



Screening Policy

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1. Overview

In 2002, the Guelph Youth Sport Advisory Council approached the Sport Alliance of Ontario and Volunteer Canada to develop a Volunteer Screening Program for sport.

A volunteer screening initiative could impact as many as 5000 volunteers, i.e., coaches, managers, administration staff and executive members. It was essential that this initiative be developed in consultation with minor associations and be able to be delivered by minor associations.

The task force reviewed the roles and responsibilities of positions within an Association and assessed a level of risk to each position. A set of screening measures were established and applied proportionately to these positions and their level of risk.

The screening measures included requirements such as:

- Application Forms with References
- Interviews
- Police Records Checks
- Training and Education
- Reporting Mechanism
- Evaluations

(See pages 15 and 16 for a list of Volunteer Canada's 10 Safe Steps for more information on screening methods)

Screening Task Force

The following sports groups were represented in the development of these guidelines:

- GuelphYouth Soccer Club Inc.
- Guelph Minor Hockey Association
- Guelph Ringette Association
- Guelph Minor Baseball Association
- Guelph Minor Football
- Guelph Police Service
- Youth Sport Advisory Council represented by Chuck Miller and Mike Hasler
- Legal Advisor - Steven W. Pettipiere
- Volunteer Canada/Volunteer Centre of Guelph-Wellington Consultant - Reva Cooper
- Human Resources Advisor - Christine Valdala

Disclaimer: The materials in this booklet are meant as a guide to organizations rather than legal advice. Organisations should check with their legal and insurance representation to ensure that they are taking appropriate steps to protect participants from harm.

2. Definitions Related to Screening

What is screening?

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.

Volunteers

A volunteer is an individual:

- Who chooses to undertake a service or activity, and 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 policy focuses on volunteer screening, the same principles apply to paid employees, interns, students on placement and trainers.

Participants

Many different words are used to name people who participate in programs or receive services from recreation and sport organizations. The word participant is used throughout the policy as the generic term and 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 clients. 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 him/herself 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

1. Situations in which someone has a significant degree of:
 - Authority or decision-making power over another
 - 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 organization will do what it can to reduce the risk of this happening.

Orientation

Orientation is a period of 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. Orientation is a valuable screening tool.

Training

Training is a learning process, during which time an individual is taught specific skills and expectations, which will assist them in performing their duties. The Guelph Youth Sport Advisory Council will assist in providing training modules.

3. Why Screen?

The answer is simple. We want to do a better job of protecting participants. It is much easier to ensure that the appropriate people take on the responsibilities that suit them best, than to spend the resources needed 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, coaches, managers, leaders 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 legislated under the "Duty of Care" concept.

4. 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, overnight accommodation away from home, physical contact, close relationships, positions of trust, and lack of organizational policies.

While organizations cannot unduly discriminate against people, they have the right and the obligation to refuse potential volunteers based on the risks and requirements of each position.

5. About Screening

Having a screening policy implies a commitment to effective volunteer management. Good human resource management takes time and resources, both scarce commodities in the voluntary sector. While many fitness, recreation, sport and community organizations may accept their responsibility to protect the participants in their programs, they can feel overwhelmed by the need to screen every one of their volunteers.

Screening is a flexible process; clearly the onus on an organization that puts individuals in positions working with children but who are never left alone is different from an organisation that places individuals in significant positions of trust with participants in an unsupervised setting. While there is an investment of time and energy upfront to develop appropriate screening, the benefits are worth it. These include safer programs, less liability risk for board volunteers, and more satisfied volunteers.

While we all want to do what we can to reduce harm to participants, an important caveat must be stated here: There is always risk! These guidelines can assist you to look at what you are already doing to manage that risk, and to adapt as necessary.

6. Police Record Checks

For certain positions within minor sport associations, for both volunteer and paid personnel, a Police Record Check will be required as an important but not exclusive element of the screening process.

In general, individuals with past Criminal Code convictions, ten years old or more recent, or charges pending for certain offences, will not be accepted for a direct service position with vulnerable clients. These offences include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Physical assault
- Sexual assault
- Invitation to sexual touching
- Sexual interference
- Indictable criminal offences for youth abuse
- Any weapons offence
- Conviction under controlled drugs and substance act (previously known as Narcotic Controlled Act)
- Any Court Order forbidding the individual to have contact with children under the age of 14
- Convictions or charges pending for any violent offence
- Convictions or charges pending for criminal driving offences, including but not limited to impaired driving
- Criminal harassment

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 to the ability of the applicant to carry out his/her duties in an effective, safe manner.

