



## 2. Human Resources

No: 07

**Policy Title:** Volunteer Screening

**Date Approved:** August 13, 2006

**Revision 1**      October 3, 2008

*(Note: Included as an Appendix under Specific Hosting Guidelines)*

### **I - GENERAL DEFINITIONS**

In this Policy:

"Volunteer" means any individual who provides a service or has any responsibility for the provision of a service in any of the areas identified as applicable to this policy and includes any individual who may receive any form of compensation for the provision of said services and also includes any executive or paid staff of the NSCA

"Vulnerable individual" means any person whose age is less than the age of majority in Nova Scotia where the volunteer is providing the service and any person who is publicly or commonly considered to be a person with a disability

### **II - POLICY STATEMENT**

The NSCA recognizes that the sport of curling, at every level, could not exist without the valuable contribution that volunteers provide in every aspect of the organization. The selfless giving of time and skills, combined with the pride and caring volunteers provide the sport of curling in Nova Scotia, are commodities that are protected, encouraged and valued by the NSCA

It is also acknowledged that the NSCA has a moral, ethical and legal responsibility to ensure that volunteers, who provide a service in certain areas, are individuals who are suitable to work in those areas of service. It is imperative therefore that the NSCA implement a volunteer screening process to provide certain standards, criteria and enforcement measures in the selection and ongoing supervision of certain volunteers

### **III - APPLICABILITY**

This Policy and the attached Operational Procedures will apply to any on-going operation of the NSCA or any service, program or event under the jurisdiction of the NSCA and is intended to apply to any volunteer who may provide a service or supervise the provision of said service in areas dealing with vulnerable individuals, finance and transportation. The provisions of this

Policy apply equally to all members of the Board of Directors of the NSCA, all executive and staff of the NSCA, and all volunteers who may provide a service or supervise the provision of said service in the above noted areas.

#### **IV - PRIVACY LEGISLATION AND POLICY**

Notwithstanding any applicable Privacy Legislation and the NSCA Privacy Policy, any properly discharged volunteer screening process carried out in accordance with this Policy, is not considered an infringement on the applicable Privacy Legislation and the NSCA Privacy Policy.

#### **V - HUMAN RIGHTS LEGISLATION AND POLICY**

Notwithstanding any applicable Human Rights Legislation and the NSCA Discrimination and Harassment Policy, any properly discharged volunteer screening process carried out in accordance with this Policy, is not considered an infringement on the applicable Human Rights Legislation and the NSCA Discrimination and Harassment Policy.

#### **VI - VOLUNTEER INFORMATION**

Any personal information, supplied by a volunteer or gathered by the NSCA, necessary for the operation of this Policy will be made available only to those individuals responsible for the operation of this Policy and any such information will not be released or retained by the NSCA except as necessary for the operation of this Policy.

#### **VII - RISK DETERMINATION**

It is acknowledged that the first step in a volunteer screening process is to identify any potential dangers or risks. Therefore, as a matter of operational policy, the NSCA will examine all programs and services in an attempt to identify any potential risks that may arise in the above identified areas of concern. Where a risk or potential risk is identified, the operation of the program or service may be altered or safeguards implemented to minimize or eliminate the risk or potential risk.

#### **VIII - POSITION DESCRIPTIONS**

The NSCA will provide up-to-date, clear and comprehensive position descriptions for any position that may require volunteer screening. Any such position description will contain an indication that screening is an integral part of the position requirements. A position description may be altered at any time to ensure that it reflects the actual duties and responsibilities of the position. Incumbents to a position will be encouraged to provide input concerning their roles and responsibilities.

## **IX - VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT**

Any volunteer recruitment or advertising material or any application form for such recruitment will indicate that volunteer screening is an integral part of the recruitment process. The application form for such volunteers will request required contact information and references as well as any other information necessary to the screening process (e.g. driver's record, police records check, references, etc.). As a condition of selection, the applicant will be requested to indicate formal agreement for the NSCA to gather any information that may be required to complete the screening process.

Each volunteer will be interviewed on an individual basis to determine background, skills, interests and availability. The interview will also be designed to openly discuss any risks or potential risks in the particular service or program that may have been determined. All references supplied by the applicant will also be checked. Orientation sessions will be held where the volunteers will be made aware of the NSCA's policies and procedures regarding volunteers and, where necessary, training sessions will be conducted.

The identified level of risks or potential risks with a volunteer position will determine the necessary degree of supervision and evaluation required for volunteers. Where volunteers are involved with vulnerable individuals, regular contact with participants and family members will occur and feedback will be sought.

## **X - VOLUNTEER SCREENING POLICY - OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES**

These Operational procedures shall apply to all NSCA "volunteers" who may provide a service or supervise the provision of a service in any area dealing with vulnerable individuals, finance or transportation (paragraph III of the Policy). It should also be noted that, for the purpose of the Volunteer Screening Policy and these Operational Procedures, "volunteer" also includes individuals who may receive any form of compensation for the provision of services in the above noted areas (paragraph I of the Policy).

