

Safe Steps: A Volunteer Screening Process

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Introduction to the Workbook

Who is it for?

This workbook has been developed specifically for individuals within public service or not-for-profit organizations who are in charge of setting policy or will be directly involved with the screening process at the national, provincial or local level. It is recommended that groups attend the *What is Screening? Why Screen?* and *Developing Effective Policy on Screening* workshops in order to have a minimum level of knowledge on screening before attending the Safe Steps workshop. The workshop offered in conjunction with this workbook is much more effective when participants have a basic level of knowledge regarding screening.

This is a hands-on, practical guide for members of organizations who want to proceed from the theory of screening to the practical application.

What will I learn?

Following completion of this workbook, you will have a thorough knowledge of the screening process and how it applies specifically to your organization. Completing the exercises, reflecting on the current practices of your organization and using the information learned in the workbook will allow you to analyze the risk in your organization and take steps to reduce that risk.

You will learn about the 10-step screening process and how to use a combination of those steps in different situations to ensure, to the best of your ability, the safety of the participants and to protect your organization and volunteers.

Learning objectives

- To identify the 10 steps of screening.
- To provide an opportunity to apply the 10 steps of screening in various situations.
- To assess the level of risk in various positions within your organization.
- To define screening as a part of good volunteer management.

Terminology

The following glossary will ensure the terms that recur frequently in this workbook have the same meaning to all readers.

Duty of care

Duty of care is the obligation that one owes the other, especially the obligations to exercise reasonable care with respect to the interests of the other. This obligation includes protection from harm.

Section I

Orientation

Orientation is a period or process of adjustment. Providing information to a volunteer about the program they will be involved in, providing them with the rules and regulations and the code of conduct are all part of the orientation process.

Participants

Many different words are used to name people who participate in programs or receive services from organizations. The word participant is used throughout the workbook as the generic term and represents clients, mentors, camp councillors, users, etc.

Position of trust

1. Situations in which someone has a significant degree of:
 - authority or decision-making power over another; and/or
 - unsupervised access to another person and to his/her property
2. Situations where the success of the service depends on the development of a close, personal relationship between the individuals as in mentoring or friendly visiting programs.

Training

Training is a learning process, during which time an individual is taught specific skills, which will assist them in performing their duties.

Volunteers

As defined in *The Screening Handbook*, a volunteer is an individual:

- who chooses to undertake a service or activity – someone who is not coerced or compelled to do this activity;
- who does this activity in service to an individual or an organization, or to assist the community-at-large;
- who does not receive a salary or wage for this service or activity.

While this workbook focuses on volunteer screening, the same principles apply to paid employees, interns, students on placement and trainers.

Vulnerable person

One who has difficulty protecting him/herself from harm temporarily or permanently and is at risk because of age, disability, handicap or situation.

What is screening?

Screening is an ongoing, 10-step process designed to identify any person – whether paid or unpaid, volunteer or staff – who may harm children, youth or other vulnerable persons. This workbook will provide an overview on what screening is, why organizations should screen their personnel, and a step-by-step guide to the screening process.

Screening is a poorly understood and relatively new concept in many organizations. This is particularly true in organizations that are predominantly volunteer-driven, and magnified in organizations that utilize a large number of parent volunteers and work with hundreds or thousands of children.

Why screen?

The answer is simple. We want to do a better job protecting participants. It is much easier to ensure the right people take on the responsibilities that suit them best than it is to spend the resources to deal with problems that arise from poor recruiting. Organizations are not obliged to accept everyone who wants to volunteer. However, they are obliged to do everything reasonable to protect those in their care.

Educating participants, staff and volunteers about abuse and harassment is very important. However, it is not enough! As soon as any organization opens for business – whether run by staff or volunteers – it has a responsibility to appropriately screen any person who will have access to vulnerable people. This responsibility is both moral and legal; it is not only the "right" thing to do, but it is legally required under the "duty of care" concept.

Duty of care is a legal principle that identifies the obligations of individuals and organizations to take reasonable measures to care for and protect their participants. Organizations need to understand that Canadian courts will uphold their responsibilities with regard to screening in the context of their duty of care.

Who should be screened?

While many organizations may accept their responsibilities to protect the participants in their programs, they may feel overwhelmed by the need to screen every one of their volunteers.

The screening requirements and procedures could be different for each voluntary organization depending upon the level of risk associated with that organization. Clearly, the onus on an organization to screen individuals who work with children or vulnerable adults but who are never left alone or unsupervised is different than for an organization that places individuals in significant positions of trust with participants. However, an important caveat must be stated here: **THERE IS ALWAYS RISK!** The premise of using a risk assessment approach to determine the amount of screening that will be done is based on the fact that voluntary organizations do not have the resources to screen everyone intensively. Even the most seemingly "safe" position – a person who cleans the facilities of a community centre – can and has presented a risk. Risk management is based on your best judgement – but the world can surprise us. Organizations must understand that if and when a problem occurs, they will be, and should be, held accountable.

Before you screen

Having a good screening policy implies a commitment to effective volunteer management. Good human resource management takes time and resources – both scarce commodities in the voluntary sector. Volunteer recruitment is relatively uncontrolled in many organizations, and in many instances is characterized by a desperate plea for volunteers, implying an open door to all. This provides opportunity for perpetrators of abuse to infiltrate these organizations.

The Screening Process

Introduction

In this section you will learn that screening is an ongoing process consisting of 10 steps. Many, if not most, of the elements of screening are already in place in the majority of organizations but individuals are not aware that they are a part of the screening process. Screening begins long before anyone is interviewed for a position and ends only when the individual leaves the organization.

Screening is essentially about judgement, about making a decision based on many factors, and whether or not to engage someone as a volunteer. Volunteer Canada recommends a 10-step process for screening to assist organizations in the recruitment, selection and management of volunteers and staff. The following 10-step process is divided into three sections in this workbook; before you select, the selection process and managing the volunteer.

Ten steps of screening

Before you select

1. DETERMINING THE RISK

Organizations can control the risk in their programs. Examining the potential for danger in programs and services may lead to preventing or eliminating the risk altogether.

2. POSITION DESIGN AND DESCRIPTION

Careful position descriptions send the message that an organization is serious about screening. Responsibilities and expectations can be clearly set out, right down to the position's dos and don'ts. A clear position description indicates the screening requirements. When a volunteer changes positions, the screening procedures may change as well.

3. RECRUITMENT PROCESS

Whether an agency posts notices for volunteer positions or sends home flyers, they must indicate that screening is part of the application process.

The selection process

4. APPLICATION FORM

The application form provides needed contact information. If the volunteer position requires other screening measures (medical exam, driver's record, police records check), the application form will ask for permission to do so.

5. INTERVIEWS

Interviews help ensure that candidates meet the position requirements and fit in with the organization.

6. REFERENCE CHECKS

By identifying the level of trust required in the position and asking specific questions, the applicant's suitability may be easier to determine. People often do not expect that their references will be checked. Do not assume that applicants only supply the names of people who will speak well of them.

Section II

7. POLICE RECORDS CHECKS

A police records check (PRC) is just one step in a 10-step screening process. PRCs signal – in a very public way – that the organization is concerned about the safety of its clients.

Managing the volunteer

8. ORIENTATION AND TRAINING

Screening does not end once the volunteer is in place. Orientation and training sessions offer an opportunity to observe volunteers in a different setting. These sessions also allow organizations to inform volunteers about policies and procedures. Probation periods give both the organization and the volunteer time to learn more about each other.

9. SUPERVISION / EVALUATION

The identified level of risk associated with a volunteer position will determine the necessary degree of supervision and evaluation. If the risk is great, it follows that the volunteer will be under close supervision. Frequent feedback in the first year is particularly important. Evaluations must be based on position descriptions.

10. PARTICIPANT FOLLOW-UP

Regular contact with participants and family members can act as an effective deterrent to someone who might otherwise do harm. Volunteers should be made aware of any follow-up activities that may occur. These could include spot checks for volunteers in high-risk positions.

Before you select your volunteer

Step 1 – Determining the risk

It may seem tedious to determine the risk for every position. However, it is the key to an effective screening process. Being aware of the risks and avoiding them whenever possible is an essential component to effective screening.

The first principle of risk management is: do all you can to prevent problems from occurring in the first place rather than buying all the insurance you can.

Two leading American authorities on risk management for non-profit and charitable organizations put it this way:

Risk management improves performance by acknowledging and controlling risk. It's about finding solutions, not just looking for trouble. At its heart, risk management not only reduces the likelihood of losses, it also maximizes the benefits of volunteer programs. ... (the) heart of risk management beats with three Cs:

- Commitment to respecting the rights and safety of everyone the program touches;
- Communicating that commitment to everyone; and
- Consistency in acting in accord with that commitment.¹

Seeking to protect participants, volunteers, staff and the community through screening measures is an exercise in risk management.

While the term "risk management" may seem intimidating, it simply means asking, "What could go wrong here and how do we avoid it?" Risk management involves looking at the possibilities of loss or injury that might arise in programs, activities and services and taking steps to stop, minimize, prevent or eliminate them altogether.

Remember, it is the nature of the position – and its inherent level of risk – which dictates the need to screen the individual. While screening must be carried out on an individual, it is only done because of the position that individual holds or is applying for, and not because they belong to any particular group or have any particular characteristic.

Organizations have choices when they look at controlling the risks in their programs. To determine the best course of action, the questions in Exercise 1 should be asked for all positions.

