



Safe Enough? Reviewing Your Screening Practices

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Canada

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This document does not offer legal advice. Readers should consult with a lawyer regarding specific legal questions or concerns.

The contents of this tool have been carefully researched, checked and reviewed by individuals in Ontario. We apologize for any errors that may remain. Readers must be aware, however, that legislation, social policy, and specific procedures and practices of organizations, including police and insurance agencies, are continually changing.

While examples of screening practices are referenced throughout this document, Volunteer Canada is not in a position to determine whether organizations or individuals have fulfilled their legal duties or satisfied the applicable standard of care in every circumstance. Individuals and organizations should seek legal counsel or consult human resource experts and their insurance provider in planning specific volunteer screening policies and procedures.

Safe Enough? Reviewing Your Screening Practices is not intended to be used as a guide for organizations to develop their volunteer program. There are a number of resources available to help with establishing a comprehensive volunteer program. Consult Volunteer Canada's resource, *A Guide to Volunteer Program Resources*, for a list of the top 20 volunteer program management resources or visit www.volunteer.ca/resource for other valuable volunteer management resources.

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Terms in **bold** type are defined in the glossary on page 19.

Introduction

To safely manage programs and services and to demonstrate **due diligence**, every **organization** must be able to show that volunteer-management policies and practices are in place and that such policies and practices support the appropriate matching of **volunteers** to volunteer positions. Organizations are required to do everything reasonable to protect those in their care. This responsibility is both moral and legally required under the **Duty of Care** concept, which requires organizations to do everything reasonable and to take reasonable measures to care for and protect their program participants.

Safe Enough? Reviewing Your Screening Practices is a voluntary, self-administered checklist developed for groups and organizations to assist them with a screening **performance review**.

This tool complements the series of resources produced by Volunteer Canada on screening for positions of trust. As such, the Checklist is based on Volunteer Canada's ten safe steps to screening standards as listed in resources such as *Safe Steps: A Volunteer Screening Process*. A complete list of resources is available online at www.volunteer.ca/screening.

What is Screening?

Screening is an ongoing ten-step process designed to identify any person – whether paid or unpaid, volunteer or staff – who might harm children, youth or other **vulnerable persons**. Screening helps people know that you care about the people you serve in your community. Screening is performed by an organization to ensure that the right match is made between the work to be done and the person to do it. The screening process is clearly communicated and consistently delivered. Screening begins before someone starts volunteering and continues throughout their involvement with the organization. The proper management and screening of volunteer resources plays an important part in an organization's ability to carry out its mission.

What is the Screening Checklist?

Working through a series of questions and statements, the Checklist helps organizations to assess their current volunteer screening practices and to consider other practices and activities to improve their current screening systems. Based on Volunteer Canada's *Safe Steps*, the Checklist involves systematically reviewing all aspects of volunteer screening practices, in a checklist fashion, ensuring that government regulations and organizational policies are being considered.

The Screening Checklist helps to:

1. look at what you have - perform an accurate due diligence review and thorough inventory and analysis of your current screening activities and practices;
2. compare against best known practices- assess whether you are engaging in best known practices and alert you to areas that need improvement;
3. discover new practices and consider implementing them - discover screening practices, additional processes and corrective measures;
4. determine gaps; and
5. decide what you want to use - set effective screening priorities and develop a plan that considers and responds to the volunteer screening needs of your organization.

The Checklist may be appropriate in a number of situations. For example, it may be appropriate to use the Checklist before beginning to recruit volunteers so that systematic procedures can be implemented. And, it may also be used at critical stages in an organization's planning cycle to ensure the continuing adequacy of those procedures and to help detect any weaknesses. The Screening Checklist is also appropriate in conjunction with development of new volunteer positions, particularly if such positions involve vulnerable persons.

How to Use the Screening Checklist

The Checklist should be self-administered by the designated person(s) who manages volunteer resources or a senior-level individual responsible for human resource and volunteer resource management. If more than one individual is involved in the management of volunteers for your organization, involve them in completion of the Checklist.

The following pages present a series of baseline standards and practices. These have been divided into two sections:

1. a profile of the organization's readiness for screening; and
2. the ten safe steps to screening.

The key to the Checklist is to approach it as a learning or discovery tool, and not as a test. This should help you to be more honest and accurately identify where you stand. It is unlikely that an organization will meet all of the standards (or answer YES to all of the questions or statements.) An important step to the assessment process will be the identification of measures or practices to be put in place to improve your screening practices.

Note: the time and effort involved in completing the Checklist will vary depending upon the complexity of your volunteer program.

From basic assessment to in-depth review

Two versions of the Checklist have been provided in this document: a short version (in the following pages) and a longer version (Appendix 1 and 2).

The first version proposes a core outline of screening-related practices and considerations. When conducting your screening program and practices assessment, use the shorter Checklist first. In most cases, the shorter version will offer you enough food for thought.

However, we encourage you to consult and complete the longer version of the Checklist (provided in Appendix 1 and 2) if you feel that your organization is at a more advanced stage in its screening development due to, for example:

- the complexity of your processes;
- the wide range of volunteer positions, including many high-risk positions;
- the number of volunteers, the types of positions, and the scope of your operations;
- the experience of those involved in managing the volunteer program.

Section 1 - Profile of the Organization's Readiness for Screening

As a first step, we encourage you to examine your organization's awareness of and processes in place to support a successful screening program. This first section will therefore focus on the overall practices that need to be in place to sustain your screening strategies. When working through the Checklist, please consider key questions about your current volunteer program and take an inventory of your existing screening policies, procedures, practices, systems, tools and forms.

Complete the Checklist by answering each question using one of the five choices: DON'T KNOW / YES / SOMEWHAT / NO / NOT APPLICABLE

Consider all your current practices, documents, tools and resources while answering the questions.

Note:

- If you are unable to answer the question, please check DON'T KNOW and consider discussing the question with others in your organization to get an answer.
- A YES response indicates those screening activities and practices that are currently being done.
- A SOMEWHAT response indicates that parts of the question are being met, but that the organization needs to consider implementing some action.
- A NO response indicates that no part of the question is being met and the organization needs to consider implementing action.
- The N/A or NOT APPLICABLE response indicates that the question does not apply or is not relevant to your organization.

Note: Appendix 1 offers supplementary questions that more thoroughly address each of this section's categories.

Once you have completed your assessment, we encourage you to meet briefly with others in your organization to discuss your findings and to develop an action plan (go to page 18 for an action planning sample).

ORGANIZATIONAL READINESS CHECKLIST

ORGANIZATION: _____

COMPLETED BY: _____

DATE COMPLETED: _____

REVIEWED BY: _____

DATE REVIEWED: _____

Q	ACCOUNTABILITY Identify accountability and authority for decision making	DON'T KNOW	YES	SOME-WHAT	NO	N/A
1	BOARD AWARENESS Within the context of the organization's operations and activities, does the board of directors understand its moral and ethical responsibility, as well as its legal liability regarding the duty of care it owes its clients, staff, volunteers and the community?					
2	INSURANCE COVERAGE Are volunteers included and covered under the organization's insurance policy?					
3	CLEARLY DEFINED AND COMMUNICATED AUTHORITY Are there clearly defined and communicated policies and practices regarding who is authorized to make final volunteer-selection decisions?					

Q	RESOURCES Identify human, financial and material resources	DON'T KNOW	YES	SOME-WHAT	NO	N/A
1	ADEQUATE RESOURCE ALLOCATION Has the board/organization determined what would be adequate resources (financial, material and human) for involving volunteers?					
2	DESIGNATED HUMAN RESOURCES Does the organization's management have a designated person(s) to manage volunteer resources and to monitor the implementation of screening policies and procedures?					
3	CENTRALIZED OR DECENTRALIZED MONITORING Is the position(s) responsible for screening centralized in one department or area?					

