



Diocese of Davenport

Deacon Handbook of Policies and Procedures

Approved by Most Rev. Martin Amos, Bishop of Davenport
Promulgated May 12, 2013
The Ascension of the Lord
Revised October 31, 2014
[Revised October 28, 2015](#)

Table of Contents

I.	Introduction	3
II.	Definitions and Abbreviations	3
III.	The Ministry & Life of Deacons	4
IV.	Annual Calendar of Events	4
V.	Identification of the Deacon	4
	A. Appropriate Title	4
	B. Identification Card	4
	C. Clerical Attire	4
VI.	Chancery Organization	5
	A. Director of the Diaconate	5
	B. Director of Deacon Formation	6
	C. Access to the Bishop	7
	D. Communication	7
	E. Confidentiality of Records, Pastoral Counseling and Pastoral Care	7
VII.	Ss. Stephen & Phoebe Deacon Council	8
VIII.	Personal Care	8
	A. Support Groups	8
	B. Spiritual Direction	8
	C. Situations Requiring Professional Counseling	9
IX.	Ministerial Assignments	10
	A. Bishop – Deacon Relationship	10
	B. Priest – Deacon Relationship	10
	C. Ministry Agreement	10
	D. Changes in Assignment	11
	E. Notification and Public Announcements of Assignments	11
	F. Ministry Outside of the Diocese of Davenport	11
	G. Extern Deacons working in the Diocese of Davenport	11
	H. Illness	11
	I. Retirement	12
X.	Faculties for Deacons in the Diocese of Davenport	13
XI.	Employment, Remuneration, Compensation and Financial Support	13
XII.	Incardination/Excardination	13
XIII.	Accountability	14
	A. Publication	14
	B. Absence from Ministry	14
	C. Leave of Absence	14
	D. Complaints Against Deacons	14
	E. Conflict Resolution	14
	F. Dispensation from the impediment of Holy Orders	14
XIV.	Disciplinary Action	15
	A. Suspension of Faculties	15
	B. Dismissal from the Clerical State – Laicization	15

XVI.	Post Ordination Formation	15
XVII.	Politics	16
	A. Political Office	16
XVIII.	Diocesan Policies Relating to Sexuality and Personal Behavior	16
XIX.	Liturgical Ministry	16
	A. Diocesan Policies	16
	B. Frequency	16
	C. Preaching	16
	D. Liturgy of the Hours	16
	E. Bi-Ritual Deacons	17
	F. Ecumenical Liturgies and Services	17
XX.	Funeral Planning	17
	A. Entering the Priesthood	17
XXI.	Appendix I – Forms	
	A. Ministry Agreement	
	B. Letter in Good Standing Request	
	C. Retired Deacon Ministry	
	D. Acknowledgement and Consent Forms	
	E. Funeral Instructions	
XXII.	Appendix II – References	
	A. Chancery Staff Chart	
	B. Diocesan E-mail	
	C. Ss. Stephen & Phoebe Deacon Council Constitution & By-Laws	
	D. Diaconal Ministry Examples	
	E. Faculties	
	F. Compensation for Clergy - Deacons	
	G. Protocol for Incardination and Excardination	

I. Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is to provide the deacons and priests of the diocese a clear understanding of the policies and procedures relating to the diaconate. This information would also be useful for diocesan and parish staff and to the laity in general.

This handbook pertains to permanent deacons incardinated to the Diocese of Davenport and for deacons incardinated to another (arch)diocese who are in ministry within the Diocese of Davenport. Seminarians who have received ordination to the diaconate (transitional deacons) are supervised by the director of vocations for the Diocese of Davenport.

Sources for the policies and procedures are based on particular law promulgated by the bishop including modifications from Synod V of the Diocese of Davenport, the Code of Canon Law, the Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons from the Congregation for the Clergy and the norms and guidelines from the National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States promulgated by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Gratitude is also extended to the many dioceses that made their deacons and handbooks available as resources.

This handbook is posted to the diocesan website. Notifications of updates to the handbook will be e-mailed to the clergy and diocesan leadership groups in addition to posting to the diocesan website. Any questions regarding this handbook should be sent to the director of the diaconate.

II. Definitions and Abbreviations

active deacon	A deacon who is not retired or on a leave of absence, or suspended, or dismissed from the clerical state (laicized)
CIC	Code of Canon Law
director	The director of the diaconate
directory	National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States
excardination	The process by which a cleric relinquishes his juridical attachment to a diocese, an institute of consecrated life, or other society of clerics to incardinate in another diocese
extern deacon	A deacon who is not incardinated in the Diocese of Davenport
faculty	Church authorization, given by the law itself or by a church superior, to perform certain official church acts validly and/or licitly
inactive deacon	A deacon who is retired or on a leave of absence, or suspended, or dismissed from the clerical state (laicized)
incardination	A cleric's juridical attachment to a diocese, an institute of consecrated life, or other society of clerics that occurs bylaw at ordination to the diaconate or afterward according to canon law
retired deacon	A deacon who has been granted a request for retirement by the bishop due to advanced age or physical status and who is no longer required to perform ministerial duties
sacramental minister - deacon	A deacon who is not assigned to a parish for diaconal ministry in general may be assigned for the specific purpose of providing the sacraments and liturgical

leadership according to the order of the diaconate and the faculties granted to him by the bishop in addition to his regular parish assignment(s)

