



## **808. Credentials and the Process for Violations of Biblical Standards**

**808.1.** When a credentialed individual is alleged to have committed a sin expressly forbidden in God's Word or to have acted in a manner that is detrimental to the people entrusted to his/her care, the Evangelical Congregational Church, or the ministry of the Kingdom, the Bishop and Ministerial Development Associate shall meet with the credentialed individual, and any other parties involved in order to discern the reality and seriousness of the situation.

### **808.2. Violations Not Resulting in Suspension of Credentials**

**808.2.1.** The Bishop and Ministerial Development Associate may determine that the individual can continue in ministry under the direction of a Pastoral Restoration Team that will be assigned to walk through a process of healing with the individual that may also include the spouse and family, if necessary. This process will be defined as Under Accountability (See 808.2.2.) or Under Disciplinary Care (See 808.2.3.) based on the seriousness of the violation.

#### **808.2.2. Under Accountability**

**808.2.2.1.** There are times when an individual holding credentials is not removed from his/her ministry position, but is dealing with issues where the guidance of the Pastoral Restoration Team may be of great help.

**808.2.2.2.** In those cases, the Ministerial Development Associate and Bishop may at their discretion place individuals Under Accountability and assign a Pastoral Restoration Team to provide accountability, guidance, and support to them. The appropriate District Field Director will be notified, and no action is taken in regard to the credential.

**808.2.2.2.1.** The members of the Pastoral Restoration Team are accountable to the Bishop and the Ministerial Development Associate at all times and can never act independently of their oversight.

**808.2.2.2.2.** The work of the Pastoral Restoration Team will be governed by the Ministerial Development Community policy.

**808.2.2.3.** There is no change in credential or in status of an individual who is Under Accountability.

**808.2.2.4.** Neither this designation, nor its results, will appear in the Conference Journal.

#### **808.2.3. Under Disciplinary Care**

**808.2.3.1.** There are times when an individual holding credentials is removed from his/her ministry position because of sinful conduct and is placed under the disciplinary care of the Pastoral Restoration Team (801.1.1.2.5).

**808.2.3.2.** The Pastoral Restoration Team will work toward spiritual restoration of the individual (including the family, if necessary), in consultation with the Bishop, the Ministerial Development Associate. The appropriate District Field Director will be notified.

**808.2.3.3.** The members of the Pastoral Restoration Team are accountable to the Bishop and the Ministerial Development Associate at all times and can never act independently of their oversight.

**808.2.3.4.** The work of the Pastoral Restoration Team will be governed by the Ministerial Development Community policy.

**808.2.3.5.** Neither this designation, nor its results, will appear in the Conference Journal.

### **808.3. Violations Resulting in the Suspension of Credentials**

**808.3.1.** There are times when a credentialed individual is removed from his/her ministry position because the individual has violated biblical standards of conduct to the extent that the individual in question cannot immediately continue in ministry.

**808.3.2.** The Bishop and Ministerial Development Associate, acting jointly or individually in the other's absence, have the authority to act immediately to suspend the credentials of any individual when in their judgment credible evidence exists that the individual has violated biblical standards of conduct to the extent that the individual in question cannot continue in ministry effective immediately. (See 808.2)





signed copies to the Pastor, District Field Director, Executive Director and place a copy in the official minutes of the church. The walk-thru committee shall provide a synopsis of the parsonage review form, including the list of immediate needs and priorities, to the congregation at the annual congregational meeting. The National Conference Finance Committee is responsible for the distribution of the Annual Parsonage Review Form with the Pastors' Salary Forms.

#### **1004. Compensation**

**1004.1.** Lay leaders, pastors and stationing elders should negotiate the pastor's compensation with good faith and a pure heart. See the current year's National Conference Journal, annual Pastoral Compensation Report, and Pastoral Compensation Forms for pastor employee benefits levels that must be adhered to for both part-time and full-time pastors.