Q	POLICIES AND PROCEDURES Identify policies, procedures, documentation and materials required	DON'T KNOW	YES	SOME-WHAT	NO	N/A
1	GENERAL POLICY ON SCREENING Is there a policy in place for standardized screening procedures for all new staff, volunteers and board members?					
2	POLICIES THAT SUPPORT SCREENING Other than a general policy on screening, are there other policies in place to support organizational due diligence efforts?					
3	SCENARIOS TO CONSIDER Does the organization have a policy on providing service recipients, older adults, students or recent immigrants with an opportunity to volunteer?					
4	FLAGGED POLICE RECORDS Has the organization decided if it will accept volunteers who have a flagged police record?					

Q	ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES Identify the documented administrative and clerical processes in place	DON'T KNOW	YES	SOME-WHAT	NO	N/A
1	IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING THE SCREENING PROCESS If the organization introduces new screening measures, has it considered how it will handle those volunteers who currently occupy the positions?					

Q	INFORMATION SHARING Identify how information is communicated	DON'T KNOW	YES	SOME-WHAT	NO	N/A
1	COMMUNICATING THE VALUE OF SCREENING Does management have a communication process for all new staff, volunteers and board members regarding the importance of screening all applicants and accepting only those applicants who meet the identified requirements?					
2	COMMUNICATING THE SCREENING PROCESS TO VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF For each step in the screening process, decisions are made to determine if the organization proceeds to the next screening step. Are these decisions documented?					

Q	RECORDS MANAGEMENT Identify how confidential information in volunteer records is handled, kept, shared and destroyed	DON'T KNOW	YES	SOMEWHAT	NO	N/A
1	COLLECTING CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL INFORMATION Does the organization have written policies and procedures in place for managing, storing, returning and destroying personal and confidential information in accordance to all laws?					
2	PRIVACY PRINCIPLES APPLIED Are information privacy principles followed for both paper-based and electronic records?					
3	STORAGE OF RECORDS Has the organization decided how and where it will store personal information?					
4	ACCESS TO INFORMATION/RECORDS Are records created with access in mind while maintaining confidentiality?					

Section 2 - Screening Checklist

This section is based on Volunteer Canada's Ten Safe Steps to Screening¹ for positions of trust.

Each of the ten steps contains a series of screening standards. For each standard, we propose examples of practices in the form of a checklist. Complete the checklist by:

- reading the standard;
- reviewing the sample examples of practices; and
- indicating if your organization has these practices in place.

Note:

- If you are unable to answer the question, please check DON'T KNOW and consider discussing the question with others in your organization to get an answer.
- A YES response indicates those screening activities and practices that your organization is currently doing to meet their Duty of Care.
- A SOMEWHAT response indicates that the organization needs to take some action. Determine which parts of the statement are being met and which areas the organization needs to address to effectively minimize risks.
- A NO response indicates that the organization needs to consider implementing some action.
- The N/A or NOT APPLICABLE response indicates that the question does not apply or is not relevant to your organization.

TEN SAFE STEPS TO SCREENING

1. Determine the risk
2. Write a clear position description
3. Establish a formal recruitment process
4. Use an application form
5. Conduct interviews
6. Follow up on references
7. Request a **Police Records Check**
8. Conduct orientation and training sessions
9. Supervise and evaluate
10. Follow up with program participants

Note: Appendix 2 offers supplementary questions that offer more examples of practices for each standard.

Once you have completed your assessment, we encourage you to briefly meet with others in your organization to discuss your findings and to develop an action plan (go to page 17 for an action planning sample).

¹ www.volunteer.ca/screening

SCREENING CHECKLIST

1. Determine the Risk

Q	STANDARD The organization takes proactive measures to identify, assess and reduce risks associated with each volunteer position. Examples	DON'T KNOW	YES	SOMEWHAT	NO	N/A
1	ORGANIZATIONAL RISK MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES AND OVERALL PRACTICES There is a risk-management team or committee (staff, volunteers and board members) that creates opportunities to talk about potential risks in volunteer positions.					
2	RISK ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS When a new volunteer position is created, risks are identified and evaluated.					
3	RISK-MANAGEMENT PRACTICES Risk-management controls and early warning mechanisms have been identified, documented and monitored, with responsibility for each risk assigned to a named member of senior management.					

2. Position Descriptions

Q	STANDARD The organization has complete and accurate written position descriptions for all volunteer positions and has selected and implemented appropriate screening measures for each position. Examples	DON'T KNOW	YES	SOMEWHAT	NO	N/A
1	DEVELOPMENT OF POSITION DESCRIPTIONS In designing positions, the purpose of the position, the types and scope of activities, the accountability and the risks involved are assessed.					
2	POSITION DESCRIPTIONS ARE VALUABLE TOOLS Candidates are assessed against position requirements and selected in a fair and consistent manner.					
3	POSITION DESCRIPTIONS AND SCREENING Each position description follows a plan for placement, training and supervision and for evaluation of volunteer performance.					

3. Recruitment Process

Q	STANDARD All recruitment and selection systems are fair, consistent and appropriate for the position. Examples	DON'T KNOW	YES	SOMEWHAT	NO	N/A
1	CLEARLY DESIGNED RECRUITMENT PLANS AND PRACTICES The organization provides clear, accurate and up-to-date information about the positions available so that candidates can decide if they wish to apply to become a volunteer.					
2	CLEARLY COMMUNICATED RECRUITMENT PLANS AND PRACTICES The organization has a standardized volunteer information package that details the requirements for becoming a volunteer.					

4. Use an Application Form

Q	STANDARD The organization uses a standardized application form for all volunteer positions. Examples	DON'T KNOW	YES	SOMEWHAT	NO	N/A
1	APPLICATION PROCESS All applicants are required to fill out, sign and date the application form.					
2	APPLICATION FORM CONTENT There is a statement on the application form regarding the need for a Police Records Check for certain positions.					

5. Conduct Interviews

Q	STANDARD Interviewers have specific questions to ask applicants and a consistent interview format for each position and they keep accurate and objective written records of interviews. Examples	DON'T KNOW	YES	SOMEWHAT	NO	N/A
1	STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROCESS There is a pre-developed system for conducting interviews and assessing the responses.					
2	CONSISTENT AND LEGALLY COMPLIANT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS All selection tests or questions asked are relevant, legal and based on the position requirements.					
3	INTERVIEWERS ARE TRAINED IN LEGAL COMPLIANCE Interviewers treat all applicants for the same position in an equitable manner and ask questions that are reasonable and appropriate to the position.					

6. Follow-up on References

Q	STANDARD References are checked in accordance to position requirements and comply with human rights and protection of privacy of information legislation. Examples	DON'T KNOW	YES	SOMEWHAT	NO	N/A
1	THE VALUE OF REFERENCE CHECKS Applicant references are checked to verify candidate information, interview responses and application completeness.					
2	THE REFERENCE CHECK PROCESS All written and oral offers for volunteer placement are conditional and based on the completion of the necessary reference checks.					
3	PERSONS PERFORMING REFERENCE CHECKS ARE TRAINED IN LEGAL COMPLIANCE Persons performing reference checks request only position-related information, specific to the highest risk position for which the candidate is applying, and use standardized questions that have been prepared in advance.					

7. Request Police Checks

Q	STANDARD Organizations using Police Records Checks to help assess the suitability of applicants for volunteer positions deemed high risk, comply with human rights and protection of privacy of information legislation. Examples	DON'T KNOW	YES	SOMEWHAT	NO	N/A
1	THE POLICE RECORDS CHECK PROCESS Police Records Checks and other disclosure checks are carried out consistently on volunteers who wish to occupy high-risk positions.					
2	MANAGING THE INFORMATION OBTAINED THROUGH PRCs There are systems in place to ensure that information received from checks performed remains private and secure, and only appropriate decision makers view the information.					