It is important to remember that, in the operation of the NSCA volunteer screening process, the NSCA must be seen as exercising the required due diligence. Due diligence is described as "the degree of prudence and carefulness that would be exercised by a reasonable person in similar circumstances".

Education, communication and commitment are key elements in a volunteer screening process and using the following procedures will provide an assurance that NSCA programs and services which use volunteer assistance are safely operated.

The detailed Operational Procedures follow:

- **Risk Determination and Management**

Examine all programs and services provided by the NSCA to determine the potential for any risks in the identified areas of concern. Also examine the actual operation of each program or service to determine the level of responsibility and supervision of the individuals involved in the provision of the program or service. The management of any identified risks has two important objectives: to protect participants and programs or services from harm; and to protect the organization and its members from any liability

claims. It is recognized that the best way to achieve the later objective is to achieve the former.

- **Position Descriptions**

Provide a clear and concise position description for each volunteer position. If a potential risk has been identified for a particular position, the position description must be created with a view to eliminate or minimize the identified risk. This may be accomplished by stating, in the position description, that an individual is required to work closely with other volunteers or is subject to close and regular supervision. The duties, responsibilities and expectations including the dos and don'ts must be clearly set out in the position description. Also include a statement that the incumbent will be subject to the NSCA volunteer screening program.

- **Recruitment Process**

Create an application form that uses the information gathered from 1 and 2 above and is specific to the particular position. Besides the required contact information, the form should request past work or volunteer related experiences and business and personal references. The form must also indicate that screening is an integral part of the application process. Because of Privacy and Anti-Discrimination legislation, the applicant must agree to provide certain information or allow the NSCA to gather certain information in order to conduct the volunteer screening process. Therefore a paragraph such as the following must be included in the application form.

"I, (Full Name of Applicant,) acknowledge that this position is subject to the NSCA Volunteer Screening Program. Therefore, notwithstanding the provisions of any applicable Privacy or Anti-Discrimination Legislation, I do here hereby agree to provide any required information or allow the NSCA to gather any required information for the purposes of the NSCA Volunteer Screening Program. I also acknowledge that such information may include a Police Records Check" Include a signature and date line immediately following the above paragraph.

- **Conduct Interviews**

Any interview with a potential volunteer candidate must be conducted by more than one person. It is recommended that more than one interview be held and that different interviewers be used in the second or subsequent interviews. It is important that the candidate be made aware of the fact that certain risks have been identified in the operation of the program or service for which the candidate is being considered and that therefore the position is subject to the volunteer screening process. Also explain that the NSCA must and will exercise the required due diligence and will closely and carefully supervise and monitor the operation of the program or service.

- **Conduct Reference Checks**

Prepare the questions to be asked with the assistance of those who conducted the interviews with the applicant and design the pertinent questions to determine the suitability of the candidate in consideration of the risks involved. Advise the references of the fact that the applicant has applied for a position where certain risks have been identified and that the reference check is part of a volunteer screening process. If there is a hesitation in a response from a reference or if a response seems veiled, have another member of the interview committee conduct a second interview with the reference.

- **Police Records Check**

Although a Police Records Check is only one step in the volunteer screening process, it is very important in that it sends a message that the NSCA is serious about volunteer screening. All Police Record Checks in Canada are conducted by local police authorities. Therefore, contact must be made with the appropriate police authority in the geographic area where the volunteer resides. The local authorities will provide written details of their records check system. The system should be explained to all applicants as part of the interview process. In order to have a Police Record Check conducted, a consent form such as that detailed in paragraph 3 above must be signed by the applicant. An updated Police Records Check is required at least once every three (3) years.

- **Child Abuse Registry**

Although a Records Check under the Child Abuse Registry is only part of the volunteer screening process, it is very important in that it sends a message that the NSCA is serious about volunteer screening. Therefore, contact must be made with the appropriate authority in the geographic area where the volunteer resides. The local authorities will provide written details of their records check system. The system should be explained to all applicants as part of the interview process. In order to have a Child Abuse Registry Check conducted, an appropriate consent form must be signed by the applicant. An updated Records Check under the Child Abuse Registry is required at least once every three (3) years.

- **Orientation and Training**

A group orientation session is a good opportunity to review the volunteer screening program and caution the volunteers about the identified areas of concern. Remind the volunteers that, for their own protection, they should not put themselves in a vulnerable position (for example, demonstrating a skill that requires touching a child without having another volunteer present during the demonstration). During training sessions, use skill training demonstrations and role play methods that minimize the identified risks. Train the volunteers to work in a buddy system which will also assist in minimizing risks.

- **Supervision and Monitoring**

The screening process must continue throughout the entire period the program or service is operative. The degree of supervision and the evaluation of the work performed by the volunteer must be directly related to the identified level of risk associated with a volunteer position. It is important to note that any formal evaluation of the work of a volunteer must be directly related to the position description of the volunteer. Frequent monitoring, including unannounced drop-ins are recommended. If the volunteer is working in a program or service dealing with vulnerable people, periodic contact with parents or guardians to receive feedback is essential.