



VOLUNTEER SCREENING MANUAL
OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC EPISCOPAL CORPORATION
OF THE DIOCESE OF HAMILTON IN ONTARIO

© 2020



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

December 1, 2020

Dear friends in Christ,

Thank you for your interest in serving in the Diocese of Hamilton. You should know that we do everything we can to assure a safe environment for children and vulnerable adults in all our Parishes and in all of our Diocesan sponsored programs.

We are blessed with clergy, staff, and volunteers who assure that those who benefit from our services are treated with kindness and respect.

Our Screening Program helps us assure that you are protected, as are those you serve. Every person 16 years of age and older volunteering in the Diocese must be screened in accordance with this policy. While the program was initiated several years ago, it has recently undergone a complete review and updating.

I offer my thanks to those who serve on Parish and Diocesan Screening Committees. You make the program effective and helpful.

I am also grateful for the support of clergy, staff, and volunteers which makes this program work well, promoting a safe environment for all!

Sincerely in Christ and Mary Immaculate,

+ *Douglas Crosby, OMI*

(Most Rev.) Douglas Crosby, OMI
Bishop of Hamilton

/cd



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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Diocesan Screening Manual

In The Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of the Diocese of Hamilton in Ontario (Diocese), many Volunteers serve in positions of trust and assist with essential services to Parishioners and the community at large. These Volunteers are a valued and indispensable aspect of many operations and ministries of the Diocese. The screening of potential Volunteers helps to create and maintain a safe environment for those to whom they minister and for the Volunteers themselves.

In order to facilitate the efficient screening of Volunteers and ensure that everyone involved with the ministries and activities within the Diocese is protected, this Volunteer Screening Manual (Manual) has been developed. This Manual is to be read in the context with the Diocesan policy “Screening in Faith and Guidelines for Volunteers” and this Manual shall be applicable throughout all programs, Parishes and operating divisions of the Diocese (referred to within as Parishes) and may be updated or amended from time to time by the Bishop.

1.2 Purpose

The Manual is intended to assist Parishes within the Diocese in the effective and appropriate screening of Volunteers. This Manual provides policies and procedures relating to the screening of volunteers together with standardized forms that are to be used for the screening process. The purpose of the screening initiative is to protect all those, and most especially the vulnerable, for whom ministry is provided, but also the Volunteers themselves.

1.3 Implementation

The implementation of screening of volunteers is an initiative that the Bishop has mandated and must take place and be maintained throughout all Parishes of the Diocese. All volunteers of the Diocese, both those serving at present and those seeking to do so, are to be screened in accordance with this Manual, including its standardized forms which are included with this Manual and may be amended from time to time.



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2.0 Definitions and Screening Positions

In this Manual the following terms shall have the following meanings:

CPIC Police Check(s), shall be one of the two basic types of police record checks which may be used for screening purposes, the other one being a Vulnerable Sector Check (defined below). A CPIC Check is a basic Canadian Police Information Centre search, which shows Criminal Code convictions for which a record suspension has not been granted. These must be obtained by the individual that they pertain to, in the jurisdiction in which their permanent residence is located.

Diocese of Hamilton or the **Diocese**, shall be the term utilized in this Manual for The Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of the Diocese of Hamilton in Ontario, including (but not limited to) its programs, Parishes and any division of the Diocese, such as the Chancery or Cemeteries.

Diocesan Volunteer Screening Coordinator, is a position which a person is appointed to by the Bishop. The role of the Diocesan Volunteer Screening Coordinator is to support the screening of Volunteers and support the Volunteer Screening Committees in the individual Parishes in accordance with this Manual. The Diocesan Volunteer Screening Coordinator reports to the Bishop when required, and is an employee of the Diocese (not a volunteer). This person will also assume the responsibility of screening Volunteers for the Chancery Office and any non-parochial departments of the Diocese. A Position Description of this position, its role, and responsibilities is set out in Appendix B, Position Descriptions, of this Manual.

Parish, shall be defined for this policy as all programs, Parishes and Operating Divisions of the Diocese, including the Catholic Cemeteries and the Chancery Office.

Parish Volunteer Screening Coordinator, shall refer to a Volunteer position to which the Pastor of a Parish will appoint a person in consultation with the Diocesan Volunteer Screening Coordinator. The Parish Volunteer Screening Coordinator shall assist with, among other things, overseeing the screening and training of the Parish Volunteer Screening Committee in the relevant Parish. The Parish Volunteer Screening Coordinator will also lead and participate in the meetings of the Parish Volunteer Screening Committee in their work in screening potential Volunteers in the Parish. A Position Description of this position, its role, and responsibilities is set out in Appendix B, Position Descriptions, of this Manual.