8. Conduct Orientation and Training Sessions

Q	STANDARD Appropriate orientation and training measures are selected and implemented for each position. Examples	DON'T KNOW	YES	SOMEWHAT	NO	N/A
1	ORIENTATION TO THE ORGANIZATION The volunteer orientation provides information that will help new volunteers learn about the organization and what they need to know about being a volunteer within it.					
2	APPROPRIATE AND RELEVANT TRAINING On-the-job, position-specific training is provided for each task to be performed before a volunteer is allowed to perform such tasks.					
3	MONITORING AND DOCUMENTING PARTICIPATION There is an orientation/training follow-up and feedback to allow new volunteers to evaluate the volunteer orientation/training process.					

9. Supervise and Evaluate

Q	STANDARD Appropriate supervision and evaluation measures are selected and implemented for each position. Examples	DON'T KNOW	YES	SOMEWHAT	NO	N/A
1	APPROPRIATE SUPERVISION The degree of volunteer supervision for each position is based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the level of risk involved in the position; • the needs of the volunteer; • the complexity of the tasks; and • the vulnerability of the program participants. 					
2	ASSIGNED SUPERVISOR AND CONTACT PEOPLE Volunteers know who their supervisor is and have access to someone in charge.					
3	PERFORMANCE REVIEWS AND CHECK-INS Volunteer performance evaluations are conducted regularly and are linked back to the position description's performance elements/criteria.					
4	ADDRESSING ISSUES, FEEDBACK AND MISCONDUCT Misconduct issues raised are recorded and scheduled for supervisory or remedial action.					
5	PROBATIONARY PERIODS For each position, an appropriate probationary period is determined, at the end of which, the volunteer is provided with performance feedback.					

10. Follow-Up with Program Participants

Q	STANDARD The organization provides appropriate follow-up with program participants to monitor volunteer involvement and has clear written policies and procedures for timely and attentive response to potential problem situations with appropriate follow-through and documentation. Examples	DON'T KNOW	YES	SOMEWHAT	NO	N/A
1	<p>FOLLOW UP ON VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT</p> <p>The degree of regular contact with program participants and family members is based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the level of risk involved in the volunteer position; • the needs of the volunteer; • the complexity of the tasks; and • the vulnerability of the program participants. 					
2	<p>INCIDENT MONITORING</p> <p>Investigations of incidents/injuries/complaints are conducted as soon as the organization becomes aware of the incidents/injuries/complaints.</p>					
3	<p>RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS</p> <p>The organization has clear policies and procedures that inform staff, victims, volunteers and managers about what they should do immediately or soon after an incident, an injury, a complaint or a claim involving a volunteer.</p>					

ACTION PLANNING

Once you have completed the organization’s readiness assessment and screening checklist, we encourage you to tally your results.

STEP 1:

One section at a time, review your answers under each category or screening step and analyze the opportunities for change under each section.

EXAMPLE	DON'T KNOW	YES	SOME-WHAT	NO	N/A
Screening Step 1 – Determine the risk STANDARD: The organization takes proactive measures to identify, assess and reduce risks associated with each volunteer position.					
There is a risk-management team or committee that creates opportunities to talk about risk.			✓		

STEP 2:

Make a list of the DON'T KNOW responses and consider discussing the question with others in your organization to get an answer. Your responses may change based on your discussions.

STEP 3:

Make a list of the SOMEWHAT responses and identify the gaps or issues that need to be addressed. Consider setting these as priority objectives for an action plan, since they are already somewhat met.

STEP 4:

Make a list of the NO responses and prioritize areas that need to be addressed following the same logic as in steps 1 through 3.

STEP 5:

Develop an action plan that addresses the gaps and issues identified through your assessment exercise. Keep this action plan close at hand and monitor your progress.

SAMPLE ACTION PLAN

Note: This action plan is provided as an example only and not as a recommendation of the actions an organization needs to take to implement the identified practice.

Screening Category/Step	What to Do	Responsibility	Timeline for Completion
<p>Information Sharing</p> <p>COMMUNICATING THE VALUE OF SCREENING</p> <p>Does management have a communication process for all new staff, volunteers and board members regarding the importance of screening all applicants and accepting only those applicants who meet the identified requirements?</p>	<p>Develop a process to communicate and share updated screening information:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a statement on the application form regarding the need for Police Records Checks for certain positions; 2. Update website to communicate same message; 3. Send out information as part of electronic updates; 4. Include information in volunteer newsletter; 5. Share information at volunteer meetings; 6. Share information at volunteer orientation or presentation; and 7. Include updates in volunteer correspondence. 	<p>Jeff</p>	<p>September</p>

Glossary of terms used

Board of Directors: Persons whose responsibility it is to provide leadership and direction to the organization and to govern the affairs of the organization on behalf of its members.² For the purposes of this document, the term “board” is used to refer to a board of directors, members of the executive, board of governors or a board of trustees, administrators, clergy, leaders, coaches, coordinators, officials, parents, participants, or anyone else involved in the governance or decision making of the organization.

Due Diligence: to act reasonably, prudently, in good faith and with a view to the best interests of the organization and its members³

Duty of Care: The legal principle that identifies the obligations of individuals and organizations to take reasonable measures to care for and protect their participants⁴

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, e.g., through a legal action, the individual or organization has been found legally responsible for an action or inaction in a particular set of circumstances and is required to pay damages to someone harmed as a result.

Occupiers' Liability: requires that the person (an individual or an organization) in possession of premises owes a duty of care to those who come on the premises and must take reasonable 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: the liability an organization takes on for the actions of those who function on its behalf⁵

Organization: institutions, agencies and collectives, including government departments such as Parks and Recreation, charities, cooperatives, religious groups, health, education and social service providers, self-help and mutual aid groups, social justice groups, environmental, cultural, arts, recreation, sports, and professional associations such as chambers of commerce.

Performance Review: a review that checks performance against standards. This is usually done as part of an annual evaluation process.

² <http://www.benevoles.ca/volcan/eng/content/board/legal.php?>

³ <http://www.volunteer.ca/volcan/eng/content/board/legal.php?>

⁴ http://www.volunteer.ca/volcan/eng/content/screening/screening_room1.htm

⁵ http://www.volunteer.ca/volcan/eng/content/screening/screening_background.htm

Personal Information: any factual or subjective information, recorded or not, about an identifiable individual. This includes information in any form (e.g., age, ID numbers, income, ethnic origin, blood type, opinions, evaluations, comments, social status, or disciplinary actions), and personnel files, credit records, loan records, medical records, existence of a dispute between a consumer and a merchant, intentions (for example, to acquire goods or services or to change positions). Personal information does not include a name, title, business address or telephone number, or anything that might appear on a business card or can be found publicly available, such as in a telephone book.⁶

Police Records Check: a search of the records held in the information database of a police agency. It may include a check of national or local and regional police records. At the end of the process, a report is issued.⁷

Risk Management: a detailed process that aims to reduce the chances of injury, damage or loss. The process involves taking steps to identify, measure and control risks. Screening is a form of risk management.

Standard of Care: 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 Standard of Care that a person is expected to exercise is an objective standard reflected by what an average, reasonable person would do, or not do, in a given situation. The required standard varies according to the circumstances of each situation, and determining the appropriate standard is often not a simple matter.⁸

Volunteer: 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; and
- who does not receive a salary or wage for this service or activity.⁹

Volunteer Records: information (in any media) that has been created or gathered as a result of any aspect of the involvement of volunteers

Vulnerable Persons: 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 other circumstances such as emotional distress due to crisis or trauma. Vulnerability may be a temporary or a permanent condition. This is purposely a broad definition, and can include children, youth, senior citizens, people with physical, developmental, social, emotional, or other disabilities, as well as people who are victims of crime or harm or accident, or are otherwise left with little defense against those who would harm them.¹⁰

⁶ http://www.privcom.gc.ca/faq/faq_01_e.asp

⁷ http://www.volunteer.ca/volcan/eng/content/screening/screening_background.htm

⁸ <http://www.volunteer.ca/volcan/eng/content/screening/background.php?>

⁹ <http://www.volunteer.ca/volcan/eng/content/screening/background.php?>

¹⁰ http://www.volunteer.ca/volcan/eng/content/screening/screening_background.htm

APPENDIX 1 – Supplementary Statements of Readiness

Section 1 - Profile of the Organization's Readiness for Screening (Long Version of Checklist)

The following Checklist supplements the one already provided in the core Screening Checklist. This longer Checklist provides more questions to consider when determining your organization's readiness for screening.

