

# Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference United Methodist Volunteer in Missions Team Policies and Guidelines



UNITED METHODIST VOLUNTEERS IN MISSION  
OR-ID CONFERENCE

## UMVIM Introduction

United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM) are called to partner and serve with others throughout their conferences, the nation and the world. These guidelines are meant to both guide and protect our participants, our churches and the conference and maximize the mission experience for our teams and partners. Within this policy, there are guidelines for:

- Upholding leading practices for all our mission teams, ensuring that leaders are properly equipped for their work on behalf of our churches and that our team members and their partners have maximum legal and operational safety throughout their mission experience.

Defining and following leading practices offers some protection for both the conference and its churches from legal action and enables the conference to seek the most favorable insurance rates for covering both the conference and our teams.

### LEADING PRACTICES

1. Have a trained team leader through the annual conference or Western Jurisdiction UMVIM program.
  2. Comply with the Safe Sanctuaries policy of our annual conference.
  3. Serve with an UMVIM project.
  4. Register your team with the conference UMVIM coordinator.
  5. Take insurance through UMVIM, WJ.
  6. Include Spiritual Formation as a key element of your mission experience.
- Maximizing the mission experience with well-trained, informed and culturally sensitive leaders who can ensure that the efforts expended in mission are to the benefit of the team members and their local churches as well as the communities with whom we minister and partner.

## Scope

UMVIM teams serve and partner both in an on-going capacity and in times of disaster. They serve locally, nationally, and globally. The guidelines presented here apply to all teams from Oregon-Idaho Conference churches, district, or other ministry groups, no matter the capacity or the locale, with a few exceptions:

- Teams that are serving in their local communities or within the conference with no more than one night away from home are exempt from the leader training and team registration policies. Depending on the activities and travel distance involved, they should consider whether accident insurance would be appropriate. They should always follow the safety policies outlined in this document.

- Early Response Teams (ERTs), a specially certified sub-group of UMVIM volunteers, are held to the guidelines described here plus the additional [ERT guidelines](#). Where these guidelines conflict, and except as noted below, the more stringent generally applies; please contact the conference UMVIM coordinator for clarity in your situation.

## COVID:

**As much as we wish COVID was over, it is not!** Volunteers come from nearby, from another county, or from another state. One of the worst unintended effects of volunteer work throughout the ages has been the spread of infectious disease. All want to serve. All volunteers should adhere to public health and safety protocols to protect survivors and others we work beside.

- If you or a team member doesn't feel well, it would be best to stay home.
- Remind your team to be mindful of the people they are working with. If they are masked, you probably should be masked. Or, at least ask if that would make them feel more comfortable.
- Go to the [CDC](#) or [CovidActNow for updated information](#).

## Document Sections

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Please contact the Oregon-Idaho Conference UMVIM Coordinator with any questions about following and implementing these policies and guidelines for your team; there can and will be exceptions made on a case-by-case basis in cooperation with your coordinator. Your feedback and insights as you use these policies are welcome to continue our efforts to safely and efficiently partner with others in this world.

## Team Leader Responsibilities

UMVIM Team Leaders are responsible for ensuring that the teams they lead follow the Oregon-Idaho UMVIM Guidelines, including:

1. maintaining their own approval status,

2. understanding and following the COVID policy outlined in ['Guidelines for UMVIM Project Sites and Leaders During COVID'](#),
3. choosing team members and sites wisely and consistent with the goals of the UMVIM program,
4. registering and insuring their teams as required by the conference,
5. handling and processing all team forms and paperwork in an appropriate manner as required by this policy and the UMVIM Safe Sanctuaries policy,
6. training their teams both for the practical matters as well as the ministerial and transformational aspects of being in mission.

In addition, Team Leaders have a responsibility to debrief both their hosts and their teams and communicate the results back to the conference to aid in future conference missions. The Oregon-Idaho UMVIM Coordinator is available to assist in all of these matters.

### **Oregon-Idaho Conference Responsibilities**

The Oregon-Idaho Conference, through its UMVIM Coordinator and its Mission Secretary, as well as other related conference staff and volunteers, have the following responsibilities regarding its UMVIM program:

1. Maintain a list of approved Team Leaders,
2. Maintain and/or provide access to lists of approved mission sites,
3. Provide training from Team Leaders and specialized teams (specifically UMCOR certified Early Response Teams),
4. Provide the ability to run national criminal background checks,
5. Provide a process for obtaining Safe Sanctuaries Certification,
6. Provide training material to leaders for team Safe Sanctuaries briefings,
7. Provide secure document storage for long-term storage of documents that must be kept per this policy and the UMVIM Safe Sanctuaries policy,
8. Support in all ways possible the mission activities of all members of the Oregon-Idaho Conference.

