

Internal Control Checklist Offertory Collection and Count

There should be at least two people with the offering at all times until it is deposited at the bank. Having two people protects the funds and the reputations of the individuals handling the funds. There is a much smaller chance of embezzlement when two people are present because theft would require that they conspire together. By the same token, their reputations are protected because they are witnesses to each other's honesty.

“Secure” locations are not locked drawers, cabinets or safes that are accessible to many people. In addition, the device should not be easily removed from the premises such as is the case with a locked cash box.

It is best if the pastor never touches any of the cash that belongs to the parish. This protects the good name of the pastor. The first accusation by a disgruntled parishioner or employee can be that the pastor “has his hand in the till.” If the procedures of the parish are such that the pastor never handles cash under any circumstances and everybody in the parish knows that, allegations against the pastor of misappropriating parish funds are minimized.

Controls

Cash count procedures should be in writing and furnished to each member of the count team.

Parish employees and their families should not be involved in any way with the offertory collection.

No fewer than two individuals who are unrelated to each other should count collections. Husbands and wives, mothers and daughters, etc. should not be on the same count team.

Count team members should be registered parishioners in good standing.

Count team members should be approved by the pastor.

Members of count teams should be rotated.

Count team members should take “vacations” for at least a month every year.

The parish bookkeeper, pastor, associate pastor, administrator and members of the Parish Board of Directors and Parish Finance Council should not count the offertory collection.

If adequate numbers of volunteers are not available to count the collection, consider having your bank count the funds.

Individuals who participate in counting the collection should have a criminal background history check and a credit check in accordance with diocesan policy.

Internal Control Checklist Offertory Collection and Count (continued)

The offertory collection should immediately be placed into tamper proof or locked bags prior to being taken to the altar.

Immediately after the mass is concluded, the offertory should be deposited in a safe under the control of at least two individuals who are not related to each other.

The safe should preferably have two locks requiring two individuals to access. If this is not possible, the collection should be in locked bags with the keys inaccessible to the individual with the combination to the safe. Alternatively, the safe could be located in a locked closet or room with access to the room not available to the individual with the combination to the safe.

Two individuals should transport funds to the bank.

The bank should be instructed to report variances between the deposit and the deposit slip to the pastor.

The offertory should be counted in a secure location.

The count team should immediately restrictively endorse all checks.

The amount of offering should be written on the outside of the envelope for subsequent posting to parishioners' accounts. Loose checks should be listed for subsequent posting to donors' records.

The count should be entered on a summary sheet and signed by all count team members.

The count sheet should be prepared in ink.

The count team should prepare the deposit slip in duplicate. One copy of the deposit slip goes with the deposit into a tamper proof bag; the other deposit slip goes to the bookkeeper for recording the deposit.

The offertory envelopes and listing of checks should be given to the individual responsible for maintaining the parish census.

A member of the Parish Finance Council should compare the bank statement to the weekly count sheets.

An annual statement should be sent to parishioners and donors. Statements should be pre-printed with the following confirmation request: *"This statement is for your records. Please examine it carefully. If it does not agree with your records, please communicate directly to the Pastor."*

Internal Control Checklist Offertory Collection and Count (concluded)

Offertory receipts should be deposited INTACT; employee paychecks or personal checks should not be cashed with offertory monies.

If plastic bank bags are used to secure the collection, the numerical sequence of the bags should be monitored. The bags should also be accessible only to ushers (if bags are used to secure the collection before it is taken to the altar) and to the count team (if bags are used to transport the bank deposit).

Someone other than the bookkeeper should post donor and parishioner records, if possible.

Donor records should be reconciled to the general ledger posting of offertory.

The pastor and Parish Finance Council should review the trend in offertory income on a regular basis.

The offertory collection should be deposited separately from other receipts.