Complete the Checklist by answering each question using one of the five choices:

DON'T KNOW / YES / SOMEWHAT / NO / NOT APPLICABLE

Consider all your current practices, documents, tools and resources while answering the questions.

Note:

- If you are unable to answer the question, please check DON'T KNOW and consider discussing the question with others in your organization to get an answer.
- A YES response indicates those screening activities and practices are currently being done.
- A SOMEWHAT response indicates that parts of the question are being met, but that the organization needs to consider implementing some action.
- A NO response indicates that no part of the question is being met, and the organization needs to consider implementing action.
- The N/A or NOT APPLICABLE response indicates that the question does not apply or is not relevant to your organization.

Once you have completed this longer assessment, we encourage you to meet with others in your organization to discuss your findings and to develop an action plan (go to page 18 for sample action plan).

ORGANIZATIONAL READINESS CHECKLIST (LONG VERSION)

ORGANIZATION: _____

COMPLETED BY: _____

DATE COMPLETED: _____

REVIEWED BY: _____

DATE REVIEWED: _____

Q	ACCOUNTABILITY Identify accountability and authority for decision making	DON'T KNOW	YES	SOME-WHAT	NO	N/A
1	BOARD AWARENESS					
	A. Within the context of the organization's operations and activities, does the board of directors understand its moral and ethical responsibility as well as its legal liability regarding the duty of care it owes its clients, staff, volunteers and the community?					
	B. Is there a designated person responsible for regularly verifying that the organization's screening process keeps up with changing legislation and social environment?					
2	INSURANCE COVERAGE					
	A. Are volunteers included and covered under the organization's insurance policy?					
	B. Have you discussed volunteer coverage with your insurance broker?					
	C. Has appropriate and relevant insurance been purchased to minimize liability relating to volunteer involvement and activities?					
	D. If your organization has chosen to allow the volunteers' personal insurance to cover liability, has the organization verified and assessed whether or not the existing insurance coverage of volunteers is adequate in relation to the risks of the volunteer activity (e.g., volunteer drivers)?					
	E. Is there a process to advise and inform volunteers about what coverage (if any) is available?					
3	CLEARLY DEFINED AND COMMUNICATED AUTHORITY					
	A. Are there clearly defined and communicated policies and practices regarding who is authorized to make final volunteer-selection decisions?					
	B. Does the organization have pre-determined standards and practices to assist in making volunteer-selection decisions, including who has the final say in the decision-making process?					

Q	RESOURCES Identify human, financial and material resources	DON'T KNOW	YES	SOME-WHAT	NO	N/A
1	ADEQUATE RESOURCE ALLOCATION					
	A. Has the board/organization determined what would be adequate resources (financial, material and human) for involving volunteers?					
	B. Has a budget to support the education, maintenance and administrative needs of those responsible for volunteers been determined?					
	C. Does the organization have links with agencies that can assist in supporting the screening process (e.g., local volunteer centre, local police)?					
	D. Does the organization have links with expert counsels that can assist in supporting the development of screening policies and procedures as well as required documentation (e.g., lawyer, insurance broker or agent, etc.)?					
2	DESIGNATED HUMAN RESOURCES					
	A. Does the organization's management have a designated person(s) to manage volunteer resources and to monitor the implementation of screening policies and procedures?					
	B. Does the designated person(s) have an appropriate level of understanding and experience to screen volunteers?					
	C. Does the designated person(s) responsible for volunteer screening have a current and accurate written job description detailing their screening responsibilities?					
	D. Is this person(s) also responsible for implementing a risk-management process?					
3	CENTRALIZED OR DECENTRALIZED MONITORING					
	A. Is the position(s) responsible for screening centralized in one department or area?					
	B. Is the position(s) responsible for screening decentralized through various departments or areas?					
	C. If decentralized, please indicate the number of people who have the primary responsibility for screening volunteers:					
	D. If decentralized, are there policies and uniform procedures in place for the organization as a whole to ensure that positions with the primary responsibility for screening volunteers follow a screening plan or checklist?					

Q	POLICIES AND PROCEDURES Identify policies, procedures, documentation and materials required	DON'T KNOW	YES	SOME-WHAT	NO	N/A
1	GENERAL POLICY ON SCREENING					
	A. Is there a policy in place for standardized screening procedures for all new staff, volunteers and board members?					
	B. Does the policy emphasize the importance of screening all applicants and placing only those applicants who meet the identified requirements?					
	C. Has the organization considered the cost of re-screening (e.g., valid CPR certification) and “screening up” for when a volunteer changes positions?					
	D. Is there a process to inform volunteers on the policy?					
	E. Is the organization’s position on screening referenced in other relevant organizational policies and documents?					
	F. Is there a current manual of volunteer policies and procedures?					
2	POLICIES THAT SUPPORT SCREENING					
	A. Other than a general policy on screening, are there other policies in place to support organizational due diligence efforts?					
	B. Is there a vulnerable person protection policy statement and guidelines?					
	C. Do the guidelines clearly state the boundaries (what is considered harmful or potentially harmful behaviour) towards those being served?					
	D. Are there confidentiality and disclosure policies?					
	F. Is there a clearly communicated complaints policy and procedure that addresses concerns about a volunteer’s behaviour?					
	G. Is there a clearly communicated grievance policy and procedure?					
	H. Is there a conflict resolution policy identifying an appropriate mechanism to assess and negotiate situations in which the supervisor-volunteer relationship is in difficulty (e.g., conflict resolution)?					
	I. Is there a disciplinary policy and procedure which clearly specifies the conditions for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • disciplinary actions? • prohibited conduct? • unacceptable performance, behaviour or misconduct? • periodic reassignment? 					
	J. Is there a suspension/termination/dismissal policy and procedure that specifies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the conditions for non-voluntary termination of volunteers; and • who has the authority for decision-making? 					
	K. Are volunteers informed of the above policies? How?					

3	SCENARIOS TO CONSIDER	DON'T KNOW	YES	SOME-WHAT	NO	N/A
	A. Does the organization have a policy on providing service recipients, older adults, students or recent immigrants with an opportunity to volunteer?					
	B. Are program participants, older adults, students or recent immigrants screened in the same manner as other volunteers applying for the same positions?					
	C. If not, are there other risk-management practices used to compensate (e.g., additional supervision, tasks performed in less isolation, etc.)?					
4	FLAGGED POLICE RECORDS					
	A. Has the organization decided if it will accept volunteers who have a flagged police record?					
	B. If the organization has decided to accept volunteers who have a flagged police record, has the organization determined what offences would be unacceptable to the position?					
	C. If the organization has decided to accept volunteers who have a flagged police record, is there an equal opportunities policy in place that includes a statement on the recruitment of ex-offenders?					

Q	ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES Identify the documented administrative and clerical processes in place	DON'T KNOW	YES	SOME-WHAT	NO	N/A
1	IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING THE SCREENING PROCESS					
	A. If the organization introduces new screening measures, has it considered how it will handle those volunteers who currently occupy the positions?					
	B. Does the organization have a communicated written process for reviewing and responding to ideas, suggestions, comments or perceptions about the screening process?					
	C. Does the system allow volunteers to raise issues and access support?					
	D. Does the system offer guidance and processes for staff members who support the work of volunteers?					