**1005. Statement of Church's Compensation Package.** Churches are required to complete the Statement of Pastor's Salary and Benefits and provide copies to the Pastor, Official Board / Ministry Council Record Book, Local Church Treasurer, and Benefits-Compensation Administrator. A Statement of Church's Compensation Package must be completed by the church and signed by the pastor and representative of the local governing body prior to January 1 each year or before July 1 for a newly stationed pastor and a copy sent to the Benefits Compensation Administrator within 30 days after the end of the calendar year or 30 days after a change in pastoral assignment.

**1005.1.** The Executive Director will annually review the Statement of Church's Compensation Package, worksheets for Pastor's Salary, and make them available to the churches.

**1005.2.** Statement of Pastor's Salary and Benefits is required for all credentialed pastors receiving compensation from an EC ministry. EC ministries employing non-credentialed pastor(s) may submit a Statement of Church's Compensation Package.

**1005.3. Medical Premium Cost Sharing.** After the pastor and Pastoral Relations Committee / Official Board / Ministry Council agree on the pastor's salary for the upcoming year, churches may choose to deduct a portion of the pastor's salary as payment for the medical premium according to the following schedule:

<u>Gross Compensation</u>	<u>Contribution</u>
\$0 - \$35,000	5.0%
\$35,001- \$50,000	7.5%
\$50,001- Unlimited	10.0%

**1005.4.** The following compensation items must be approved by the Official Board / Ministry Council before the pastor receives their first paycheck of the new calendar year or first paycheck after a change in pastoral assignment; Housing or Parsonage Allowance, FSA Agreement, Medical Premium Cost Sharing.

**1006. Mid-Year Change From Full-Time To Part-Time or Part-Time To Full-Time Pastoral Assignment.** Any church or assigned pastor contemplating a change of status from full-time to part-time or part-time to full-time during the course of the conference year must contact the District Field Director and Executive Director prior to any change in the pastor's status. The Executive Director and the Bishop, in consultation with the District Field Director, will review the request. If the change in assigned status is approved, the Executive Director, where appropriate, will negotiate a new compensation agreement. Due to legal issues of compliance the E.C. Benefits and Compensation Administrator must be informed of the pending change in status 30 days in advance of its effective date.

**1007. Leaders Serving in Shared Ministry.** When denominational leaders serve in a shared ministry position the denominationally funded portion of the total compensation shall not increase by more than ten percent (10%) in any year without approval by the Finance Committee and National Ministry Team.

**1008. Change from Parsonage to Housing Allowance.** Pastors and congregations who are considering a change to a housing allowance from a parsonage allowance should in all cases advise the Executive Director and seek consultation regarding the pertinent details.

**1009. Social Security Benefit.** Each church will reimburse to the pastor the employer's portion of the Social Security and Medicare Payroll tax per the annual rate as reported in Internal Revenue Service Publication 15 (Circular E, Employer's Tax Guide).

**1009.1.** For a pastor living in his own home – The amount due each pastor is calculated by multiplying the annual rate (defined above) by the compensation, less allowable tax exempt items. The reimbursement is taxable income for the calculation of federal, state and local payroll taxes.

**1009.2.** For a pastor living in a church provided parsonage – The amount due each pastor is calculated by multiplying the annual rate (defined above) by the compensation plus rental value and church provided utilities/maintenance for the parsonage, less allowable tax exempt items. The reimbursement is taxable income for the calculation of federal, state and local payroll taxes.

**1010. Parsonage Rental Value.** Annually a member of the PRC should determine the market rental value of the parsonage. The market rental value is defined as what an unbiased individual would pay in monthly rent for the parsonage. Normally an internet search of available similar homes for rent in the community or a search of classified ads will yield the market rental value of the parsonage. In certain situations a parsonage is a unique property and a reasonable adjustment to the market value may be required.

**1011. Parsonage Utilities/Maintenance.** When a pastor receives something of value, e.g. utilities paid by the church, that is related to living in the parsonage the cost or value of those goods or services are taxable for Social Security and Medicare taxes.

