

Compensation Guidelines for Church Sextons and Custodians



Second Edition



**Commission for Leadership Development
Massachusetts Conference, United Church of Christ**

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One printed copy of this booklet is available free to each Massachusetts Conference church; other parties please include \$5 for printing and postage with your order. This document is also available on the Conference Web site at www.macucc.org.

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Introduction

A sexton is a caretaker of the church buildings, furniture and grounds. At one time, cemetery care and the opening of graves were included in the sexton's duties. In modern usage, custodians maintain buildings used by the public, including churches, libraries and schools. For the purpose of this booklet both terms, sexton and custodian, will apply to the same function.



Since all of a church's assets and resources are tools by which the church's calling may be fulfilled, than the buildings and grounds that have been bequeathed to the current church from those in its past are an important tool in the church's present ministry. It is therefore essential that the church utilize these tangible resources to their fullest potential while being good stewards of these resources by tending to their maintenance, repair and improvement. It is only through such care that the assets of buildings and grounds may be handed down to future generations intact and capable of continuing to offer ministry to both the church and community.

The work of the sextons and custodians is therefore essential to the functioning of the church as it seeks to serve God, its members and the wider community. A high level of custodial service helps to create a setting conducive to worship, study, discussion, pastoral care and fellowship. In order to further its mission of worship and service, the church will seek out and utilize the talents of women, men and youth who have the ability to perform the duties of sexton or custodian. The church needs to provide appropriate support and compensation to those engaged to perform these tasks. The recommendations contained in this booklet seek to provide local congregations with realistic guidelines in providing support for the caretakers of their facilities.

Plan of Organization

Responsible Board or Committee: All congregations need to establish or designate a board or committee that is responsible for obtaining custodial services and providing appropriate support for all custodial staff and services. The responsible board or committee should establish a supervisor for the sexton or custodian. The sexton or custodian should have one supervisor to be responsible to for her or his overall performance. This person may be the chair of the responsible board or committee, a member of that body or appointed by that body or the pastor. The sexton or custodian should be organizationally accountable to the responsible board or committee and administratively responsible to the designated supervisor.

Supervision and Evaluation

One or more designated persons from the responsible board or committee should be appointed to work closely with the sexton to see that tasks are being performed in a satisfactory manner, to provide additional help when required, to receive suggestions regarding maintenance needs,

to provide general support and advocacy and function as a liaison between the responsible board or committee and the sexton. The sexton should also be made aware of how any grievances should be directed and how issues with maintenance and repair are to be handled. It is recommended that the sexton meet with the responsible board or committee at least once a year.

The role of the pastor in relationship to the custodian or sexton should be clearly defined. While primary responsibility for the custodian or sexton rests with the designated board or committee, day to day supervision may include the pastor.

There should be a clear evaluation policy that states by whom and how the sexton is evaluated, when during the year the evaluation takes place and allows for direct feedback from the sexton. The evaluation should be connected directly to the job description. All critique is to be timely and recorded. Recognition of the sexton's work should be made to the congregation at appropriate times, such as the Annual Meeting.

Personnel Policies

It is strongly recommended that the duties of the sexton or custodial staff be written into a job description which complies with the Americans With Disabilities Act and contains the purpose, position, delegation of authority, the major duties and responsibilities, working conditions, education and or experience, qualifications, specific skill requirements and physical requirements. Such a job description should set standards but also protect the employee from unfair expectations. When a job description is introduced to an existing employee, it should be developed with that employee's input – there is no one who knows the job better than the person who has been doing it. A sample job description is included in this booklet.

Salary and Benefits

Compensation for church sextons and custodians should reflect the requirements of the job and the prevailing standards within the community. Prevailing wage data may be obtained from the following resources: town personnel board, town school department, local library, the local chamber of commerce. Churches with full time sextons should provide a compensation package similar to that provided in the local school system or by area businesses. Such a package would provide comparable wages, and full benefits, including: sick leave, paid vacation, health insurance and a pension plan. Congregations with part time sextons should provide an hourly wage similar to that provided part time custodians employed by the local community or area businesses. Benefits for part time custodial staff may be pro rated to the number of hours worked. Vacations, holidays and sick leave arrangements need to be specified in written form. Extra compensation should be provided for sextons who work at weddings, funerals and any function held by groups or individuals outside the church community that require special custodial services not included in the job description. Wages and benefits for all custodial staff should be reviewed annually by the responsible board or committee.

Churches are required by law to provide Workman's Compensation and to pay one half of the Social Security/Medicare tax. If the church employs the services of an independent contractor

for custodial services, please refer to the Handbook for Treasurers available from the MACUCC office.

The United Church of Christ, through its Pension Boards, offers the following benefits to those employed by member congregations: participation in the pension plan, health insurance, dental insurance, group life insurance and disability insurance. It is necessary to enroll in the pension plan to participate in the life insurance and disability insurance programs. These benefits are available to part time and full time employees. A minimum of 20 hours per week employment is required for participation in the health insurance program. The address and phone number of the Pension Board is found at the end of this booklet.

