



# **GROUND ZERO HANDBOOK**

- Section 1: Introduction**
- Section 2: Employment**
- Section 3: Employee Code of Conduct**
- Section 4: Attendance & Office Procedures**
- Section 5: Financial**
- Section 6: Emergency Procedures**

# Introduction

## **1.1 Welcome and Purpose of Handbook:**

Welcome to the Ground Zero team! In accepting this position, you have chosen to embrace Ground Zero's mission, values and strategy, adopting them as your own. Your commitment to the mission and significant role as an employee are the keys to Ground Zero's success. With that in mind, and much thought and prayer, we have developed this handbook.

It is our goal to provide you with a few guidelines and answers to your questions about your employment with Ground Zero. This handbook covers basic information about our personnel policies, procedures, and conduct that is expected of all Ground Zero employees. It outlines the ministry's expectations of you, as well as what you can expect of Ground Zero. It is important that you become familiar with this manual so that your ministry here can be successful.

This handbook applies to all employees and supersedes any previous policies. As we continue to grow and develop, some policies herein may change. Ground Zero reserves the right to revise, supplement, remove, or add any policy or portion of this handbook, at any time, as needed. In the event of a change, all employees will be notified. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask the President. Once again, welcome to Ground Zero. Thank you for joining our team!

## **1.2 Our Vision Statement:**

To start a movement of teenagers coming to Christ, living for Him and impacting their world

## **1.3 Our Mission Statement:**

To make a positive impact in the lives of today's teenagers, cultivating their faith and transforming their futures

## **1.4 Our Statement of Faith:**

**About the Bible** - We believe the entire Bible is the inspired Word of God. The Spirit of God moved men to write scripture. Therefore, we believe the Bible as given in its original language is without error.

**About God** - We believe in one God who exists in three distinct persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We believe that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, became flesh to reveal God to humanity and became the Savior of the world.

**About Man** - We believe that mankind was created in the image of God to have a relationship with Him, but became alienated through sinful disobedience. As a result, man is incapable of regaining a right relationship with God through their human efforts. Therefore, man is eternally lost.

**About Salvation** - We believe that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross provides the sole basis for the forgiveness of sin. God freely offers salvation to those who place their faith in the person of Jesus Christ as a means to an eternal relationship with Him.

**About the Christian Life** - We believe Christ-followers should live intentionally for Jesus. Believers choose daily to obey God's Word, yield to the Holy Spirit, pursue maturity, and become more Christ-like.

**About the Church** - Ground Zero is not in competition with the local church. Instead, we work alongside the local church in a complementary role to achieve God's plan for all mankind. We believe that the church is the body of Christ. The head of the church is Jesus Christ. Members are those who have trusted by faith the finished work of Christ. The church's purpose is to glorify God by loving Him and by making Him known to the lost world.

## 1.5 Our Biblical Positions Statement

Ground Zero seeks to advance the cause of Christ by working alongside other believers. Because there are so many life issues being discussed in the media that are raising valid questions about faith, doctrine and the interpretation of scripture, we have developed the following Biblical positions. This is not a complete list of what we think the Bible has to say, but rather a current list of what God has shown us through prayer, study, reflection and discussion with other Christian leaders. We hope to add to these positions as our ministry continues.

**About Marriage** - We believe marriage is between one man and one woman.

*Genesis 2:24* - Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

**About Sexual Purity** - We believe God calls Christ-followers to sexual purity. Sex is a gift from God to be treasured solely within a marriage relationship.

*Hebrews 13:4* - Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.

**About Homosexuality** - We believe God calls Christ-followers to abstain from sexual relationships or marriage with members of the same sex.

*Leviticus 18:22* - You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.

**About Abortion and Life** - We believe God creates and sustains all life. Life begins at conception and ends in His time.

*Nehemiah 9:6* - You give life to everything.

*Psalms 139:13* - For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

**About Alcohol and Substance Abuse** - We believe in the indwelling Holy Spirit and as such, Christ-followers are charged with caring for their bodies by avoiding any substances that would abuse them or tempt others to abuse theirs.

*1 Corinthians 6:19* - Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God?

*Ephesians 5:18* - Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit.  
*Romans 14:13* - Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother.

## 1.6 Our Values

**Relevance.** We use high-quality current events, entertainment and experiences to capture the attention of teenagers and impact them for Christ.

**Excellence.** We conduct everything we do with thoughtful stewardship and an excellence that glorifies God.

**Relationships.** We believe we best convey Christ's love, grace, and forgiveness through authentic relationships.

**Unity.** We are most effective when we work together to impact teenagers for Jesus Christ.

**Truth.** We found everything we do on truth from God's Word, the means by which minds are renewed and hearts are transformed.