III. The Ministry & Life of Deacons

The Second Vatican Council synthesized the ministry of deacons in the threefold “*diaconia* of the liturgy, the word and of charity” (78). In this way diaconal participation through the ordained ministry in the one and triple *munus* of Christ is expressed. The deacon “is *teacher* in so far as he preaches and bears witness to the word of God; he *sanctifies* when he administers the Sacrament of Baptism, the Holy Eucharist and the sacraments, he participates at the celebration of Holy Mass as a “minister of the Blood”, and conserves and distributes the Blessed Eucharist; he is a *guide* in as much as he animates the community or a section of ecclesial life (79). Thus deacons assist and serve the bishops and priests who preside at every liturgy, are watchful of doctrine and guide the people of God.

The ministry of deacons, in the service of the community of the faithful, should “collaborate in building up the unity of Christians without prejudice and without inopportune initiatives” (80). It should cultivate those “human qualities which make a person acceptable to others, credible, vigilant about his language and his capacity to dialogue, so as to acquire a truly ecumenical attitude” (The Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons 22).

The deacon should reach out in the name of Christ to the civil and Christian community those marginalized by disadvantage or alienation, and to inspire the faithful to the same. By faithfully devoting himself to the service of others and by publicly joining his service to the Eucharist by his assistance at the liturgy, the deacon properly and authentically demonstrates the intimate relationship of the service and divine worship missions of Christ’s Church (Synod V).

IV. Annual Calendar of Events

Diaconal events are scheduled on a regular basis to enable easier planning.

- Spring Retreat is held on the weekend prior to Ash Wednesday with the Deacon Council meeting scheduled during Sunday lunch
- Fall Convocation is held on the 3rd weekend of October with the Deacon Council meeting scheduled during Sunday lunch

V. Identification of the Deacon

A. Appropriate Title

In all forms of address (written and oral) for permanent deacons, the appropriate title is “Deacon” (Directory 88).

B. Identification Card

Each incardinated deacon and those extern deacons serving within the diocese for an extended period of time will receive diocesan identification cards annually unless the deacon is under disciplinary penalty.

C. Clerical Attire

Two fundamental facts color and inform the issues of deacon attire and identification. The first is the clerical status of the deacon. The deacon is not a layman. The second fact is the commitment of the deacon, though a cleric, to continue to identify with his lay brothers and sisters in a truly intimate way. He is always “to be with them as he serves them.” Like his brother clerics in the episcopal and

presbyteral ranks, the deacon may use clerical dress and clerical forms of identification or non-clerical dress and non-clerical forms of identification as tools to aid him in accomplishing valid ministerial goals and objectives. The deacon is counseled to prudence with respect to the use of clerical attire and forms of address. The excessive wearing of clerical attire and use of clerical forms of address coupled with arrogance, pride or a sense of elitism lead to the evil generally known as clericalism. Failure to use clerical dress or clerical forms of address with a measure of “sufficiency” can result in confusion as to the status of the deacon or deprive those ministered to of the comfort of the “clerical presence” when such presence is not only proper but preferable.

A deacon shall never wear the Roman collar while engaged in the pursuit of his secular profession or occupation.

A deacon may wear the Roman collar, after prudent consideration of his situation, when the wearing of the Roman collar would: bring some measure of comfort to those to whom he is ministering when those persons are suffering some intense personal crisis; when the deacon can serve more efficiently and effectively with the aid of the Roman collar which provides immediate recognition of the deacon as a cleric; or in gatherings of non-Christians or non-Catholic Christians when the sure recognition of a deacon as cleric is deemed desirable.

Clerical attire is recommended to be worn by deacons before and after diocesan liturgies that are attended by the public at which deacons vest as an order. For example, clerical attire is recommended for the Chrism Mass, ordinations, funerals etc. but not for clergy days/overnighters/institutes.

Upon his ordination, the deacon may wear a simple cross or “deacon cross” on a chain around his neck or a lapel pin or emblem, which is to be worn as he ministers in extra-liturgical settings. They may be worn at other times as desired or appropriate (Synod V).

Deacons are to wear the liturgical vestments prescribed by the rubrics (CIC 929). Additional information can be found in “Policies Relating to The Liturgical Ministry” from the diocesan office of liturgy.

VI. Chancery Organization

A. Director of the Diaconate

The director of the diaconate is responsible for providing coordination, collaboration and leadership in all matters pertaining to the permanent diaconate for the Diocese of Davenport. He should be a priest or deacon appointed by the bishop. He is the bishop’s representative in directing the post-ordination path of formation and assists the bishop in the supervision of diocesan deacons.