The applicant has the right to know why he or she is being refused, and may appeal to an appeal panel in writing for a review of their record. Organisations that need to set up an appeal process are referred to the following handbook:

“So You’ve Got a Complaint... The Hearing Process From Start to Finish”

Hilary A. Findlay and Rachel Corbett
Centre for Sport and Law – Brock University
500 Glenridge Avenue, St. Catharines, ON, L2S 3A1
(905) 688-5550 Extension 3149
www.sportlaw.ca

The Police Records Check will be valid for two years and will be recognized by all sport associations and can be made available to members of the Guelph Youth Sport Advisory Council.

Every staff member or volunteer, once accepted, is obliged to immediately inform all minor sport associations that they are associated with, if he or she is 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. Volunteers will be asked to sign an agreement to this effect.

NOTE: Sporting associations may require applicants under the age of 18 to provide a Police Records Check.

The Process for Police Records Checks

Step 1. The individual would fill out an application form for the sport Association they wish to apply with.

Step 2. The individual would sign the application form giving the association the approval to submit a Criminal Record Search Form on their behalf.

Step 3. When the report is ready the applicant will be notified by Police Services, if there are any problems. They can then compare their Police Report to the criteria for declining a potential volunteer, and have the opportunity to make their own decision to withdraw.

Step 4. If the individual decides to proceed, he/she would hand in the Police Report to the sport association President/School Designate.

Step 5. The President/School Designate would compare the Police Report to the sport association criteria and provide a written report to the Applicant, stating whether or not the person meets the criteria for the position. Each organization must understand the implications of the HUMAN RIGHTS CODE as it applies to hiring volunteers. They must have a clear view of what information might constitute a "bona fide" reason for refusing to hire an applicant or volunteer for each position based on the risks and responsibilities of that position.

Step 6. All volunteers have the right to appeal the decision of the sport association. A Committee of Review made up of three independent representatives (that could include Guelph Youth Sport Advisory Council Members) not actively connected with

the individual would form a tribunal appointed by the President/School Designate followed with a closed hearing.

Step 7: Confidentiality of Information

Each organization that collects personal information from police records checks and from other sources 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 organization to make decisions about hiring 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 organization's criteria for hiring 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).

Multiple Police Record Checks

If you are volunteering for more than one minor sport association in the same year, you may request in writing for your Police Record Check (PRC) to be shared with another S.A.C. member organisation.

1. A letter signed by the volunteer giving permission to the Association that submitted your PRC to share the information with the new association.
2. This is only to confirm that a PRC has been submitted and the expiry date of the PRC.
3. The interview process is still the responsibility of the new Association.

7. Position Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference are developed for each position in order to clarify duties, specify related qualifications, identify boundaries or limits, and as a feedback/evaluation tool for the volunteer. Each position must have an up-to-date comprehensive written description in order for the organization to be able to determine the relevant type and intensity of screening required. Descriptions also allow you to identify potential risks and change elements of how the work is done in order to reduce risk.

The Guelph Youth Sport Advisory Volunteer Screening Task Force has developed several generic Position Terms of Reference to assist sports groups. These are meant as guidelines and may need to be adapted according to your individual needs. The Task Force has also rated risk levels, and suggested screening activities related to the risk. Generally, the risk is rated according to: the vulnerability of the participant, supervision of the volunteer, the setting, and the types of activities the position entails.

Suggested Screening Methods by Risk Level

Low Risk:

1. Application

2. Police Records Check
3. Monitoring

Medium Risk:

1. Application
2. Police Records Check
3. Supervision

High Risk:

1. Application
2. Police Records Check
3. Interview Process
4. References
5. Supervision
6. Parent/Participant Evaluation

8. Areas for Evaluation of Coaches

House League Coach:

- Communication skills
- Fair play
- Ensuring a safe sports environment
- Knowledge of the game
- Develop skills and abilities of players
- Organized practices
- Preparation for games
- Conduct
- Adherence to association rules/regulations

Rep Coach:

- Communication
- Team goals
- Ensuring safe sports environment
- Knowledge of the game
- Strategy
- Development of player's skills and abilities
- Practices organized
- Prepared for games
- Knowledge of the rules
- Adherence to association rules/regulations