## 1.7 Our Staff Covenant:

Compelled by the love of Christ, motivated by a love for teenagers, and empowered by the indwelling Holy Spirit, I hereby enter into a covenant with God and my co-laborers in youth ministry. I claim by faith that my life will be characterized by:

**A Personal Relationship with Jesus Christ and the Acknowledgement of His Lordship in my Life Each Day:** I have committed my life to Christ and have accepted Him as my Lord and Savior.

*Psalm 62:2* - He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken.

*Romans 10:9-10* - That if you confess with your mouth "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup>For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

**A Daily Walk with Christ:** I am committed to growing and maturing in my relationship with Jesus Christ through a regular time of prayer and study of God's Word.

*Psalm 119:9* - I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

*James 5:16b* - The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

**Regular Church Attendance:** I am committed to active involvement in a local church, which is necessary for my personal refreshment and spiritual growth.

*Hebrews 10:25* - Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

*Acts 2:42* - They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

**Financial Stewardship:** I recognize that all I have is a blessing from God. Therefore, I am committed to giving a portion of my financial resources back to God.

*Leviticus 27:30 - A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the LORD; it is holy to the LORD.*

*Malachi 3:10 - Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. "Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.*

**A Lifestyle Worthy of the Calling:** I am committed to a lifestyle characterized by honesty and integrity, exemplifying spiritual maturity through my behavior and language at work, home and in the community.

*1 Corinthians 10:31 - So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.*

*Galatians 6:22 - But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law.*

**Sexual Purity:** I am committed to a life of sexual purity.

*1 Corinthians 6:18 - Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body.*

*1 Thessalonians 4:3-4 - It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; <sup>4</sup>that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable...*

**An Exemplary Home Life:** I have a primary commitment to my family that is never to be superseded by my commitment to Ground Zero. My family is always my first priority and my home life serves as a guide and constant source of renewal for my family and myself.

*1 Timothy 3:4 - He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect.*

*1 Corinthians 7:3 - The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband.*

**A Positive Teamwork Attitude:** I am committed to daily creating a Christ-filled work environment, continually focused on teamwork, and accepting and nurturing new employees, interns, volunteers and guests.

*Colossians 3:23-24 - Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, <sup>24</sup>since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.*

*Romans 15:5-6 - May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup>so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

# Employment

## **2.1 Employee Orientation:**

An orientation will be scheduled with each new employee during their first week in the office. The purpose of this time is to familiarize them with the Ground Zero office as well as the policies and procedures in this handbook. It is designed to help the employee become an effective member of the Ground Zero team.

## **2.2 Personnel Files:**

Ground Zero keeps a personnel file for each employee. It is critical that we have accurate and up-to-date records for each employee. The Administrative Assistant must be notified within 30 days of the change of any changes in name, address, phone number or marital status. In order to maintain complete personnel files, several items are required:

1. Resume
2. Completed Ground Zero application
3. Completed W4 form (to be reviewed/updated each year)
4. I9 Form (to be reviewed/updated each year)
5. Copy of valid Driver's License and Social Security Card
6. Information form (to be reviewed/updated each year)
7. Employee evaluations
8. Compensation Agreement
9. Signed copies of handbook, covenant, etc.
10. Background Check
11. Background Check consent form
12. Any other information the ministry wishes to keep on file

Personnel files are the property of Ground Zero and access to the information contained in these files is restricted. The President, Administrative Assistant, and the Board (as a whole) have access to personnel files. No other person has access to an employee's file for any reason, at any time.

## **2.3 Background Checks:**

During the interview process, each employee is required to sign a release allowing Ground Zero to perform a background check at any time during their employment. Any criminal convictions or charges must be reported immediately to the Administrative Assistant.

## **2.4 Evaluations:**

To ensure that each employee is doing his/her job effectively and productively, formal performance evaluations will be conducted each June by the President. The purpose of these evaluations is to identify those areas where the employee is excelling, as well as those areas needing improvement.

Upon completing the evaluation, the employee will be given an opportunity to personally review his/her own evaluation. The employee and the President will meet privately to review the evaluation. During this meeting the employee will be given an opportunity to raise any questions he/she may have about the evaluation. The employee and the President will also discuss ways to address those areas needing improvement. The employee will be asked to sign his/her evaluation, after which he/she will receive a copy for his/her own records. During this time the staff member's personnel file will be updated and budget responsibilities (expenses and income connected to the staff member's job) will be outlined.

This formal evaluation is not necessarily the only time an employee's job performance will be discussed. There may be other times during which this may be needed. If an employee has any questions about his/her own job performance or about what he/she can do to improve, he/she may arrange a time to meet with the President.