At this time, that support includes funding to cover the cost of background checks and Safe Sanctuaries Certification for team leaders and any other team members needing them per this policy; funding will also be provided to cover the administrative portion of the team insurance costs. Apply to the conference UMVIM Coordinator for access to these funds.

Additional assistance, such as scholarships for first time members, may also be available; contact the conference UMVIM Coordinator.

### **UMVIM Team Leader Policies**

Every Oregon-Idaho Team Leader should be approved by the Oregon-Idaho Conference. Approval is granted by the Oregon-Idaho UMVIM Coordinator based on leader training, experience and background check status. Approval is granted in four-year increments, with an updated background check required every two years and updated/refreshed training every four years.

**NOTE:** Leaders who do not follow these policies put themselves, their teams, their local churches and the conference at legal risk. The conference will do its best to prevent unapproved leaders from leading teams.

## **Team Leader Approval Process/Maintaining Approved Status**

Trained team leaders are authorized to lead teams to any site but are advised to seek guidance and mentoring regarding unfamiliar sites, particularly international sites. Consult with the conference UMVIM Coordinator to determine which might be appropriate for a particular leader.

All prospective team leaders in the Oregon-Idaho Conference need to:

1. Submit a [Team Leader Application](#), signed by both the prospective leader and the leader's pastor or district superintendent to the OR-ID UMVIM Coordinator. By signing the application, the prospective leader agrees and acts as follows:
  - a. To follow all Oregon-Idaho guidelines and policies regarding team formation, travel and site choices;
  - b. As a new leader, to be mentored by either a site specialist or experienced UMVIM leader for their first trip, as required by the Oregon-Idaho UMVIM Coordinator or Mission Secretary;
  - c. As an experienced leader going to a difficult or problematic site for the first time, to be mentored by either a site specialist or UMVIM leader experienced with that site, as required by the Oregon-Idaho UMVIM Coordinator or Mission Secretary;
  - d. In addition to training, prior to taking any team anywhere, review the currently recommended paperwork and insurance requirements. Consult with conference UMVIM Coordinator to obtain this latest information;
  - e. Attend or otherwise complete any additional or updated training as needed and made available by the Conference.
2. To be an approved leader, attend an authorized leader training event. Training events in other conferences may apply; check with the Oregon-Idaho UMVIM Coordinator for clarification. In consultation with the conference UMVIM Coordinator, experience may be used in lieu of this training.
3. Participate in a mission trip or other similar activity in the two years prior to applying for approval, preferably with a leadership or assistant leadership role, and preferably in an area or of a nature similar to the type of missions the prospective leader plans to undertake.
4. Undergo a national criminal background check (required every two-years to maintain approval); a previous check, run within the Oregon-Idaho provider's system, qualifies, but must be rerun at two-year intervals.
5. Show and maintain a Safe Sanctuaries Certification that demonstrates knowledge of the conference's Safe Sanctuaries Policy for UMVIM Teams, including types of abuse, team screening policies, and safe practices around vulnerable individuals. This certification must be updated every two-years to maintain approval status. See your conference UMVIM Coordinator about obtaining this certification.

Approval status is granted for four-years, assuming that background checks and Safe Sanctuaries Certification are maintained as required during that time. To renew approved status after four-years, a team leader must:

1. Submit an updated application.

2. Consult with the conference UMVIM Coordinator about updated training requirements. As a minimum, a refresher course on paperwork and insurance requirements will be required, but could include updates on leading practices on planning, training and equipping teams. Required training might be satisfied at a full Leader training event, a special refresher/update course, or as a web –based course provided by the conference.
3. Participate in a mission trip or other similar activity in the two years prior to applying for renewal, preferably with a leadership or assistant leadership role, and preferably in an area or of a nature similar to the type of missions the prospective leader plans to undertake.
4. Show compliance with both the background check and Safe Sanctuaries requirements for all leaders.

**NOTE:**

- The application form is the same for approval and renewal. Simply check the ‘renewal’ box on a renewal application.
- Requirements for training and prior participation in similar activities may be satisfied in other ways; contact the Oregon-Idaho UMVIM Coordinator for options as indicated above.
- Review the Oregon-Idaho UMVIM website for options and guidelines for completing background checks and Safe Sanctuaries Certification.