1. Responsible to the bishop for the successful performance of assigned duties.
2. Has discretionary authority to make administrative decisions consistent with the approved policies.
3. Assists and coordinates with other diocesan staff to assure the successful performance of assigned job duties and responsibilities.
4. Assists and coordinates with deans, pastors and deacons to provide deacon support in the diocese.
5. Administer all aspects of diaconal life in the diocese. This involves assisting in the preparation and execution of ministry appointment letters, assignments of deacons, and other requirements as set forth in canon law. Helps identify the ministry needs of the diocese to ensure proper placement of deacon assignments after ordination.
6. Provide opportunities for the ongoing spiritual development and continuing formation of all permanent deacons in the diocese.

7. Coordinate and supervise the first three years of diaconal ministry following ordination.
8. Serve as a focal point for pastors, deacons and other pastoral leaders on questions related to the ministry of deacons.
9. Identify the ministry needs of deacons currently serving in the diocese.
10. Facilitate the pastoral care for deacons, wives of deacons, their children and widows as needed.
11. Ensure that all deacons receive timely communication of information relating to diaconal ministry, such as information available from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops or from the National Association of Deacon Directors.
12. Collaborate with the Diocesan Deacon Council for achieving Diocesan goals.
13. Prepare and maintain the budget allocated to the office of the diaconate.
14. Perform other duties as needed or assigned.

B. Director of Deacon Formation

The director of deacon Formation should be either a priest or a deacon, [and] is appointed by the diocesan bishop to be head of the deacon formation program. He reports directly to the bishop and should have regular communication with him. The director is ultimately responsible for both aspirant and candidate formation. However, the number of participants in either path may require the additional appointment of an associate. The director oversees the implementation of the formation program. He conducts regularly scheduled assessments; makes home and parish visitations; supervises the formation team, faculty, and mentors; and maintains contact with the aspirants' and candidates' pastors" (Directory 271).

1. Responsible to the bishop for the successful performance of assigned duties.
2. Has discretionary authority to make administrative decisions consistent with the approved policies.
3. Responsible for overseeing and collaborating with the director of spiritual formation, the coordinator of pastoral field education, and other members of the formation team.
4. Directly, or through members of the formation team, responsible for overseeing and collaborating with the academic faculty, spiritual directors, mentors, and pastoral field education supervisors.
5. Assists and coordinates with the other diocesan staff to assure the successful performance off assigned job duties and responsibilities.
6. Administer all aspects of formation for permanent deacon candidates in the Diocese of Davenport. This involves coordinating the preparation and execution of a comprehensive deacon training program as outlined in the *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States* or any guidelines which may apply.
7. Work within and maintain the budget allocated for the formation of deacons.
8. Assist in integrating the formation program for deacons with other diocesan formation programs.
9. Help identify the ministry needs of the diocese to ensure the proper placement of deacon assignments after ordination.
10. Ensure that all deacon aspirants and candidates receive timely communication of information relating to diaconal formation and ministry.
11. Perform other duties as needed or assigned.

C. Access to the Bishop

Deacons may request a meeting with the bishop through the secretary to the bishop. The request should include the general topic of the meeting.

D. Communication

Active deacons are required to have access to a computer or other device that has access to the Internet. Inactive deacons are encouraged to have the same access. The office of the diaconate makes extensive use of the diocesan website, www.davenportdiocese.org, and diocesan e-mail to provide information and resources to the diaconate community. Each incardinated deacon and those extern deacons serving within the diocese for an extended period of time are assigned a diocesan e-mail address by the Diocesan Department of Communication. This e-mail address will be the only address used by diocesan staff to communicate with the deacon. The deacon may forward mail sent to the diocesan address another address. Diocesan e-mail accounts should be checked daily for new messages.

“Deacon News” is the official newsletter of the diaconate community in the Diocese of Davenport. This newsletter will be published quarterly in January, April, July and October on or about the 15th of the month.

E. Confidentiality of Records, Pastoral Counseling and Pastoral Care

The first principle is that the right of confidentiality in clerical privilege belongs to the client (person being served). This is the only protection in the law, and only the client may waive the privilege. The cleric can invoke the privilege if called upon to testify.

Two important factors need also be considered:

1. The privilege applies only to conversations within the professional context of the cleric’s ministry.
2. If a person comes to you and has someone with them that they expect to participate in the conversation, that conversation is not protected. If the third person is an employee of the cleric necessary to the communication the conversation remains protected (e.g., a translator or someone present to protect yourself).

While the HIPPA laws do not specifically apply to parishes and church ministers, it is important to be aware that any personal information published in parish bulletins and websites or announced from the pulpit or sent by e-mail can be misused. Therefore, the following is recommended:

Do not presume consent for publishing personal information. For example, if you are going to publish a directory make sure that you have permission to list any and all information. If you are in the practice of publishing ministry schedules, make sure people know that that is part of volunteering. This issue is especially important when it comes to children. Be especially careful with publishing addresses and phone numbers.

If you are going to publish a “prayer list,” do not list the reasons for the prayer request—even in a generic way. Even to say that someone is “sick” can lead to problems; better to simply state that they have requested prayer. If they are speaking for themselves, and understand the risks, then use your best judgment. The safest course would be to have a set practice to not include specifics; that way, there is no differentiation between persons or an impression given that someone is getting “special” treatment.

