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## *WHAT DOES FELLOWSHIP ATLANTIC REQUIRE FOR CHURCH PROTECTION PLANS?*

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Christian ministries are compelled by Scripture and community expectations to respond truthfully, openly and favorably to any allegations or issues of abuse. Even if the allegations are from years past, we must deal with them in a manner that is above reproach. (Matthew 5:13-16; 2Cor.6:3; 1Tim.3:2). We cannot minimize these expectations nor neglect our due diligence.

To be victimized by unwanted sexual contact, advances, and behavior is horrendous. It is diametrically opposed to everything we believe about the value and dignity of every single person. The primary results of abuse can be life-long damage and on-going problems for victims, their families, and perpetrators. We are committed to preventing abuse as much as is humanly possible with policies that work to safeguard the vulnerable people among those we serve. We will not deny or minimize the damage to victims and will support whatever the truth reveals.

Another major fallout of abuse is the damage to the reputation and ministry of our churches and people. Some of this is unavoidable, but how we handle an abuse crisis can be key to how we are perceived as being either proactive and helpful, or secretive and concealing. How we communicate with and are perceived by the media plays a large role in this perception.

In response to the increasing reporting of abuse allegations in our times, Fellowship Atlantic adopted a Crisis Management Plan in 2021 for our organization under the authority of Plan to Protect®. The purpose of this Crisis Management Plan (CMP) is to give Fellowship Atlantic detailed procedures for dealing effectively with a crisis prompted by abuse allegations. It is designed specifically for our context as the central organization for our association of churches.

This Plan and a designated Team of regional leaders will enable FA to respond well to any allegations or issues of abuse coming from any of our regional churches or our national association and ministry partners. Churches can benefit from our plan by knowing how FA will respond in an abuse crisis and how we can help them should a situation arise. It can be found on our website.

**We now require each of our churches** to adopt comprehensive and recognized abuse protection plans and policies as a member of our association. Church liability insurance depends upon each

church having such plans and policies and without such a church could be in serious legal jeopardy, should an allegation of abuse arise.

Plan to Protect® has a free assessment for churches and we need every Fellowship Atlantic church to do this to evaluate how well they are protecting the vulnerable. Plan to Protect® will provide Fellowship Atlantic with an overall assessment of us as a Region, so please take this free assessment at:

<https://www.plantoprotect.com/en/services/assessment-tool/assessment-tool-canada/>.

In addition we have as a resource the Plan to Protect “Appendicies” developed for The Fellowship. This document consists of policy instructions and forms needed for the development of a local church protection plan. We also have a sample protection plan on our website ‘FAQ’ from one of our Atlantic churches. [Fellowship Atlantic: Nova Scotia, Canada > FA Documents](#)

Please contact the Regional Director or Council for further information.

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