9. Monitoring, Supervision and Evaluation

Once the volunteer is placed, the organization has an ongoing duty to ensure that the volunteer is carrying out his or her responsibilities in an effective, safe manner. There are many ways that the organization can monitor the work of volunteers, and

support volunteers in their work. Some mechanisms are probably already in place in your organization. The degree and type of supervision that is appropriate varies with the degree and type of risk within the volunteer position. The higher the risk for a position, the more intense the supervision needs to be. Generally, supervision is also closer when someone is new to the position. Some ideas of how to meet your duty of care in this regard are:

- Having a designated supervisor who monitors activities
- A supervision/evaluation team
- A mentor system where a new volunteer is matched with an experienced person
- Observing the volunteer
- Phone or personal follow-up with the volunteer
- Spot checks
- Formal performance appraisals by supervisor
- Parent/Participant evaluations of volunteer
- Assessment form
- Informal feedback and suggestions
- Reports from the volunteer and to the volunteer
- Mandatory training sessions
- Volunteer meetings
- Follow-up with parents
- Parental awareness and responsibility
- Educating participants
- Discipline/dismissal policies and procedures
- A formal complaint process

10. Screening by Position

Position: All Star/Rep Coach

Risk Level: High Risk Position

Responsible To: All Star/Rep Convenor/ V.P. Rep Travel

Goals:

- Positional play and individual roles on a team
- Competition at a higher level than house league play
- Maintaining team chemistry while improving individual skill
- Encouraging commitment and self-discipline
- Fair Play Initiatives, Violence Free Sport
- Playing for the "love of the game"

Activities:

- Weekly practices and exhibition/ game
- Tournament play-travelling and overnight stays
- Upgrading qualifications through coaching certification clinics
- As mandated by the club(s) and tournament committee(s)

Responsibilities:

- Appointment of a coaching staff, assistants & managers
- Establish behaviour expectations on part of players
- Knowledge of the game
- Attendance at all-star/rep coaches meetings
- Participation in all related club coaching clinics
- Familiarity with club policies pertaining to all-star/rep teams
- Adherence to coaching standards as set by head club coach
- Background in injury prevention and management.

Boundaries/Limitations:

- Attempt to avoid being alone with the player
- Not responsible for transportation to/from practices/games/tournaments
- Not responsible for water or snacks
- Role model-no drugs/alcohol/smoking/or abusive language at practices/games/tournaments
- Appropriately dressed
- Embrace club values, principles, and policies as per club constitution
- Ability to set and maintain standards for players (i.e. respect, self-discipline, fair play)

Position: All-star/Rep Team Manager

Risk Level: High Risk Position

Responsible To: All-Star/Rep Head Coach

Goals:

- To assist the coach with all team administration as required by the club, league and tournaments in which team participates
- Improve and maintain a line of communication between the club, coaching staff, parents and players
- Fair Play Initiatives, Violence Free Sport

Activities:

- Attend weekly practices and games
- Attend meetings as organized by the club, league or coach
- Tournament play, including travel and overnight stays

Responsibilities:

- Communicate regularly with parents and coaches
- Attend all-star/rep coaches meetings as necessary
- Familiarity with club policies pertaining to all-star/rep teams
- Familiarity with all-star/rep coaches code of conduct
- Ensure proper registration of players for club and league
- Completion of all requirements for tournament play

- Organization of transportation for players at league games and tournaments
- Establish committee(s) of parents and/or players regarding refreshments, fund-raising, and other non-coaching team functions
- Completion of team game sheets and payment for referees
- Control of team finances, including a bank account (two signatures required)
- Other related duties as assigned by the club or coach

Boundaries/Limitations:

- Attempt to avoid being alone with player
- Role model-no drugs/alcohol/smoking or use of abusive language at practices/games/tournaments
- Appropriately dressed
- Embrace club values and principles
- Adherence to club/league and tournament policies as set out in the constitution
- Not responsible for transportations to/from practices/games/tournaments

Position: House League Coach

Risk Level: Medium Risk Position

Responsible To: Age Group Convenor

Goals:

- Instruction in sport skills as set out by the club
- Positional play and individual roles on a team
- Competition at an appropriate level of play
- Encouraging self-confidence and individual skill development through positive reinforcement
- Building and maintaining team chemistry
- Fair Play Initiatives, Violence Free Sport