The parish has control over what is published in the bulletin and what is prayed at the prayer of the faithful; inclusion can be monitored both for appropriateness of content as well as for consent (see below). Control and oversight is lost if there is a “book of intentions” that anyone can write in or if the

assembly is invited to offer intentions. For that reason, among others, it is recommended to refrain from such practices.

Likewise, listing someone as hospitalized could lead to them becoming a target for burglary; thieves can easily find their address and then access the empty house.

Consent is an important issue. Immediate family can give permission, especially if the ill person is a member of the parish. It would be prudent to ask anyone making a request for inclusion: Does the person you are asking us to pray for know that you are making this request? Did you get permission?

Death terminates any privacy rights, so listing the deceased should be permissible. However, do not list addresses – it is like giving an invitation to thieves who know when the house will be empty for a funeral. A caveat here: while privacy rights are terminated after death, privileged communications are not (Deacon Formation Program Candidacy Handbook).

VII. Ss. Stephen & Phoebe Deacon Council

The purpose of the Council shall be: to provide a forum for the full and free discussion of all issues of diaconal concern in the diocese, thus providing an organized opportunity for mutual open reflection and fraternal dialog between the bishop and the deacons of the diocese; to aid the bishop, priests and deacons to insure that the pastoral welfare of the People of God may continue; and to encourage and provide ways and means for effective ministry, continuing education and the spiritual growth of deacons. The council is an advisory group to the bishop.

The membership shall consist of the diocesan bishop and other members as prescribed in The Saints Stephen and Phoebe Deacon Council Bylaws. Officers of the Deacon Council shall be president, vice president, secretary and treasurer from among the deacons of the diocese.

The Council shall meet as determined in the Bylaws. For voting purposes a simple majority of the members present is required.

When the See is vacant the Deacon Council ceases. The new diocesan bishop may establish the Deacon Council anew.

Additional information about the council can be found in the “Constitution of the Saints Stephen and Phoebe Deacon Council of the Diocese of Davenport” in the appendix.

VIII. Personal Care

A. Support Groups

Deacons are encouraged to form support groups that can meet regularly. The primary support must come from among the deacons themselves and their wives. The meetings could encourage prayer, discussion, sharing, and help in personal development and ministry (Synod V).

B. Spiritual Direction

Deacons are encouraged to have a spiritual director.

Some recommended spiritual exercises to assist the deacon in developing and promoting his spiritual life include the following:

1. Daily or frequent participation in the Eucharist, the source and summit of the Christian life, as well as daily or frequent Eucharistic adoration, as often as his secular employment and family requirements permit.
2. Regular reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

3. Daily celebration of other parts of the Liturgy of the Hours in addition to the required Morning and Evening Prayer.
4. Shared prayer with his family.
5. Meditative prayer on the Holy Scriptures—*lectio divina*.
6. Devotion to Mary, the Mother God.
7. Prayerful preparation of oneself prior to the celebration of the sacraments, preaching, or beginning one's ministry of charity.
8. Theological reflection.
9. Regular spiritual direction.
10. Participation in an annual retreat.
11. Authentic living of one's state of life.
12. Time for personal and familial growth.

C. Situations Requiring Professional Counseling

The death of the wife of a married deacon introduces a new reality into the daily routine of his family and ministry. Charity should be extended to the widowed deacon as he assesses and accepts his new personal circumstances so he will not neglect his primary duty as father to his children or any new needs his family might have. As required, a widowed deacon should be assisted in seeking professional counseling and spiritual direction as he encounters and integrates the bereavement process. The fraternal closeness of his bishop, the priests with whom he ministers, and the diaconal community should offer comfort and reassurance. This adjustment to a new state of life can be achieved only in time through prayer, counsel, and an "intensification of one's dedication to others for the love of God in the ministry (Directory 73).

A similar sensitivity also should be given to the widow of a deacon since she shared so intimately in her husband's life and ministerial witness. The bishop and her pastor, as well as the diaconal and parish communities, should extend appropriate and adequate support in her bereavement. Widows of deacons ought to remain connected with the diaconal community not only because of support and encouragement, but because of the unique bonds that had been forged by virtue of her husband's ordination (Directory 74).

Suitable pastoral care should be offered to the deacon, his wife, and their children during a divorce. This pastoral care, which may be facilitated by the director or any other qualified person on behalf of the bishop, should include ample time to work through the various stages of grieving and adjustment caused by divorce. The determination of the divorced deacon's ministerial status will require sensitivity and prudence on the part of the bishop, the pastor or pastoral supervisor, the ministerial community, and other institutions in which the deacon serves. Members of the diaconal community are also in a unique position to reach out, as appropriate, in order to help the divorced couple and family deal with the challenges the divorce may entail (Directory 76).

In a similar way, pastoral care should also be offered to the deacon, his wife, and their children who suffer from addictions.

IX. Ministerial Assignments

A deacon shall receive a letter of appointment from the bishop that delineates his specific duties and responsibilities and the designation of his proper pastor or priest supervisor (Directory 93).