Q	INFORMATION SHARING Identify how information is communicated	DON'T KNOW	YES	SOME-WHAT	NO	N/A
1	COMMUNICATING THE VALUE OF SCREENING					
	A. Does management have a communication process for all new staff, volunteers and board members regarding the importance of screening all applicants and accepting only those applicants who meet the identified requirements?					
	B. Is there a process to communicate and share (updated) screening information (legislative, regulatory and legal information and management initiatives) with the board, staff, volunteers and the general public?					
	C. To create awareness, is information about the organization's probationary measures for all volunteer opportunities communicated and consistently applied in an open and transparent manner?					
	D. Is there a person responsible for monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of the information communication process?					
2	COMMUNICATING THE SCREENING PROCESS TO VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF					
	A. For each step in the screening process, decisions are made to determine if we proceed to the next screening step. Are these decisions documented?					
	B. At each step of the screening process, are applicants informed of their status and as to whether they will proceed to the next step of the screening process?					
	C. Is there a process to ensure, through the volunteer selection procedures, that those not selected are treated with dignity, respect and, if appropriate, referred to alternative volunteer opportunities?					
	D. Is there a clear procedure to announce the new volunteer to the staff?					

Q	RECORDS MANAGEMENT Identify how confidential information in volunteer records is handled, kept, shared and destroyed	DON'T KNOW	YES	SOMEWHAT	NO	N/A
1	COLLECTING PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION					
	A. Does the organization have written policies and procedures in place for managing, storing, returning and destroying personal and confidential information in accordance to all laws?					
	B. Is there a clearly stated purpose for collecting personal and confidential information?					
	C. Does the organization maintain complete, accurate and up-to-date written records for volunteers?					
	D. Has the organization identified: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how personal and confidential information is collected? • what personal information and confidential information is collected? • why the information is collected? • how it is collected? • what the information is used for? 					
	E. Has the organization decided how long it keeps inactive volunteer records and how it destroys personal information?					
	F. Is a record kept of destroyed volunteer files?					
	G. Is there is a review process with the specific person in charge of the destruction process?					
	H. Has the organization assigned authority to alter or correct volunteer records?					
	I. Is there a person responsible for the reliability of volunteer records?					
2	PRIVACY PRINCIPLES APPLIED					
	A. Are information privacy principles followed for both paper-based and electronic records?					
	B. Is there a process to direct volunteers to more information on the organization's privacy principles and how they can access that information?					
	C. Have procedures been developed for when records have been altered, updated or accessed without approval?					

3	STORAGE OF RECORDS	DON'T KNOW	YES	SOME-WHAT	NO	N/A
	A. Has the organization decided how and where it will store personal information?					
	B. Are there controls to ensure that a particular volunteer record can be located at any time?					
	C. Are volunteer files locked and access limited to need-to-know basis?					
	D. Is there a disaster recovery plan for volunteer records (e.g., if they were burnt in a fire, stolen, or the database became corrupt)?					
	4 ACCESS TO INFORMATION / RECORDS					
	A. Are records created with access in mind while maintaining confidentiality?					
	B. Has the organization identified with whom confidential information will be discussed or disclosed and why?					
	C. Has the organization identified who will review personal information including police records checks and other reference checks?					
	D. Are there procedures to follow when volunteers request to see their file?					

APPENDIX 2 – Supplementary Standards

Section 2 - Screening Checklist (Long Version of Checklist)

The following Checklist supplements the one provided in the core Screening Checklist. This longer Checklist provides more questions to consider when reviewing your organization's practices for each of the ten safe steps to screening.

Each of the ten steps contains a series of screening standards. For each standard, we propose examples of practices in the form of a Checklist. Complete the Checklist by:

- reading the standard;
- reviewing the sample examples of practices; and
- indicating if your organization has these practices in place.

Note:

- If you are unable to answer the question, please check DON'T KNOW and consider discussing the question with others in your organization to get an answer.
- A YES response indicates those screening activities and practices that your organization is currently doing to meet their Duty of Care.
- A SOMEWHAT response indicates that the organization needs to take some action. Determine which parts of the statement are being met and which areas the organization needs to address to effectively minimize risks.
- A NO response indicates that the organization needs to consider implementing some action.
- The N/A or NOT APPLICABLE response indicates that the question does not apply or is not relevant to your organization.

TEN SAFE STEPS TO SCREENING

1. Determine the risk
2. Write a clear position description
3. Establish a formal recruitment process
4. Use an application form
5. Conduct interviews
6. Follow up on references
7. Request a **Police Records Check**
8. Conduct orientation and training sessions
9. Supervise and evaluate
10. Follow up with program participants

Once you have completed this longer assessment, we encourage you to meet with others in your organization to discuss your findings and to develop an action plan (go to page 18 for sample action plan).

1. Determine the Risk

	STANDARD The organization takes proactive measures to identify, assess and reduce risks associated with each volunteer position. Examples	DON'T KNOW	YES	SOMEWHAT	NO	N/A
1	ORGANIZATIONAL RISK-MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES AND OVERALL PRACTICES					
	A. There is a risk-management team or committee (staff, volunteers and board members) that creates opportunities to talk about potential risks in volunteer positions.					
	B. All necessary risk assessments are regularly completed and clearly documented.					
	C. The organization has prepared an action plan to deal with any deficits/gaps identified in the risk-assessment process for each position (an action plan to eliminate or reduce risk). If yes, the action plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • specifies who is responsible for doing what; • explains what is expected; • supports the screening process; • specifies how to respond to incidents; • specifies how to respond after an incident; and • includes a review and evaluation. 					
	D. Board, staff and volunteers are encouraged to help identify and report risks.					
	E. The organization annually reviews operations and incident reports. The review includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • controls that either failed or were particularly successful during the year and why; • changes to the external environment that may change the risk profile of the volunteer position; • changes to the internal environment that may change the risk profile of the volunteer position; • unforeseen risks – why they happened and why they were not foreseen; • risks expected to emerge during the following year; • recommendations for new controls and processes that need to be put into place, especially for unforeseen risks, and who is responsible for implementing them; and • recommendations for changes or improvements to existing risk-management processes and controls recommended for the following year and who is responsible for ensuring it happens. 					
	F. Program adjustments are made according to the recommendations.					

2	RISK ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS	DON'T KNOW	YES	SOME-WHAT	NO	N/A
	A. When a new volunteer position is created, risks are identified and evaluated.					
	B. Identification of risks/foreseeable risks has been identified and criteria for assessing these risks have been developed.					
	<p>C. Identified risks are based on the following categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People: The organization considers the vulnerability of the people being served by each position (e.g., emotional, physical health, age, maturity, isolation, history of abuse, language and communication skills, disability, dependence, powerlessness) and the requirements of the position. • Property: The organization considers the risk to its property (e.g., buildings, equipment, financial accounts, databases/donor bases/personnel records, intellectual property). • Income: The organization considers the risk to its income (e.g., contracts, donations, grants). • Goodwill: The organization considers the risk to its goodwill (e.g., reputation, profile, credibility, public trust). • Liability: The organization considers the risk to its liability (e.g., criminal acts, contracts, negligence, vicarious liability, statutory obligations). • Requirements of the position: The organization considers the requirements of each position (e.g., supervision, isolation, physical contact, physical demands, trust and temptation, risk inherent to task/environment, emotional demands, knowledge, skills or experience). 					
	D. Risk is evaluated for each position and the organization considers the likelihood of occurrence, the extent of the potential harm (severity of the potential impact), and the relative importance of each risk so that decisions can then be made on priorities for risk management.					
	<p>E. Positions are identified as being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • low risk (within the risk tolerance range) • medium risk (potential harm, loss or liability) • high risk (need risk control attention) 					

3	RISK-MANAGEMENT PRACTICES	DON'T KNOW	YES	SOME-WHAT	NO	N/A
	A. Risk-management controls and early warning mechanisms have been identified, documented and monitored, with responsibility for each risk assigned to a named member of senior management.					
	B. Based on the results of the risk-management and position-description analysis, there are accepted practices/guidelines to be followed when eliminating or diminishing risk: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stop the activity; • eliminate risks; • minimize harm (e.g., training, orientation); and • transfer liability (insurance, waivers, contracts, agreements). 					
	C. The organization has a communicated written process for identifying and reporting risks.					
	D. Volunteers are encouraged to promptly report incidents/risks and suggest ways to reduce or eliminate risks.					