## **2.5 Raises:**

Staff who are compensated by the budget can expect a 2% - 3% annual cost of living raise at the beginning of each new fiscal year (July 1), pending board approval. Staff hired after the first 5 months of a fiscal year will not receive a raise until the following fiscal year. Staff who are responsible for raising their own support must fund any increase in their salary as approved by the Board of Directors.

## **2.6 Additional Employment:**

Any Ground Zero employee who finds it necessary to seek additional employment elsewhere must first have the approval of the President. Ground Zero employees may not, in any circumstance, engage in outside employment that:

1. Interferes with their Ground Zero duties or job performance.
2. Brings discredit to God or Ground Zero.
3. Is inconsistent with the policies as set forth in this handbook.

## **2.7 Resignation:**

If an employee should decide to leave Ground Zero for any reason, he/she must report his/her plans to resign immediately, and must give no less than 30 days' notice. Any such notice is required to be in writing and should be given to the President before any discussion with anyone associated with Ground Zero in any way (including employees, ministry partners, students, parents, ministry contacts, and other key individuals.) The purpose of this notice is to provide a sufficient amount of time to facilitate a smooth transition. However, Ground Zero may accept a resignation immediately or accelerate the final date of employment. This decision will be made at the discretion of the President.

After notice is given, the President and the employee will meet to form an exit strategy and schedule the exit interview. The exit interview will provide the ministry with the opportunity to reclaim any Ground Zero property and for both parties to tie up any loose ends.

A resigning employee is responsible for following the proper procedures for alerting partners who are financially supporting their ministry with Ground Zero. This communication with donors must be in the form of a letter which is to be submitted to Ground Zero for approval and mailing. No other communication with donors about the employee's resignation may take place until after the donor has received the approved letter mailed by Ground Zero.

## **2.8 Personal Items:**

All personal property must be removed by the last day of employment. Ground Zero will assume no liability for any personal property left in the office. Any property left will be considered abandoned and disposed of at Ground Zero's discretion.

## **2.9 Ground Zero Property:**

Each employee is responsible for any Ground Zero property in his/her possession. Equipment and furniture must be kept clean, neat and in good working order. Any employee who loses or misuses any Ground Zero property will be required to personally replace or fix the item. Ground Zero property must be returned immediately upon request or at the end of employment. Upon resignation, an employee may submit a formal request to purchase equipment or furniture that was used solely by the employee for personal ministry use during their employment with Ground Zero. Ground Zero reserves the right to accept or deny any such request and to sell (only at fair market value) or refuse to sell any equipment or furniture. This decision is to be made at the discretion of the President. Original documents are only to be destroyed at the discretion of the President.

*Property of Ground Zero includes, but is not limited to:*

1. Keys and security codes. Employee security codes will be deleted during the employee's final day in the office.
2. Manuals
3. Confidential Information (see section 2-14 for more information about confidentiality)
4. Items donated to Ground Zero. Any item reported as a donation to Ground Zero, whether for a specific employee's use or not, is property of Ground Zero.
5. Any items purchased using Ground Zero funds. Ground Zero funds include any donations made to Ground Zero regardless of the designation of funds.
6. Any items reimbursed using Ground Zero funds. The items described in #4, #5 and #6 include but are not limited to office equipment, computer software and furniture.
7. Information and files obtained or created for Ground Zero's use or used by employee for the ministry's purposes, including but is not limited to venue information, resource and vendor contact information, and database contact information.
8. Electronic or paper documents created while employed by Ground Zero, including originals, copies, and those stored in any electronic device.
9. Cell phones and cell phone numbers
10. Passwords and access to ministry social media, photos, logos

## **2.10 Personal Use of Ground Zero Property:**

Employees will be charged a fee for any personal use of Ground Zero equipment (copier, fax machine, postage machine). No children of employees should ever use any equipment owned by Ground Zero.

## **2.11 General Office Atmosphere and Appearance:**

A Ground Zero office is an inviting, and comfortable place for all employees and guests. As such, Ground Zero expects employees to contribute to the effort to keep our offices clean and organized at all times.

## **2.12 Personal Office Guidelines:**

Each individual is responsible for keeping his/her own office space clean, neat, and welcoming to guests. Employees are encouraged to personalize their own office in accordance with a few guidelines:

1. Avoid setting items on the half wall separating each office from the walkway.
2. Empty trash cans regularly. Do not allow overflow to accumulate.
3. Keep the floor and furniture clear.
4. Maintain a neat and uncluttered workspace.
5. Play music at a reasonable volume.
6. Dust office furniture regularly.
7. Leave your office clean and ready at the end of the work day.
8. Keep common areas neat and organized.

## **2.13 Employee Privacy:**

Employees should first acquire permission before using the office or computer of another employee. Staff spouses and children are not permitted to use the office or computer of another employee without permission from that staff member.