¹ Tremper, Rypkema; 1994

Exercise – Risk: Asking the basic questions

Choose two different positions in your organization to analyze (i.e. swimming instructor for special needs children, 4H leader, Sunday school teacher). You may want to photocopy this exercise and repeat it for every position in your organization.

What are the potential risks?

How likely is it that the potential risks will occur? (not likely, possible, probable)

What are the consequences?

Can we accomplish our purpose if we eliminate this activity?

How could we modify the activity? (i.e. separating activities)

Is there a way we can transfer the risk? (i.e. insurance, outside contracts, etc.)

Can we assume the risk?

What are the costs of reducing risk in this activity?

Depending on the answers in the Exercise Risk: Asking the basic question, you can choose from the following options.

a) Eliminate the risk

Sometimes the risks are too great and the consequences are too serious to bear. In this case, the organization may decide to eliminate the activity altogether.

Example

An organization providing day programming for children may decide that the level of risk is too high to continue taking the participants on trips in cars driven by staff. The organization may decide to eliminate the risk altogether by cancelling such trips.

b) Modify the activity

There may be ways of changing some aspects of a position or activity so that it reduces the risk. This modification may involve changing how something is done, where or by whom, or it may mean that a particular element of an activity will be eliminated.

Example

During fundraising events such as tag days, all volunteers must participate in teams of two. This reduces the risk that either the volunteer or the general public will be harmed because there is a third party involved. It is also important to change the teams occasionally.

c) Transfer liability

In some circumstances, organizations may choose to have someone else (an individual, an organization) take on part of a task and assume the liability for it. This outside party is usually a company or an organization that can bear the risks because either it can afford to, or because it has a particular professional expertise the original organization does not have.

Example

After having considered the risks and losses, an organization may decide to discontinue the practice of having volunteers driving groups of disabled adults to and from its activities. The organization may also have decided that the trips are essential, so they may look for someone else to take over that part of the activity, and to assume the risk at the same time. A bus or taxi service, for example, would offer the protection of significant insurance coverage for this activity.

d) Assume the risk.

Having clearly identified the risks, assessed the probability of their occurrence, looked at the possible losses and determined the consequences, organizations may decide that an activity or position is fundamental to their functioning and they will not give it up, they may decide to assume this risk.

Example

Counselling for youth is done regularly in a private room with a single adult. The faith community agrees that this counselling is a critical function of the community despite the risk, therefore the practice is continued.

Section III

e) Assuming risk and minimizing the risk

Having decided to assume the risk, the organization should nevertheless continue to seek ways of reducing or avoiding the risks and minimizing the possible losses. Purchasing insurance is one way organizations seek to do this; screening staff is another.

About insurance

Consult your local insurance adviser about the various types of insurance available to your organization (see Lai, Mary L. for an excellent general source on insurance).

The bottom line

Taking all of these steps does not, of course, guarantee that everyone will be safe. The bottom line is that an organization should never assume risks and potential losses by default. Review them, assess them and think them through. Understand the risks, act to control them and assume the risks for those that can't be eliminated and/or are essential to the work of the organization. Then look to minimize risk as much as possible.

Having taken the time and made the effort to review, assess, control risks and document the process, the chance of something going wrong is reduced. As such, the organization will be in a better position – ethically, morally and legally if something should happen.

There are a number of different tools that can assist organizations to determine the level of risk inherent in a particular position. The tools in the exercises *The continuum of risk* and *Rating the risk in a position* are effective and easy to understand. Exercise *Analyzing a screening dilemma* provides an opportunity to practice using the tools given specific examples.

Exercise – The continuum of risk

Some activities, jobs and tasks have a higher risk than others. Think of a line which represents a continuum of risk. At one end of the continuum are situations that have minimal risk. At the other are situations with considerable / enormous risk.

The factors that help to determine where an activity or a position sits on the continuum of risk are:

- the participant;
- the setting;
- the nature of the activity;
- the level of supervision; and
- the nature of the relationship.

The following matrix classifies risk as high, medium or low in the five categories listed above. Use this matrix to determine the level of risk in one or more situations that your organization faces regularly.

Example:

Risk:	Low	Medium	High
Participant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able-bodied adult 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15-year-old 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12-year-old with disability • Infirm senior • Child or baby
Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting room or hall • Off-site public space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tents or cabins • Classrooms with doors which have windows 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant’s home • Classrooms with doors without windows • Off-site private or home meetings with children and youth • Car
Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religious literature studying • Playing cards • Administrative work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth group meeting • Congregate • Dining teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendly visiting • Coaching a travelling hockey team • One-on-one music or liturgical instruction
Supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisor always present • Always in large groups • Documentation of meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occasionally • Some documentation of meetings or events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little to none • No documentation of meetings or events
Nature of the relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short term • Non-intense • Non-intimate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal relationship • Extends over time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-on-one relationship • High level of intimacy and influence

Think of positions in your organization and see where they fit on the continuum of risk.

Section III

Exercise – Rating the risk in a position

The next tool will assist you in determining the level of risk in different situations. Considering the five elements and calculating their level of risk separately can sometimes help us see how risk can be reduced in a position by altering one of the five elements. For example, if the participant, environment, and activity are extremely low-risk but the supervision is very high-risk, it is obvious by increasing supervision we can decrease the overall level of risk and use less extensive screening measures for that position.

The following is a risk assessment for a volunteer camp counsellor who is in charge of a group of children, ages 10-15. The camp counsellor has the opportunity of being alone with a child if that child comes to them with a problem.

Legend: 1 - least risk 10 - most risk

Position:	Camp Counsellor										Risk
Participant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	5
Environment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8
Activity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	4
Supervision	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	9
Nature of the relationship	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	9

Choose one position in your organization and analyze the risk levels associated with each element.

Legend: 1 - least risk 10 - most risk

Position:											Risk
Participant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Environment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Activity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Supervision	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Nature of the relationship	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

Exercise – Analyzing a screening dilemma

In small groups, discuss a screening dilemma that your organization is currently facing. How would you decrease the risk in any of these situations? Use either of the tools introduced in the exercises The continuum of risk or Rating the risk in a position or share the methods your organizations uses to assess and manage risk.

If you prefer, you may use one of the following examples.

Example 1:

A member of the local community centre requests assistance to supervise children of parents who are attending a sexual abuse survivors group.

The current volunteer has retired. There are limited funds in the budget so paying for a replacement is not an option.

A student responds to the request and volunteers four of her friends at the high school to assist.

Questions:

1. Do you see any potential risks in this scenario?
 - a. to the care receiver(s) (i.e. the children in the group)
 - b. to the caregiver(s)
2. How might you manage the risk in this situation?

Example 2:

A referral is received from a community support organization and later from a caring neighbour.

The family includes: a mother, a father (at work), son "A" who is 18 and has a relapse of leukemia, son "B" who is 14 years old and considered a responsible son, son "C" who is 10 years old with a learning disability and has special needs and daughter "D" who is 6 years old.

When "A" is in the hospital, mother and father spend most of their time with him. Mom finds it difficult to ask for help. When "A" was first diagnosed 10 years ago, the family coped on their own. Mother is very stressed and worried about her children at home. Son "B" has had the responsibility of taking care of his siblings. He is tired of this and his marks at school are suffering. Son "C" has been behaving inappropriately and is challenging "B's" authority.

Questions:

1. How would you select a caregiver to respond to the needs of this family? What screening strategies would you put in place?
2. What are the potential risks involved?
3. How would you monitor this involvement?

Summary of key concepts

1. Analyzing the risk in a position is the first step in effective screening.
2. Preventing problems before they occur is good management.
3. Organizations can control if and how they will manage risk.
4. How to analyze the risk in the positions in your organization is dependent on the participant, the setting, the activity, the supervision and the nature of the relationship.

Step 2 – Position design and position description

Position design

The first level of screening consists of effectively designing positions in your organization. Each position has a specific set of conditions and responsibilities, and with these, risks. To reduce the risk factor:

- First and most important, learn to think about risk realistically. Accept the fact that participants can be harmed while taking part in your organization’s programs.
- Establish behavioural standards for your organization and communicate them to your volunteers and staff at scheduled orientation sessions. An example of a behavioural standard could be that volunteers must never dispense medications.
- Group the positions in your organization according to their level of risk.
 - Low risk: minimal or no contact with vulnerable people.
 - Medium risk: contact with vulnerable people but never alone.
 - High risk: opportunity to be alone with or exert influence over vulnerable people.
- Set the screening standard based on the risk factor. For example, you may set as a minimum that, for low-risk positions, everyone should complete an application form and periodically meet with their supervisor. For high-risk positions, all 10 steps of screening should be followed.
- Actively work to reduce risk in specific positions, as described on pages 9 and 10.
 - Design positions that require people to work in pairs.
 - Introduce an initial mentor phase where an experienced person works with new volunteers.
- If your volunteers are active in more than one position, make sure they are screened for the position with the highest level of risk. If volunteers change positions, make sure the extent of the screening used for the previous position is appropriate for the new one.

Position description

A position description is a powerful and necessary tool. It is used to define a position and to set ground rules for personnel – both paid and unpaid.

Although it may be difficult to define the work of some people, it is imperative to be able to describe the position and to define the risk inherent in it. Position descriptions don’t have to be lengthy but they must set guidelines and boundaries. They not only protect personnel by formalizing roles, but also send a clear message to any potential abuser that your organization is serious about providing safety for both their participants and personnel.

