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# ***VOLUNTEER SCREENING MODEL***

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## **GUIDELINES AND POLICIES**

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## **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 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 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.
- 4. Use an application form.**  
The application form provides needed contact information. If the volunteer position 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, interests, 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 is the basis upon which to screen persons for participation as volunteers.
- The Volunteer position description contributes to involving and supporting persons for participation as Volunteers.
- 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>
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 maintains the Volunteer position)	Orientation, Information, Education, Training, Supervision, Evaluation
6. Motivation (How the Volunteer position engages persons to participate)	Motivational Statements, Benefits
7. Limits (Expectations of the Volunteer)	Standards, Guidelines, Rules, Regulations, Procedures, Mandatory Activities, Screening Procedures

### **Purpose of Statement**

1. *Needs Statement:*  
A statement that establishes the reason for being of 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:**

(Needs Statement)

(Functions Statement)

(Values Statement)

#### **Coach Position/Sports Organization**

-To ensure that participation in sports is safe, fun and friendly for children.

- By leading, teaching and organizing.

-And through teamwork, integrity, honesty, quality, and commitment to service.

**Volunteer Position Description – Basketball Ontario**  
**(Sample Template)**

Title of Position: _____ Purpose of Position:
Outcomes of Position:
Roles, Responsibilities, and Tasks:
Schedule and Commitment:
Skills, Experience & Other Requirements:
Setting & Location:
Orientation, Training & Other Support Provided:
Benefits:
Screening Procedures & Mandatory Activities:

**Volunteer Application**

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Organization name)

**Applicant Information:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/Town: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ (Res.) \_\_\_\_\_ (Bus.)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Fax)

**Volunteer Involvements:**

(current and/or previous)

**Agency/Organization**

**Volunteer Position**

Agency/Organization	Volunteer Position
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**Volunteer Position Selection:**

Please review the enclosed/attached volunteer position descriptions. Indicate below, your choice of position(s) in order of preference:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

Why are you applying for the above volunteer positions?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Skills and Qualifications:**

Please provide information on your background relevant to the volunteer position(s) you selected.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Time Availability:**

Please indicate all the days and times when you are available to volunteer.

**WEEKDAYS:**

- Monday
- Tuesday
- Wednesday
- Thursday
- Friday

**WEEKENDS:**

- Saturday
- Sunday

**TIME AVAILABLE:**

- Morning
- Afternoon
- Evening

**HOURS:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**What Can You Expect:**

- To be contacted for an interview.
- To receive orientation and training, if selected to volunteer.
- To have your performance evaluated as a volunteer.

**Police Checks and other background checks are required for designated positions.**

\_\_\_\_\_

*(signature of applicant)*

**Return this Application to:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Volunteer Application Review**

**Applicant Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Application Reviewer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Application Review Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Position:** \_\_\_\_\_

1.  Volunteer Application is reviewed with Applicant to ensure all requested information is included.
2.  Volunteer position descriptions are reviewed with Applicant.
3.  Volunteer involvement and skills, experiences and qualifications of Applicant are discussed/clarified in relation to Volunteer Position Selections.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4.  Time Availability and commitment of Applicants are reviewed in relation to Volunteer Position Selections.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5.  General Sustainability: \_\_\_\_\_

6.  One Volunteer Position is selected for the Interview Process

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Interview Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Application is withdrawn

Application is put on hold

Explanation: \_\_\_\_\_

**Volunteer Interview**  
**(sample format)**

**Candidate Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Interview Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Interviewer Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Volunteer Position:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Motivation:**

- Questions related to reasons for volunteer involvement with the particular volunteer position.

**Skills & Experience:**

- Questions related to core abilities required by the particular volunteer position.

**Qualifications:**

- Questions related to certified competencies required by the particular volunteer position.

**Situations:**

- Questions related to behaviours expected of the volunteer, in different circumstances that involve the particular volunteer position.

