

United Methodist Church Minimum Insurance Requirements

During the 2016 General Conference in Portland, OR, Petition 60158, relating to adequate insurance coverage, was adopted. This Petition amends ¶ 2533.2 in *The Book of Discipline (2012)* and alters the responsibilities of a local church's board of trustees as it relates to their report to the charge conference. The current *Book of Discipline* does not provide for any standards to be made available to assist local church trustees in their annual review of insurance coverages. The paragraph now states:

The board of trustees shall annually compare the existence and adequacy of the church's insurance coverages to an insurance schedule annually published by the General Council on Finance and Administration. The purpose of this review is to ensure that the church, its properties, and its personnel are properly protected against risks. The board shall include in its report to the charge conference (¶ 2550.7) the results of its review and recommendations needed to timely bring the church into compliance with the published schedule.

Typical "a la carte" programs designed for businesses allow churches to pick and choose their coverage, which often leads to gaps in coverage. Churches need a package that covers all of the lines of coverage important to a ministry – i.e., sexual misconduct, employment practices, directors', officers' & trustees, employee benefits liability, and coverage for volunteers. This allows for focus on more important aspects of ministry.

This change provides guidance and empowerment to local church boards of trustees in ensuring that the assets of the denomination are protected by adequate insurance coverages. Attached are the current minimum insurance requirements from GCFA. These dedicated (non-shared) limits provide a starting point for churches as they are entrusted to be good stewards in protecting God's assets.

Insurance is now a Disciplinary requirement. However, there is not a penalty for non-compliance prescribed in the Book of Discipline but trustees need to be aware they are personally putting themselves at risk with the church does not have adequate insurance.

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Rev. November, 2019

The Book of Discipline requires local church trustees to annually review and report on the adequacy of local church property and liability insurance coverage “to ensure that the church, its properties, and its personnel are properly protected against risks.” Since 1797, the *Book of Discipline* has provided that the property and assets of local churches are held in trust for the benefit of the denomination. Inadequate insurance puts local church property and assets at risk, including the denomination’s trust interest therein. Therefore, in representing the denomination’s trust interest, the following minimum insurance requirements are adopted for local churches:

COMMERCIAL PROPERTY & LIABILITY PACKAGE POLICY, to include the following minimum limits:

Property

- ✓ Buildings, Pipe Organs & Contents - Insured to Replacement Value, “Special Risk” Coverage
- ✓ All Church buildings should have an updated replacement cost valuation every five (5) years.
- ✓ The replacement cost valuation must be updated within 180 days if additional square footage is added.
- ✓ A Church building may be insured on an actual cash value basis where replacement cost valuation is not an option available to the Church. The Church should understand that it is being insured on an actual cash value basis and use its best efforts to complete the necessary upgrades and renovations required to qualify for replacement cost valuation coverage.
- ✓ A church building may be insured on a functional replacement valuation basis where it is a desired option on the part of the church or conference. **The church should understand it may only do so with the written approval of the conference.**

Liability

