

Directive 3.1.1 Parish Signing Authorities - responsibilities

The signing of cheques and other transactions (Policy 3.1.1)

There must be two signatures on every cheque and transaction. If the parish has a priest or deacon, he must be one of the signatories. When the parish does not have a cleric as spiritual leader, then the pastoral animator would take his place as signatory.

The other signatory must be a lay member of the parish or mission: the secretary, finance officer, chair of the parish council, or other parishioner that the parish council designates. Thus, every cheque must bear the signature of one priest (or pastoral animator, depending on the circumstance) and one lay parishioner.

Cheques are not to be signed in advance. In the prolonged absence of the pastor (or pastoral animator) (e.g. holidays), two other authorized signers may sign routine cheques. All such signed cheques must be reviewed by the pastor (or pastoral animator) upon his/her return. If in the absence of the parish priest there is an urgent requirement to pay for a non-routine matter, two parish signing authorities, or a parish employee, may seek permission of the Finance Administrator to issue the necessary cheque.

The archbishop must have signing authority on all parish and mission accounts in the archdiocese.

Parishes shall not use an automatic direct debit/payment method to make payments from the parish bank account.

Accountability

The parish priest will:

- Sign all cheques issued on parish account
 - Exception: cheques issued during an extended absence: review all cheques issued during vacation/absence within three days of return to the parish
- Review any changes to parish signing authority and inform the Finance Administrator, who will notify the bank
- Never sign incomplete or blank cheques
- Not permit the use of online or ATM banking on the parish bank account
- Not permit automatic direct payment from the parish bank account (and will cancel any such payments as they come to his attention)

Others with signing authority on a parish bank account will:

- Ensure that the second signature on all cheques is that of the parish priest
- Not use online or ATM banking on the parish bank account

Annual Review

In September of each year, the Finance Administrator will send a letter to all parish priests, reminding them to review the signing authorities on the parish bank account and to assure that he and parishioners with signing authority are in compliance with Policy 3.1.1 and this directive.