The following pieces of information can be included in a position description:

- Title
- Participant group (children, seniors, etc.)
- Goals
- Activities and tasks
- Outline of responsibilities
- Time commitment expected
- Boundaries and limitations
- Skills, experience and qualifications required
- Personal traits and qualities needed and/or desired
- Orientation and training available

Section III

- Support, supervision and evaluation provided
- Mandatory activities (e.g. training, monthly meetings, travel)
- Working conditions (e.g. non-smoking environment)
- Benefits to the volunteer
- Screening measures

As suggested above in the point about boundaries and limitations, make sure to include general dos and don'ts related to the position. For example, if a volunteer is not to make friendly visits to seniors alone, make sure that is clearly stated in the position description.

The exercises *Designing a position* and *Decreasing risk in a position* will assist you in developing and/or adapting position descriptions.

Exercise – Designing a position

Designing positions is not as complicated as it sounds. For the purposes of a screening program, the intention of position design is to ensure that the position can be achieved in a safe or safer way by incorporating elements that can reduce risks to participants and staff.

Using the list below, design a position for your organization.

- Title of position
- Participant group
- Goals of position
- Activities and tasks associated with position
- Outline of responsibilities
- Time commitment expected
- Boundaries and limits to the position
- Skills, experience and qualifications required
- Personal traits and qualities needed and/or desired
- Orientation and training available
- Support, supervision and evaluation provided
- Mandatory activities (e.g. training, monthly meetings, travel)
- Working conditions (e.g. non-smoking environment)
- Benefits to the volunteer
- Screening measures

Ask questions – who the participant is, what the activity is, where it is undertaken and how it is supervised as a template for position design. These questions should be asked with a focus on how to build in ways of avoiding inherent or foreseeable risks in the position being created.

Examples

1. 4-H is looking for a volunteer to take some children to a nearby farm to demonstrate the nightly routine of milking dairy cows.
2. A volunteer Girl Guide leader is needed to take six children on an overnight trip to a campsite 45 minutes outside of the city.
3. A community support agency is looking for a volunteer to help organize and serve dinner to seniors who attend the Congregate Dining program.

Feel free to use your own examples if that would be more useful.

Exercise – Decreasing risk in a position

Using a position description already existing in your organization, suggest ways to change the position in order to decrease the current level of risk. Include a list of behaviours or actions that are inappropriate in that position. Discuss how an organization can best communicate which activities are inappropriate.

Summary of key concepts

1. Comprehensive position design is the foundation for all other screening measures.
2. Clear position descriptions send the message that your organization is serious about screening.
3. Several components of the position, taken together, determine the position's level of risk (i.e. participant group, boundaries, supervision).

Step 3 – Recruitment process

Recruitment of volunteers is usually done less formally than the recruitment of employees. In fact, volunteer recruitment is often haphazard as organizations encourage, for example, parents to move from watching their children or vulnerable family members participate to helping out with their activities. These personal ties between volunteers and the participants complicate the screening process.

The more informal volunteer recruitment is, the less comfortable recruiters are in applying formal steps. One of the ways to move from an informal to a formal recruitment process is to post notices or send home requests for volunteers accompanied by position descriptions and application forms.

Be careful to achieve balance between formalizing the recruitment process and appearing desperate for volunteers. The worst recruitment notice – in terms of participant safety and the integrity of the program – is something like, "Help! We're desperate! Come and volunteer!" This sense of urgency does not always attract the type of volunteer the organization wants or needs.

Be careful about how you recruit, especially for positions of trust with vulnerable participants. Ensure that your recruiting materials clearly outline that the agency takes its responsibilities for participants seriously and screens all applicants thoroughly. Do not leave people with the impression that everyone who applies will be accepted. Be very clear that your organization is extremely careful about selecting volunteers, and don't apologize for that fact.

Make sure that your promotional materials, including your position descriptions, are kept accurate and up-to-date. If you are recruiting through your local volunteer centre, ensure that the staff there is kept current about changes in position descriptions and of any special considerations that would affect the referral of volunteers. When someone indicates interest in a position, send information to him or her before you commit to an interview. Ensure that the documents include all of the information available about the position in question, and about the organization's screening measures.

It is only fair that there are no surprises, and to give people an opportunity to screen themselves out at this point. It also saves time that might have been wasted interviewing someone who was not aware of the screening measures and who refuses to participate in them.

Sample – Recruitment methods

- Establish and maintain contact with key individuals and groups in your community such as:
 - former and current volunteers;
 - religious leaders;
 - chair people and members of service, social, sorority, professional groups, etc.;
 - chamber of commerce officials;
 - volunteer centres; and
 - seniors clubs.

- Use attractive mail-outs.

- Develop interesting presentations.

- Ask welcome wagons to distribute your brochures.

- Use local universities / colleges (many students look for volunteer work to get more experience).
 - Health science departments
 - Education departments
 - Social service departments

Summary of key concepts

1. It is important to formalize the recruitment process.
2. The organization should be open about its process and make it clear that not everyone is accepted for the position for which they apply.
3. Recruitment materials should indicate that your organization thoroughly screens applicants.

Summary: Before You Hire

Once a risk assessment has been completed and positions have been designed and developed, making appropriate choices about the remaining screening measures to be discussed is easier. Choosing the right approaches and procedures is not like choosing from among the many options on a menu. Screening measures have to be appropriate to the positions that people occupy or are applying for; they should not be chosen because they are easier, more pleasant or less intrusive than others.

Screening measures should be chosen on the basis of:

- the organization's awareness of its moral and ethical responsibilities and legal obligations;
- the organization's decisions about basic principles and values, including decisions about the way in which volunteers and other unpaid staff will be treated;
- the results of the risk audit conducted and the organization's assumption of certain risks;
- adherence to the screening policies determined by the board of directors; and
- the position that is being considered.

A blanket approach to screening will not work; worse, it is dangerous. It would be difficult to defend using the same screening measures on someone who packages goods and someone who works one-to-one with vulnerable seniors. Screening measures have to be chosen to suit the characteristics of the position in question: participant, activity, setting, supervision and nature of the relationship.

Position development and design, along with careful promotion and recruitment, provide the organization with powerful screening measures even before anyone applies for a position. People can screen themselves out on the basis of the information provided by the organization, with a minimum of wasted time and effort.

Selecting Your Volunteers

Screening measures or procedures should be selected using the organization's screening policies as a guide. They should also be based on the results of the risk management audit and on the development of clear position descriptions.

There are a number of points that should be considered during the selection process.

- Consider each position individually, starting with your position description and the nature and degree of risk and possible losses.
- Review the descriptions of screening measures that follow. They begin with relatively non-intrusive measures and progress to more intrusive procedures, such as police records checks and medical checks, which reveal much more private information about individuals.
- Having done all of the work described in the previous steps, the nature, risks and requirements of each position should be clear.

There is no magic to selecting screening measures. To determine which measures are appropriate, ask yourself these two basic questions.

1. Given all that you know about the position, including its risks and the vulnerability of the participant(s), what do you need to know about the applicants in order to make good decisions about accepting or rejecting their applications?

Do you need to know:

- about their professional qualifications?
 - about their attitudes towards participants?
 - about their ability to develop bonds with at-risk participants?
 - about any involvement they may have had with the police?
2. Which screening measure(s) will provide this kind of information?

Not every screening measure can or will give you all the information you need.

Steps 4-7 will assist in developing a selection process that will help you choose the appropriate person for the position.

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Step 4 – Application form

An application form is the first screening tool that potential volunteers/staff will encounter. It collects basic information – name, address, experience – while giving the organization permission to do reference checks and police records checks (if necessary). The reasons for asking for references and the conditions for a police records check should be noted on this form.

As with the use of a position description, asking volunteers to complete an application form signals the seriousness of your organization’s commitment to screening and provides a paper trail that will protect both the volunteer and the organization.

Human rights legislation distinguishes between what can be asked of people before they are hired, and what can be asked after they are hired. Organizations should check with the Human Rights Commission or Council in their respective province or territory for a list of the types of information that may be sought before and after someone is hired.

The following chart was developed by Continuing Education, Edmonton Public Schools and is reprinted here with their permission. The acceptable and unacceptable practices noted here can be applied to your organization’s application form as well as the recruiting and interviewing procedures.

Subject	Unacceptable practices	Acceptable practices	Comments
Name	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Asking for birth name of applicant.• Asking for previous name when name was changed by court order.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Asking for name under which applicant has been educated or employed.	
Address	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Asking for foreign addresses (which may indicated national origin).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Asking for place and duration of current and previous address in Canada.	
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Asking for birth certificate, baptismal record, or any other documents or information regarding age of applicant.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Asking whether applicant has attained minimum age, or has exceeded maximum age, applying to employment by law.	Verification of age may be obtained after hiring.
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Asking about the gender of an applicant on the application form.• Using different or coded application forms for males and females.		Correspondence to applicants may be addressed to their home with or without the prefixes Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms., e.g., “Dear Mary Smith”.

