

Volunteer Canada's Safe Steps Screening Program

Volunteer Canada's Safe Steps Screening Program provides an easy-to-use method for organizations to ensure that the people they serve are safe. The Safe Steps are much like a menu—you need only to select those steps that apply specifically to positions within your organization. The key to a successful screening program is to use the steps in a way that best suits a specific position within your organization. The 10 Safe Steps are:

1. Determine 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. Write a clear position 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 do's and don'ts. A clear position description indicates the screening requirements. When a volunteer changes positions, the screening procedures may change as well.

3. Establish a formal recruiting process.

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

4. Use an application form.

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

5. Conduct interviews.

The interview provides not only an opportunity to talk to the potential volunteer about their background, skills, interest, and availability, but also to explore any doubts about the suitability of the candidate. In other words, the interview will help determine the "right fit".

6. Follow up on references.

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.

7. Request a Police Records Check.

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 participants.

8. Supervise and evaluate.

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.

9. Follow up with program participants.

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.

The Volunteer Position

- The volunteer position is the single most important structure used to manage volunteers.
- The volunteer position description contributes to involving and supporting persons for participation as volunteers.
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- The volunteer position is often considered to be the greatest source of motivation for persons who volunteer.
- It follows that the design and description of volunteer positions is a critical process toward the effective management of volunteers and meaningful participation of volunteers.

Volunteer Position Design & Description

| <u>Design Elements</u> | <u>Description Elements</u> |
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| 1. Purpose- The reason for the volunteer position | Purpose Statement |
| 2. Outcomes- What the volunteer position is intended to accomplish | Outcomes Statement (Results, impacts, directions) |
| 3. Activities- What the volunteer position does | Roles, Responsibilities, Tasks |
| 4. Requirements- What is required by the volunteer position | Schedule, Commitment, Skills, Experience, Abilities, Qualifications, Costs, Qualities, Setting, Location |
| 5. Supports- What is maintaining the volunteer position | Orientation, Information, Education, Training, Supervision, Evaluation |
| 6. Motivation- How the volunteer position engages persons to participate | Motivational Statements, Benefits |

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| 7. Limits- Expectations of the volunteer | Standards, Guidelines, Rules, Regulations, Procedures, Mandatory Activities, Screening Procedures |
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Purpose Statement

1. *Needs Statement:* A statement that establishes the reason for being a volunteer position.
2. *Functions Statement:* A statement that establishes broad limits on what a volunteer position is intended to do.
3. *Values Statement:* A statement that establishes broad limits on how a Volunteer position operates in its environment.

| Purpose Statement Example: | Coach Position/Sports Organization |
|----------------------------|--|
| Needs Statement | To ensure that participation in sports is safe, fun and friendly for children. |
| Functions Statement | By leading, teaching and organizing. |
| Values Statement | And through teamwork, integrity, honesty, quality, and commitment to service. |

Police Records Check

Certain positions are required to submit a Police Records Check prior to appointment with the Club.

Police Records Check (PRC) and Unacceptable Behaviours

Each Club needs to set out clear guidelines that identify how your Club will deal with an applicants' Police Records Check that shows a previous conviction or police contact. Your Club may decide that an individual who's Police Records Check establishes any of the unacceptable behaviors identified by your Club, will automatically preclude them from filling a volunteer role and may be rejected as an applicant or dismissed from any volunteer position from the Club.

Alberta Basketball recommends that each affiliated club nominate one (1) executive member to act as the Club's Screening Representative. This person will be the only club member responsible for viewing PRC's and documenting the submitted checks.

These unacceptable behaviors may include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

- Sexual Offences
- Violent or threatening behavior against children or adults
- Conduct against public morals (i.e. Prostitution)

- Substance or chemical abuse
- Violation of a position of trust including theft or fraud
- Criminal driving offences, including but not limited to impaired driving

It is suggested that Alberta Basketball Clubs have policies in place that indicate that the Club will examine PRC's that reveal any criminal code conviction, charge without disposition or police contact, to determine the acceptability of the applicant for a staff or volunteer position.

Applicants who's PRC reveal a criminal conviction outside of the unacceptable behaviors or police contact should be given the opportunity to discuss the information revealed in their PRC with the Clubs designated individual, perhaps with the President of the Club.

Consideration should be given to the following:

- The nature of the offence for which the applicant was convicted (details including how long ago it took place)
- Relevance to the position (is it a bon a fide requirement of the nature of the position)
- Efforts made in rehabilitation
- Achievements of the applicant since receiving the conviction,
- The character and degree of vulnerability of the client group served and the organization's s duty of care to the participants, to the staff and to the community.
- The potential risk involved in the position and its activities, the setting in which it took place, and the way in which it is supervised.

If a decision is made to accept an applicant with a criminal record, the police check is returned to the applicant. NO information other than the fact that a check was done is recorded. If an applicant is not accepted because of the information received from the police check, the applicant should be told why and the information is returned to the applicant. In either case, both the decision and the discussion should be documented.

Clubs will also have to decide how often they will require a PRC. Clubs may decide to request the PRC every year, every two years, etc. However, the Club should reserve the right to request a current PRC if there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the PRC is no longer accurate.

Clubs need to check with their local Police Department on the process employed for PRC. Some departments allow clubs to submit on behalf of team officials and some do not. Some departments have no fee for or a not-for-profit/charity fee.