recording systems.
7. To password protect confidential information that is being shared electronically and ensure that unauthorized people cannot access this information.

Confidential Information Not to Collect: SIN card numbers, Driver License numbers, tax returns/assessments, *and except for camp registration for campers*, health card numbers.

Retention & Destruction of Records

Our neighbour in need information record must be retained for seven years.

Records must be shredded when being destroyed. This can be done at the parish or the files can be sent to Toronto Central Council for shredding.

Archival material may be retained at the conference or sent to Toronto Central for storage.

Approved by the Board of Directors of Toronto Central Council October 26, 2016