The bishop appoints deacons to a specific assignment according to the pastoral needs of the diocesan Church and the personal qualifications of the deacon. Assignments also recognize the needs of each deacon's family and job responsibilities (Directory 42).

It has been the long held practice in the diocese to assign deacons to their "home" parish, that is, the parish of which they are a member before ordination. However, the bishop will also consider the assignment of deacons to other parishes within a reasonable travel distance when other pastors request their assistance.

Deacons may be assigned by the bishop as sacramental ministers to parishes in addition to their regular parish assignments to other parishes. Assignments as sacramental ministers are specific to liturgical ministry. Regular diaconal parish assignments are more inclusive in the three areas of diaconal ministry that includes the ministries of Word and charity in addition to worship.

Deacons assigned to the parish other than as sacramental ministers shall be ex-officio voting members of the parish council.

A. Bishop – Deacon Relationship

The deacon exercises his ministry within a specific pastoral context—the communion and mission of a diocesan Church. He is in direct relationship with the diocesan bishop with whom he is in communion and under whose authority he exercises his ministry. In making his promise of respect and obedience to his bishop, the deacon takes as his model Christ, who became the servant of his Father. The diocesan bishop also enters into a relationship with the deacon since the deacon is his collaborator in the service of God's People. It is, therefore, a particular responsibility of the bishop to provide for the pastoral care of the deacons of his diocese. The bishop discharges this responsibility both personally and through the director (Directory 41).

B. Priest – Deacon Relationship

Deacons exercise their ministry in communion not only with their bishop but also with the priests who serve the diocesan Church. As collaborators in ministry, priests and deacons are two complementary but subordinate participants in the one apostolic ministry bestowed by Christ upon the apostles and their successors. The diaconate is not an abridged or substitute form of the priesthood, but is a full order in its own right (Directory 50).

C. Ministry Agreement

Active deacons who are incardinated in the Diocese of Davenport and extern deacons ministering within the Diocese of Davenport shall complete the ministry agreement in consultation with their pastor or priest supervisor.

The ministry worksheet should be reviewed by the deacon and his priest supervisor annually. If there are no significant changes in ministry, the review section of the worksheet should be signed, dated and mailed to the chancery. If there are changes in ministry or a change in pastors, then a new worksheet should be completed with the new pastor or priest supervisor and sent to the chancery.

D. Changes in Assignment

The bishop appoints the deacon to a specific assignment by means of an official letter of appointment. The principal criteria for the assignment are the pastoral needs of the diocesan Church and the personal qualifications of the deacon, as these have been discerned in his previous experience and the course of his formation. The assignment also acknowledges the deacon's family and occupational responsibilities (Directory 42).

Deacons may request a change in assignment in writing through the director. The reason for the change must be included in the request. A proposal for a future assignment may also be included. The director will meet with the deacon making the request, with the bishop, and with pastors or priest supervisors involved. A meeting with the bishop may also be requested by the deacon, the pastor or priest supervisor, or the bishop.

E. Notification and Public Announcements of Assignments

Deacon assignments will be published by *The Catholic Messenger*. Until the letter of appointment is signed by the bishop and publicly announced by the bishop's office, all parties are bound to confidentiality (Directory 44).

F. Ministry Outside of the Diocese of Davenport

Dioceses require priests and deacons to have a letter in good standing which is sent to the ordinary of the diocese where ministry will be exercised. Copies of the letter are sent to the parish being visited and to the cleric requesting the letter. To make a request, the "Letter of Good Standing Request Form" must be completed and sent to the bishop's office by letter or email. The request must include the reason for the request, the names of those receiving the sacrament or funeral, the dates of the visit, the (arch)diocese being visited, the name and address of the ordinary or superior, the name of the pastor and the name and address of the parish being visited. A minimum of two weeks is needed for this to be processed accordingly. In the event of a funeral, every effort will be made to expedite the letter in good standing (USCCB guidelines and CIC 903).

G. Extern Deacons working in the Diocese of Davenport

A diocesan bishop is under no obligation to accept a deacon—ordained or incardinated elsewhere—for appointment to a diocesan or parochial ministry. Nevertheless, since a deacon is an ordained cleric, the bishop will not ordinarily forbid a visiting permanent deacon the exercise of his order provided that the deacon is not under censure (Directory 102).

Any cleric coming to the Diocese of Davenport to perform any ministry, even if for only one event, needs to provide the office of the bishop the documentation contained in the Diocese of Davenport "Letter of Good Standing Request Form" from his own diocese or religious superior. If the period of ministry extends beyond one month, additional documentation from the diocese of incardination shall be requested by the director for review by the bishop.

H. Illness

The director should be notified of deacons, wives of deacons and other family members who are suffering from serious illness. Unless a request is received to keep this information confidential, a general message will be sent to the deacon and priest community via e-mail.

I. Retirement

This policy addresses deacons who request a) retirement with faculties, b) retirement without faculties or c) continuation of active status.

Deacons of the Diocese of Davenport may apply to retire when they reach their 70th birthday by submitting a signed letter to the bishop that includes the reason(s) for retirement.

Deacons of the Diocese of Davenport must submit a signed letter of resignation from office when they reach their 75th birthday or the deacon may submit a signed letter to the bishop requesting to remain on active status.