Subject	Unacceptable practices	Acceptable practices	Comments
Marital status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking whether applicant is single, married, remarried, engaged, divorced, separated, widowed, or living common law. • Asking about applicant’s spouse, e.g., “Is spouse subject to transfer?” • Asking for number of children or other dependents. • Asking about child-care arrangements. • Asking about whether applicant is pregnant, on birth control, or has future childbearing plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking if applicant is willing to travel or to be transferred to other areas of the province or country, if this requirement is job related. 	Such information, if required for tax or insurance purposes, may be required after hiring.
Sexual orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking any questions regarding an applicant’s sexual orientation. • Making inquiries such as married, divorced, common-law, relationship, single, separated; information about spouse and their employment; relationship with person to be notified in case of emergency or insurance beneficiary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave blank for sexual orientation 	
National or ethnic origin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking about birthplace. • Asking about nationality of parents, grandparents, relatives or spouse. • Asking about ethnic or national origin, e.g., requiring birth certificate, asking for mother tongue. • Asking whether applicant is native born or naturalized. • Asking for date citizenship received. • Asking for proof of citizenship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking if the applicant is legally entitled to work in Canada. 	An employer may ask for documentary proof of eligibility to work in Canada after hiring.
Medical information	<p>A medical examination will necessarily reveal prohibited information about an applicant, such as his or her age, race, or sex. For this reason, employers should conduct medical examinations after the hiring decision is made. Employers may indicate on application forms that the job offer is conditional on the applicant’s passing a medical examination.</p>		

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Subject	Unacceptable practices	Acceptable practices	Comments
Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asking applicant to list all clubs or organizations he or she belongs to. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asking for such a list with the proviso that applicant may decline to list clubs or organizations, which may indicate a prohibited ground of discrimination. 	The request should only be made if membership in organization is necessary to determine job qualifications.
Optional inquiries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making any of the above prohibited inquiries, even if marked “optional” on the application form. 		
Military	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asking about all military service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asking about Canadian military service. 	Asking about all military service is permissible if military experience directly relates to the job applied for.
Languages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asking about mother tongue or where language skills were obtained. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asking about which languages applicant speaks, reads, or writes, if job related. 	Testing or scoring an applicant in English or French language proficiency is not approved unless English or French language skill is a requirement for the work to be performed.
Race or colour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asking anything which would indicate race, colour, or complexion, including colour of eyes, hair or skin. 		
Photographs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asking for photograph, or taking of photograph. 		Photos may be required after hiring for identification purposes.

Subject	Unacceptable practices	Acceptable practices	Comments
Religion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking about religious affiliation. • Asking about willingness or availability to work on a specific religious holiday. • Asking about church attended, religious holidays, customs observed, or religious dress. • Asking for reference or recommendation from pastor, priest, minister, rabbi, or other religious leader. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking about willingness to work a specified work schedule. 	<p>It is the duty of the employer to accommodate the religious observances of the applicant, if it is reasonably possible to do so.</p> <p>After hiring, inquiry about religion to determine when leave of absence for religious observance is permitted.</p>
Height and weight			<p>Height and weight requirements may be discriminatory if they screen out disproportionate numbers of minority-group individuals or women and if they cannot be shown to be essential for the performance of the job.</p>
Relatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking for relationship to applicant of next of kin to be notified in case of emergency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking for name and address of person to be notified in case of emergency. 	
References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking any questions of a person given as a reference that would not be allowable if asked directly of the applicant. 		

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Subject	Unacceptable practices	Acceptable practices	Comments
Criminal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asking whether applicant has ever been convicted of an offence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asking whether applicant has been convicted of an offence for which no pardon has been granted. 	<p>The Canadian Human Rights Act permits discrimination on a criminal conviction for which a pardon has not been granted. However, it discourages inquiries into unpardoned criminal convictions unless the particular conviction is relevant to job qualifications; e.g., a theft and fraud conviction is relevant to a job requiring honesty, but a conviction for marijuana possession is not.</p>
Physical handicap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asking about all physical handicaps, limitations, or health problems which would tend to elicit handicaps or conditions not necessarily related to job performance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asking whether applicant has any physical handicaps or health problems affecting the job applied for. Inquiry as to any physical handicaps or limitations that the applicant wishes to be taken into consideration when determining job placement. 	<p>A physical handicap is relevant to the job when:</p> <p>(a) the handicap could be hazardous to the applicant, coworkers, clients, or the public;</p> <p>(b) the handicap could prevent the applicant from performing the duties of the job satisfactorily.</p>

Note: If you require a police records check for the position a volunteer is applying for, the police will require a date of birth. This, of course, violates human rights. Therefore, police records check forms cannot be completed until the volunteer has been offered the position (with the condition that they "pass" a police records check).

Some organizations choose to have two different application forms: general and specific position application forms.

Volunteer application form

At the preliminary level, application forms must not ask for information about characteristics that are among the prohibited grounds of discrimination, such as age, gender, marital status, etc. Please note that federal and provincial statutes are not identical in terms of these prohibited grounds.

In creating application forms, organizations should consider the following questions:

- Why are we asking for this information?
- Is this information necessary to establish the applicant's qualifications for this position?
- What effect will asking these questions have on the individual's prospects of being engaged or hired?
- Will they unduly or unlawfully prejudice his or her chances?
- Will this question elicit information that falls within the prohibited grounds of discrimination?

Sample: Volunteer application form

(Volunteer Canada, 2001)

VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM

GENERAL INFORMATION

Name: _____

Address: _____ Phone number: _____

Languages: English spoken written
 French spoken written
 Other _____

SKILLS, EXPERIENCE, INTERESTS

Present/previous employment, community or volunteer involvement:

Other skills, experience and special interest:

REFERENCES

NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE
1.	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____

EDUCATION

Please give a brief outline of your educational background

AVAILABILITY

I am interested in volunteering

- virtually
- on site

If you would like to volunteer on site please indicate your availability.

- Monday _____ Thursday _____
- Tuesday _____ Friday _____
- Wednesday _____

Why are you interested in volunteering for Volunteer Canada?

What do you hope to gain from your volunteer experience here?

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the above information is true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that a false statement may disqualify me from further consideration as a volunteer or result in dismissal.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Authorization for collection of personal information

I, _____, authorize _____ to collect personal information appropriate to the position applied for concerning my academic background and employment / volunteering history, and to verify the character references I have supplied.
(name of applicant) (name of organization)

I understand that the information obtained will be confidential but may be shared with relevant organizations in order to obtain an appropriate volunteer position.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

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Specific position application forms

What you may be permitted to ask by law is entirely dependent on the requirements of the position. Before adding any questions to your application form, ask, "Why do we need to know this?"

"Need" is the operative word here. You might want to know whether someone is married, or where they were educated. However, the issue is whether or not that information is *essential* to making a decision about a specific position.

What you ask must be directly related to the position being applied for. Ensure that the kinds of questions being asked don't come as a surprise to applicants. They should have received information about the screening policies of the organization before being asked to fill in the application.

Many questions that are routinely asked on application forms are actually only required after the individual is hired in order to establish emergency contacts or to set up certain human resource procedures. For example, an employee's bank account number would be required for payroll purposes. This type of information should not be requested before an official job offer.

In the next exercise, Review of current application forms, you will review your organization's application form and determine whether or not changes are required.

Exercise – Review of current application forms

Review the application form(s) that your organization uses. Discuss whether the questions are appropriate. If you do not have a sample of your organization's application form, feel free to use the example provided on page 32.

Choose a position within your organization and determine if the questions on the form are appropriate for the skills and responsibilities required for that position.

Summary of key concepts

1. Ensure your application form only asks for information related to the requirements of the position.
2. Information requests before selection are much more restricted than information requests allowed following an offer.
3. Do not ask for information about characteristics among the prohibited grounds of discrimination, as set out by federal and provincial statutes.

Step 5 – Interviews

Interviews are an extremely important step in the screening process. The interview provides not only an opportunity to talk to the potential volunteer about their background, talents, skills, interests and availability, but also to explore any doubts the organization may have about the suitability of the candidate. An interview also serves to express your organizational expectations and to convey the norms / culture of your community. In other words, an interview will help determine "the right fit." You should be well prepared in order to be thorough and make the best use of time, but an interview need not be long or difficult.

When planning an interview, you may want to consider the following:

- have at least two people conduct the interview;
- explain the interview process to the applicant;
- establish a safe environment for the applicant;
- describe the position specifically, using the position description;
- describe the screening procedures of your organization;
- document the applicant's responses to the questions and keep them on file;
- look for attitudes towards children, vulnerable adults or general values that do not fit with those of your organization; and
- ask all applicants the same basic questions for consistency.

When selecting questions for an interview, remember that the most revealing questions address situations that have already taken place. Past behaviour is the best indicator of future performance. The selection of appropriate questions is very important in volunteer screening. Also, remember that interviews are subject to the same Human Rights laws as discussed in Step 4 – Application Form.

Interview questions should encourage responses that allow you to judge:

- relevant work-related experiences;
- relevant formal and informal education;
- eagerness to work;
- ability to work with others;
- integrity;
- supervision preferences; and
- initiative and judgement.

Location of interview

If a volunteer and participant will spend time in a volunteer's home, an in-home interview is entirely appropriate. The applicant must consent to it, of course, but if he or she does not, this may be enough to reject the application. The organization should determine if the home is a safe and appropriate place for the participant to be taken.

Warning signs

Be wary of monosyllabic or many yes/no answers instead of complete responses. Note any inconsistencies when similar questions are asked in two or three different ways. Evasion, general and roundabout answers rather than specific information should raise flags.

In the next exercise, you will practice interviewing techniques in groups.

