

**Diocese of Nova Scotia
and**

Prince Edward Island

**Licensed Lay Ministers'
Handbook of**

Standards and Regulations

Loving and eternal God, who through your Son, Jesus Christ, calls your people and sends them forth to witness and serve in your name, bless each member of the Licensed Lay Ministers' Association of this Diocese. Give us grace that we, walking in the footsteps of your Son, and being filled and strengthened by your Holy Spirit, may serve you and your Church as faithful stewards in the ministry to which we are called and, by our example, enable others to know and love you, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The office of Licensed Lay Minister is intended to be an opportunity for ministry in the Spirit in which an individual can respond to the call to be helpful in building up the Body of Christ. It must be recognized, however, that this ministry is more than solely liturgical. It may involve other areas such as pastoral care, Christian education, social action and parish administration.

A. Licensing of Lay Ministers

1. The Bishop appoints and licenses Licensed Lay Ministers to serve in a parish under the direction and supervision of the Rector/Bishop's Designate, such license being held at the pleasure of the Priest and the Bishop.
2. Any new candidate for licensing shall normally be required to serve an apprenticeship for a period of up to two years and not less than one year.
3. Installation of Licensed Lay Ministers shall occur at a regular service of worship or in such place as the Bishop shall determine.
4. In the event of revocation by the Bishop, or resignation by the Licensed Lay Minister, the license shall be returned to the Bishop without delay.
5. The license of a Licensed Lay Minister expires with the end of the incumbency of the Rector/Bishop's Designate in a parish. Duties may continue until the appointment of a new Rector/Bishop's Designate under the direction of the Priest-in-Charge or the Bishop.

B. Qualifications for Licensing

To qualify for licensing, candidates for the Office of Licensed Lay Minister (including Commissioned Lay Ministers-in-Training) must:

1. Be regular communicants over the age of 16.
2. Be recommended by their Rector/Bishop's Designate and members of Parish Council after they have completed the prescribed Basic Education and Training Program (as outlined in Section C below).
3. Be approved by the Bishop on the recommendation of the Warden of Licensed Lay Ministers and the President of the Licensed Lay Ministers' Association. The

decision to license Commissioned Lay Ministers-in-Training to the role of Licensed Lay Minister resides with the Bishop.

C. Education and Training Program

1. The basic instruction and training program is designed to give candidates for this ministry a standard level of study and an introduction to a pattern which is expected to guide Licensed Lay Ministers throughout their life and ministry.
2. The instruction will include:
 - a) Attendance at courses given specifically for Licensed Lay Ministers in the following areas of study:
 - (1) Biblical Foundations
 - (2) Doctrine and Church History
 - (3) The Book of Common Prayer and The Book of Alternative Services
 - (4) Basic preaching skills and sermon preparation
 - (5) Spiritual Discipline (prayer and devotional life)
 - (6) Discernment
 - b) Supervised practical training in a Parish setting.
3. Candidates will develop a variety of skills, interests, and sensibilities to assist in their participation in the areas of Christian activity cited below:
 - a) An ability to read and speak in public and to explain spiritual concepts in language suitable to the listening audience;
 - b) An understanding of Christian stewardship;
 - c) A willingness to participate in and to facilitate Christian education;
 - d) An understanding of evangelism, social awareness, and Christian service.

All Licensed Lay Ministers shall respond to the Lord's call to serve the Church.

D. Qualifying Procedures

1. When candidates complete the training program, they shall undergo certification, beginning with an interview by the Rector/Bishop's Designate. This interview is an opportunity for candidates to share their understanding of their faith in our Lord.
2. The Rector/Bishop's Designate shall certify to the Warden of Licensed Lay Ministers and the President of the Licensed Lay Ministers' Association that the prospective Licensed Lay Minister has completed a sufficient level of understanding and, with a letter of reference from the Rector/Bishop's Designate and permission of other members of Parish Council, request the Warden of Licensed Lay Ministers and President of the Licensed Lay Ministers' Association to recommend that the Bishop issue the license.
3. The Rector/Bishop's Designate may petition the Warden of Licensed Lay Ministers to waive the requirement and allow a candidate to forgo the certification interview. In the request, the Rector/Bishop's Designate must express in writing satisfaction with the ability of the candidate to carry out the duties as outlined in Section F below.

E. Procedure for Application

1. Application for a license, together with a letter of recommendation from the Rector/Bishop's Designate, with the concurrence of the Parish Council, is made to the Warden of Licensed Lay Ministers. The application will be sent to the President of the Licensed Lay Ministers' Association and then to the Bishop.
2. Application for transfer of the license of a Licensed Lay Minister from another parish should be accompanied by a photocopy of the previous license, a letter of commendation from the Licensed Lay Minister's former Rector/Bishop's Designate, and the concurrence of the Rector/Bishop's Designate and Parish Council of the new parish. There should be a three month waiting period before the transfer becomes effective.

F. Duties of a Licensed Lay Minister

Under the direction of the Rector/Bishop's Designate and/or the Bishop, a Licensed Lay Minister may be called upon to:

1. Read the appointed lessons and prayers in the church;
2. Conduct the Service of Morning or Evening Prayer (not including the Absolution and Benediction);
3. Read the Litany, Order of Compline, and Service for Young People, or other approved Services;
4. Conduct, in case of emergency, the Baptism of any person in danger of death or the Burial of the Dead;
5. Preach a sermon;
6. Gather and prepare candidates for Confirmation who, before they are presented to the Bishop, shall be examined by a Priest;
7. Support the aims and work of the parish (e.g. Christian education, youth work, stewardship);
8. Carry out other duties when specifically requested by the Rector/Bishop's Designate;
9. Exercise responsible stewardship of time, talent and treasure; and
10. Assist in the distribution of the Elements at the Communion Service and to shut-ins when authorized through a special license by the Bishop.