Letters of resignation must include either a request for the continuation of faculties during retirement or a statement that the deacon is withdrawing completely from all diaconal ministry during retirement in which case the deacon will not receive faculties from the bishop.

The following information should be completed and submitted to the director along with a copy of the letter to the bishop requesting retirement or to remain on active status unless the deacon is withdrawing from all diaconal ministry during retirement:

1. Evaluation form completed by the deacon.
2. Evaluation form completed by the pastor or priest supervisor.

In addition, if the deacon is requesting to remain on active status:

3. New ministry agreement completed by the deacon and the pastor or priest supervisor.

Practical considerations

Each deacon's ability to continue in diaconal ministry after retirement should be evaluated while also considering the needs of the diocese. Some deacons are able to function well after retiring. Others may have limited function due to physical or mental changes. Some deacons do not recognize these changes in their ability as these changes may develop slowly over time. Deacons, pastors and priest supervisors should be consulted to assist a deacon in making the necessary changes in his ministry activities which are in his best interest and the interest of the diocese.

Retired Status

A retired deacon no longer needs a ministry agreement with the pastor or priest supervisor nor a letter of appointment from the bishop. He is not required to maintain all of the obligations for active deacons although he is invited to continue ministering as a deacon according to the needs of the parish and as he desires and is able. In most cases, a retired deacon continues to receive faculties appropriate to the needs of the diocese. A deacon who is retired is welcome to attend continuing education opportunities and retreats with these expenses paid by the [diocese](#). A deacon providing any type of ministry must continue to participate in the diocesan safe environment training.

Deleted: parish

A retired deacon will consult with his pastor and the director annually or at any time his ministerial activities need to be adjusted due to health changes or other considerations. The director will monitor this process for the mutual benefit of the parties involved.

Active Status Beyond the Retirement Age at 75

If approved, the deacon remains on active status with a written ministry agreement with the pastor or priest supervisor and a written letter of appointment and associated faculties from the bishop. The deacon is required to maintain all of the obligations of continuing education, retreats, safe environment training and communication. These obligations will continue to be paid by the parish. Any changes to diaconal ministry should be noted in a new ministry agreement that is completed by the deacon and the pastor or priest supervisor and forwarded to the office of the diaconate for approval by the bishop.

X. Faculties for Deacons in the Diocese of Davenport

Faculties link the minister to the bishop, are intended to be used for the good of the People of God and help to ensure that ministers and administrators are qualified for the tasks assigned to them. Some faculties are granted at ordination by law; other faculties are granted by law – whether to office holders or apart from a specific office (for example, in the danger of death). Some faculties are granted only by personal delegation- either habitually or for a specific event. Details concerning faculties can be found in the diocesan document, “Faculties for Deacons” in the appendix.

XI. Employment, Remuneration, Compensation and Financial Support

Deacons are to take care of their own and their family’s needs using income derived from their full-time employment by the diocese, parish, or secular profession. In an individual situation of need, the diocesan Church assists the deacon and his family in charity (Directory 94).

To provide for their own upkeep, every deacon is obliged to satisfy the legal requirements for Social Security benefits or a comparable program (Directory 95). Deacons serving in the Diocese of Davenport are covered by diocesan directors and officer’s insurance policy for events that take place during their ministerial work for the parish, diocese or diocesan entity. Questions regarding this insurance coverage should be directed to the diocesan office of finance and administration.

The deacon is a non-salaried minister unless otherwise employed by a parish, organization or agency of the diocese, at which time a separate employment contract must be drawn up and agreed to by all parties involved. Deacons in full-time employment by the diocese, parish, or agency are to receive remuneration commensurate with the salaries and benefits provided to the lay men and women on staff for that particular occupation. Deacons in full-time secular employment, as well as those in part-time ministries, are to be reimbursed for legitimate expenses incurred in their ministry (Directory 96). The parish, organization or agency of the diocese will normally reimburse out-of-pocket expenses and pay for any education and other ministry-related expenses required to carry out the ministries listed in the diaconate ministry worksheet and are also encouraged to pay for the spouse’s education related to the ministry of the deacon such as participation at retreats and study days for deacons and wives. (Diaconate Ministry Worksheet 2013).

Compensation schedules for weekend assistance provided by a deacon to a parish outside of his regular assignment or as a sacramental minister is stipulated in the “Compensation for Clergy” policy found in the appendix (Remuneration for Clergy 2014).

XII. Incardination/Excardination

“Through the imposition of hands and the prayer of consecration, [the deacon] is constituted a sacred minister and a member of the hierarchy.”(Directory 77) Having already clearly expressed in writing his intention to serve the diocesan Church for life, upon his ordination the deacon is incardinated into the diocesan Church. “Incardination is a juridical bond. It has ecclesiastical and spiritual significance in as

much as it expresses the ministerial dedication of the deacon to a specific diocesan Church.” (Directory 78) Detailed information for the excardination and incardination process is provided by the USCCB.