Exercise – Role Play: Interviewing

In groups of three, two people act as interviewers and one as the volunteer seeking a particular position.

After completing the mock interview, analyse both the questions that were asked and the answers. As a group, decide whether or not the questions were appropriate to the position and if there were other questions which could have been more pertinent.

Summary of key concepts

1. To select the candidate most likely to succeed, the process must be completely objective.
2. Like screening, selection is based on the requirements of the position.
3. Interviews are important ways to get to know the applicant better.

Step 6 – Reference checks

A reference check may be the most effective screening step during the hiring process. References will confirm the background and skills of the applicant and will provide an outside opinion on the suitability of the person for the position.

Don't assume that applicants will only give the names of people who will speak well of them. People often expect that references will not be followed up.

Here are some tips for getting the most out of a reference check.

- Describe the position clearly to the person giving the reference. Ask about the applicant's skill and suitability to the tasks as defined.
- Identify the level of trust that will be developed with children within the position (e.g. "Joe will be working closely with children and will be alone with them...would you be comfortable with Joe having this kind of relationship with your child?"). Do not ask leading questions (e.g. "We really think Joe will make a great mentor, don't you?").
- Leave space in the call for open comment (e.g. "Could you comment on Joe and how you think he would fit in this job?").
- Do more than one reference check. If the candidate has given names of people who might not be objective (e.g. family members), ask if it is okay to contact previous or current employers. Whenever possible, get the name of someone who is familiar with the applicant's work with specific participant groups.

Dos and don'ts of reference checks

(Celeste J. Wroblewski, *The Seven Rs of Volunteer Development: A YMCA Resource Kit*)

- Do not proceed with reference checks until you have a signed release form.
- If possible, try to contact a non-profit agency the applicant has worked for. This contact can offer additional insight into their commitment, organizational skills and responsibility.
- Make sure you have a phone number for the references.
- Don't make exceptions for anyone. If you've determined that the position requires reference checks, follow through on everyone.
- Do not accept one bad reference without validation through other resources. Do not reject the applicant based solely on one bad reference.
- Verify that the person to whom you are speaking is indeed the reference given on the applicant's form.
- After you mention the name of your candidate, listen carefully to the attitude, tone and hesitancy of those you have called. If the person sounds upbeat and positive, it is likely that the candidate was a good employee / volunteer. If the person sounds guarded or hesitant, perhaps the candidate was a problem. Remember, however, that some problems arise because of the supervisor; not because of the employee / volunteer. For this reason, it is important to get several references.
- Remember that you may be able to ask volunteers or other staff to help conduct the reference checks. These volunteers, of course, would have to be trained using a specific format. A standardized reference check questionnaire ensures everyone is asked the same questions and, when completed, it can be kept on file.

The following is a sample reference check script and reference check form which can be used as a guideline for your organization.

Sample – Reference check

(Can be used for telephone, person-to-person, mail or fax checks.)

Adapted from *The Seven Rs of Volunteer Development: A YMCA Resource Kit* by Celeste J. Wroblewski.

This form gives you a good indication of the kinds of questions to ask the references who are listed by the candidate.

To start:

- Identify yourself and your organization.
- Verify that you are speaking to the person named as a reference.
- Tell the person that (name of applicant) gave you permission to call for a reference and that you will keep the conversation confidential.
- Ask if this particular time is suitable and indicate how long the conversation will take.
- Explain what the applicant would be doing for your organization and the participant group they would be working with.

Sample script

Hello, my name is _____, and I am calling on behalf of (name of organization). (Name of applicant) has applied to be a volunteer with us doing _____ . Your name has been provided as a reference. Do you have a few minutes to answer some questions now?

How long have you known (name of applicant)? What is your relationship to (name of applicant)?

It is important that our volunteers are reliable.

Tell me about your experiences with (name of applicant) in regard to reliability.

What are (name of applicant)'s strengths and weaknesses in regard to working with (indicate specific participant group: preschoolers, people with disabilities, etc.)?

How would you feel about having (name of applicant) work on a one-to-one basis with your (child or elderly participant)?

It is important to us that (name of organization)'s volunteers are comfortable with being (supervised or are able to work independently with little or no supervision). What is your experience with (name of applicant)'s ability to accept (being supervised or working independently)?

This volunteer position requires handling many tasks at once and can be stressful at times. How does (name of applicant) deal with stressful situations?

Is there anything else you would like to tell me about (name of applicant)?

Is there any reason you know of why (name of applicant) would not be able to perform the duties necessary for this volunteer position?

Would you ever consider approaching (name of applicant) for another volunteer position again?

Comments: To get the most out of your reference checks, you should develop additional questions that are specific to the volunteer position.

Sample – Reference check form

VOLUNTEER REFERENCE SHEET

Volunteer name: _____ **Volunteer position:** _____

Project: _____ **Supervisor:** _____

Date: _____ **Reference contact name:** _____

Phone number: _____ **Relation to the volunteer:** _____

How long have you known this individual?

Do you consider the applicant to be reliable, punctual?

Does the applicant follow tasks through to completion?

Are there any groups of people with whom this applicant would be uncomfortable working?

One word that best describes the applicant

Additional Questions

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Signature _____ Date _____

Summary of key concepts

1. A reference check is the most effective screening step during the hiring process.
2. To get the most out of your reference check, prepare a list of questions or sample script beforehand.
3. Be aware of the dos and don'ts of reference checks before you proceed with one.

Step 7 – Police records checks (PRC)

Police records checks are probably the most misunderstood element of screening. Too many people believe that doing a PRC means that the person has been screened. Nothing could be further from the truth.

It is not only important to know if someone has been convicted of a crime, the nature of that crime is also important. If a conviction is an abuse or harassment offence, it can be more pertinent than a conviction for shoplifting, depending on the position the volunteer will be filling.

What information do the police see when they enter a volunteer's name in their database?

Contrary to popular opinion, not all police forces check the same data sources. Your local police units will consult their local records but may or may not consult the national database. In contrast, a national search done through the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) produces federal level data but may not reveal pertinent local details.

Local police force databases show:

- convictions and charges; and
- information about the individual as a complainant, victim, or witness to the occurrence
- suspect data.

CPIC database show:

- criminal charges and convictions;
- probation; and
- related court orders (i.e. possession of firearms, etc.).

Prior to requesting a PRC, your organization should decide what type of information is required from the police. For example, if the position allows a volunteer access to your organization's finances but there is no risk of one-on-one contact with a participant, the police should be checking the data base for any convictions related to theft, fraud, etc. If the police receive very specific information about your organization's requirements, it is more likely that they will be able to provide you with the information you need.

Unfortunately, many abusers and sex offenders have never been convicted of a crime. Furthermore, despite CPIC, there can be inherent problems with any list.

There are limitations to PRCs.

- They are only good up to the checking day; a recent conviction may not show.
- There are lags in sending records from one country to another.
- The individual may be using an alias, so only fingerprint checks will ensure they are "clear."
- Relying solely on PRCs is dangerous – organizations may believe that they have done enough; a false sense of security may be created.
- The individual may have obtained a "pardon" and therefore is no longer on the list.
- The information may not be available because the conviction occurred while the individual was a youth and is protected by the Young Offenders' Act.

Despite the built-in limitations of PRCs, they do serve a purpose, particularly in those cases where the organization is committed to a full and complete screening process (e.g. high-risk positions). The PRC will also signal, in a very public way, that the organization is concerned about the safety of its participants.

A number of steps should be taken when requesting a PRC.

- For high-risk positions, the position application form should state that the employee or volunteer will be asked to provide a PRC; the applicant should confirm acceptance of this. Just as stating your screening policy in your recruiting notices can be an effective deterrent, making all applicants aware that you conduct PRCs can ensure that some applicants screen themselves out.
- Use a release form (see sample on page 46) which states the agreement of the volunteer or employee to a PRC. The resulting information can be handled in one of two ways.
 1. The organization may ask the applicant to give permission to the police to release the result directly to the organization (the results will only indicate whether or not there has been a conviction).
 2. The organization may ask the applicant to take the form to the police, have the results released directly to the applicant and bring it back to the organization. This option puts more control into the hands of the applicant and allows him or her to make the decision whether or not to share the results.
- A written policy should be in place – with which all current and prospective employees and volunteers are familiar – that defines organizational policy on selecting individuals with criminal records.
- A number of police forces and municipalities now charge for PRCs. The organization will need a policy on whether these costs will be borne by individuals, the organization, dependent on the position, etc.

In some provinces, territories and communities, an organization signs a memorandum of understanding with their provincial / local police force which specifies the roles of the police, the organization and the individual being screened. An agreement about cost is also developed.

The following should be taken into consideration when your organization is developing a screening policy which includes PRCs:

1. Clear guidelines must be developed concerning how your organization will handle a volunteer whose PRC shows a previous conviction. For example, organizations can determine that for positions of trust where there is the opportunity for one-on-one contact with a participant, certain classes of convictions (e.g. fraud, violent crimes, sex-related crimes) will automatically preclude a volunteer from filling that position.

Organizations must decide in advance the position they will take with regard to volunteers with convictions outside the specified classes (e.g. theft, possession of narcotics). There is a range of positions that an organization may consider:

- establishing a panel to assess individual cases which fall within the "grey area";
- accepting volunteers with a criminal history, as long as they are not in positions of trust and dependent on the tasks required in the position they will be filling.

The decision your organization makes will depend on the activities you carry out, the participants you deal with, as well as the organization's purpose, philosophy and values.