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Parish Volunteer Screening Committee(s), shall refer to a group of two (2) to five (5) Volunteers appointed by the Pastor in consultation with the Parish Volunteer Screening Coordinator. Members of the Volunteer Screening Committee are to be primarily responsible, along with the Parish Volunteer Screening Coordinator, to oversee the screening and training of all Volunteers within the Parish.

Participant(s), is a generic term used to describe those who participate in programs or who receive services from Ministries or any programs of the Diocese.

Position Description(s), shall refer to a list of expectations, duties and conditions under which a person functions as a volunteer of the Diocese.

Volunteer(s), shall refer to any individual(s) who chooses to undertake a ministry position or activity in the service of any Parish of the Diocese and freely carries out the activity and does not receive a salary or wage for this service.

Vulnerable Person(s), shall refer to any person who, because of his or her age (either under the age of 18 or over the age of 65), a disability (e.g. mental or physical), or other circumstances, whether temporary or permanent:

- Is in a position of dependency on others; or
- Is otherwise at a greater risk than the general population of being harmed by a person in a position of trust or authority towards them.

Vulnerable Sector Check, is a comprehensive search of an individual's personal information, particularly their criminal history including charges and convictions (pardoned or not). The Vulnerable Sector Check is required for Volunteers working with Vulnerable Persons in extended or private circumstances during the scope of their Volunteer duties for the Diocese.

Volunteer Screening Manual or the **Manual**, are the terms for this policy on the screening of Volunteers throughout the Diocese and shall be applicable throughout all operating divisions of the Diocese. The Manual may be updated or amended from time to time by the Bishop of the Diocese.

3.0 Implementation of Diocesan Policy

The Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario has asked that volunteer screening be done in every Diocese in the province. Bishop Crosby has mandated that the screening of



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volunteers be implemented in every Parish in the Diocese.

All Volunteers, both those currently serving and those seeking to do so, are to be screened and are to be screened according to the procedures and instructions presented in this Manual.

Standardized forms, provided by the Diocese, are to be used in the implementation of a uniform screening process.

Pastors are to establish Volunteer Screening Committees. A Volunteer Screening Committee ranges from a minimum of two (2) to a maximum of five (5) people.

4.0 Position Descriptions

The Parish Volunteer Screening Committee in each Parish and the leaders or coordinators of the various ministries are to ensure that there are Position Descriptions for every ministry and program that involves Volunteers. Each Position Description outlines the responsibilities and duties of the Volunteer as well as the screening measures to be applied for each position. The basic outline for position descriptions is to follow the same format across the Diocese.

The following outline serves as a suggested format in devising a Position Description;

Name of Group/Ministry - States the name of the group/ministry.

Accountability - States from whom the Volunteer is to take direction and to be accountable to.

Purpose of Ministry - Explains the service that the ministry provides.

Participant Group - Outlines those to whom the Volunteer ministers.

Activities and Responsibilities - Lists the expectation for the Volunteer in the exercise of his or her ministry.

Skills and Qualifications Required - Identifies the characteristics and qualities required of the Volunteer.

Time Commitment and Duration - Identifies the time commitment that is required and the amount of time for which a person is to serve in a given ministry (for example, two hours every week for a two-year period).



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Orientation and Training - Outlines the manner and extent of preparation required.

Supervision/Support/Enrichment - Outlines the support that is in place for the Volunteer.

Risk Assessment and Screening Procedures - After consultation with the relevant ministry leader or pastor, the Parish Volunteer Screening Committee, in consultation with the Diocesan Volunteer Screening Coordinator, identifies the risk and implements the corresponding level of screening (including whether a CPIC Check or Vulnerable Persons Check is required).

Position descriptions for ministries that involve children and youth under 18 must include under Skills and Qualifications “knowledge, understanding and compliance with the reporting obligations under the *Ontario’s Child and Family Services Act*, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter C. 11” as well as comply with the reporting abuse procedures outlined in the “Screening in Faith Guidelines for Volunteers” and any other relevant policies that may be amended or promulgated from time to time by the Bishop.

Parish Volunteer Screening Committees and Pastors shall review its Position Descriptions once a year to ensure they are up to date and accurately reflect the duties and responsibilities given the potentially changing programs or activities within a Parish. If there is a proposed change to any Position Description, then the Diocesan Volunteer Screening Coordinator must be consulted. If there is a change to the position description before the end of the year, then the revision to the position description should be made at that time.

If there are Volunteers that do not fall within any of the positions described, then the relevant Parish Volunteer Screening Committee shall consult with the Diocesan Volunteer Screening Coordinator to determine the level and type of screening to be applied to the individual Volunteer or the new position and create a new, approved Position Description.