XIII. Accountability

The deacon is called to minister to and in the name of the Church under the leadership of the local bishop. Prior to taking action with respect to a deacon who fails to follow the policies and procedures contained in this handbook or otherwise promulgated by the bishop, the director shall attempt to employ fraternal correction, with the assistance of others if appropriate, before more formal action is taken against the deacon. The director may schedule a meeting with the bishop and the deacon to discuss the matter further. After such a meeting, the deacon’s failure to comply may result in the loss of faculties and the stipulation of the conditions under which the faculties may be renewed by the bishop. In the most severe cases, the bishop may seek the laicization of the deacon.

A. Publication

Deacons are obliged to obtain the permission of their bishop before submitting written material concerning faith and morals for publication. Deacons are required to adhere to the norms established by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops or diocesan policies when participating in radio or television broadcasts, public media, and the Internet (Directory 81).

B. Absence from Ministry

Deacons may request a temporarily absence from their place of assignment with the permission of their pastor or priest supervisor. The temporary absence should not exceed one month (Directory 92).

C. Leave of Absence

Deacons may request a leave of absence greater than one month in writing through the director. The reason and duration of the leave must be included in the request. The director will meet with the deacon making the request, with the bishop, and with pastors or priest supervisors involved. A meeting with the bishop may also be requested by the deacon or the bishop.

A deacon who leaves his assignment without the bishop’s permission is considered to be on unauthorized leave that may result in the withdrawal of faculties by the bishop and additional action.

D. Complaints Against Deacons

Signed complaints against deacons should be sent in writing to the director who will notify the deacon of the complaint and assist the bishop in investigating the complaint.

E. Conflict Resolution

The director shall attempt to employ fraternal correction, with the assistance of others if appropriate, in order to resolve conflicts involving a deacon. The director may schedule a meeting with the bishop and the deacon to discuss the matter further if necessary.

F. Dispensation from the Impediment of Holy Orders

In exceptional cases, the Holy See may grant a dispensation for a new marriage or for a release from the obligations of the clerical state. However, to ensure a mature decision in discerning God’s will, effective pastoral care should be provided to maintain that a proper and sufficient period of time has elapsed before either of these dispensations is sought. If a dispensation for a new marriage is petitioned and granted, additional time will be required for the formation of a stable relationship in the new marriage, as well as the enabling of his new wife to obtain sufficient understanding and experience about the diaconate in order to give her written, informed consent and support (Directory 75).

The Holy See may dispense from the impediment of holy orders to permit a widowed permanent deacon to remarry when all three of the following conditions are present: the great pastoral usefulness of the deacon's ministry, attestation by the bishop and the need to care for minor children (CDWDS circular letter July 13, 2005).

XIV. Disciplinary Action

A. Suspension of Faculties

Bishops are reminded that if the ministry of a deacon becomes ineffective or even harmful due to some personal difficulties or irresponsible behavior, his ministerial assignment and faculties are to be withdrawn by the diocesan bishop in accord with Canon Law (Directory 100).

B. Dismissal from the Clerical State – Laicization

A deacon can be returned to the lay state by canonical dismissal or because of a dispensation granted by the Holy See. Once dismissed or dispensed, he no longer enjoys any rights or privileges accorded clerics by the law of the Church. Any responsibility, financial or liability, ceases on the part of the diocese (Directory 99).

XV. Post Ordination Formation

The training and formation prior to ordination was only a beginning. Each deacon is expected to take the responsibility for his own life-long continuing spiritual formation and education. The goal for this path in formation is to address the various aspects of diaconal ministry, the development of his personality and, above all, his commitment to spiritual growth (Directory 239). This phase of formation is divided into two parts: the initial three years after ordination and life-long formation. Within each of these parts are two distinct but closely related levels of formation: the diocesan level and the community level in which the deacon exercises diaconal ministry (Directory 242).

During the first three years after ordination, those newly-ordained and their wives continue to take part in regular gatherings for formation as a community. In addition, those newly ordained begin to develop a specific formation plan that addresses their specific needs.

Beyond the initial three years after ordination, deacons and their wives continue to take part in formation events and retreats for the entire diaconal community as well as continue to take responsibility for their continued ministerial formation through academic classes, spiritual development, personal reading, research, discussion, theological reflection and skill development. Opportunities are also available for the gathering of deacon families.

The office of the diaconate, in consultation with the Deacon Council, will provide an annual retreat and a convocation per year. Funding for these events will be provided by the parish(es) to which deacons attending the events are assigned and with support from the office of the diaconate in the form of honoraria for presenters. Funding for retired deacons will be provided by [the diocese](#).

Deleted: parishes they serve

A list of spiritual directors will be made available for deacons and their wives.

Deacons are invited to attend the November Clergy Days, [the Priest Convocation](#) and June Clergy Institute provided for deacons and priests.

Each deacon should complete a minimum of ten contact hours of continuing education annually. Hours may come from deacon study days, Clergy Days and Clergy Institutes, diocesan, regional, or national conferences, workshops and seminars, educational and developmental themes for retreats and days of recollection, self-guided study, distance learning, ministry reflection groups, and mentoring groups

among deacons that meet to discuss ministry, exchange experiences, advance formation, and encourage each other in fidelity. Each deacon should also complete a retreat annually.