Section IV

2. When deciding whether to accept or reject an applicant, the organization will base its decision on the following:
 - the nature of the program, services and activities provided;
 - the character and degree of vulnerability of the participant group served and the organization's duty of care to the participants, to the staff and to the community;
 - the relevant moral, ethical, legal and policy issues and principles; and
 - the potential risks involved in the position the individual is applying for, based on the participant group being served, the nature of the position and its activities, the setting in which it takes place, the way in which it is supervised, and the nature of the relationship created between the volunteer and the participant.
3. Once organizations receive information about an applicant, whether from the applicant directly or from the police, the organization becomes responsible for that information and is then subject to many of the same legal requirements and regulations as other holders of personal information, in terms of confidentiality and access.

Organizations must carefully consider and determine the following:

- What types of information would be helpful to them?
- Who will have access to the information once received?
- What policies will govern the gathering or storage of information?
- If the organization receives a report from the police (either directly or given to them by the individual), where will the information be kept?
 - How is it recorded or transferred?
 - How long is it kept?
 - How secure is it?
 - Who has access to it? Why?
- In what circumstances, and with whom, is the information discussed? Why?

In some communities, the police may give the report to the individual rather than to the organization. While this may be less convenient for the organization, it may actually be a better system. If information is given to the individual concerned, the police may be able to provide more complete information than if the report goes directly to the organization.

Consider the following questions when the information is provided directly to the applicant.

- Does your organization require an original or a copy of the document?
- Is the document kept or just verified?
- If it is kept, how does your organization deal with the issue of confidentiality?
If the information goes to the organization directly, the organization must be vigilant about confidentiality, as well as storage and access to the information.

4. Organizations must also decide whether or not they will conduct PRCs more than once. Some organizations require that PRCs be done annually, or every two or three years. This requirement may act as a deterrent to some. However, the limitations on police records checks remain, regardless of the number of checks conducted.

The bottom line is that PRCs can be an extremely important step in the screening process. However, they may not be appropriate for all positions. The only certainty is that they should never be the first, last or only screening step used by an organization.

Participants are encouraged to familiarize themselves with their local, regional and provincial police operations.

The following is a sample of a release form for conducting a PRC.

Section IV

Sample – Consent and Authorization for Police Record Check

The undersigned authorizes release to the _____ full disclosure of police information relating to criminal convictions and/or outstanding criminal charges recorded in my name in Canada. I hereby release the _____ and any other police authorities from any liability for such disclosure. I understand this check may involve fingerprinting for the purpose of verification of my identity. I also consent to this procedure, should it be required.

Please print:

_____ Surname			_____ Birth Name			_____ Other Surname (Alias)		
_____ Given Names						_____ Date of Birth		
_____ Age			_____ Sex					
_____ Present address								
_____ City			_____ Province			_____ Postal code		
_____ Place of birth (province and/or Country)						For Police use Only (Do not write in this space)		
_____ Signature of person consenting			_____ Telephone number					
_____ Signature of Witness			_____ Telephone number of Witness					
_____ Date								
_____ Paid position or Volunteer Position								

The information contained on this form is accurate only as of the date of the form.

Summary of key concepts

1. PRCs are only one step in the 10-step screening process.
2. Be aware of the limitations of PRCs.
3. PRCs are an important screening tool, particularly for high-risk positions.
4. Organizations should consult with their local police force when establishing their policy.

Summary: The selection process

Now that the volunteer has filled out an application form, been interviewed, had their references checked and, if necessary, completed a PRC, and you are satisfied that this is the person who has the most to offer your organization, you have a new volunteer. The selection process is over but volunteer management and screening involve more than just selection. The next steps involve orientation and training, supervision, evaluation and follow-up.

It is important to remember that screening does not stop when an applicant is accepted into the organization. Appropriate measures must be developed to ensure ongoing screening.

A number of cases of participant abuse reported over the last few years have been in organizations that have extensive pre-engagement screening. Sometimes, no matter how good the policies, procedures and practices are, someone slips by. It is not enough to be vigilant at the outset, only to stop screening the person once he or she is on board.

Section V, Managing the volunteer, outlines steps 8-10 in the screening process.

Managing the volunteer

Step 8 – Orientation and training

Orientation and training are an important part of the screening process. Screening continues through the early period of the volunteer's involvement, and should be ongoing throughout the entire engagement. Ongoing vigilance on behalf of participants is a must – the responsibility does not end once the volunteer is in place.

A volunteer should be considered "on probation" at least until the training period is complete. A three- to six-month probation period allows the organization and the individual to ensure they have made the right choices and offers each the chance to change their minds.

During the orientation and training period, an organization should achieve:

- knowledge of the volunteer's approach, values and work style – role playing may be used to explore some of these issues;
- translation of their policies to the individual's role within the organization – the policies need to be clearly understood by new volunteers, especially in areas that relate to participants who are vulnerable (e.g. counselling, road trips);
- development of interpersonal skills in areas where each individual will be working; and
- the final decision of whether the person is appropriate or not.

Remember, it is perfectly acceptable to change your mind about your choice of volunteer during or after a probationary period. Trust your observations and make decisions accordingly.

Tips on dismissing a volunteer:

- Inform all personnel of the length of the probation period.
- Conduct a personal interview at the end of the probation period.
- Whenever possible, give the reasons for terminating the person's involvement.
- Unless you have clear and irrefutable proof that the individual intends to harm a participant, you should avoid mentioning this possibility for reasons of liability.
- The primary emphasis when dismissing a volunteer should go on the position and not the person (e.g. The position is not best suited to your skills).
- Bring up the position description that was mentioned at the initial stage (when hired) and point out discrepancies.
- Emphasize the seriousness of their position and how it must be properly filled.
- Finally, always thank them for having taken the time to try it out and perhaps suggest a different position (if wanted or needed).

Although training volunteers may use some of your organization's resources, you will benefit in the long-run through better informed volunteers, better job performance, increased job satisfaction, safe environments and the opportunity to continue with the screening process.

Section V

Orientation and training sessions provide opportunities to test our observations of individuals – to see them under different circumstances. People who may be skilled manipulators in one-to-one interviews may demonstrate more questionable behaviour in group settings.

Make orientation and training events mandatory. Apart from providing an opportunity for you to pass on information, including manuals and handbooks, and answer questions, it gives you and other volunteers and staff members a chance to follow up on the placement. Refusal to attend, or constant excuses for not attending may signal that something could be wrong.

Involve other volunteers and staff in the screening process by asking them to seek out applicants and engage them in conversation at such events. Urge people to participate at these meetings; don't always let them sit on the sidelines, or accept shyness in groups as an excuse for not interacting with others.

The organization should make it explicit that these activities are an integral part of the placement and should not be concerned about making them mandatory. As always, these requirements should be made clear to the applicant from the outset.

The following exercise, Discussion on orientation and training, will assist participants in brainstorming and exchanging ideas about orientation and training.

Exercise – Discussion on orientation and training

List the types of orientation and training that would be helpful to the volunteer and serve as a protection mechanism for the participant. Discuss how these sessions can be implemented within your organization for:

- new volunteers
- existing volunteers
(e.g. buddy system, spot checks, mentor system)

Summary of key concepts

1. Responsibility does not end once the volunteer is in place – ongoing vigilance is a must.
2. A probation period allows both the organization and the volunteer to learn more about each other.
3. Host orientation and training sessions to provide new and existing volunteers with information on the organization's policies and procedures.
4. Orientation and training sessions offer you the opportunity to observe volunteers in a social setting.

Step 9 – Supervision and evaluation

Feedback on job performance should occur at least once a year, and probably two or three times in the first year. In order to give feedback, someone in the organization must be responsible to supervise the employee or volunteer, teaching him or her how to do the job, and periodically reviewing their performance. By instituting a formal supervision and evaluation process, the employee or volunteer can be observed on the job, and their work can be monitored on an ongoing basis.

If supervision and evaluation is new to your volunteers, they may resist.

Overcome these barriers by clarifying that the purpose of evaluation is:

- to ensure a standard level of practice;
- to improve the experiences of volunteers, staff and participants in the programs;
- to enrich individuals' experience in their jobs; and
- to protect all participants.

All supervision and evaluation processes should use the position description as a reference point. During the evaluation interview:

- go through the position description point by point;
- ask personnel to comment on how they think they are doing in each area, and how they enjoy their work;
- give feedback on their performance in each area;
- keep comments positive but clearly state any concerns;
- document the evaluation;
- have the document signed by both personnel and evaluator; and
- file the document.

There is nothing more difficult than letting someone go. By using a formal evaluation process and referring to the position description, the difficult decisions do not become personal. The amount of supervision and evaluation needed will depend on the level of risk in the position – but all volunteers need to be periodically observed and given feedback. Any cause for concern requires immediate action.

Summary of key concepts

1. Ensure frequent feedback during the first year.
2. Assign someone in your organization the task of supervision and evaluation of your new volunteers.
3. Base evaluation on the position description.
4. The greater the risk in a position the more frequent and more intense the supervision and evaluation process should be.

Step 10 – Participant follow-up

It is important to make volunteers aware of the follow-up activities that may take place after they begin their volunteer work. Ensure that the volunteer is aware that any follow-up that happens is because of the level of risk in the position.