Activities:

- Weekly practice and game(s) for players as mandated by the club

Responsibilities:

- Communication with players, parents (i.e. practice/game schedules, half time snacks)
- Player information forms
- Familiarity with guidelines for reporting child abuse
- Ability to set and maintain standards for players relating to respect, discipline and fair play
- Attendance at meetings and clinics as organized by the club
- Awareness of club policies relating to player safety (i.e. weather advisories, heat policies, facility/field conditions)
- Familiarity with house league coaches' code of conduct
- Distribution of player equipment as issued by club

Boundaries/Limitations:

- Attempt to avoid being alone with player
- Not responsible for transportation to/from practices/games/tournaments
- Role model-no alcohol/drugs/smoking or use of abusive or profane language at practices/games/tournaments
- Appropriately dressed
- Adherence to club policies, values and principles as set out in the constitution

Position: Member of the Board of Directors

Risk Level: High/Medium/Low Risk

Position risk to be determined by the association

Responsible To: President/Executive

Goals:

- Responsible for management and supervision of the overall policies and affairs of the Association
- Working in unison to better the association
- To provide a violence free sport

Activities:

- Attend monthly meetings
- Sit on different committees as required
- Prepare, distribute and implement rules and regulations
- Abide by the constitution and by-laws

Responsibilities:

- Approve any fund raising endeavours
- To develop recommendations for improvements to the association
- Develop policies and procedures
- Responsible for the constitution and by-laws
- Maintaining accurate records (treasurer) and approving the financial statements at monthly meetings
- To operate with a budget that is approved annually
- Enforcing the rules, regulations and guidelines established by the association
- Maintaining and purchasing the proper equipment
- Identify and manage risk
- Adhere to club policies
- Be a positive role model
- Be financially responsible
- Promote Fair Play Initiatives
- Operate a violence free sport

Position: Referee/Umpire

Risk Level: High/Medium

Responsible To: Referee-in-Chief/Umpire

Goals:

- To provide a standardized officiating level as required by the provincial and / or national organizations
- Maintain a fair and safe game for all participants

Activities:

- Attend clinics for certification and promotion
- Ensure personal attendance for every assignment received
- Attend local officiating meetings as required

Responsibilities:

- Familiarity with all playing rules, policies and procedures pertaining to officiating
- Completion of game sheets / line-up cards
- Communicate incidents / game ejections to R.I.C. and governing leagues
- Maintain current official certification level (sport specific)
- Other related duties assigned by the officiating organizations
- Role model – no drugs/alcohol or use of abusive language
- Embrace officiating values and ethics
- Adherence to policies as established in constitutions

Boundaries / Limitations

- Attempt to avoid being alone with a player
- Not responsible for transportation
- Attempt to avoid being alone in a referee/umpire's room with an officiating partner under the age of 21 or with a member of the opposite sex.

11. Volunteer Canada's Ten Safe Steps Screening Program

Volunteer Canada's Ten Safe Steps Screening Program provides an easy-to-use method for organizations to enhance the safety of their programs. The Safe Steps are much like a menu - you need only select those steps that apply specifically to the risk inherent in 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 Ten 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 minimizing 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'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. 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 record, 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. However, it should never be the first, last or only form of screening that you use.
 8. Conduct orientation and training sessions
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. 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 the goals and expectations specified in the position description.
 10. 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.

[Source: www.volunteer.ca](http://www.volunteer.ca)

12. Volunteer Canada Appendixes

Check List for Implementing Screening in Your Organization

The board of directors is ultimately responsible and potentially liable for the organization's services and programs. It is therefore important that the board establish policies, which will guide the staff in designing and carrying out appropriate screening

measures. Answer the questions below to identify the strengths and gaps in your organization.

- Do the board members understand their moral and ethical responsibility as well as their legal liability regarding "duty of care"?
- Are the philosophy, values and principles of the organization clearly stated and set out in brief written statements?
- Has the organization's executive designated a person(s) to manage volunteer resources and implement a risk management process?
- Has the board allocated a budget for a comprehensive screening program?
- Has a risk management audit been conducted? This process will review position descriptions and identify risks inherent or foreseeable relating to the participant, the setting, the activity, the level of supervision and the nature of the relationship.
- Have appropriate screening measures been designated and implemented for each position?
- Have screening policies been written and communicated specific for each of the following:
 - Rationale for screening
 - Screening of volunteers and staff
 - Confidentiality and record keeping
 - Standard of care
 - Acceptance of rejection of applicant(s)
 - Discipline and dismissal
 - Authority for decision making
- Has the Board planned to audit regularly the organization's screening process to meet the ever-changing legislation and social environment?