## **UMVIM Team Registration Policies**

Registering a team has the following benefits:

- Access to scholarships and other financial assistance,
- Assistance with site choices and other team needs,
- Assistance in finding additional team members or equipping a team for its work,
- Assistance in telling a team’s story to the conference when a team returns,
- Access to the latest training materials regarding both team formation and the team’s chosen site,
- Access to the most up to date insurance information and the latest in team member forms,
- Quick emergency assistance in the event of accident or other issues with a deployed team (**NOTE:** we will never deny this emergency assistance, but if we know who you are and where you are, we can respond much more efficiently and quickly.)

All UMVIM Teams should be registered with the conference, with the following exception:

- The team travels entirely within the conference AND the team spends no more than one night away from home.

It is suggested that all teams be registered regardless of the specific requirement so as to take advantage of the benefits of registration. In particular, no scholarships or monetary assistance will be offered to unregistered teams.

## **Team Registration**

Registration consists of these actions on the part of the Team Leader:

1. Completion and submittal of a [Team Registration Form](#) to the conference UMVIM coordinator; ideally, this is submitted early in the team formation process so that the UMVIM coordinator can be of the most assistance.

2. For missions to sites not previously approved by either Global Ministries or the Oregon-Idaho Conference, submission of evidence that an invitation has been extended by an appropriate entity in the area of service.
3. Prior to travel, confirmation that all team members are appropriately insured; this will be a confirmation letter or email from the accident insurance carrier along with the first page of each team member's medical information form that includes their personal medical insurance information.
4. Prior to travel, completion and submission of a final roster of team members, including the contact details for each member.

## Choosing a Site

In the spirit of making UMVIM missions be true partnerships, teams should travel and work only at the invitation of an appropriate entity at any chosen site. Whenever possible, UMVIM teams should travel to sites previously approved by either the Oregon-Idaho Conference or Global Ministries. The [General Board of Global Ministries](#) (GBGM) and the [Oregon-Idaho Conference](#) maintain lists of approved mission sites. If in doubt about whether a site is approved, please reach out to the conference UMVIM coordinator.

### Cultural Sensitivity

Whether a mission site is officially approved or not, it is strongly encouraged that all teams make themselves aware of, and be sensitive to, the work of our fellow Methodists in the area in which they will be serving as well as the indigenous culture of any areas in which they work. The OR-ID UMVIM coordinator can assist in finding appropriate resources for raising this awareness prior to a mission trip.

## UMVIM Team Formation Policies

Choosing a site for an UMVIM team's work and forming the team itself are critical elements of a successful mission experience. In both cases, the team leader, in consultation with his or her pastor and peers and the Oregon-Idaho UMVIM Coordinator, is responsible for both of these elements. Included as part of Team Formation are policies and guidelines on selecting a team, safety, youth and teams dealing with vulnerable populations, and team insurance.

## Team Member Selection, Registration and Forms

Team Leaders have the responsibility for choosing and training members for their teams. The [Oregon-Idaho UMVIM website](#) provides all of the necessary forms and related instructions for the logistics of forming these well-chosen and well-equipped teams. As noted on the website, not all forms are necessary for all teams and, in general, the forms have been packaged in a way that makes it easy to select the right group of forms for any particular team. The list below briefly describes the use of each form, but please refer to the website for details on each.

1. Team Member Application and Questionnaire to Local Pastor (optional, team leader discretion)
2. Medical and Emergency Information Form (required of all team members)
3. Liability and Photo Release (required of all team members)
4. Mission Covenant and Safe Sanctuaries Agreement (required of all participants)
5. Parental Consent Form (required of all participants under 18 years of age)

6. Healthcare Professional's Information and Team Member Certification (optional, team leader discretion/depends on site)
7. Notification of Death (required of all participants on international teams)

### **Team Form Use, Disposition, and Retention**

The team leader is to carry the original signed copies of the Medical and Emergency Information Form, the Mission Covenant form, the Parental Consent form, (for youth only), and the Notification of Death form (international only) as well as copies of all insurance cards, drivers licenses and passports as required for the particular mission on the mission. Copies (electronic or paper) of all forms are to be left with an easily contactable person in the conference (leader's pastor or conference UMVIM Coordinator).

The team leader is responsible for determining whether background check and/or reference check forms must also be carried on the mission; this will depend on the host site.