## **2.14 Confidentiality:**

Confidentiality is vital to effective ministry. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Employee, donor, volunteer or student personal information and lists.
2. Personal issues regarding employees, donors, and volunteers that are shared in confidence.
3. Employee personnel information.
4. Employee compensation information.
5. Ministry passcodes and passwords.

The ministry's confidential information (including but not limited to the above) should not be discussed outside the office or in the presence of guests. Any confidential information in an employee's possession should be kept out of sight or locked in the employee's office. All confidential information is property of Ground Zero and must be returned immediately upon end of employment. Employees may keep no record of information that is considered confidential beyond employment with Ground Zero.

## **2.15 Employee Communication:**

Effective communication is crucial in ministry. To that end:

- Employees are expected to attend all staff meetings
- Employees are assigned individual mailboxes. It is each individual's responsibility to keep his/her own box clear at all times. New items must be processed as quickly as possible, allowing employees to know when new material has been placed there.
- Employees are expected to take complete phone messages for others, including all necessary information (name, date and time of call, phone #, and other pertinent details). This allows the receiving employee to respond appropriately to the message.
- Employees are expected to return all emails and phone calls in a timely manner.

## **2.16 Meetings and Commitments:**

Employees are expected to be on time to mandatory meetings and activities. It is each employee's responsibility to be aware of any such meetings and to arrive before they begin. Employees are expected to show respect for the person speaking while it is their time to share. Employees are asked to not bring electronic devices to meetings (including computers and iPads) as they are an unnecessary distraction. Cell phones are permitted in meetings, but staff members are asked to keep them on vibrate and only answer when there is an emergency.

## **2.17 Ground Zero Board Communication:**

Employees are to solve internal problems following the pattern outlined in Ground Zero's conflict resolution policy (3-8) and in accordance with the principles stated in Matthew 18:15-17. If an employee feels he/she is not being given a fair hearing by the President, he/she may contact the Board Chairman to discuss the concern. If no resolution is reached in consult with the Chairman, then together the Board Chairman and employee can schedule a meeting with the President to bring about a satisfactory outcome. It is inappropriate for employees to contact the full board of directors en masse (via letter, email, telephone, digital media, or other means) to address an internal conflict without following Matthew 18 procedures.

# Employee Code of Conduct

In order to create the best possible work environment, Ground Zero expects all employees to respect the rules of conduct listed below.

## **3.1 Tobacco/Alcohol/Drug Use:**

Ground Zero expects all employees to refrain from a lifestyle that engages in the use of tobacco, alcohol, or any non-prescribed or illegal drug.

## **3.2 Appropriate Language/Behavior Policy:**

Ground Zero expects all employees to refrain from the use of foul language, crude or degrading humor, and inappropriate behavior at work, home and in the community.

## **3.3 Employee Dating Policy:**

Ground Zero employees are prohibited from dating other employees.

*1 Corinthians 8:35 - I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord.*

## **3.4 Opposite Sex Policies:**

It is crucial that Ground Zero maintains a reputation of sexual purity. To that end, no two employees of the opposite sex may be alone together in private. When two employees of the opposite sex meet in an office, the door is to be left open at all times. Two employees of the opposite sex may not travel alone together. No employee is to be alone with a teenager at any time.

*Ephesians 5:3 - But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people.*

## **3.5 Harassment Policy:**

No employee of Ground Zero is expected to tolerate harassment of any sort. Ground Zero is committed to providing a work environment that is free of harassment. The ministry prohibits harassment in any form.

## **3.6 Respecting Denominational Differences:**

Each employee is to respect the denominational differences of other employees. Ground Zero is characterized by its diversity and is unified by its mission and strategy through Jesus Christ. Our denominational differences add to the richness and potential of our impact on the teenagers of America. We focus on what binds us together and praise God for our differences.

*Psalms 133:1 - How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity.*

### 3.7 Dress Code:

Personal appearance at the Ground Zero office and Ground Zero activities projects a professional atmosphere, displays reverence for God, and demonstrates respect for others. Each employee should dress appropriately for work in the office and for meetings as accepted as standard by other area professionals. Staff members not meeting Ground Zero's standards will be required to correct the problem immediately.

### 3.8 Conflict Resolution:

In order to maintain unity among the staff of Ground Zero, it is crucial that we are able to solve problems effectively and Biblically. Ground Zero holds to the following procedures as consistent with God's Word that serve as a guide when dealing with interpersonal conflict.