Working Conditions

In supporting the work of the sexton, the church needs to provide safe equipment, adequate supplies and a safe environment to perform the job duties and responsibilities outlined in the job description. The church should support training on the use of chemicals, supplies and equipment. Most training can be obtained through local vendors at little or no charge. Once defined and trained the sexton or custodian should be expected to work safely and in compliance with the church guidelines. This should be included in his or her evaluation. In order to provide such materials, the church should budget for these items on a yearly basis. It is also necessary that from initial employment, the sexton understand who his or her immediate supervisor is and which board or committee is responsible for the custodial staff. Further, the sexton should be made aware of how any grievances should be directed and how issues with maintenance and repair are to be handled. Policies related to providing custodial services for outside groups using the church's facilities, wedding, memorials and funerals and appropriate rates of compensation for such extra events should be set in writing by the responsible board or committee and made a part of the job description.

Risk Management

The sexton or custodian should be made aware of the church's emergency policies and procedures. This plan should clearly state who is responsible for monitoring the church buildings and grounds and responding to emergencies. This plan should also include discussion of emergency medical situations at the church and define emergency response and notification responsibilities.

Useful Phone Numbers

Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ

P.O. Box 2246
Framingham, MA 01703

Phone 508-875-5233
Fax 508-875-5485
Email macucc@macucc.org

Most recent guidelines version available at Web site: <http://www.macucc.org>

Central Area Association

485 Grove Street
Worcester, MA 01605

Phone 508-853-3446
Fax 508-853-3450
Email cmacucc@sprynet.com

Metropolitan Boston Association

14 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02108

Phone 617-742-4450
Fax 617-742-8470
Email mbabos@ntr.net

Northeast Area

12 Phoenix Row
Haverhill, MA 01832

Phone 978-373-6748
Fax 978-373-6749
E Mail nemacucc@greenet.com

Southeast Area

8 Town Square
Plymouth, MA 02360

Phone 508-746-8330
Fax 508-746-8339
E Mail semacucc@tiac.net

Western Area

51 Center Street, P.O. Box 443
Ludlow, MA 01056

Phone 413-589-7034
Fax 413-589-7035
E Mail wmacucc@juno.com

The Pension Boards United Church of Christ

475 Riverside Drive
New York, NY 10115

Phone 212-870-2770
800-642-6543
Fax 212-870-2877

Appendix I

Sample Job Description

First United Church, United Church of Christ
Job Title: Church Sexton (or Church Custodian)
Hours: (20) Hours per week
Employed by: The Board of Trustees (or Church Council)
Supervised by: Designated Representative of Board of Trustees
(or Church Pastor)

Summary:

Cleans and maintains buildings and grounds of the First United Church, United Church of Christ.

Essential Duties and responsibilities include the following.

1. Opens and closes buildings except when other persons are authorized to do so. Adjusts thermostats and lighting.
2. Inspects and cleans sanctuary, classrooms and rest rooms.
3. Plans with supervisor and carries out seasonal tasks such as floor polishing, installation of screens or storm doors.
4. Removes snow and ice from stairs and walks as needed.
5. Sees that safety devices such as fire extinguishers, smoke detectors and emergency lights are inspected as required.
6. Replaces light bulbs and fluorescent tubes.
7. Sets up and takes down needed chairs and tables for church meetings and usage by outside groups.
8. Removes rubbish from the premises for proper disposal.
9. Orders supplies as authorized by the Board of Trustees.
10. Cares for lawns and shrubs as needed.
11. Performs minor repairs and reports needs for major maintenance to the appropriate board.
12. Provides needed services related to weddings, memorials, and funerals for which the sexton is compensated separately.
13. Performs other responsibilities as directed and negotiated within the limits of the position.

Education and/or Experience:

- Must be able to read, write and speak English in a understandable manner.
(a literacy and language requirement may not be necessary in every situation, however, anyone handling chemicals or operating machinery should have the ability to read and understand instructions of use.)
- Must have one or more years experience in cleaning and caring for a building.

Certificates, licenses, registrations:

- Driver's license

Working conditions:

- Sits, stands, bends, reaches and moves intermittently during work.
- Is subject to frequent interruptions.
- Works beyond normal hours for planned functions of the church and emergencies.
- Communicates with supervisor and other church staff, volunteers, members and guests.
- Is exposed to slippery conditions, odors, outside weather conditions, etc.

Specific Requirements and Physical Demands:

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by the employee to successfully perform the essential functions of the position. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

- Must possess the ability to make independent decisions when circumstances warrant it.
- Must be able to deal tactfully with staff, volunteers, members and guests.
- Must maintain care and use of supplies and equipment and make regular inspections of the buildings areas.
- Must possess sight/hearing senses, or use prosthetics that enable these senses to meet the responsibilities of the job.
- Must be able to manage time and multiple tasks and projects.
- May be required to lift, push, pull, and move equipment, supplies, etc., up to 25 pounds and transport up to 150 pounds with mechanical assistance.
- Must be in good general health.
- Must be able to supervise other staff and volunteers.