**Values:**

- Questions related to attitudes or behaviours expected of all volunteers, regardless of the volunteer position.

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**Interview Process Sample Questions**

**Sample Position: COACH**

**Motivation:**

- Why would you want to volunteer as a Coach with our organization?
- In what ways will volunteering with our organization contribute to meeting your personal goals?
- What would you like to see happen as a result of your volunteer involvement?

**Please Note:** More than one question may be required to clarify the motivation or reasons persons have to volunteer.

**Skills & Experience:**

(Questions may be grouped according to the roles of the volunteer position).

**Roles**

*Leader*

- \* How do you build a team?
- \* Describe your approach to leadership
- \* In what ways could you improve as a leader?

*Teacher*

- \* What is your approach to teaching?
- \* Describe the experience you have working with children
- \* How could you improve as a teacher?



### *Organizer*

- \* How do you manager your time?
- \* How would you build a support team to assist you?
- \* Describe how you would organize an activity (i.e. a practice)

**Please Note:** The sample questions provided relate to the Coach Position and possibly Positions unrelated to Sports and Recreation. It should be determined in advance, if skills and experience outside of Sports and Recreation are to be considered, and how these contribute to an assessment of suitability.

### **Qualifications:**

(Questions are relevant if specific certifications are required of the particular volunteer position).

**Other Certifications** not required of the particular volunteer position but with transfer value.

**Examples:** Teaching Certification, Early Childhood Education Certificate

**Please Note:** Questions are asked only if other certifications have been previously factored into an assessment of suitability.

### **Situations:**

(Questions are developed in the form of scenarios or role plays).

- A child is acting out, disturbing other children in a group or team. What are possible causes for their behaviour and how do you manage it?
- A child arrives at a game bruised on the face. You do not recognize the child, and assume the child is a player of the other team. What do you do?
- In selecting players for games, how would you deal with the varying athletic levels of the children you coach?
- You are confronted after a game by a parent who is visibly angry and directs insults at you. The parent is upset because of your decision not to include his/her child in the game. How do you respond?
- You find yourself in a tense situation with members of your team following a recent decision that resulted in the dismissal of a team member. The members of your team disagree with the decision and threaten to discontinue their participation as volunteers. What do you do?

### **Values:**

(Questions may include scenarios or role plays).

- Describe the qualities of the ideal volunteer?
- What do you consider to be most important in working relationships?
- What expectations do you have from the persons you work with?
- In the course of a game, you make a decision you believe is in the best interests of the organization and children served. Your supervisor disagrees with the decision you made and considers taking disciplinary action against you. How do you respond?
- The organization makes an important decision that will change how it does business. You strongly disagree with the decision because you believe it compromises basic values of the organization. What recourse do you have?

### Volunteer Management Checklist

Name of Volunteer: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone Number:(H) \_\_\_\_\_ (B) \_\_\_\_\_ (Fax) \_\_\_\_\_

Screen	Description	Date	Details
Application Process	*Volunteer application received		
Application Review	*Volunteer application reviewed with applicant		
Information Review	*Volunteer positions reviewed with candidate *Mutual expectations reviewed with candidate		
Interview Process	*Candidate interviewed		
Interview Assessment	*Suitability of applicant determined *Candidate informed of decision *Appropriate background checks applied (List them)		
Involvement Review	*Volunteer provided with orientation *Probationary period established *Probationary agreement signed by volunteer		
Pre-Placement Assessment	*Volunteer participation monitored *Probationary appraisal conducted		
Placement Process	*Placement agreement developed & signed by volunteer *Volunteer participation: monitor follow-up *Placement appraisal conducted *Exit interview conducted		
Placement Process	*Incident report received *Recognition report received *Other Feedback		

## **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 Behaviors**

Each Club needs to set out clear guidelines that identify how your Club will deal with an applicant's Police Records Check that shows a previous conviction or police contact. Your Club may decide that an individual whose Police Records Check establishes any of the unacceptable behaviours 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.