Each Volunteer shall carry out activities that are only within the scope of the position description for which they were screened, and if they wish to volunteer for events or activities in the Diocese outside of the scope of the position description for which they have been screened, then the Parish Volunteer Screening Committee, in consultation with the Diocesan Volunteer Screening Coordinator shall determine the level of additional screening that is required (if any).



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5.0 Determining the Risk, Risk Management

5.1 Overview

All positions within a given ministry or program are to be individually assessed for the level of risk involved. The level of screening of a Volunteer Position must reflect the level of risk associated with that ministry. When there is doubt as to the level of risk, a position will be deemed to be the higher risk. If any questions arise regarding the level of risk or if a new volunteer position is to be created, it shall be done in consultation with the Diocesan Volunteer Screening Coordinator.

Volunteers who are active in more than one ministry are to be screened for the position with the highest level of risk. When a Volunteer moves from a lower risk Volunteer Position to a higher risk Volunteer Position, he or she is to be screened again accordingly at the higher risk level before being approved as a Volunteer in the higher risk Volunteer Position.

All risk assessments are to be determined in consultation with the risk level grid and principles set out in this section.

5.2 Determining the Risks

The nature of the ministry and the inherent level of risks involved dictate the need for screening. Consequently, the greater the risk, the greater the degree of screening is to be completed. The following factors that help determine the risk:

a) **The Participant**

The potential vulnerability of the persons being served is to be taken into consideration. Vulnerable Persons merit particular attention and protection. Sometimes it will take a preliminary, sensitive investigation to determine whether an individual is a Vulnerable Person or not, if it is not immediately apparent. The Diocesan Volunteer Screening Coordinator can assist in this regard. The Position Description needs to take this into account in determining whether it is a high risk position, as will be discussed below.

b) **The Setting**

The setting is the context in which a ministry is provided. The following questions may help to establish criteria for determining the risk:



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- Where is the activity taking place, for example, in someone's home, a Parish Centre, in a public or private place?
- Are the participants meeting on a one-to-one basis with volunteers or are others involved?

c) The Nature of the Activity

The relationship established between participants is important. The following questions may help to establish criteria for determining the risk:

- What authority (if any) does the volunteer have in a given ministry?
- Is the volunteer in a position to establish a close relationship with the participant (for example, as a mentor)?
- Is the volunteer involved with emotional or traumatized participants?
- How often do the participants come together with the volunteers?

d) The Level of Supervision

The level of supervision may vary from one ministry to another. The presence or absence of supervision helps to determine the risk. For example, if a ministry always requires supervision and it takes place in a group setting, the risk would be lower than for an activity that has no supervision and takes place one-on-one with a participant and a volunteer.

5.3 Risk Levels

When considering new volunteer Position Description or amending an existing Position Description, the positions shall be assessed for risk according to one of these three levels (please see the Risk Grid below and for further information):

Low Risk: Volunteers who participate in a group setting, who have minimal or no contact with Vulnerable Persons, and who have minimal access to confidential information. There is no access to money or exclusive access to Diocesan or Parish property.

High Risk: Volunteers who participate in ministries that involve an on-going, intensive or lone interaction with Vulnerable Persons. It may also include



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Volunteers who have access to confidential records, Diocesan or Parish property, or money (either the Diocese's or Parishes money or the Participant(s)).

Risk Level Grid

	High Risk Position	Low Risk Position
Person Being Served	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Child (under 18 years old) - Senior (e.g. 65+ years old) - Handicapped/disabled (any age) - Infirm due to illness or emotional distress, or any other type of Vulnerable Person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Able-bodied adult (between 25-64 years old) - Young Adult (between 18-24)
Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Isolated - Person's home - Room with doors and no windows - Off-site private space - Home meetings - Car - Tents/Cabins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meeting room - Meeting hall - Worship space/Church - Off-site public space - Room with doors and windows
Examples of Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One-on-one home visits/instructions/Overnight activity - Emotional/Physical activity - Handling money - Financial/confidential information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Group bible study - Liturgical readings - Decorating the church/hall - Ushering and lecturing - Some financial information - Young Adult (between 18-24) group meetings/events with several adult leaders - Hospital/Nursing home visiting in pairs -



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Supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Little to none - No documentation of meetings or events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supervisor always present - Always in large group - Documentation of every meeting - Occasional supervision
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5.4 Risk Management

Risk management is a process of assessing potential problems and developing strategies for dealing with them.

