

Policy #15 – Personnel Reference Checks for Ministers Entering the Presbytery
Committee on Ministry – Presbytery of Tampa Bay

The Presbytery of Tampa Bay has the responsibility to examine ministers, candidates and certified church educators seeking membership in the presbytery (G-11.0402) including their faith and views in theology, the sacraments, and the government of the Presbyterian Church (USA). The Presbytery of Tampa Bay has delegated this examination to the Committee on Ministry (COM). In order to facilitate the employment of ministers and certified church educators, and to protect the presbytery, its churches and its officers from the charge of negligent hiring, personnel inquiries have become an unfortunate but necessary policy.

Prior to an interview with the COM, ministers, candidates and certified church educators seeking membership in this presbytery must complete, sign and return the Authorization for Release of Information and Background Report (Form F-4) for the following background checks: employment history, motor vehicles driving record, criminal record, civil court record, bankruptcy and other credit difficulties. The COM may use a commercial firm to assist with background checks. These forms, releases, and background checks will be sent to the COM, care of the presbytery presbyter.

The completed forms and all information received from former employers, presbytery officials, and the background checks shall be kept in the permanent confidential personnel file of the minister or educator. This file will be maintained at the presbytery office. Access to the file will be limited to the chairperson of the COM, the COM liaison to the congregation, the Stated Clerk and the staff of the presbytery under supervision of the presbytery presbyter.