Licensed Lay Ministers may serve in a parish other than their own when requested by the Bishop and/or the Rector/Bishop's Designate of the parish involved and with the expressed permission of the Rector/Bishop's Designate of their own parish. This option is not available to the Commissioned Lay Minister-in-Training.

Licensed Lay Ministers should always be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit in their ministry.

G. Vestments

1. Vestments for leading in the service of worship are either:
 - (1) A cassock and surplice **or**
 - (2) An alb.

During non-Eucharistic services, an academic hood may be worn with a cassock and surplice.

2. Licensed Lay Ministers are responsible for obtaining their vestments whether through loan from their Parish or purchase.
3. The badge of office is the medallion featuring the Bishop's mitre over the shield of the Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island; attached to a ribbon (blue for a Commissioned Lay Minister-in-Training, purple for a Licensed Lay Minister). Information on purchasing the Medallion/Pin/Ribbons can be found on the Licensed Lay Ministers' Association website www.nspeilayreaders.ca and in the Association newsletter, the Diakonia.
4. The Licensed Lay Minister (and Commissioned Lay Ministers-in-Training) shall wear their badge of office around the neck while participating at public worship.
5. No other adornments or embellishments (e.g. pins, ribbons, medals, etc.), other than the Commissioned and Licensed Lay Minister's medallion, are to be worn with vestments during Public Worship. The only exception may be a poppy.

H. Remuneration

1. Remuneration is officially set by the Diocese and is to be paid to Licensed Lay Ministers when they conduct church services outside their "home" parish.
2. Parishes benefitting from such services shall be responsible for meeting such cost and should be made aware of their financial obligation by the person securing the services of the Licensed Lay Minister.

I. Warden of Licensed Lay Ministers

There shall be a Warden of Licensed Lay Ministers who shall be a Priest appointed by the Bishop and have the following duties:

1. Act as the Spiritual Advisor to the officers and members of the Licensed Lay Ministers' Association;
2. Consult with appropriate resource persons regarding course materials for Licensed Lay Ministers;
3. Assist Licensed Lay Ministers in fulfilling their functions; and,

4. Work in conjunction with the Board of Standards in performing its duties.
5. The Board of Standards must approve alterations to the official Licensed Ministers' Training program. Should the Board be unable to meet to approve any alteration to the program, the Warden may act on behalf of the Board.

J. Board of Standards

1. The Board of Standards shall consist of the following officers:
 - a) Warden of the Licensed Lay Ministers' Association of the Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island (the "Association")
 - b) One additional Clergy representative appointed by the Bishop
 - c) The President and Vice President of the Association
 - d) The Immediate Past President of the Association
 - e) Secretary
 - f) Three (3) Licensed Lay Ministers elected at the Association's Annual General Meeting as representatives to the Board
 - g) One (1) Licensed Lay Minister to report to the Diocese.
2. The Board shall be responsible for:
 - a) The maintenance of a high standard of candidates to be licensed;
 - b) Co-operating with Clericus and Regional Councils for the planning, training and program evaluation of candidates to be licensed, and for continuing education of Licensed Lay Ministers.
3. The Board shall be responsible to the Bishop.
4. All courses of study for official Licensed Lay Minister programs must be approved by the Board of Standards.
5. The Board will meet at least semi-annually.
6. Should a vacancy arise on the Board, the Licensed Lay Ministers' Association Executive can propose a name to the Bishop to fill the vacancy until such time as the next appointment is finalized.

K. Diocesan Licensed Lay Ministers' Association

1. All Licensed Lay Ministers and commissioned Lay Ministers-in-Training are members of the Diocesan Licensed Lay Ministers' Association.
2. Every Licensed Lay Minister is expected to pay annual dues, the amount being decided from time to time at the Annual General Meeting.
3. The aims of the Association are to:
 - a) Maintain and upgrade standards;
 - b) Provide an opportunity for meaningful discussion in a Christian community;
 - c) Provide continuing educational opportunities;
 - d) Keep Licensed Lay Ministers informed; and,
 - e) Provide opportunities for personal spiritual growth on an ongoing basis.

4. The Association seeks to accomplish these aims by:
 - a) Organizing and promoting retreats, conferences, seminars, and other learning sessions on parish, regional and diocesan levels;
 - b) Designing reading courses and circulating book lists and reviews; and,
 - c) Circulating a newsletter (DIAKONIA) twice yearly.
5. The Association shall keep a current list of Licensed Lay Ministers and Commissioned Lay Ministers-in-Training.

Amendments

[Note: New Lay Readers' Prayer presented and adopted at the Annual Meeting of the Lay Readers' Association of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island Tangier Deanery Camp, Ship Harbour, Nova Scotia, May 26, 2007]

[Note: Change in name of prayer and title of Association to reflect the approval of Synod May 2019]

[Note: New Association Logo added January 2020]

[Note: Replacement of 'Rector' with 'Rector/Bishop Designate' to better reflect reality of parishes – June 2025 AGM]

[Note: Replacement in Section G, 2 with the following: Licensed Lay Ministers are responsible for obtaining their vestments whether through loan from their Parish or purchase – June 2026 AGM]