



VOLUNTEER SCREENING POLICY

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Rev.	0
Originator:	D. Hawkins
Checker	I. Toellner
Approver:	C. Craig
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Volunteer Screening Process

Big Country Soccer Association supports the initiative of Alberta Soccer and adopts its policy and procedures for Volunteer Screening and will follow the Volunteer Screening guidelines found on the Alberta Soccer website as part of their “Safe Sport Resources”.

Educating participants, coaches, managers, leaders, and volunteers about abuse and harassment is very important. Big Country Soccer Association recognizes that the organization has a responsibility to ensure the Association and its members 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 legislated under the “Duty of Care” concept.

Due to the positions of trust that are inherent in the provision of active, high quality sport activities, volunteers shall be required to undergo a screening process based on Alberta Soccer. The screening process will be comprised of a variety of measures and includes a Police Record Check for all Volunteers.

Scope

Screening is an ongoing process designed to identify any person, whether paid or unpaid, volunteer or staff, who may harm children, youth, or other vulnerable persons. Screening involves isolating the risks related to specific volunteer positions, and then establishing appropriate methods to reduce the risk. Screening takes place before someone starts volunteering and continues throughout their involvement.

Definitions Related to Screening Volunteers

Participants Many different words are used to name people who participate in programs or receive services from recreation and sport organizations. The word participant represents players, athletes, clients, users, etc.

Duty of Care “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. It is important to understand that Canadian courts will uphold organizations’ responsibilities to screen carefully. This is part of their “Duty of Care”.

Vulnerable Person One who has difficulty protecting themselves from harm temporarily or permanently and is at risk because of age, disability or handicap. Children and youth are considered vulnerable. The standard of care is higher when running programs for vulnerable participants.

Position of Trust A volunteer is a person 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 and does not receive a salary or wage for this service or activity.

While this policy focuses on volunteer screening, the same principles apply to paid employees, interns, students on placement and trainers which the Association deems to require a screening process.



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The following guidelines are used by Big Country Soccer Association to determine that screening is necessary for all positions of trust:

1. Situations in which someone has a significant degree of:
 - a) Authority or decision-making power over another
 - b) 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 individual as in mentoring or friendly visiting programs.

Where volunteers are in a position of trust, there is more opportunity for abuse and more expectation that the Association will do what it can to reduce the risk of this happening.

Risk Factors

Screening is a way of reducing the risk of harm involved in doing certain things within the sports environment. The screening that is done for each position is based on the specific risks related to that position. Factors that increase risk include: young age of participants, minimal family presence, transporting participants, low or no on-site supervision, isolation, overnights, physical contact, close relationships, positions of trust, and lack of organizational policies.

While Big Country Soccer Association and its members:

- a) Through its selection process cannot unduly discriminate against people.
- b) Do have the right and the obligation to refuse potential volunteers based on the risks and requirements of each position.
- c) Will do everything reasonable to protect participants.

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

- Sexual Offences
- Violent or threatening behavior against children, adults, or other recognized group based on Big Country Soccer Association Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion Policy (*Ref: BCSA-POL-010*)
- Conduct against public standard morals
- Substance or chemical abuse
- Violation of a position of trust including theft or fraud



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- Criminal driving offences, including but not limited to impaired driving.

Convictions

Criminal code convictions, charges without disposition or police contact will be considered by Big Country Soccer Association and its members and may affect the acceptability of an applicant for a position within the soccer program.

For applicants that have a conviction outside of the specified unacceptable behaviors (cases that fall in the “grey area”). A decision may be made by the members’ Board and, if requested/ required, Big Country Soccer Association’s Board that for certain cases that fall in the “grey area” conditions may be placed on the applicant’s acceptance. For example, an applicant with a conviction for driving under the influence may not be permitted to drive participants.

An applicant who reveals a criminal conviction outside of the unacceptable behaviors or police contact may be given the opportunity to discuss the information with members’ Board and/ or with Big Country Soccer Association Board.

Big Country Soccer Association may wish to consider:

- 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 requirement of the nature of the position).
- Efforts made at rehabilitation (if any).
- Achievements of the applicant since receiving the conviction.
- The character and degree of vulnerability of the participant group served and the duty of care to the participants.
- The potential risks involved in the position the individual is volunteering for, based on the participants being served, the nature of the position and its activities, the setting in which it takes place, and the way in which it is supervised.

Criminal Record Checks (CRC)

The Criminal Records Check will be valid for three (3) years and can be made available to Big Country Soccer Association and/ or its members if approval is granted by the volunteer. Every volunteer, once accepted, is obliged to immediately inform the member Association if ever been charged, tried, convicted or involved in any way in a police investigated matter related to any of the above-noted offences under the Criminal Code or under other provincial or federal statutes.

In general, individuals with past Criminal Code convictions for the unacceptable behaviors listed above will not be accepted for a direct service position with participants.



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Applicants may also be rejected as a result of other information gained during the police record check process or through the screening process as a whole, or as a consequence of other factors which are directly relevant to the requirements of the position, and the ability of the applicant to carry out their duties in an effective, safe manner.

If a decision is made to accept a volunteer with conditions or if an applicant is not accepted because of the information received on the application or police check, the applicant should be told why they are given restrictions within the volunteer role or why they are being refused. The applicant has the right to an explanation and may appeal to Big Country Soccer Association President/ Vice-President in writing for a review of their application. Once a decision is provided following an appeal, the decision is final.

Confidentiality of Information

Big Country Soccer Association and its members collect personal information from Police Records Checks and from other sources and is obligated to keep that information confidential, and to use it only for the purposes for which the individual agrees it can be collected. Information can only be disclosed to individuals who are assigned by the Association and members' Boards to make decisions about accepting or refusing potential volunteers.

There shall be no dissemination or disclosure of the information to any other agency, body, or organization without the specific approval of the applicant. Once the information is used to compare to the Association's and members' criteria for accepting or rejecting a potential volunteer for a specific position, the information shall be destroyed (shredded /mulched) or kept in such a manner to prevent unauthorized access. (for example, in a locked cabinet with limited access). For all applicants that are refused, the applicant has the right to request the return of the police check and application.

Reference

Criminal Records Act, Section 6.3(3)

Big Country Soccer Association Policy (Ref: BCSA-POL-001)

Big Country Soccer Association Coaching Youth in Sport Policy (Ref: BCSA-POL-003)

Big Country Soccer Association Coaching Code of Conduct (Ref: BCSA-POL-009)

Big Country Soccer Association Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion Policy (Ref: BCSA-POL-010)