One of the most valuable sources of information about the nature of relationships between volunteers and participants is the participants themselves. Through education programs on abuse and harassment and healthy relationships, participants have the opportunity to talk about their experiences, their feelings about the way they are treated, and their reactions to the people around them. Listen!

Regular contact with participants and families

Regular ongoing contact with participants and family members can act as an effective deterrent to someone who might otherwise do harm and go undetected. It is vital that the organization let all volunteers know that regular supervision and evaluation, including contact with participants and families, is part of the organization's risk management procedures and that there is nothing personal about it.

Random spot checks

If a volunteer and a participant are usually alone together, it may be appropriate to conduct random spot checks by visiting the location where they are together.

It should be made clear when the volunteer joins the organization that random spot checks are a possibility in high-risk positions. It should likewise be made clear to the participant that this is a risk management and screening measure that the organization intends to take for everyone's protection.

Spot check schedules can be part of a volunteer manager's planning. If you do plan to conduct spot checks, you may consider establishing a schedule for them on an annual basis. This type of planning makes it easier for you to work the spot checks into your schedule and it can protect you. If your spot checks are scheduled ahead of time, you can defend your reasons for choosing a particular time and place for spot checks in high-risk positions.

The following is a sample of an action plan that could be used when scheduling spot checks. Spend some time thinking about how you could use this type of form.

Sample – Spot check schedule

position	volunteer's schedule	spot check dates	complete ✓	comments
Hospital visitor	Tuesday and Thursday mornings	March 13 and November 17		
Youth group leader	Retreat – 1st weekend in December	Call in on Saturday afternoon		

Summary of key concepts

1. Make volunteers aware of follow-up activities that may occur.
2. Listen to your participants.
3. Stay in contact with participants and their families.
4. Consider conducting spot checks on individuals working in high-risk positions with little or no supervision.

Summary: Managing the volunteer

Congratulations! You have developed a screening policy that meets the needs of your organization. This is the biggest step in the screening continuum. Now you have to think about maintaining the policy and putting the steps into action.

One issue that confronts many organizations around the implementation of screening is that of existing volunteers versus new volunteers. It is expected that new volunteers will all be screened. Many organizations have difficulty introducing screening to the volunteers who are already involved in their programs.

While it may seem difficult to ask someone who has already been accepted by your organization to submit to screening measures, remember where your first duty lies – the safety and protection of participants, staff and the community. Minimize the reactions by ensuring that screening doesn't come as a surprise to anyone – identify this policy and the procedures in your documents, orientation and training. Help people to understand why it is necessary to do this and most will understand. Be aware that someone might try to enter the organization in a position that requires little screening, planning to move into a position of trust without further screening. Decide up-front how you will handle people moving from one position to another, you may even want to include this possibility in your policy.

As your organization develops a screening policy appropriate to its needs, make sure to continually remind yourselves that you are doing this to protect children and other vulnerable people from harm. Keeping your goal in focus will help to motivate you.

Conclusion

Although screening may be costly and time-consuming, organizations must address this issue. Any organization working with vulnerable people must take on this responsibility.

Each organization is different from the other. This difference is due to many factors: the province or territory; the type of community (urban, rural, large, small, northern, southern); the nature of the programs offered; the age of the participants involved; the management culture; and the socio-economic level of participants. The context will affect the kind of screening policy adopted.

Steps can be taken to reduce your organization's workload while still ensuring the protection / safety of your participants. An orientation session on policies and expectations can serve a large number of low-risk personnel who have limited access to participants. By introducing the concept of screening in this format, these volunteers will understand the policies that protect their participants and themselves without going through the individualized screening processes. This approach will serve two purposes. Initially, it will put the group on-guard, giving them the skills to watch for abusive and harassing behaviours. Secondly, it will put them at ease by helping them understand that the rules are not a "witch hunt," but a responsibility to protect all vulnerable participants. Medium- and high-risk positions require a more in-depth screening process.

There are many practical strategies to meet the challenge of screening. Volunteer centres across Canada are able to provide local organizations with training and consultation. Screening policies can be custom made for each organization.

What's next?

Education of volunteers, staff and participants about screening issues.

It is important to communicate to the public why the organization screens and what screening measures it uses.

By communicating to the public that the organization takes screening seriously, not only through policy development, but also in its practices, you will be taking one more step in preventing inappropriate individuals from applying.

More importantly, the organization must also articulate its values and philosophies related to screening based on its mission statement, while keeping them consistent with policies and procedures.

Development of policies and procedures related to screening is not just to prevent legal liability, but more importantly, should be based on ethical and moral responsibilities to protect participants, volunteers, staff and the general community from harm.

It is particularly important to keep in touch with other organizations. By sharing the successes and failures of implementing a screening policy with other organizations, eventually the process will become less daunting. Become an advocate of screening and a resource to other organizations that are just beginning to learn about screening.

Section VI

Most importantly, continue to learn and grow as an organization. Always keep in mind that the goal of the Safe Steps Volunteer Screening Program is to assist voluntary and public sector organizations in their efforts to protect people from harm, and your goal is to provide safe programs for your participants.



Additional resources

The following resources are aids which can be useful to organizations as they develop policies and procedures around screening specific to their organization. Remember, there are likely a number of steps which your organization has already incorporated into its daily functioning. Congratulate yourself for this and start tackling those areas that your organization has not dealt with yet.

1. Screening grid, page 58
2. Screening checklist, page 59
3. Screening standards checklist, page 60

2. Screening checklist

- Assess each position
- Identify each level of risk
- Determine the appropriate screening measures for the position
- Write position descriptions
- Design interviews based on position descriptions
- Develop an application form
- Develop reference check questions based on position descriptions
- Develop policy on decisions re: hiring or not hiring
- Develop orientation and training package
- Develop orientation and training presentation
- Design guidelines for supervision
- Create evaluation forms
- Develop policy on documentation; particularly what kind of information is to be kept confidential and what kind of information can be made accessible to staff and volunteers.
- Develop policies on selection and termination

3. Screening standards

Screening is not about identifying sex offenders or police records checks. It is about the need for appropriate, deliberate, considered, *comprehensive screening* of staff (an inclusive word for volunteers and paid employees) in positions of trust with vulnerable participants.

The following grid will assist organizations in determining what screening policies and procedures are already in place as well as in identifying the work they still have to do.

Screening standards	in place	N/A	needs revision	to be developed	to be followed up	assigned to	timelines		comments
							start	complete	
1.0 The Board understands their moral and ethical responsibility as well as their legal liability regarding "Duty of Care".									
1.1 The philosophy, values and principles underpinning the organization are clear and explicitly set out in brief written statements.									
1.2 The Board is informed of the pertinent legislation and social policy, as well as the organization's moral and ethical obligation.									
1.3 The Board will establish policies and approve necessary administrative procedures to ensure the organization has appropriate screening measures, thereby maintaining organizational consistency and standards.									
1.4 The Board will designate a budget, supporting education and maintenance of necessary staff and administrative needs to maintain a comprehensive screening program.									



Screening standards	<i>in place</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>needs revision</i>	<i>to be developed</i>	<i>to be followed up</i>	<i>assigned to</i>	<i>timelines</i>		<i>comments</i>
							<i>start</i>	<i>complete</i>	
1.5 The Board will regularly audit the organization's screening process to meet the ever-changing legislation and social environment.									
2.0 The organization's management will have a person(s) designated to manage staff resources and implement a risk management process.									
2.1 A clear, written analysis of potential risks and consequent losses associated with each position within the organization is complete.									
2.2 Position descriptions will be reviewed and risks inherent or foreseeable in each have been identified. The risk management audit considers the following factors: 2.2.1 Client 2.2.2 Setting 2.2.3 Nature of the position 2.2.4 Supervision 2.2.5 Nature of the relationship									



Screening standards	<i>in place</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>needs revision</i>	<i>to be developed</i>	<i>to be followed up</i>	<i>assigned to</i>	<i>timelines</i>		<i>comments</i>
							<i>start</i>	<i>complete</i>	
2.3 In designing jobs the following will be assessed: 2.3.1 assessing the staff position 2.3.2 purpose of the position 2.3.3 nature of the position 2.3.4 scope of the position 2.3.5 accountability and risks involved Such a review will conclude whether to: 2.3.6 modify the position 2.3.7 discontinue the activity 2.3.8 transfer liability 2.3.9 accept the risks as identified									
2.4 Appropriate screening measures will be selected and implemented for each position									
2.5 Risk management policies will be written and communicated specific to: 2.5.1 rationale for screening 2.5.2 staff screening 2.5.3 confidentiality and record keeping 2.5.4 standard of care 2.5.5 acceptance and rejection of applicant(s) 2.5.6 discipline and dismissal 2.5.7 authority for decision making									



Screening standards	in place	N/A	needs revision	to be developed	to be followed up	assigned to	timelines		comments
							start	complete	
2.6 From pre-recruitment until the exit of staff, ongoing screening procedures will be followed addressing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.6.1 orientation/training 2.6.2 probation periods 2.6.3 buddy systems 2.6.4 regular supervision 2.6.5 evaluation 2.6.6 random spot checks 2.6.7 periodic reassignment 2.6.8 updated police record checks 									
3.0 The organization’s management takes responsibility for clients seriously, and screens all applicants thoroughly accepting only those applicants who meet our identified requirements.									
3.1 Recruitment and promotional material will regularly be reviewed for accuracy. Statements are clear and materials state all applicants are thoroughly screened.									
3.2 Based on the results of the risk management audit and job description analysis, measures will be selected from the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.2.1 application form 3.2.2 interview 3.2.3 reference checks 3.2.4 orientation and training 3.2.5 medical checks 3.2.6 police record checks 3.2.7 child abuse register checks 3.2.8 others 									



Screening standards	in place	N/A	needs revision	to be developed	to be followed up	assigned to	timelines		comments
							start	complete	
3.3 Application forms will: 3.3.1 comply with the human rights legislation 3.3.2 request general and preliminary information about the applicant 3.3.3 ask for specific and detailed information									
4.0 All prospective staff are interviewed for each position.									
4.1 Interviewers are trained and have a specific and consistent format, with specific questions to ask of applicants. i.e. Driver's license might be used to identify the individual.									
4.2 The "type" of interview procedures will reflect the level of risk involved. Considerations will be given to: 4.2.1 one-on-one interviews 4.2.2 panel 4.2.3 series of interviews 4.2.4 in-home interviews including client and environment 4.2.5 specific positions may require a specialized interview or test.									
4.3 Accurate and objective written records will be completed meeting the Human Rights Legislation. Records will be filed in a confidential environment according to the Human Rights Standards.									