The married deacon does not serve in his ministry alone, but with the encouragement and approval of his wife. While the deacon is continuing his own growth, his wife should grow too. There is evidence that when the wife is actively integrated into the education-formation experience, her life has been improved, her relationship with her husband and family has been renewed and a healthier attitude exists for future growth. Wives of deacons are invited and encouraged, but not required, to participate fully in the diaconal continuing education program. Occasionally a session will be limited to deacons only or to wives only. In these guidelines most of the items are intended to apply to both the deacon and his wife, not to the deacon alone. There may be times when, because of the ages and numbers of children or other commitments she may not be able to participate fully, but at these times her husband should keep her informed with a look toward fuller participation at a future time (Synod V).

XVI. Politics

A deacon may not present his name for election to any public office or in any other general election, or accept a nomination or an appointment to public office, without the prior written permission of the diocesan bishop (Directory 98). A deacon may not actively and publicly participate in another's political campaign without the prior written permission of the diocesan bishop (Directory 91).

XVII. Diocesan Policies Relating to Sexuality and Personal Behavior

Policies relating to sexuality and personal behavior are found on the diocesan website. The vicar general is responsible for these policies.

XVIII. Liturgical Ministry

A. Diocesan Policies

Diocesan policies regarding the deacon and the liturgy can be found on the diocesan website and in the appendix. The director of liturgy is responsible for these policies.

B. Frequency

The frequency that the deacon assists at parish liturgies is determined by the ministry agreement. If the deacon performs a function of ministry at a liturgy, he should vest. He should also vest if with a group of deacons gathered as an order.

In the absence of a priest, a deacon should preside at liturgies outside of Mass. If a deacon assigned to the parish is not available or a deacon is not assigned to the parish, a deacon from a neighboring parish, from the deanery or from outside of the deanery should be contacted to preside at the liturgy.

C. Preaching

Deacons are ordained "to proclaim the Gospel and preach the Word of God." They "have the faculty to preach everywhere, in accordance with the conditions established by [Canon Law]" (Directory 80).

The general frequency of preaching by a deacon is determined in the ministry agreement with the understanding that the frequency may be modified according to the needs of the parish and the pastor.

D. Liturgy of the Hours

Deacons are required to include as part of their daily prayer those parts of the Liturgy of the Hours known as Morning and Evening Prayer. Deacons are obliged to pray for the universal Church. Whenever possible, they should lead these prayers with the community to whom they have been assigned to minister (Directory 90).

E. Bi-Ritual Deacons

When a permanent deacon of the Eastern Catholic Churches is granted bi-ritual faculties to assist in the Roman Church, the theological understanding of the sacraments and the order of the diaconate in the Eastern Catholic Churches is to be respected. Practically, a deacon of the Eastern Catholic Churches is not to be allowed to solemnize marriages in the Roman Church (Directory 102).

F. Ecumenical Liturgies and Services

The Second Vatican Council also urged "its sons and daughters to enter with prudence and charity into discussion and collaboration with members of other religions." Such a spirit must imbue a desire for ecumenical and interreligious cooperation with Jews, Muslims, and members of other religions. Deacons should strive in achieving a spirit of welcome, respect, and collaboration among people of good will. The concerns of justice, peace, and the integrity of human life join together all churches and all religions (Directory 152).

XIX. Funeral Planning

One of the greatest acts of love that can be offered to loved ones is relieving them of the burden of deciding funeral arrangements at the time of death. Survivors often agonize over making the right decisions and fulfilling unstated 'final wishes'. The office of the diaconate provides the "Deacon Funeral Instructions" to assist in advising both loved ones and the diocese of those 'final wishes'. It is recommended that this form be completed with the assistance of loved ones. One copy should be left in their possession and one copy should be forwarded to the office of the diaconate in a sealed envelope plainly marked with the name of the person's instructions. If a funeral has been pre-planned, a copy of the instructions should also be provided to the local mortuary.

The funeral instructions may be used for deacons and for the wives of deacons.

A. Entering the Priesthood

Widowed deacons and deacons who have not been married who are considering a call to the priesthood should contact the director and the director of vocations.

Underlying the restoration and renewal of the diaconate at the Second Vatican Council was the principle that the diaconate is a stable and permanent rank of ordained ministry. Since the history of the order over the last millennium, however, has been centered on the diaconate as a transitory stage leading to the priesthood, actions that may obfuscate the stability and permanence of the order should be minimized. This would include the ordination of celibate or widowed deacons to the priesthood (Directory 77).

XX. Appendix I – Forms

Note:

Effective July 1, 2013 the Diocese of Davenport implemented a new procedure for performing background checks. Completion of the background information is now done electronically through the VIRTUS Program instead of paper forms.

Go to the diocesan Safe Environment webpage for complete information on this process:

<http://www.davenportdiocese.org/Safe%20Env/index.htm>.

The Safe Environment Library contains instructions on how to complete the online forms as well as an instruction manual for the Safe Environment Local Administrator.

XXI. Appendix II – References