2. Position Descriptions

	STANDARD The organization has complete and accurate written position descriptions for all volunteer positions and has selected and implemented appropriate screening measures for each position. Examples	DON'T KNOW	YES	SOMEWHAT	NO	N/A
1	DEVELOPMENT OF POSITION DESCRIPTIONS					
	A. In designing positions, the purpose of the position, the types and scope of activities, the accountability and the risks involved are assessed.					
	B. The person(s) responsible for recommending the creation or abolishment of a volunteer position has been identified.					
	C. Others (e.g., staff) are invited to participate in the development of new volunteer positions					
	D. A template is used for the development of all volunteer position descriptions.					
	E. The organization has determined when and how a volunteer may undertake special duties that are not specifically mentioned in the position description and for how long these duties may be performed.					
	F. The organization has determined what actions to take if the special duties become a permanent part of the duties performed.					
	G. If, by their nature, the special duties tend to change the level of risk associated in the position, the position description is reviewed, modified accordingly and presented for re-evaluation/re-screening.					
	H. Written position descriptions for supervisors of volunteers include requirements to record, report and address volunteer misconduct.					
2	POSITION DESCRIPTIONS ARE VALUABLE TOOLS					
	A. Candidates are assessed against position requirements and selected in a fair and consistent manner.					
	B. Acceptance and rejection of volunteer applicants is based on the position description.					
	C. The organization makes the full position description (or a summary description of all the positions) available to interested candidates for review prior to an interview.					
	D. Each volunteer position description has a corresponding evaluation.					
	E. All positions, including short-term positions, groups and special events, have annually reviewed position descriptions.					

3	POSITION DESCRIPTIONS AND SCREENING	DON'T KNOW	YES	SOMEWHAT	NO	N/A
	A. Each position description follows a plan for placement, training and supervision and for evaluation of volunteer performance.					
	B. Each volunteer position description is signed and dated by the incumbent and the incumbent's immediate superior.					
	C. Those volunteer positions that are more demanding or are positions of trust involve a more thorough screening protocol.					

3. Recruitment Process

	STANDARD All recruitment and selection systems are fair, consistent and appropriate for the position. Examples	DON'T KNOW	YES	SOMEWHAT	NO	N/A
1	CLEARLY DESIGNED RECRUITMENT PLANS AND PRACTICES					
	A. The organization provides clear, accurate and up-to-date information about the positions available so that candidates can decide if they wish to apply to become a volunteer.					
	B. A volunteer-recruitment plan based on the needs of the organization has been developed and is followed.					
	C. The recruitment process is guided by a volunteer-recruiting team or by the person(s) responsible for volunteer screening.					
	D. The organization regularly assesses its volunteer needs before recruiting volunteers.					
	E. Recruitment and promotional material are reviewed regularly for accuracy.					
	F. During first contact with the volunteer, the organization does not make any promises regarding placement (e.g., submission of information does not guarantee selection for a volunteer position).					

2	CLEARLY COMMUNICATED RECRUITMENT PLANS AND PRACTICES	DON'T KNOW	YES	SOME-WHAT	NO	N/A
	A. The organization has a standardized volunteer information package that details the requirements for becoming a volunteer.					
	B. Steps are taken to circulate details of volunteer positions so that they are accessible to all sections of the community.					
	C. There is a notice of the screening requirements and probationary period in the position description, flyer, bulletin, advertisement, Internet posting, on the volunteer application form and/or position description.					
	D. All recruitment materials state that reference checks and/or police checks may be part of the recruitment and selection process for some positions.					

4. Use an Application Form

	STANDARD The organization uses a standardized application form for all volunteer positions. Examples	DON'T KNOW	YES	SOMEWHAT	NO	N/A
1	APPLICATION PROCESS					
	A. All applicants are required to fill out, sign and date the application form.					
	B. Applicants provide written consent for the organization to obtain personal information from references, police records, or medical checks.					
	C. There are additional forms that collect needed information (e.g., confidentiality forms/statements, minimum age requirements/permission forms, code of conduct statements/forms or waivers).					

2	APPLICATION FORM CONTENT	DON'T KNOW	YES	SOMEWHAT	NO	N/A
	A. There is a statement on the application form regarding the need for police records checks for certain positions.					
	B. If the organization has decided to accept volunteers who have a flagged police record, there is a statement on the application form regarding police records not automatically disqualifying candidates unless related to the position for which they are applying.					
	<p>C. The application form:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • requests and collects only permissible information in accordance with human rights legislation, privacy of information legislation and other relevant legislation; • indicates the purpose for gathering the information; • indicates that the information collected is used only for the purpose for which it was collected (e.g., used to determine if an applicant is suitable for a specific position); • states the reasons for potential termination of the volunteer relationship (e.g., “False statements or omissions are grounds to terminate the relationship no matter when they are discovered. Information provided should be true and complete.”); • states what candidates can expect from the organization (e.g., to be contacted for an interview, to receive an orientation and training, if selected, or to have a performance evaluation); and • states that the volunteer/organization relationship can end at any time by either group (relationship is “at will” and is not a contract of employment). 					

5. Conduct Interviews

	STANDARD Interviewers have specific questions to ask applicants and a consistent interview format for each position and they keep accurate and objective written records of interviews. Examples	DON'T KNOW	YES	SOMEWHAT	NO	N/A
1	STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROCESS					
	A. There is a pre-developed system for conducting interviews and assessing the responses.					
	B. The application form and the volunteer-position descriptions are reviewed with the applicant.					
	C. The interviewers advise applicants about the different checks that the organization performs as a standard practice for certain positions and asks applicants if they have any concerns to share about the process/procedure (e.g., reference checks/police records checks, driver's abstracts, medical checks).					
	D. The type of interview procedure reflects the level of risk involved for the position being applied for.					
	E. There are procedures for the acceptance and assignment of volunteers for high-risk positions.					
	F. There is a process to notify all candidates of the results of the interview and selection process.					
	G. Applicants who do not have the necessary qualifications (based on position requirements) are refused.					

2	CONSISTENT AND LEGALLY COMPLIANT INTERVIEW QUESTION	DON'T KNOW	YES	SOME-WHAT	NO	N/A
	A. All selection tests or questions asked are relevant, legal and based on the position requirements.					
	B. All application forms are reviewed with the applicant for completeness (e.g., applications are assessed for blank or incomplete answers and excessive cross-outs or changes).					
	C. Applicants are asked about blank or incomplete answers, why they left past positions, and gaps in their employment/volunteer history.					
	D. Volunteer involvement, skills, experiences and qualifications required for the positions selected are discussed and clarified.					
	E. Mutual expectations are discussed.					
	F. The same questions are asked of all candidates for the same volunteer position.					
	G. Candidates are assessed against the position-description requirements.					
3	INTERVIEWERS ARE TRAINED IN LEGAL COMPLIANCE					
	A. Interviewers treat all applicants for the same position in an equitable manner and ask questions that are reasonable and appropriate to the position.					
	B. Interviewers do not ask questions that may not legally be asked (e.g., questions that are discriminatory or prohibited by law).					
	C. Interviewers do not make promises about placement to the applicants.					
	D. Interviewers know how to respond when an applicant discloses information that may not be legally asked about.					
	E. The interviewers make appropriate, uniform notes and have uniform record-keeping procedures (e.g., interviewers do not quote candidates on the file, there are no subjective comments on the file and there are no transitory notes on the file).					
	F. Interviewers collect only the information they need to make a decision.					
	G. Records are created assuming that the individual will ask to see their file and that they meet national and provincial human rights and privacy of information legislation and other relevant legislation.					