Screening standards	in place	N/A	needs revision	to be developed	to be followed up	assigned to	timelines		comments
							start	complete	
4.4 All parties involved understand the process for obtaining police records checks, sources of information assessed and how information is released, as well as the limitations of the information provided.									
4.5 Applicants will provide written consent for the organization to obtain personal information from police, medical, and child abuse checks, only in the final stages of placement.									
5.0 All references are checked and completed on all applicants.									
5.1 Reference checks will comply with Human Rights Legislation									
5.2 A minimum of two references will be supplied from such resources as: 5.2.1 business 5.2.2 education 5.2.3 previous work experience (paid or unpaid) 5.2.4 family									
5.3 Position placement is conditional on receiving verified references.									
5.4 The interviewer(s) will keep written records of all telephone references completed on an applicant.									



Screening standards	<i>in place</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>needs revision</i>	<i>to be developed</i>	<i>to be followed up</i>	<i>assigned to</i>	<i>timelines</i>		<i>comments</i>
							<i>start</i>	<i>complete</i>	
5.5 Applicants who do not have the necessary qualifications (based on position requirements) will be refused.									
6.0 Orientation and training is mandatory prior to a position being staffed.									
6.1 Each staff will be provided with the philosophy, values and principles underpinning the organization.									
6.2 All staff will be educated in their: 6.2.1 roles and responsibilities 6.2.2 issue of confidentiality 6.2.3 limits of authority 6.2.4 extent of responsibility, "Duty of Care".									
6.3 Each staff will be provided a written policy and procedures manual.									
6.4 Position specific training will be provided.									
7.0 Administrative and management supports for screening measures will be in place ensuring the Board's policies and procedures are implemented and enforced.									
7.1 Zero tolerance for any abuse will be demonstrated by: 7.1.1 clearly writing down policies and procedures 7.1.2 implementing and enforcing policies and procedures 7.1.3 timely reviews and revisions of issues and decisions									

Screening standards	in place	N/A	needs revision	to be developed	to be followed up	assigned to	timelines		comments
							start	complete	
7.2 Ongoing staff training, specific to their job and "Duty of Care", within the changing environment will be provided.									
7.3 An audit of supports and systems, needed, to ensure success of screening measures, will be completed by reviewing the following: 7.2.1 communication of policies and procedures 7.2.2 administrative and clerical processes in place 7.2.3 information and materials 7.2.4 furniture (locking file cabinets) 7.2.5 space (secure room / office) 7.2.6 documentation (job descriptions, applications, etc.) 7.2.7 schedules for review of policies and procedures 7.2.8 destruction of confidential information 7.2.9 reporting process 7.2.10 accountability 7.2.11 record-keeping policies and procedures for consistency and completeness									

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APPENDIX I

Background

Volunteer Canada Snapshot

Volunteer Canada is the national voice for volunteerism in Canada. Since 1977, Volunteer Canada has been committed to supporting volunteerism and civic participation through ongoing programs and special projects.

National in scope, Volunteer Canada's board members, partners and members represent hundreds of different communities across Canada. Our membership includes 86 volunteer centres in nine provinces, including the federation of 109 volunteer centres in Quebec. Managers and directors of volunteers represent a vital aspect of volunteerism in Canada and make up an important aspect of our organization's community.

By developing resources and national initiatives, we actively engage in research, training and other national initiatives designed to increase community participation across the country. Volunteer Canada provides leadership on issues and trends in the Canadian volunteer movement.

Training

Across the country, volunteer centres offer workshops to help Canadians learn more about screening and how to implement screening practices in their organization. Whether you are a manager of volunteers, a member of a board of directors, an executive director or a volunteer, screening workshops will not only provide answers to your questions, but will teach you to ask the right questions about your own volunteer management program in order to determine its needs and direction.

Screening Workshops

Currently there are two different screening workshops available through a variety of volunteer centres across the country. These workshops include:

- 1. What is Screening? Why Screen?**

This workshop offers your organization basic information about screening. It answers questions about police records checks and whether voluntary organizations can be held responsible for their volunteers' actions. This workshop provides participants with the knowledge and skills to start making changes within their organization.

- 2. The Safe Steps Volunteer Screening Program Series**

These workshops are one-day sessions that will help you learn the 10-step screening process and how to use a combination of these steps in different situations to ensure the safety of your participants. A practical, hands-on workbook accompanies each of the following workshops:

- a. Safe Steps: A Volunteer Screening Process for Recreation and Sport
- b. Screening in Faith
- c. Taking Care: Screening for Community Support Organizations

For more information on training opportunities in your area, please contact your local volunteer centre or Volunteer Canada.

APPENDIX II

Guidelines when working with children

The following guidelines are intended to provide a general overview of how adult-child interactions should occur. It is recognized that unforeseen circumstances can and will occur. The most important safeguard for our children is full disclosure. If an adult finds him or herself alone with a child for any significant amount of time, or in a situation of emotional intensity, every effort should be made to find another adult or at least inform the child's parent or guardian as quickly as possible under the circumstances.

- Adults (16+) should not spend extended time alone with children without the consent of the child's guardian and the knowledge of the program supervisor.
- When, and if, programming requires an adult to be alone with children (overnight camps for example, field trips) every effort must be made to protect the child's privacy. Girls and boys should not change together and adults must change separately. Adults should not sleep in proximity to children.
- Adults who form a relationship with children through an organization's activities should not seek out opportunities to spend time with the child "off site." If off-site interactions occur the appropriate people should be informed.
- Adults should not help children with toileting. For younger children who cannot manage alone, permission should be given by the parent or guardian before toileting or changing help is given.
- Children should not be taken in an adult's vehicle without parent/guardian permission and the knowledge of leaders.
- Any physical contact between adults and children should occur in "public" and be sanctioned by the program supervisor and the parent/guardian (for example, hugs and kisses for younger children or physical 'rough housing' with older kids).
- Parents of children enrolled in programs should be encouraged to ask questions and stay abreast of the nature of the adult/child interactions. Where they feel comfortable, they should be encouraged to talk with their children about the programs and the volunteers and staff they encounter.

These guidelines are not intended to hamper relationships between adults and children. More importantly they are not designed to introduce suspicion into adult/child relations. In all cases, a certain amount of discretion rests with the adult based on their knowledge and the nature of their relationship with the child, or the child's family, the setting and the kind of activities. Talking to parents, being transparent when the relationship becomes closer or more time is spent alone, reviewing any incidents with 'supervisors' – these steps will ensure the safety of our children, the integrity of our programs and the well-being of volunteers and staff who work with children.

APPENDIX III

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Volunteer Screening - It's Our Duty - Interviews and Reference Checks and Recruiting, Scouts Canada (1997)

Volunteers: The Grizzly Creek Solution, Scouts Canada (1997)

Web sites

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Canadian Human Rights Commission: This guide describes the Act in everyday language, its application, the role of the Commission and the complaints process. 8 pages; bilingual.

<http://www.chrc-ccdp.ca/publications/screen-preselection.asp?l=f> -

la Commission canadienne des droits de la personne : Guide de présélection et de sélection des employés.

<http://www.chrc-ccdp.ca/publications/screen-preselection.asp> -

Canadian Human Rights Commission: Tells employers how to avoid common pitfalls when interviewing prospective employees.

http://www.chrc-ccdp.ca/publications/chra_guide_lcdp.asp?l=f -

la Commission canadienne des droits de la personne : Ce guide de consultation présente la Loi en termes simples, son champ d'application, le rôle de la Commission et le processus de traitement des plaintes. 8 pages, bilingue.

<http://harassmentinsport.com>

This is the web site of the Harassment & Abuse in Sport Collective. Visitors can find *Speak Out! Act Now! A Guide to preventing and Responding to Abuse & Harassment in Sport* at this site.

<http://scouts.ca>

Scouts Canada was one of the first not-for-profit organizations to adopt Volunteer Canada's Safe Steps Program. Their web site has a number of resources and articles that are of particular interest to parents and guardians.

<http://www.sportlaw.ca>

The Centre for Sport and Law: They have written some very interesting articles on screening and liability. They target the sport community, but the information is very clearly presented and quite relevant to all.

Visit Volunteer Canada's screening reading room for additional references –

http://www.volunteer.ca/volunteer/screening_room.htm.