*Matthew 18:15-17* - *If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. <sup>16</sup>But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. <sup>17</sup>If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church...*

1. First go to the person who has offended you without involving any other person.
2. Then, if the person does not listen, go again and take one or two other Ground Zero employees with you. ***In the case your conflict is with the President, your next step would be to go to the board chairman with your concern after you have discussed your concern with the President. (see 2.17)***
3. If the person still does not comply, notify the President of the problem.

### 3.9 Complaint Resolution:

Ground Zero encourages its employees to address any complaints as quickly as possible using these simple guidelines.

1. Informally discuss the complaint with the President. Make a serious attempt to resolve the problem at this initial level.
2. If the complaint remains unresolved, submit a written statement to the President for further review and discussion, in an attempt to solve the problem.
3. If the problem is still not resolved via #1 and #2, the Board will be called upon to make a decision which will be final and binding.

### 3.10 Corrective Action/Termination:

In cases where an employee is involved in a serious violation (such as but not limited to conviction of a crime, violation of Ground Zero's financial procedures, adultery, drug use, sexual harassment or misconduct) an employee will be terminated immediately. If an employee's behavior shows disrespect for the ministry or staff and/or does not follow the established guidelines in this policy,

Ground Zero has the responsibility to take actions to correct the problem. The ministry will follow this course of disciplinary guidelines.

1. Verbal Correction: A meeting will be called between the President and the employee during which the behavior and the need for action will be discussed. This meeting will be conducted verbally, and it will be documented by the President and placed in the employee's personnel file to verify that it took place.
2. Written Correction: If little or no improvement is seen, a second meeting will be held between the President and the employee. A written plan of correction will follow, to be signed both by the President and the employee. This is to be placed in the employee's personnel file at which point the employee is placed on a 30-day probationary period, with guidelines set on an individual basis. The employee's signature on this document indicates only that the employee has read the plan. He or she may or may not agree with its content.
3. Termination: If the employee continues the unacceptable behavior, he/she may be terminated. If the behavior is changed within the time set in the signed document (30 days), the employee will be removed from probation and documentation of the change will be placed in the employee's personnel file. If after the 30-day probationary period the employee violates the same policy or repeats the problem behavior, the President may choose to terminate employment. If an employee is placed on probation more than two times for any violation of policy or problem behavior in any 12-month period, the President may choose to terminate employment. Termination decisions will be made at the discretion of the President. In the event of termination with cause an exit interview will be conducted by the President and the employee will immediately relinquish all Ground Zero property (outlined in 2-9) including, keys, passwords, and electronic devices containing Ground Zero data or database information acquired while employed by Ground Zero. Personal property left after termination will be considered abandoned and disposed of at Ground Zero's discretion.

Ground Zero reserves the right to eliminate, enforce, or repeat any of the forementioned procedures as the severity of an individual situation merits.

# **Attendance & Office Procedures**

## **4.1 Attendance and Punctuality:**

Ground Zero maintains an effective and productive work environment. Employees are expected to be punctual to work and scheduled meetings.

Office hours are Monday through Friday, 9 AM – 4:30 PM. Employees are to arrive on time and leave on time. Employees are to be present and ready to work at the designated time. Employees are to begin their lunch break during the standard lunch hour (12 – 1 PM) and return to work an hour after leaving. Employees are expected to be on time to mandatory meetings and activities.

Absenteeism and tardiness places an unnecessary burden on other employees and daily office operations. If an employee anticipates being tardy or absent, he/she must notify the Administrative Assistant as soon as possible. The employee is to complete a “Leave Request/Report Form” within two days of the employee’s return to work.

## **4.2 Employee Respect:**

Time is a resource given to us by God to invest and use. Employees should first acquire permission before entering another employee’s office while the other is working. When needs are not urgent, employees are expected to keep social time to a minimum, including accompanying colleagues on errands.

Employees are expected to keep noise and music levels to acceptable minimums in order to respect their colleagues in the ministry’s open work space.

## **4.3 Ministry vehicles**

Vehicles owned by the ministry are to be used for Ground Zero-related purposes only, such as transporting artists, meeting with sponsors, or errands for the ministry unless otherwise noted by the Board of Directors.

## **4.4 Inclement Weather:**

When the local school system closes or is delayed due to inclement weather, an employee who is concerned about travel safety will be granted an excused absence should he/she choose not to travel to work (or choose to follow the delay). Employees are requested to use both good judgment and discretion when roads improve during school closures, traveling to work later in the day as conditions warrant.

#### **4.5 Sick Leave:**

Sick leave is to be used during an employee's personal illness, spouse's illness, or a child's illness – the latter two in the event the employee is needed in the home. Each salaried employee may use up to 40 hours of sick leave each year. In the case of extreme or extended illness, the President may grant more time. Within two days of the employee's return to work, he/she must fill out a "Leave Request/Report Form."

