

01 / PATHWAY DETERMINATION

The Pathway Determination Matrix

Use this matrix to identify the appropriate pathway for your concern. Pathway 1 addresses relational matters that benefit from mediation by Supervisory Teams. Pathway 2 addresses allegations of misconduct that require formal intake and investigation by the Ethics Process Team. When in doubt, file through Pathway 2.

CATEGORY	Pathway 1 — Relational Mediation or dispute resolution managed by your Supervisory Team.	Pathway 2 — Misconduct Formal intake and investigation conducted by the Ethics Process Team.
Leadership Style & Decisions	Disagreements over church direction, staffing strategy, lawful termination of at-will employees, poor judgment, or poor communication style in meetings or correspondence.	Retaliation, coercion, or misuse of authority to conceal misconduct or compel unethical behavior.
Spiritual & Emotional Dynamics	Theological or doctrinal disagreements, or offense related to tone, sermons, or appropriate discipline.	Spiritual misconduct including manipulation of Scripture to enforce personal loyalty, coercive control, exploitation of congregants for personal benefit, patterns of harmful behavior, or malicious shunning or isolation.
Interpersonal Conflict	Personality conflicts, relational breakdowns between staff or congregants, miscommunication, or perceived lack of pastoral care or emotional support.	Bullying, intimidation, repeated shaming, blackmail, or misuse of confidential pastoral information.
Boundaries & Sexual Conduct	<i>Not applicable — all boundary concerns require Ethics Process Team review.</i>	Unwelcome touching, sexual harassment, grooming behaviors, extramarital affairs involving abuse of authority, or any inappropriate physical or digital contact with a minor.
Financial & Fiduciary Matters	Budget disagreements or disagreements regarding lawful financial decisions made in accordance with bylaws and policies.	Embezzlement, falsification of records, or exploiting congregants for personal financial gain.
Legal & HR Matters	General HR grievances not involving illegality or abuse (e.g., compensation, workplace concerns); lawful termination of at-will employees.	Violations of state or federal law, physical violence, threats of harm, or failure to report abuse or to meet mandatory reporting obligations.

Figure 1. Pathway Determination Matrix.

TRIAGE FAIL-SAFE

If a **Pathway 1** mediation process uncovers evidence of **Pathway 2** behaviors (for example, a pastoral conflict reveals financial fraud), the Supervisory Team must immediately halt the mediation and escalate the case to the Ethics Process Team.

02 / FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Choosing the right pathway

The questions below cover the most common situations and concerns. If your situation does not fit neatly into either pathway, please reach out to your District Supervisor or the Foursquare One Team for guidance.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

What are Pathway 1 and Pathway 2?

Pathway 1 (Relational) is for relational matters that benefit from mediation or dispute resolution managed by your Supervisory Team — for example, leadership style disagreements, interpersonal conflict, or theological differences. Pathway 2 (Misconduct) is for allegations of misconduct that require formal intake and investigation by the Ethics Process Team — for example, abuse, harassment, financial misconduct, or violations of the Minister's Code of Ethics.

Why does The Foursquare Church distinguish between these two pathways?

Most concerns brought to denominational leadership are relational in nature and are best resolved through mediation, honest conversation, and pastoral care. Other concerns involve alleged violations of the Minister's Code of Ethics or the law and require a different, more formal process to investigate and adjudicate fairly. Distinguishing between the two helps make sure each concern gets the right kind of response — and helps the Ethics Process Team focus its time on matters that may result in disciplinary action.

Which pathway should I use?

Use the Pathway Determination Matrix on page 2 to identify which pathway fits your situation. If you are uncertain, file through Pathway 2. The Ethics Process Team will review your report and, if it is determined to be a relational matter, redirect it to the appropriate Supervisory Team for Pathway 1 handling.

Can a single situation involve both pathways?

Yes. If a Pathway 1 mediation process uncovers evidence of Pathway 2 behaviors — for example, a pastoral conflict reveals financial fraud or sexual misconduct — the Supervisory Team must immediately halt the mediation and escalate the case to the Ethics Process Team. This is called the “Triage Fail-Safe.” You may also escalate from Pathway 1 to Pathway 2 at any time on your own initiative.

PATHWAY 1 — RELATIONAL

What kinds of concerns belong in Pathway 1?

Pathway 1 addresses concerns that, even if fully substantiated, would not constitute a violation of the Minister's Code of Ethics or warrant formal disciplinary action. Examples include disagreements over church direction or leadership style, theological or doctrinal disagreements, personality conflicts, miscommunication, perceived lack of pastoral care, general HR grievances that do not involve illegality or abuse, and budget disagreements regarding lawful financial decisions.

How do I submit a Pathway 1 request?

Use the “Request Mediation” button on the Healthy Culture page (foursquare.org/healthy-leadership). The form routes your request to the appropriate Supervisory Team, who will reach out to discuss the situation with you.

Who handles Pathway 1 requests?

Pathway 1 requests go first to the Ethics Process Team for documentation and review. They are then forwarded to, and managed by, Supervisory Teams — typically a District, Chaplains, or Missions Supervisor or similar designated denominational leader appropriate to the respondent’s ministry assignment.

What should I expect after I submit?

A member of the appropriate Supervisory Team will contact you to listen, discuss your concern, and where appropriate, facilitate a mediation or dispute resolution conversation aimed at understanding, reconciliation, and growth for everyone involved.