This checklist is adapted from the Screening Grid developed by Aileen V. Feicho, CAVH, and Barb Gemmell (Jan. 1997) which can be found in the Safe Steps Workbooks.

Interviews

Refer to The Screening Handbook part 11 p. 3.2 7 - 3.30

Adapted by Volunteer Canada with permission. Behaviour-based Interviewing, prepared by Roseanne Drouillard, Volunteer Trainer, United Way-Centraide, Windsor Essex County (see Additional Resources Section for more information on behaviour-based interviewing)

Interviews are an extremely important step in making the selection process more professional and decreasing the likelihood of inappropriate decisions. 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 the organization may have about the suitability of the candidate. 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 it is important to do 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 job specifically, using the job description;
- Document the applicant's responses to the question and keep them on file;
- Look for attitudes towards children and recreation/sport that do not fit with those of the organization

In order to choose the candidate who will succeed in the position, recent research suggests that behaviour-based interviewing is the most effective. Behaviour-based interviewing is designed to predict a candidate's future performance. Every question is directly related to position requirements and each candidate is treated equally. Subjective "gut feeling" reactions are greatly reduced.

Behaviour-based interviewing requires significant preparation by the organization before the interview.

In order to ensure interviews are consistent and the hiring decision is fair and unbiased, the skills and behaviours required to be successful in the position are identified prior to the interview.

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

A list of sample interview questions can be found on page 3.29 in The Screening Handbook. Whether you use those or your own, the questions should encourage responses that allow you to judge a candidate's...

- Relevant work related experiences
- Relevant formal and informal education
- Eagerness to work
- Ability to work with others
- Integrity
- Supervision preferences
- Initiative and judgement

Judging the answers to questions in an interview can be difficult. Preparing the "perfect answer" ahead of time can help guard against the "I'll know it when I hear it" method of judging answers.

When conducting the interview, the panel should ask each applicant the same questions in the same order. This will help the panel members to remain objective. During behaviour-based interviews, it is suggested that the panel avoid small talk. Instead, introduce the panel members, comment on the type of interview and how it fits into the hiring practice. Begin the interview with question number one.

Evaluate the applicant's responses based on the "perfect answer". Rating systems should be decided ahead of time. The applicant with the highest total should be the individual best suited for the job.

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.

If activities will take place in the home, the organization must ask for information about any other person who lives in the home or visits frequently.

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 Exercise 8 you will practice interviewing techniques in groups.

SAFE STEPS: A Volunteer Screening Process for Recreation and Sport (page 27 & 28)

Sample of Interview and Reference Check Questions Provided by Ontario 4-H

Applicant's Name: _____

Date of Interview: _____

Names of Interviewers: _____

1. Why do you want to be a volunteer? _____
2. Have any members of your family been involved in the 4-H program? If so, in what way?
3. a) Have you ever been involved in any other organizations that offer programs for young people?
b) What did you do? _____
c) Are you still involved? _____ If no, why not? _____
4. What skills do you have to offer the 4-H program? _____
What are your areas of interest that you would like to share with the organization? _____
5. The Ontario 4-H program has a membership of young people aged 10-21 years.

The program encourages young people from diversified backgrounds.

Are you comfortable with such diversification? _____

What age group do you prefer to work with? _____

6. What type of volunteer opportunities do you desire and why? _____

7. What training do you feel you require to work with youth? _____

Are you willing to attend training workshops and opportunities? _____

8. Are there circumstances that could affect your ability to volunteer in certain situations?

(medical problems, other commitments, etc...) _____

9. Have you read the organization's policies regarding criminal and other offences, drug and alcohol use, etc. that would be considered relevant to this position? _____

Do you understand them? _____

Do you have difficulty in being guided by them? _____

10. Are there any questions you would like to ask us about the 4-H program? _____

Rural Supplement: Safe Steps Volunteer Screening Workbook (Page 16)

What to ask References

Note to Volunteer Recruitment and Screening Committee:

Volunteers should provide the name, address and telephone number of three references. At least two references should be contacted by telephone. Identify yourself and your reason for calling. Identify the volunteer applicant. Tell the reference that "4-H is a program for young people ages 10-21. Adult volunteers assist young people in developing leadership skills. Our 4-H Association wants to provide a safe environment for young people to learn and grow. We also believe in protecting our volunteers, thus we have a selection process for our volunteers. Part of the process is the reference check I am conducting with you." Assure the reference the information is confidential to the volunteer recruitment and screening committee of the association.