#### **4.6 Vacation Leave:**

Each salaried employee will be given two weeks or 80 hours of vacation leave each year. At least one of the two weeks should be taken at one time. The remaining week may be taken however desired (together or as individual days). Vacations should not conflict with any Ground Zero event and may be denied if conflicting with a mandatory meeting. In order to request vacation leave, the employee must fill out a "Leave Request/Report Form" at least two days prior to the requested leave (2-weeks prior if taking more than 2 days of vacation leave). This form must be approved by the Administrative Assistant.

#### **4.7 Family/Personal Leave:**

Family and personal leave is not considered to be vacation time, but rather a special compensation to allow for personal or family commitments, such as taking a family member to a medical appointment or assisting with a school field trip. Each salaried employee may take up to five days or 40 hours of Family/Personal Leave each year. No more than two days should be taken together. Family/Personal leave should not conflict with any Ground Zero event and may be denied if conflicting with a mandatory meeting. In order to request Family/Personal leave, the employee must fill out a "Leave Request/Report Form" at least two days prior to the requested time off. This form must be approved by the Administrative Assistant. In the event of an emergency, the employee must report on Family/Personal leave taken by filling out a "Leave Request/Report Form" within two days of return to work.

#### **4.8 Jury Duty:**

Employees may have time off for jury duty as needed. Jury duty is a civic responsibility that should not be avoided. When an employee receives a notice to report for jury duty, he/she must fill out a "Leave Request/Report Form". If jury duty is cancelled or if it is finished before 2:00 p.m., the employee should report to work. Jury duty is considered unpaid leave for all hourly employees.

#### **4.9 Bereavement Leave:**

Each employee will be given five days of funeral leave for the death of an immediate family member or close friend. In addition, employees may take up to three days for other friends or distant relatives. There may be situations in which more time is needed for travel or care for a family member. In the case this is necessary, the appropriate arrangements for extra time off must be approved by the President. Employees must complete a "Leave Request/Report Form" within two

days of the employee's return to work. Funeral leave is considered unpaid leave for all hourly employees.

#### **4.10 Maternity & Paternity Leave:**

Ground Zero maintains a family-friendly environment. We work within the parameters of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) to grant appropriate maternity and paternity leave.. A female employee who has been with Ground Zero for one year or more may be granted six weeks of maternity leave for pregnancy, natural childbirth, delivery, or adoption; eight weeks may be granted for cesarean birth. Salaried employees who raise their support may continue to receive a paycheck during maternity leave. Hourly employees will be granted maternity leave without pay. The employee should give at least two months' notice of the anticipated date of maternity leave by filling out a "Leave Request/Report Form". If she or her physician should determine that a change of date is necessary, the President should be notified as soon as possible.

Male employees are granted one week of maternity leave for natural childbirth or adoption and two weeks for cesarean birth following the birth or adoption of a child.

#### **4.11 Partner Development Leave:**

Each salaried employee raising support is allotted 24 hours of Partner Development Leave each year. These trips should not to be planned in conflict with any Ground Zero event and may be denied if conflicting with a mandatory meeting. If an employee wishes to use Partner Development Leave, he/she must fill out a "Leave Request/Report Form" at least two days in advance.

#### **4.12 Educational Days:**

Employees may be granted time to attend conferences or seminars that Ground Zero feels would enrich their ministry at Ground Zero. This time will be granted at the discretion of the President.

#### **4.13 Hourly Employee Annual Leave**

Hourly employees may take up to two weeks or 80 hours of unpaid annual leave. At least one of the two weeks should be taken at one time. The remaining week may be taken however desired (together or as individual days). Annual leave should not conflict with any Ground Zero event and may be denied if conflicting with an important meeting. In order to request leave, the employee must fill out a "Leave Request/Report Form" at least two days prior to the requested leave (2-weeks prior if taking more than 2 days of leave). This form must be approved by the Administrative Assistant.

#### **4.14 Holidays:**

Ground Zero observes the following holidays by closing the office:

- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day (Friday or Monday if the 4<sup>th</sup> falls on a weekend)
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving (Wednesday, Thursday and Friday)
- Christmas (2 weeks as designated on the ministry calendar)

*\* Unused time will not carry over from previous year.*

# Financial

## **5.1 Partner Development:**

Ground Zero has chosen to allow employees who raise support to do so in a manner that the funds they raise are set aside from which that employee's paychecks, taxes, reimbursements and other ministry expenses are drawn. Funds received through Ground Zero become property of Ground Zero. While Ground Zero will endeavor to use donated funds as preference by the donor, we may use the gift for another purpose. Employees raising support are raising funds for Ground Zero and Ground Zero simply chooses to allow those funds to be preferenced for the employee who raised the funds. The employee's paychecks and any reimbursed or Ground Zero paid ministry expenses are drawn from the account set aside for that employee as funds allow. These accounts are referred to as the "employee's account" or "their account". This terminology is used solely to identify the name of the account. All personnel accounts are "Ground Zero accounts" and as such are property of Ground Zero. Ground Zero has the option at any time to change the manner in which funds are raised and distributed to its employees. No monies raised belong or are "due" to an employee.