Basketball Ontario 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 behaviours may include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

- Sexual Offences
- Violent or threatening behaviour 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 Basketball Ontario 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 whose PRC reveal a criminal conviction outside of the unacceptable behaviours 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 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.

**POLICE RECORDS CHECK  
APPLICANT DECLARATION AND REVIEW FORM**

To (Name of Basketball Ontario Club):

**SECTION A: (to be completed by applicant)**

Name of applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Police Records Check: \_\_\_\_\_

Police Service Providing Check: \_\_\_\_\_

I declare that the Police Records Check of the Police Service noted above, does in fact relate to me.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Applicant's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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**SECTION B: (to be completed by the screening representative)**

Date of Review of the Police Records Check: \_\_\_\_\_

The police records check did not include any information about any criminal code convictions, charges without disposition or police contacts which would prevent this individual from being accepted for a volunteer or staff position with the \_\_\_\_\_ Basketball Club, according to the current policies.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Screening Rep Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**CLUB SCREENING REPRESENTATIVE  
OATH OF CONFIDENTIALITY**

This agreement made this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 20 \_\_\_\_\_

Between:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Basketball Club

And

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

I understand that all information directly or indirectly received through my involvement with the Basketball Ontario Club, is to be kept strictly private and confidential. This would include all business related to the Club (i.e. financial information, personal issues relating to staff and other volunteers, and participant/family information)

A break of in this oath of confidentiality may result in my being asked to leave my position with the Basketball Ontario Club.

I have read and understand all of the above.

Screening Representative:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

Witness:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

## **Screening Terminology:**

### **Duty of Care:**

The concept of duty of care identifies the relationship that exists between two persons (e.g. two individuals, an individual and an organization) and establishes the obligations that one owes the other, in particular the obligation to exercise harm. The duty of care arise from the common law,, as well as municipal, provincial, federal and international statutes.

### **Liability:**

Liability refers to the duties, obligations or responsibilities imposed on a person by common law or by statute. As it is commonly used, we speak of a person or organization being held legally liable for something i.e., through a legal action or inaction in a particular set of circumstances and is required to pay damages to someone harmed as a result.

- **Occupier's Liability:** requires that the person (an individual, an organization) in possession of premises owes a duty of care to those who come on the premises and must take responsible care to protect them from harm that might come through their programs, on their premises or at the hands of a third party on the premises.
- **Direct Liability:** deals specifically with the issue of fault
- **Vicarious Liability:** is the liability an organization takes on for the actions of those who function of its behalf.

### **Police Records Check:**

The process of securing information from the police about individuals, as well as to describe the form or report in which information is provided. It may include a check of national or local and regional police records. At the end of the process, a report is issued. The report may simply identify whether or not someone has a criminal record, or it may provide details of actual offences. Just as the process varies among police agencies, so too do the report forms.

### **Position of Trust:**

A position of trust identifies a setting in which someone is placed in a position of authority over another person in an ongoing relationship. A position of trust implies that someone has some degree of power over another, that the relationship is unequal. Individuals in positions of trust may be family members, friends, caregivers, volunteers, or employees.

The question of whether a position of trust exists depends on the relationship and on the degree of authority, reliance and dependence in it, and not on the question of payment or salary. People may also assume positions of trust with respect to finances, rather than individuals.

### **Standard of Care:**

The standard of care refers to the degree or level of service, attention, care and protection that one person owes another according to the law, usually the law of negligence. The required standard varies according to the circumstances of each situation, and determining the appropriate standard is often not a simple matter.

### **Volunteer:**

A volunteer is an individual:

- Who chooses to undertake a service or activity; someone who is not coerced to 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.

### **Vulnerable Person:**

This term is used to denote individuals who have difficulty protecting themselves and are therefore at greater risk of harm. People may be vulnerable because of age, disability or handicap, or circumstances. Vulnerability may be a temporary or a permanent condition.