Is Pathway 1 confidential?

Privacy and discretion are maintained throughout the Pathway 1 process; however, full confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. If during a Pathway 1 mediation evidence of misconduct, abuse, or illegal activity emerges, the Supervisory Team is required to escalate the matter to the Ethics Process Team and, where applicable, to civil authorities.

PATHWAY 2 — MISCONDUCT**What kinds of concerns belong in Pathway 2?**

Pathway 2 is for allegations of misconduct by a credentialed Foursquare minister. Examples include abuse (physical, verbal, sexual, emotional), harassment, sexual misconduct or boundary violations, spiritual misconduct, financial misconduct or fraud, retaliation, coercion, misuse of authority, and any violation of state or federal law or mandatory reporting obligation. All boundary and sexual conduct concerns are Pathway 2 matters regardless of severity.

How do I file a Pathway 2 incident report?

Pathway 2 incident reports may be filed in two ways: (1) by calling the 24-hour toll-free hotline at 844.704.9401, or (2) through Navex’s secure online web form, accessible from the Healthy Culture page. Both options are operated by an independent third party. You may choose to file anonymously, though anonymity may limit Foursquare’s ability to fully investigate.

Can I remain anonymous?

Yes. The hotline and online form both allow you to file anonymously, and the case management system (Ethics Point) serves as an intermediary so the Ethics Process Team can request additional information without learning your identity. Anonymous reports may, however, limit the depth of the investigation. For reports involving a minor or other mandatory reporting matters, Foursquare is required to follow applicable laws regardless of the reporter’s wishes.

What happens after I file a Pathway 2 report?

An Ethics Process Team (EPT) member reviews the report and conducts an intake interview. The EPT determines whether the report describes a potential violation of the Minister’s Code of Ethics. If so, an investigation is opened and a Response Team is assembled. If not, the report is documented and you receive a written explanation. You will be kept informed of the outcome and your right to appeal.

What is the evidentiary standard?

The Response Team evaluates allegations using the “preponderance of the evidence” standard — meaning it is more likely than not (more than 50% likely) that the alleged misconduct occurred. Findings

can result in a range of outcomes including exoneration, training, counseling, suspension, or revocation of credentials.

Can I appeal the outcome?

Yes. Both the Reporter and the Respondent may appeal the Response Team's decision within 60 days of receiving written notice. Appeals are reviewed by the General Supervisor and Corporate Secretary, who may affirm, modify, or refer the matter for further review. For recommendations involving suspension or revocation, the Foursquare Board of Directors makes the final decision.

SPIRITUAL MISCONDUCT

How does Foursquare distinguish spiritual misconduct from ordinary disagreement?

Theological or doctrinal disagreements, offense at a sermon, or disagreement over pastoral discipline are Pathway 1 (relational) matters. Spiritual misconduct is a Pathway 2 (misconduct) matter and includes manipulation of Scripture to enforce personal loyalty, coercive control, exploitation of congregants for personal benefit, patterns of harmful behavior, or malicious shunning or isolation. The distinguishing elements are the misuse of spiritual authority for control, the presence of harm, and patterns of behavior over time.

What if I'm not sure whether my situation rises to spiritual misconduct?

When in doubt, file a Pathway 2 incident report. The Ethics Process Team is trained to evaluate spiritual misconduct claims and will either open an investigation or route the matter to a Supervisory Team for Pathway 1 mediation if it is determined to be a relational concern.

CONFIDENTIALITY, CARE, AND PROTECTION

Will I be protected from retaliation for filing a report?

Foursquare's Whistleblower Policy protects reporters who file in good faith from retaliation or reprisal. If you are employed in a ministry context Foursquare oversees, your employment status, compensation, position, credential status, and appointment cannot be affected during the intake, investigation, review, and decision-making process.

Is care available for people who have been harmed?

Yes. Within the limits of available resources, Foursquare may offer outside counseling referrals, sabbatical rest, pastoral counseling through the Centers for Spiritual Renewal in Los Angeles and Christiansburg, or reimbursement for a set amount of counseling expenses from an independent provider.

What about reports involving a minor?

Reports involving alleged misconduct against a minor are reported to local government authorities. Confidentiality cannot be maintained in a way that would preclude disclosure to civil authorities. Privacy and discretion are maintained as much as possible within those legal obligations.

GETTING HELP

Who can I contact if I'm not sure which pathway to use?

Reach out to your District Supervisor for guidance, or contact the Foursquare One Team at 213.989.4234 (toll-free: 888.635.4234). For situations involving immediate safety concerns or alleged criminal activity, contact local law enforcement first.

Are translated resources available?

Yes. The Responding to Clergy Misconduct Handbook (HFCRM) and reporting posters are available in English, Mandarin, French, Bahasa, Korean, Portuguese, Slavic, and Spanish. Visit foursquare.church/translations to access them.

Where can I read the full Handbook for Responding to Clergy Misconduct?

The complete handbook (HFRCM) is available for download from the Healthy Culture page at foursquare.org/healthy-leadership. It contains the full definitions, procedures, and accountability structures that inform the pathway determination process.

This FAQ is a companion to the Handbook for Responding to Clergy Misconduct (HFRCM). In any case of conflict between this FAQ and the HFRCM, the HFRCM governs. The Foursquare Church will update this FAQ as policies and procedures evolve.