6. Follow-up on References

	STANDARD References are checked in accordance to position requirements and to comply with human rights and protection of privacy of information legislation. Examples	DON'T KNOW	YES	SOMEWHAT	NO	N/A
1	THE VALUE OF REFERENCE CHECKS					
	A. Applicant references are checked to verify candidate information, interview responses and application completeness.					
	B. Reference check efforts/procedures and decisions are documented to appropriate file.					
	C. There is a procedure ensuring that the process has been followed and has been completed (e.g., signature of accountable or designated person).					
2	THE REFERENCE CHECK PROCESS					
	A. All written and oral offers for volunteer placement are conditional and based on the completion of the necessary reference checks.					
	B. Positions requiring reference checks will be indicated on the volunteer posting/advertising.					
	C. Discrepancies are noted between information provided on the application form and other information gathered.					
	D. If a placement begins before the reference checks or other required checks are completed, applicants are informed in writing that the position is conditional upon receiving a report that is satisfactory to the organization.					
3	PERSONS PERFORMING REFERENCE CHECKS ARE TRAINED IN LEGAL COMPLIANCE					
	A. Persons performing reference checks request only position-related information, specific to the highest risk position for which the candidate is applying, using standardized questions that have been prepared in advance.					
	B. Persons performing reference checks ask questions that are legally permissible and are not discriminatory.					
	C. Persons performing reference checks know how to respond when information is disclosed that may not be legally asked about.					

		DON'T KNOW	YES	SOMEWHAT	NO	N/A
	D. Persons performing reference checks make appropriate, uniform notes and have uniform record keeping procedures (e.g., persons performing reference checks do not quote candidates on the file, there are no subjective comments on the file and there are no transitory notes on the file).					
	E. Persons performing reference checks collect only the information they need to make a decision.					
	F. Records are created assuming that the individual will ask to see their file and that they meet national and provincial human rights and privacy of information legislation and other relevant legislation.					

7. Request Police Checks

	STANDARD Organizations using Police Records Checks (PRCs) to help assess the suitability of applicants for volunteer positions deemed highrisk, comply with human rights and protection of privacy of information legislation. Examples	DON'T KNOW	YES	SOMEWHAT	NO	N/A
1	THE POLICE RECORDS CHECK PROCESS					
	A. Police Records Checks and other disclosure checks are carried out on all volunteers who wish to occupy high-risk positions.					
	B. There is a standardized Police Records Check authorization form.					
	C. The organization has checked with the local police department on the process for obtaining a PRC, the databases checked and the fees for Police Records Checks.					
	D. All parties involved understand the process for obtaining Police Records Checks, the sources of information assessed, how information is released, as well as the limitations of the information provided.					
	E. If the organization has determined that it will implement Police Records Checks or other checks as part of its screening process, the organization has determined who will pay for the cost of the needed checks.					
	F. Before placement, applicants provide written consent for the organization to obtain personal information from other sources (e.g., Police Records Checks, driver's abstracts, medical checks).					
	G. The organization understands and follows policies and procedures concerning the use of Police Records Checks.					

		DON'T KNOW	YES	SOME-WHAT	NO	N/A
	H. There is a specific person in charge of the Police Records Check process.					
	I. All steps and decisions are properly documented to the appropriate file.					
	J. All written and oral offers for volunteer positions are conditional based on the completion of the necessary Police Records Checks.					
	K. If a placement begins before completion of police checks or other required checks, applicants are informed in writing that the position is conditional upon receiving a report that is satisfactory to the organization.					
	L. There is a review with the person in charge of the process to ensure that the process has been followed and has been completed (e.g., signature of accountable or designated person).					
2	MANAGING THE INFORMATION OBTAINED THROUGH POLICE RECORD CHECKS (PRC'S)					
	A. There are systems in place to ensure that information received from checks performed remains private and secure, and only appropriate decision makers view the information.					
	B. The organization has a written policy, procedure or guideline to follow if negative information is obtained from the qualification checks performed.					
	C. The organization has a procedure and guidance for refusal of candidates who do not meet the position requirements or consideration of candidates whose PRC returns "flagged," The organization may consider the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the nature, circumstances and seriousness of the offense; • the amount of time that has passed since the conviction or completion of sentence; • the nature of the volunteer position and whether the offense is relevant to the duties of the position; • efforts made in rehabilitation; • achievements since the conviction; • vulnerability of persons served and the organization's duty of care; and • the potential risk involved in the position. 					
	D. Applicants in similar situations are treated the same.					

8. Conduct Orientation and Training Sessions

	STANDARD Appropriate orientation and training measures are selected and implemented for each position. Examples	DON'T KNOW	YES	SOMEWHAT	NO	N/A
1	ORIENTATION TO THE ORGANIZATION					
	A. The volunteer orientation provides information that will help new volunteers learn about the organization and what they need to know about being a volunteer within it.					
	B. There are clear policies and procedures concerning volunteer orientation including the preparation of an orientation schedule that indicates the necessary policies and guidelines to be covered and who is covering them.					
	C. There is a volunteer-orientation checklist completed for each new volunteer.					
	D. When significant changes are made to procedures, volunteers receive re-orientation.					
	E. Each volunteer is provided with a volunteer handbook.					
2	APPROPRIATE AND RELEVANT TRAINING					
	A. On-the-job, position-specific training is provided for each task to be performed before a volunteer is allowed to perform such task.					
	B. Ongoing training and development is provided for all volunteer positions.					
	C. The training and development program is reviewed and revised regularly based upon the organization's assessment of its training needs.					
	D. When significant changes are made to procedures, volunteers receive re-training.					
	E. There is a process to ensure that training needs are adequately addressed.					

3	MONITORING AND DOCUMENTING PARTICIPATION	DON'T KNOW	YES	SOME-WHAT	NO	N/A
	A. There is an orientation/training follow-up and feedback to allow new volunteers to evaluate the volunteer orientation/training process.					
	B. There is signed acknowledgement of receipt of handbook (including supplements or changes) before placement begins or at the start of the placement.					
	C. The volunteer signs a statement indicating that he/she recognizes his/her obligation to read the handbook, become familiar with it, abide by it, and bring any questions or concerns to the designated contact person.					
	D. Orientation and training are documented and indicate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the date of the orientation/training; • the type of training; and • the signature of both the volunteer and the trainer. 					
	E. Training records are easily retrievable and it is easy to determine: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what training a volunteer has received; • which volunteers have been trained on a particular procedure; and • which volunteers have attended a particular orientation/training program. 					

9. Supervise and Evaluate

	STANDARD Appropriate supervision and evaluation measures are selected and implemented for each position. Examples	DON'T KNOW	YES	SOMEWHAT	NO	N/A
1	APPROPRIATE SUPERVISION					
	A. The degree of volunteer supervision for each position is based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the level of risk involved in the position; • the needs of the volunteer; • the complexity of the tasks; • the vulnerability of the program participants. 					
	B. There is a regular system for volunteer supervision and feedback.					
	C. Volunteers are consulted on their support needs regularly (e.g., at regular check-ins).					
	D. Supervision includes ongoing monitoring of training and re-orientation needs.					