**1012. Disability Coverage.** Local churches shall provide disability coverage for the pastors in accordance with the regulations of the Benefits Corporation in regards to annual premium and payment due date.

**1013. Continuing Education Benefit.** All Pastors are strongly encouraged to be life-long learners. It is understood that continuing education takes on many shapes and forms. Pastors are encouraged to earn C.E.U.'s from seminary courses, class audits, or seminars. Life-long learning also occurs through reading professional journals and books. The emphasis is to be a growth-oriented Pastor involved in activities which are meant to improve pastoral skills and provide personal enrichment. See the minimums listed in the annual Pastoral Compensation Report in the Conference Journal for full time and part time pastors.

**1013.1.** Approval of continuing education expenditures. The Pastoral Relations Committee Chair should review all continuing education expenditures. The Pastoral Relations Committee reserves the right to request a pastor to submit justification for any continuing education expenditure and decline a continuing education expense when warranted.

**1014. Vacation Schedule.** Full-time and part-time pastors serving up to nine years in the active ministry of the Evangelical Congregational Church shall receive a minimum of three weeks; pastors serving the tenth to nineteenth years, a minimum of four weeks; pastors serving the twentieth to twenty-ninth years, a minimum of five weeks; and pastors having completed thirty years, at least five weeks. Vacation time shall be counted on the basis of the year of pastoral assignment (July 1 – June 30), not the calendar year.

**1015. Ministry Leave.** Pastors shall annually be granted a minimum of one week of "Ministry Leave" for the purpose of personal spiritual development, study, service, or global experience. This leave requires prior scheduling approval by the local church Board or Ministry Council and accountability to that body.

**1016. Sabbatical.** The National Conference urges that all churches consider a Sabbatical/Renewal leave for their Pastor, regardless of their pastoral status, after the Pastor has served a minimum of 7 years at one church or charge and be reconsidered after each subsequent 7 year period of time at the same church or charge. Sabbatical Leave is a carefully planned period of time in which the Pastor is granted leave away from his normal responsibilities in order to spend an extended period of time in rest, renewal and refreshment. It is to be a time to receive spiritual

nourishment, a change of perspective, to deepen the Pastor's relationship with God, himself and his family. It is to be a time of rest and cessation of his regular pastoral duties and activities.

**1017. Release from Assignment.** If either a pastor is released from his assigned pastoral position by the National Conference, Conference Network Team, or if the pastor resigns his assigned pastoral position of his own volition before the end of the assignment year, effective immediately upon the date of departure of said pastor, the terms of the Statement for Pastor's Salary and Benefits, as had been approved for that pastor, are considered null and void.

**1017.1. Severance.** If the congregation agrees to a severance package for an involuntarily terminated pastor for a period longer than thirty days, the pastor will be placed on the National Conference payroll with the pastor's former church(es) reimbursing the National Conference for the gross compensation and employer portion of the FICA (social security and Medicare) payroll taxes.

**1017.2. Transitional Assistance.** To assist a pastor who is between pastoral assignments or seeking secular employment the National Conference may request financial assistance from churches. EC Benefits Corporation Manna Fund policies will be used to determine if a pastor has a bona fide financial need requiring assistance.

**1018. Expenses.** Local churches shall assume travel expenses for the pastor at the current IRS rate for mileage logged covering local pastoral care and administration.

**1019. Other Employment.** A fulltime pastor desiring to seek employment outside his pastorate is required to first consult the District Field Director and the Bishop and then the local church's Pastoral Relations Committee before approval can be granted for the pastor to be so involved.

**1020. Miscellaneous Benefits.**

**1020.1. Death Benefit.** At the death of a full-time pastor who was assigned by appointment, a cash sum in the amount of \$5,000 shall be paid to the surviving wife and/or dependent children living in the residence. This amount shall be paid from the Disability Fund.