Name of 4-H _____

Volunteer Applicant _____

Name of Reference _____ Phone _____

Questions to ask Reference:

1. How long have you known the 4-H volunteer applicant?

In what capacity?

- _____
2. Do you think this person would be an asset to a youth-serving organization? _____
How does this person interact with young people? _____
 3. Have you any reason to believe that this person has problems with drugs or alcohol?
—
Have you any indication that this person may be abusive physically, emotionally or sexually with young people? _____
 4. Would you be willing to place your son or daughter, or any other young person for whom you might be responsible, under his/her leadership? _____
 5. Do you know of any reason why the applicant would not make a suitable 4-H volunteer?

If yes, please explain. _____

6. Additional comments: _____

4-H Volunteer Recruitment and Screening Committee Member	Date
--	------

For 4-H Volunteer Recruitment and Screening Committee member: File this form in your confidential files along with reference questionnaire of the other reference

Rural Supplement – Safe Steps Volunteer Screening Workshop (page 17)

Sample – Reference check script

The following is a sample of a reference check. In groups of two, conduct a reference check using a position discussed earlier in the workshop. You may use (adapt) the sample script below or develop your own questions. If you are working with a large group, exchange the information you collected with another group and decide whether or not you would offer a position to the applicant based solely on the reference check information. Discuss your decision.

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 the applicant) in regard to reliability.

What are (name of applicant's) strengths and weaknesses in regard to working with (indicate specific participant group: pre-schoolers, 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 position?

Would you ever consider re-hiring (name of applicant)?

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

Additional sample questions for reference checks can be found in The Screening Handbook part II p. 3.31.

Exercise 10

Pointers for dismissing a volunteer after their probation period is up.

1. The primary emphasis when dismissing a volunteer should go on the position and not the person.
Example: The position is not best suited for your skills.
2. Bring up the position description that was mentioned at the initial stage (when hired) and point out discrepancies.
3. Emphasize the seriousness of their position and how it must be properly filled.
4. Finally, always thank them for having taken the time to try it out and perhaps suggest a different position (if wanted or needed).

Recruitment Methods

- Establish and maintain contact with key individuals and groups in your community such as:
 - Former & current volunteers;
 - Religious leaders;
 - Chair people and members of service, social, sorority, professional groups, etc;
 - Chamber of commerce officials;
 - Volunteer centres;
 - 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)
- Recreation departments
- Education departments
- Social service departments

The Interview Panel

What are the basic rules for behaviour-based interviews?

Generally

The three or more panel members should:

- Not look at an applicant's file (application, resume, etc.) prior to the interview
- Decide who will be responsible for each area of questioning
- Take extensive objective notes and avoid subjective written comments
- Not discuss any interview results until all applicants have been interviewed

Specifically

The three or more panel members should:

- Ask the questions in the same order and verbatim for each applicant
- Repeat if necessary, but not paraphrase
- Not coach, prompt, give hints or show positive or negative response to the candidate's answers
- Allow the same amount of time for each applicant to answer the question

Bottom line

Before, during, and after the interview, the panel needs to remain objective to achieve effective behaviour-based interviewing.

Designing Positions

Designing positions is not as complicated as it sounds. For the purpose 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 (The Screening Handbook part II, 3.13 – 3.14)

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:
- 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 is it undertaken, and how is it 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. A women's rugby team is looking for a volunteer to fill the position of equipment manager. How would you design the position to decrease risk?
2. A community group is looking for a volunteer to maintain and operate the local outdoor rink.
3. A pre-school program is looking for a volunteer to help organize and distribute snacks and juice and/or craft materials.

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

SAFE STEPS: A Volunteer Screening Process for Recreation and Sport

Screening checklist

- Assess each position
- Identify each level of risk
- Determine the appropriate screening 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 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
- Terminate the volunteer if/when it is appropriate

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