

Criminal Background Check Policy for Pastoral Leaders in the Presbytery of Geneva

The Presbytery of Geneva shall require a national criminal background check on all candidates for installed and covenanted pastoral positions to provide increased protection for churches and their members from those who have a history of criminal behavior. The policies help pastoral search committees and the Committee on Ministry make informed decisions about prospective pastors.

Persons who will undergo criminal background checks

The Presbytery of Geneva, through the Committee on Ministry, requires a criminal background check for the following persons before a call is issued or employment begins:

1. All individuals under the care of the Presbytery who move from Inquirer stage to Candidate for Ministry;
2. All teaching elders new to the Presbytery who are to be called to an installed pastoral position or begin a new covenanted pastoral position (interim/transitional or temporary pastor) regardless of the length of the term;
3. All commissioned ruling elders of the Presbytery, prior to initial commissioning;
4. All persons, regardless of denomination, who receive a new call or appointment to an installed pastoral position or begin a new covenanted pastoral position (interim/transitional or temporary pastor or CRE) regardless of the length of the term;
5. All teaching elders requesting membership in the presbytery but not being called to an installed or covenanted position.

Ministers and CREs who are renewing a covenant with the same congregation are not required to have a background check as a condition for that renewal, unless otherwise determined by COM.

Persons who only serve congregations as pulpit supply are not required to have a background check.

COM may, in its sole discretion, waive the requirement for a criminal background check on behalf of the Presbytery if a person in a pastoral position moves from one congregation in the Presbytery to another congregation in the Presbytery and the Presbytery has a satisfactory criminal background check on file dated within four years of the approval by COM of the call or covenant.

Approved by COM 3 October 2023