## **5.2 Financial Mail:**

Financial mail is considered confidential material. As such, no one besides the President or the Administrative Assistant (or an employee designated by the President) may open or handle any financial mail.

## **5.3 Pay Schedule:**

Paychecks are issued on the first and fifteenth of each month through direct deposit. ***For new employees, your first check will be received on the first pay date following your first week in the office. Your first paycheck will be a paper check and then your direct deposits will begin on your second pay date.***

## **5.4 Deductions:**

All employees must complete the appropriate tax forms before any deductions may be taken and before they receive their first paycheck. Ground Zero deducts Federal, Medicare, FICA, workman's comp, unemployment (SC) and Social Security taxes from each paycheck. Both the employee's portion and Ground Zero's portion of Medicare and Social Security taxes are drawn from salaried employee payroll accounts. W-4s are reviewed and updated annually by each employee.

Please be advised that ordained, licensed, or certified ministers fall under different tax regulations and may qualify for a housing allowance. Housing allowance requests must be submitted to the President and to the Board of Directors for approval.

## 5.5 Final Paycheck:

A full-time employee must complete his or her exit interview before the final paycheck is released. The employee's final paycheck will be issued for the complete pay period in which the employee's last work day falls. Any funds raised by the employee beyond his final pay period are credited to Ground Zero's general ministry account. An employee is responsible for communicating his or her change of status and date of the change to financial partners. Ground Zero cannot accept gifts designated to a specific employee once that individual is no longer working for the ministry.

## 5.6 Reimbursement Policy:

**Organizational expenses.** Items that an employee purchases on behalf of the ministry become property of Ground Zero. "Reimbursement Forms" should be filled out completely, with all appropriate information, including ministry purpose and the account from which the reimbursement should be paid. Photocopy receipts must accompany the "Reimbursement Form".

**Personal ministry expenses.** Employees may be reimbursed for personal ministry expenses as funds in their account allow. A personal ministry expense is defined as an expenditure that directly relates to the employee effectively performing his/her job functions, which is not provided for with funding from a designated Ground Zero account.

Employees are advised to keep all original receipts that are reimbursed for personal records in the event that they may be audited. If an employee wishes to have a copy of their reimbursement slip, it must be photocopied before it is turned in. The original will be kept on file along with the financial records.

The following is a list of guidelines for personal ministry expense reimbursements:

1. Books, subscriptions, and dues:
  - a. Ministry books and subscriptions - Books or magazines used to increase effectiveness within the employee's position. Any magazine subscriptions should be mailed to Ground Zero in order to qualify for reimbursement.
  - b. Membership in clubs - there must be a ministry purpose to qualify for reimbursement. Please include how the club is vital to your ministry.
2. Ministry Partner development, conferences, meetings and events:
  - a. All expenses related to ministry partner development, conferences, meetings and events attended at the request of Ground Zero are reimbursable.
  - b. Spouse/dependent overnight travel - Spouses are considered field staff, although they are not employees, due to their involvement in ministry partner development. Therefore all expenses incurred by employee spouses and children, directly related to partner development, are considered reimbursable. However, the expenses must be documented in a way that shows why the expenses are necessary to partner development.

3. Personal travel combined with ministry:
  - a. Employees may be reimbursed for reasonable travel expenses incurred on a personal vacation during which intentional and planned partner development took place. Interaction with immediate family members does not constitute a “legitimate” ministry expense. Also, incidental opportunities are not considered intentional or planned.
  - b. Funeral/wedding trips - You may be reimbursed for expenses incurred while attending a funeral or wedding of a ministry partner or person you have ministered to though Ground Zero. Any expenses incurred to attend a funeral or wedding of friends or family members (who are not donors) are personal and are not reimbursable.
  - c. Moving expenses - Some examples of valid reimbursable moving expenses are the following:
    1. Storage for 30 days from U.S. to U.S. location
    2. Storage for 90 days from U.S. location to overseas location or overseas location to U.S.
    3. Shipping goods from old residence to new residence in the most direct path.
    4. Lodging en route, including day of arrival
    5. Tolls and parking
    6. Costs of an incorporated moving company
    7. Truck rental
    8. Travel for one-way trip, one time
    9. Plane tickets
    10. Gas expenses for vehicle not owned by staff