At the completion of the mission, all completed forms, including any background and reference check forms, must be scanned and transmitted to the Conference for long-term retention. See the Conference Responsibilities section of this document and the OR-ID Conference Document Retention Policy for further retention policy details. After forms have been scanned and submitted and the mission is complete, all additional copies, including the originals, should be shredded or otherwise properly disposed of.

### **Safety Policy (all teams)**

Team leaders are responsible for briefing and training their teams on all aspects of being safe during travel and at the mission site. Specifically:

1. Team leaders are responsible for determining special safety needs, including those related to Safe Sanctuaries, that might be required by their host site and training their teams to the highest standards required by either the Oregon-Idaho Conference or the host site.
2. Team leaders are responsible for knowing and following current COVID guidelines.
3. The team must be briefed on [Oregon-Idaho 'Safe Sanctuaries' policies](#) and all team members must sign the Mission Covenant Form that both certifies that they have had this training and that they will abide by it. Note that, depending on host site, additional briefing, training, and forms may be required once at the site.
4. Team leaders should seek to inspire a culture of safety and watching out for one another in all things.
5. All team members have a voice in matters of safety.
6. Every team should travel with a first aid kit fully equipped for the conditions and circumstances of their mission site.
7. For teams travelling to areas without immediate access to emergency or urgent medical care, the team should include a member trained in the basics of first aid and CPR and designated as the lead in this area; this could be a team member with a valid first aid and CPR certification, or a doctor, nurse, EMT or another similarly trained professional.

### **Youth Member / Vulnerable Population Policies**

All UMVIM teams with youth members, anyone under the age of 18, regardless of whether the team is labeled a 'youth team' and regardless of whether the youth's parent is present, must follow additional policies for the safety of the youth, the team, and those to whom the team is in mission. These same policies also apply to teams in service to vulnerable populations, such as children, other youth, senior citizens or victims of disaster. These policies are inclusive of the requirements of the UMVIM Safe Sanctuaries policy, and require, but are not limited to the following:

1. Every adult member of the team must have a current national criminal background check; team members with a current Early Response Team badge (issued by UMCOR) and approved team leaders are assumed to be current. For all others, previous checks must be a national criminal check run within the two years prior to the end of any mission trip via the Oregon-Idaho Conference provider (Trak-1/PeopleFacts as of 2015) and available for review by the team leader or conference UMVIM Coordinator; if in doubt, have a new check run.
2. A second adult, preferably one with no relationship to the youth on the team or to the team leader, must be Safe Sanctuaries certified and agree to serve as a 'Designated Safety Officer' for the team. Certification must demonstrate knowledge of the conference's Safe Sanctuaries Policy for UMVIM Teams, including types of abuse, team screening policies, and safe practices around vulnerable individuals. See your conference UMVIM Coordinator about obtaining this certification.

### **Team Member Insurance**

Team members must have personal medical insurance to be eligible to serve on UMVIM teams in any capacity. There are NO exceptions to this policy, but an individual may acquire a short-term policy, separate from and in addition to the accident policy described below, to meet this requirement.

Additionally, every team, with the exception of teams working in their local area, and returning home each night, must purchase additional accident coverage; while this coverage is per individual, it is purchased as a team, for the entire team. This coverage provides an additional layer of coverage, beyond the team member's own medical insurance, in the event of an accident or illness while away. Depending on site and distance, this additional insurance will pay for medical transport to appropriate facilities for needed care.

Policy Exceptions: If a team has any of the following circumstances among its members or planned activities, please consult the conference UMVIM Coordinator prior to purchasing coverage:

- Trip is to a known high risk or high medical cost area;
- Trip includes any activities that could be considered high-risk sport (for example a side trip to ski, water ski, hang glide, etc.);
- Team wishes to use an all paper process as opposed to an on-line process.

Process for Acquiring Insurance: Team leaders register their team members and pay, in bulk, the appropriate amounts for the needed coverage.

Confirmation of this coverage must be sent by the Team Leader to the UMVIM conference coordinator prior to the start of travel. With confirmation of coverage, the Conference will reimburse the team for the administrative fees charged for the policies.



## Reference Material

- [UMVIM Team Leader Handbook](#) – this has good nuts and bolts about planning your trip, including budgeting, fund raising, sample packing lists, etc.
- A Mission Journey (2014) – this is a guide to the ministerial and transformational aspect of being in mission and includes both guidance and exercises for teams on team building, cultural sensitivity, listening, telling the story and related activities. It is available on [Amazon.com](#).

## Contact Information

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