

GUIDELINES FOR COLLECTORS

These guidelines are an adaptation of the Chicago guidelines posted for download at the [Leadership Roundtable on Church Management](#).

Note that there are two mediums within which the collections can be effectively protected: [serially-numbered, tamper-resistant, one-time-use, self-sealing plastic bags, OR reusable containers secured with one-time-use numbered seals](#).

- 1.** Before each Mass, inform the ushers of the number of collections to be taken. Assign serially-numbered bags (or numbered seals) for these collections plus a spare bag (or bag seal) in the event of a defective bag or seal or an error is made in closing a bag. If a bag or seal is spoiled, retain it and submit it with the collections.
- 2.** A written record must be made of the bag (or bag seal) serial numbers assigned for each Mass and collection so those numbers can later be compared against the serial numbers of the bags received and opened by the collection counting team.
- 3.** During the offertory, the ushers move from front to back with their baskets, collecting from the congregants and then meeting to consolidate their baskets.
- 4.** The ushers consolidate their individual collection baskets into a pre-numbered plastic bag (or reusable container to be sealed with a one-time-use numbered seal) assigned for that Mass. Seal the bag according to the instructions and bag type. If a tear-off receipt is present, it should be removed, completed and retained by the head usher. All this must always be done in the presence of a witnessing usher.
- 5.** The collection must be maintained in its original form. No checks may ever be cashed from the collected funds, nor may any deductions or change ever be made.
- 6.** If not completed in advance of the collection, record on the front of each bag the Mass time, collection (first or second), and the date. Use indelible ink to do this.
- 7.** If there is a second collection, do not delay consolidating and sealing the bag containing the first collection. Always consolidate and secure the first collection before taking up the second collection.
- 8.** The ushers consolidate the individual baskets from the 2nd collection in the same manner as the first collection, again doing so in the presence of a witnessing usher.
- 9.** Two ushers must transport the sealed bag(s) to the designated location for safe-keeping, or to the counting room if the counting team is present and operating.
- 10.** It can happen that a congregant will miss the passing of the collection basket and present their envelope after the collection container has already been sealed. Any such loose envelopes should be transported with the sealed container(s). If this becomes a regular occurrence, the usher procedures should be reviewed.

Strict adherence to these guidelines is a critical element of our secure collection system. The conscientious adherence of all participants is crucial to its success.