

**Licensing Requirements for
the Eucharistic Visitor (EV)**
*from the Commission on Ministry
of the Diocese of Hawai'i*

Eucharistic Visitor

A Eucharistic Visitor is a lay person authorized to take the Consecrated Elements in a timely manner following a Celebration of Holy Eucharist to members of the congregation who, by reason of illness or infirmity, were unable to be present at the Celebration. A Eucharistic Visitor should normally act under the direction of a Deacon, if any, or otherwise, the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith. (Title III, Canon 4, Sec. 7)

The “Eucharistic Visitor (EV) extends the altar, and thus the life and fullness of the Church community, to those who cannot present at a church’s worship by taking the Sacrament to them following any public celebration of the Holy Eucharist. The phrase “timely manner” means that (1) the EVs take the elements immediately from the altar, and that (2) they make the visit on that same day. Under no circumstances shall an EV take Holy Communion from the Reserved Sacrament.

PRE-REQUISITES

The prerequisites shall be the same as those listed in the EM section, as well as the following:

- ❖ The Deacon of a congregation, or the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of that congregation or community of faith shall assist all applicants in the discernment of this ministry.
- ❖ The EV shall be a confirmed communicant in good standing of the Episcopal Church and of the congregation, of legal age (18 years old), who is committed to the importance of Christian formation. (Such formation is understood to be an ongoing process.)
- ❖ The EV must undergo “Sexual Misconduct” (“Due-Diligence”) Training in a program approved by the Diocese of Hawai‘i.
- ❖ Because of the greater level of responsibility entrusted to the EV, this ministry requires more theological education and preparation than for that of the EM. Such training will be offered by or through the Diocese, or by those who have been duly trained and authorized by the Diocese. EMs may receive training from any licensed deacon or priest.

VISITATION POLICIES

- ❖ The primary visitors are two EVs from the congregation of which the person being visited is a member. If only one EV is available, the second person shall be one of the following (in descending order of preference): (1) a member of the pastoral care ministry, if any, of the congregation, or (2) another member of the congregation. If the second person has not completed Preventing Sexual Misconduct Training, the EV must assume responsibility that

the second person must comply with guidelines outlined in Preventing Sexual Misconduct Training.

- ❖ If no second person within the congregation is available for the visit, then no visit will be made. Under no circumstances shall an EV make a visit alone.
- ❖ The liturgy used shall be the “Distribution of Holy Communion, by Lay Eucharistic Ministers,” presently found in the *Book of Occasional Services*. Priests may use “Communion Under Special Circumstances” from *The Book of Common Prayer*.

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- ❖ The EV shall have skills in appropriate pastoral care.
- ❖ The EV must have an understanding of and also know the difference between consecrated and unconsecrated elements, and must not mix the two!
- ❖ The EV should prepare the Communion kit properly before a visit, and clean it properly afterwards. They should know how to dispose of the remaining consecrated elements properly.
- ❖ EVs should report their visits to the Deacon, Clergy, or leader exercising oversight of this ministry, and also should record their visits appropriately in the *Register of Church Services* of the congregation.
- ❖ The EV should engage in a regular program of Continuing Education.
- ❖ If application is made before Pentecost the license shall be issued for period ending on the First Sunday of Advent, three Advents later. For example, a license granted in April 2009 will be in force until First Advent 2011. If application is made after Pentecost, the license shall be issued for period ending on the First Sunday of Advent, four Advents later. For example, a license granted in September 2009 will be in force until First Advent 2012.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS AND CAUTIONS

- ❖ Any Deacon, Clergy, or leader assisting applicants in their discernment for this ministry should be aware that not all EVs can minister in every setting (e.g., a home visit is very different from a nursing home visit).
- ❖ EVs should remain aware that because they are delivering and distributing the Sacrament, this is not a social visit! The visit should not be extensive in its length. EVs should also be aware that they are not clergy, therapists, or counselors.
- ❖ EVs should, if possible, avoid taking the Sacrament to members of their own family or to the same church members continuously.
- ❖ EVs must always respect confidentiality!