



ORGANIZING AN OFFICIAL CHURCH COMPANY

The Working Policies of the Southern New England Conference (SNEC) (pp. 104-105) and the Church Manual (pp. 37-43) serve as localized applications of the principles outlined in the Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual and the Working Policies of both the Southern New England Conference and the North American Division. These documents are designed to guide the practices of church employees and volunteers, thereby supporting the ministry of the local Seventh-day Adventist congregations within the territory of the SNEC.

When a mission group experiences healthy growth due to successfully fulfilling its objectives within a community, it is encouraged to submit a formal application for interim approval to be organized as a company. This step can facilitate further development and enhance its ability to serve the community effectively.

The company aims to position itself as a thriving entity within the Seventh-day Adventist community, emphasizing growth in numerical, spiritual, and relational dimensions. It is committed to evolving into a Church within a reasonable timeframe by actively pursuing the expanded objectives set forth in the Guidelines for the Working Policies of the Southern New England Conference (pages 104-105) and the Church Manual (pages 37-43). This strategic approach not only reinforces community engagement but also fosters a supportive environment for collective development and spiritual enrichment.

- 1. Application:** The application form, available through the office of the Secretariat for Administration or the Conference website, must be completed by the board of the sponsoring church, reviewed by the Office of Pastoral Ministries, Vice President of Mission Development, and approved by the Administrative Committee for recommendation to the Conference Executive Committee.
- 2. Conflict:** A company should not be organized as the result of any internal church disputes.
- 3. Authorization:** Only the SNEC Conference Executive Committee may grant authorization to organize a company.
- 4. Conference Directory:** Authorized companies will be featured in the SNEC Conference Directory, providing attendees with valuable resources and connections.

5. Financial Responsibility: To gain authorization for organizing as a company, congregation must demonstrate its capability to operate on a robust financial foundation. This is evidenced by a robust tithe record and a consistent track record of timely payment of bills and financial commitments. Additionally, before applying to organization, the company must show it has achieved at least \$35,000 in total tithe receipts over the 12 months leading up to the application. This commitment to financial responsibility reflects a dedicated and thriving community, paving the way for growth and stability.

6. Membership: The congregation is seeking authorization to establish itself as a company. To meet this requirement, it must comprise at least thirty-five (35) baptized members who actively attend Seventh-day Adventist services. Furthermore, it is essential that no less than one-quarter of the overall membership consists of newly baptized individuals from within the target community. Concurrently, the names and addresses of these members will be submitted with the application for company status, ensuring a comprehensive and organized process.

7. Plan for Church Facility: It is essential to recognize the challenges stemming from the congregation's size and the financial limitations of a mission group. Therefore, a strategic plan for acquiring property or a building to establish a permanent location for worship and ministry is essential. This plan should include realistic future growth projections. Continued reliance on the sponsoring church's facilities or temporary accommodations without a long-term strategy for permanent housing is discouraged. Before a company can be considered for church organizations, a comprehensive plan for permanent housing must be submitted to the Administrative Committee for review.

8. Pastoral Assistance: The responsibility for assigning pastoral coverage within a the company rests with the Conference. The Conference undertakes this assignment while giving due consideration to the conference budget, as well as various other factors that affect the alignment of pastoral assignments within the district.

9. School Subsidy. If applicable, the congregation must have the financial capacity to assume its proportional share of the subsidy for the school linked to isponsoring church. This obligation begins upon the congregation's formal establishment as a company and continues until both the sponsoring church and the company agree to dissolve the arrangement.

10. Approval Process. Authorization to establish a company shall be granted upon the recommendation of the board of a sponsoring church, subsequently by the Administrative Committee and a vote conducted by the Conference Executive Committee. In certain instances, the conference itself may act as the sponsoring organization as it seeks to initiate new churches in alignment with its strategic growth plan for the conference.

11. Time Frame. A mission group must be organized for at least one year and attain all requirements before it may apply to become a company. A company is expected to continue to grow and progress towards the goal of becoming an organized church in the conference. If the company does not achieve church organizational status within five years despite support from members, the sponsoring church, and the Conference, disbandment or revocation of its status may be considered.

12. Tithes and Offerings. Per established policy, it is required that a company's tithes and offerings be submitted to the designated Sponsor Church or Southern New England Conference monthly. No mission group or church plant will be permitted to initiate the process of establishing itself as an official organization if it is in arrears on financial tithe remittances.

13. Church Leadership and Organization Structure.

When applying for company organization, the church plant or mission group must demonstrate, under the guidance of the director, lay pastor, and church elder, the capacity to identify and develop potential lay leaders who can assume leadership roles. Church plants and mission groups are expected to follow the structure and principles of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Each church plant or small group should create a church board with different leadership roles to ensure good governance and ministry (CM pp 25-30; 39-40;44-47).

The board should include an associate treasurer to manage finances with the sponsoring church, a church clerk to keep church records and membership lists, and a Personal Ministries director to oversee outreach and evangelism in the community. Additionally, a Sabbath School director should support members' education and spiritual growth through Sabbath School programs, a Youth director to engage younger members, and a Children's Ministries director to plan activities specifically for children. The board should also have deacons and deaconesses who serve the congregation and community by helping with hospitality and worship preparation. Together, these roles will help the church plant or mission group operate effectively and grow spiritually, creating a collaborative ministry environment (CM pp. 74-115).

14. Organizing an Official Company

Related NAD Policy Number: SNEC EXCOM

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Criteria for a group or branch Sabbath School to organize into a Company.

1. Be in existence as a group for a minimum of 6 months, showing stability in meeting and attendance.
2. Be able to identify its Mother church as a sponsor.
3. Have at least 35 members in regular attendance and able to demonstrate a systematic giving of tithes and offerings.
4. The Leader should submit in writing to be organized as a company with an updated proposal similar to that required for groups. Contact the Conference Secretariat for an outline of the requirements for the proposal.