*Examples of expenses that are NOT reimbursable moving expenses:*

    1. Groceries for new location
    2. Temporary housing
    3. Real estate expenses for selling/buying home
    4. General maintenance for a vehicle to take trip
4. Office Supplies - Any supply not provided by Ground Zero that you choose to purchase with your own money may be reimbursed from your account (See Purchasing Procedures)
5. Postage - These expenses are for mailing costs related to partner development
6. Printing - These expenses are for printing costs related to partner development
7. Entertainment - This must be directly related to partner development. If less than five are entertained, list the full names of those entertained followed by your own name to show that you were present. You must include the type of entertainment, such as dinner, movie, golf, etc., where the entertainment took place and the specific ministry purpose. Any meals deducted must be at a reasonable cost.

8. Equipment Purchases - Any piece of equipment that you wish to purchase with your own money, not supplied by Ground Zero, may be reimbursed as long as the equipment is used at least 80% for ministry purposes. Any equipment for which an employee is reimbursed is property of Ground Zero and must be returned immediately upon end of employment with Ground Zero.
9. Ministry use of your personal car - mileage may be claimed any time you use your personal vehicle for ministry purposes (partner development, events, meetings, etc.). Mileage to and from the office is not reimbursable. The mileage rate may change from year to year. Items such as bus fares, airplane tickets, parking fees, taxis, etc. may be reimbursed as long as the expense meets the ministry expense criteria.
10. Telephone - Any long-distance ministry calls may be claimed for reimbursement. You may not report your local residential service.
11. Education - Only specific classes that relate to your position with Ground Zero are eligible for consideration for reimbursement. The education must meet the following guidelines:
  - a. The education must contribute to maintaining or improving the employee's ministry skills with Ground Zero.
  - b. The education must not qualify you for a new trade, business or profession, even if you do not intend to pursue such a change.
  - c. The education must not be required to meet the minimum education requirements of the job.

## **5.7 Purchasing Procedures:**

Any employee who needs to make a purchase with funds from a Ground Zero account must first fill out a "Purchase Request Form." All purchase requests must be submitted to the President or the Administrative Assistant for approval on a "Purchase Request Form" and signed by the President or Administrative Assistant. The signature on the form indicates approval only for the amount requested. If the employee finds the purchase price will exceed the approved amount, he/she must immediately contact the President or Administrative Assistant for approval of the new amount. If the new amount is unable to be approved, the purchase must not be made. Once purchase(s) are made, staple the receipts to the backside upper left hand corner and turn in the "Purchase Request Form". It is the employee's responsibility to be sure the method of payment (credit card, debit card, check stub, etc.) is also turned in. Employees are financially responsible for any cash, check, credit card, or debit card belonging to Ground Zero given to them for a purchase.

Any time an approved purchase is made with personal funds, a "Reimbursement Form" should be filled out with the receipt attached and turned in to the Administrative Assistant.

A violation of Ground Zero's purchasing procedures is grounds for immediate termination. Any use of personal property for Ground Zero purposes is considered a donation by the employee. No employee may charge Ground Zero for the use of personal property unless agreed on ahead of

time. All items purchased using any Ground Zero account (including payroll accounts) is considered property of Ground Zero.

### **5.8 Petty Cash:**

Petty cash funds are subject to recall or reconciliation at any time. The administrator for a petty cash fund is financially liable for any loss or for any discrepancy not supported by proper receipts. Petty cash funds are not to be used at any time for personal expenses. An employee misusing a petty cash fund is subject to loss of the fund and/or termination.

### **5.9 Staff Financial Support for GZ**

As a staff we are committed to leading the way with giving. To that end, while Ground Zero seeks financial support from individuals, businesses, ministries, and foundations, we also ask staff members to commit to providing monthly financial support to Ground Zero at whatever level they are called to by God and are able.

# **Emergency Procedures**

## **6.1 Emergency Procedures:**

Follow these procedures if someone is injured on Ground Zero property or at a Ground Zero event:

1. Determine the seriousness of the injury.
2. Do not move the injured person.
3. If the injury is serious, immediately call 911
4. Provide care (if care can be given)
5. Notify the parent or guardian (for those under 18).
6. Notify the President of the incident.
7. Fill out an "Incident Report".
8. Submit copies of all paperwork relating to incident to the President.
9. Call and check on injured person

## **6.2 Filling out an Incident Report:**

An "Incident Report" must be turned in to the President within 24 hours in any incidence involving an injury or property damage, a public official (police, fire department, or elected representative), or is a serious altercation. The report must contain all information pertinent to the incident. The employee completing the report must place a follow-up call to the injured person within 48 hours of the incident by. This call and the results should be recorded in the report.