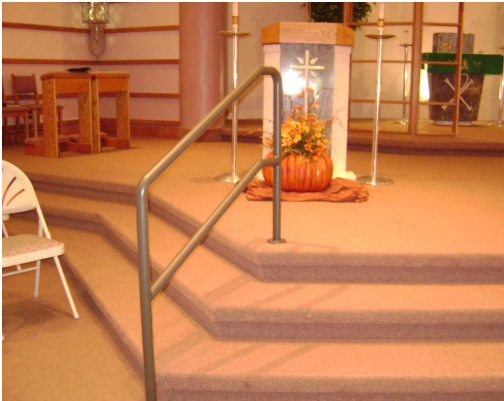


## Safety Newsletter-Fall/Winter 2009-10

R.C. Diocese of Syracuse  
Risk Management Office

### Handrails in the Sanctuary



In recent years more and more parishioners have been taking an active role in our liturgies. As a result, we have experienced more “traffic” in the sanctuary area with parishioners acting as Lectors, Eucharistic ministers and taking part in various ways at mass and at other services. We always have focused on the usual need for handrails on stairways inside the church and on the outside steps. However, our sanctuary areas are quite often have some steps and these can be difficult to handle for some parishioners and parish staff.

Handrails will also help in these situations where the carpet or flooring coloring is the same on each step. Basic handrails that still look attractive can be installed in step areas that are convenient and accessible, but are not in the way. With this in mind, we encourage all parishes to review the need for handrails in their sanctuary and thank those that have, in recent years, installed handrails in their church.

### VIRTUS-Safe Environment Checklist

The Safe Environment and Risk Management Offices have developed a “Safe Environment Checklist” for parishes with safety for our children in mind. This checklist is being distributed to parishes as we complete our regular safety inspection visits to each site. This checklist is also being added to the Diocese of Syracuse website, in the Safe Environment Program area. We encourage everyone to review this document and be aware of the many recommendations that it contains. If you have any questions on the checklist, please contact Jim Merrill or Jackie Schiano at the Diocese.

### Flu Control

In May 2009 and again in September, the Diocese issued guidelines in regards to addressing the H1N1 (Swine) flu concerns. Needless to say, these guidelines would apply to any flu and any type of illness outbreak. We ask that you stay familiar with the guidelines, be aware of any updates or more specific directives that could be announced by health officials, or by the Diocese or your pastor, as they may relate to church activities. The guidelines are published in the Catholic Sun and on the Diocesan website.

## Parish and other Diocesan-owned Vehicles

The Diocese of Syracuse Self Insurance program covers all Diocesan-owned vehicles at our parishes, schools and cemeteries. Please remember to report the addition or deletion of any vehicle to the Risk Management Office. Also, please be aware that the Risk Management Office continues to maintain a list of all regular drivers of insured vehicles in the Diocese. An “authorized driver’s information form” should be sent to Risk Management on each driver. This provided us with basic information, including driver’s license number on each driver. Before each parish allows an individual to act as a regular driver of a parish or school vehicle, we require that the individual provide proof that he or she has a valid driver’s license without any restrictions that would adversely affect their ability to safely drive a parish vehicle.

## Field Trips

With the start of the new school year we know that “field trips” will be planned and will be starting up. Please remember that, for all field trips, permission slips should be secured from the parent or legal guardian. The permission slip should include the name of your parish, the specific event and date, the mode of transportation to be used, the name of the teacher or supervisor overseeing the event. The permission slip should also contain wording, which the parent signs, that gives permission to attend, gives permission for the parish or school to seek any needed emergency medical care, and also provides a parent phone # for emergency contact. Parish or school officials should always be aware of any special needs of any student or child that attends a field trip. All employees or parents who volunteer to supervise the trip for children must be VIRTUS trained. We encourage you to contact the Risk Management Office with any specific questions you may have in regards to field trips.

## Snow and Ice Removal

(Sorry to use the “S” word so soon) but as Winter comes upon us, we want to remind everyone that exterior walks, parking lot areas, outside entrance areas and steps should be kept clear of ice and snow. Special efforts should be made prior to any church or school activity. We also strongly recommend that a log be kept (daily) of what snow and ice removal was done and the time(s) it was completed. Use safe ice-melt materials whenever possible. Also check roof areas and drains over and near entrances and walkway to make sure snow, ice and water is not falling or draining into high traffic areas. All parking lot areas should be inspected for uneven areas and potholes. A small amount of snow can hide slight depressions or holes and create unsafe conditions. If your snow removal activity is done by an outside firm or individual, we require that person to have general liability and auto (if using a plow) insurance. A certificate of insurance, showing the parish and diocese as additional insured on their policy, should be secured from the outside contractor. Please send a copy of this certificate to the Diocese Risk Management Office.