2	ASSIGNED SUPERVISOR AND CONTACT PEOPLE	DON'T KNOW	YES	SOME-WHAT	NO	N/A
	A. Volunteers know who their supervisor is and have access to someone in charge.					
	B. Supervisors of volunteers are trained to recognize, report, and deal appropriately with volunteer misconduct.					
	C. Supervisors of volunteers are regularly trained and educated regarding an organization's liability for negligent retention, supervision or promotion.					
3	PERFORMANCE REVIEWS AND CHECK-INS					
	A. Volunteer performance evaluations are conducted regularly and are linked back to the position description's performance elements/criteria.					
	B. Volunteer performance reviews include issues related to conduct.					
	C. There is a position-specific standardized volunteer evaluation form.					
	D. Volunteers are provided with the opportunity to include their own self-evaluation comments before the report is entered into the volunteer record.					
	E. Conclusion discussions are recorded and dated (e.g., there are clearly stated objectives for feedback, future performance, future training or future skill building opportunities).					
	F. The volunteer performance evaluations are signed, dated and acknowledged as having been read.					
	G. Volunteers are provided with a copy of their performance evaluation.					
4	ADDRESSING ISSUES, FEEDBACK AND MISCONDUCT					
	A. Misconduct issues raised are recorded and scheduled for supervisory or remedial action.					
	B. Remedial action may include: changes to the volunteer work environment, changes to the position description, changes to procedures, addition of new procedures or the addition of new training.					
	C. Volunteer and program participant feedback informs the volunteer program and is used in the development of volunteer management policy and planning.					
5	PROBATIONARY PERIODS					
	A. For each position, an appropriate probationary period is determined, at the end of which, the volunteer is provided with performance feedback.					
	B. Probationary periods for each position description are determined in advance and the standards required for the successful completion of the probationary period are set, based on the volunteer position's risk assessment.					

		DON'T KNOW	YES	SOMEWHAT	NO	N/A
	C. Volunteers are informed about the probationary period by signing and dating a probationary agreement.					
	D. Probationary agreements state under what circumstances the probationary period could be extended and for what maximum period.					
	E. The organization has determined what happens when the probationary period has been completed (e.g., volunteers are advised in writing if the probationary period has been successfully completed or if it is to be extended, or if the placement is terminated).					
	F. Periodically, throughout the probationary period, the volunteer is given the opportunity to discuss their progress in the position.					
	G. Training and support needs and experiences are assessed, evaluated and recorded as part of the probationary period.					
	H. The organization clearly communicates and recognizes a change in status when volunteers have finished their probationary period.					
	I. When a volunteer takes on a new position with a higher risk classification, a new probationary period may be established.					

10. Follow-Up with Program Participants

	STANDARD The organization provides appropriate follow-up with program participants to monitor volunteer involvement and has clear written policies and procedures for timely and attentive response to potential problem situations with appropriate follow-through and documentation. Examples	DON'T KNOW	YES	SOMEWHAT	NO	N/A
1	FOLLOWUP ON VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT					
	A. The degree of regular contact with program participants and family members is based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the level of risk involved in the volunteer position; • the needs of the volunteer; • the complexity of the tasks; and • the vulnerability of the program participants. 					
	B. All volunteers are informed about program participant follow-up activities (including spot checks, evaluations or surveys completed by program participants).					

		DON'T KNOW	YES	SOMEWHAT	NO	N/A
	C. Volunteer turnover rates are monitored and the information is shared or reported regularly to management.					
	D. There is a standard pre-termination/exit interview, procedure and/or checklist.					
2	INCIDENT MONITORING					
	A. Investigations of incidents/injuries/complaints are conducted as soon as the organization becomes aware of the incidents/injuries/complaints.					
	B. Volunteers are included on incident forms.					
	C. Incidents/injuries/complaints, received orally or in written form, are adequately documented in writing, investigated and retained in a designated file.					
	D. There is an established investigation procedure. The procedure may include: investigation steps, actual summary of complaint/incident, identification of persons interviewed, sworn statements, results of findings, documented action taken in response to each incident/complaint and communication of findings to those who need to know. Dates are included for each entry and the Board of Directors' role in the complaint or incident management is documented.					
	E. Decisions not to investigate an incident/injury or complaint are documented and the name of the responsible person is also documented.					
	F. A designated person reviews on a timely basis all incidents or complaints involving volunteers.					
3	RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS					
	A. The organization has clear policies and procedures that inform staff, victims, volunteers and managers about what they should do immediately or soon after an incident, an injury, a complaint or a claim involving a volunteer.					
	B. All volunteers, program participants and staff are informed about reporting unsafe conditions immediately.					
	C. Following an incident, there are follow-up and monitoring steps. If required, there is an identification of improvements to systems performed (remedial action taken) and dates are included for each entry.					
	D. There is a procedure ensuring that the process has been followed and has been completed (e.g., signature of accountable or designated person).					

Resources

Cooper, Reva, Screening Process: The Consultant's Guide. Volunteer Canada, 2001.

Graff, Linda L., By Definition: Policies for Volunteer Programs. Linda Graff and Associates Inc., 1997.

Graff, Linda L., Beyond Police Checks: The Definitive Volunteer & Employee Screening Guidebook. Linda Graff and Associates Inc., 1999.

Graff, Linda L., Better Safe... Risk Management in Volunteer Programs & Community Service. Linda Graff and Associates Inc., 2003.

McCurley, Steve and Sue Vineyard, Measuring Up: Assessment Tools for Volunteer Programs. Heritage Arts Publishing, 1997.

Street, Lorraine, The Screening Handbook: Protecting Clients, Staff and the Community. Canadian Association of Volunteer Bureaux and Centres, 1996

United Way of Windsor-Essex County, Road Map to Success: A checklist to assess the effectiveness of the board in its exercise of stewardship. United Way of Windsor-Essex County, 2003.

WEBSITES

Volunteer Screening Model. Basketball Ontario.
<http://www.basketball.on.ca//site/news/files/VolunteerScreeningModel.pdf>

HR Audit: An ounce of prevention with a human resources audit can be worth more than a pound of cure.
<http://news.pghtech.org/teq/teqstory.cfm>

The ABCs of Background Checking: Safe Hiring Audit.
<http://www.esrcheck.com/articles/Safehiringaudit.php>

Liability and Screening: Proceed with Caution.
<http://www.nonprofitrisk.org/nwsltr/archive/employment01021999-p.htm>

Resources (cont'd)

VOLUNTEER CANADA

A Guide to Volunteer Program Management Resources.

http://www.volunteer.ca/volunteer/pdf/Volunteer_Program_Managemen.pdf

Developing Volunteer Screening Policies.

<http://www.volunteer.ca/volunteer/pdf/screeningpolicy.rtf>

Developing Employer-Supported Volunteerism Policies.

<http://www.volunteer.ca/volunteer/pdf/ESVpolicyENG.pdf>

Directors' Liability: A Discussion Paper on Legal Liability, Risk Management and the Role of Directors in Non-Profit Organizations.

<http://www.volunteer.ca/volunteer/pdf/LiabilityEng.pdf>

Federal Law and Social Policy.

<http://www.volunteer.ca/volunteer/pdf/federallaweng.pdf>

Know the Legal Risks of Being a Volunteer Board Member.

<http://www.volunteer.ca/volunteer/pdf/DObrochure.pdf>

Provincial Laws and Screening.

http://www.volunteer.ca/volunteer/pdf/ProvincialUpdate_eng.pdf

Understanding Police Records Checks Brochure.

<http://www.volunteer.ca/volunteer/pdf/PRCBrochureEng.pdf>

Risk Management by Position Design: A guide for community support organizations in Ontario. Volunteer Canada.

<http://www.volunteer.ca/volunteer/pdf/RiskEng.pdf>

Safe Steps: A Volunteer Screening Process.

<http://www.volunteer.ca/volunteer/pdf/SafeSteps.pdf>

Volunteer Management Audit: The Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement.

<http://www.volunteer.ca/volunteer/pdf/ManagementAuditEng.pdf>