The following strategies are to be considered for risk management:

A. Modify the activity

There may be ways of changing some aspects of a ministry or activity so that it reduces the risk. This modification may involve changing the way in which something is done, where it takes place, by whom it is carried out, or it may mean that a particular aspect of an activity is to be discontinued.

B. Transfer liability

In some cases, a choice may be made to have someone else, an individual or organization for example, take on part of a task and assume the liability for it. This outside party is usually a company or organization that can assume the risks because it has a particular professional expertise in an area that members of the parish do not have. If the event is put on or organized by a third party, other than the Diocese, even if Volunteers attend to help out, the risk is somewhat minimized.

C. Assume the risk

Having clearly identified the risks, assessed the probability of their occurrence, looked at the possible losses, and determined the consequences, a decision is then made to introduce or continue an activity or ministry and assume the risk.



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D. Minimize assumed risk

Having decided to assume the risk, consideration should be directed towards further reducing the risks where possible. The ongoing training and supervision of Volunteers are two ways of further minimizing the risk, which is addressed in the Diocese's "Screening in Faith and Volunteer Guidelines", among other relevant policies. The Diocesan Volunteer Screening Coordinator can assist with understanding the extent and limits of insurance coverage. It is important that an ongoing effort be made to review, assess and document the steps that are being taken to reduce risk.

5.5 Risk Levels and Applicable Procedures

The extent of the screening process varies from one level of risk to another. Some tasks, especially those associated with low risk screening, may be delegated to the coordinator or contact person of the particular ministry. Volunteers within the Diocese are to be screened according to the following general procedures, full particulars to be set out in the Position Descriptions.

5.6 Checklists

Low Risk Volunteers

1. Deliver the Position Description to the prospective Volunteer, if applicable.
2. Have the prospective Volunteer fill out a *Volunteer Information Form* (no need for reference or a Police Records Check)
3. Have the prospective Volunteer execute the *Volunteer Acknowledgement of Responsibilities Form*.

High Risk Volunteers

1. Deliver the relevant Position Description to the prospective Volunteer.
2. Have the Volunteer fill out a *Volunteer Information Form*.
3. Have an interview conducted by the Parish Volunteer Screening Committee.
4. Have their references checked by the Parish Volunteer Screening Committee.



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5. Review the prospective Volunteer's CPIC or Vulnerable Sector Check.
6. Have the prospective Volunteer execute the Volunteer Acknowledgement of Responsibilities Form.
7. Receive appropriate orientation and training as referenced in this manual..

Please see Appendix A, Volunteer Forms for a copy of all of the above forms.

5.7 Recruitment Process

The recruitment of Volunteers is normally conducted on a less formal basis than the recruitment of employees. In a Parish setting, for example, there are ways to highlight the seriousness with which volunteer screening is being undertaken: printing or posting notices in the bulletin or hosting a ministry information day. When an individual expresses interest in volunteering for a particular ministry, that person may be provided with the relevant Position Description so the prospective Volunteer can understand the potential ministry or program and the requisite screening methods that are required. In so doing, the individual will have a better understanding of the expectations and the role that he or she is to assume and the screening process he or she will be subject to.

In order to protect all those involved in ministry and programs in the Diocese (both the Volunteers and the Participants), potential Volunteers are to observe the formal screening steps mandated by the Diocese of Hamilton. Volunteers, especially those who are in positions of trust with Vulnerable Persons, enjoy a sacred trust and are to be screened accordingly.

1. All positions within a given ministry are to be assessed for the level of risk involved. The level of screening of a volunteer position must meet the level of risk associated with that ministry. When there is doubt as to the level of risk, a position will be deemed to be the **higher** risk.
2. All ministries that involve children or vulnerable adults are to be considered high risk.
3. Volunteers who are active in more than one ministry are to be screened for the position with the highest level of risk. When the volunteer moves from a low risk position to a higher risk level, he or she is to be screened again according to the higher risk level.
4. Please see section 5–Determining the Risks, Risk Management for more details.



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6.0 Forms

Each volunteer is to complete a volunteer information form. For low risk ministry positions, the Parish Screening Committee is to be responsible for the completion and collection of these forms. For high risk positions, the Parish Screening Coordinator is responsible for the completion and collection of all applicable forms, especially the Vulnerable Sector Check or CPIC Police Check.

All forms are to be maintained in a confidential file in the Parish. Please see Appendix A, Volunteer Forms for more details.

7.0 Interviews and Reference Checks

7.1 Interviews

An interview with the applicant Volunteer is to be conducted for all Volunteers in high risk positions. A minimum of two (2) people from the respective Volunteer Screening Committee shall conduct the interview. A record of the interview is to be documented and kept in the Volunteer's confidential file.

The interview is an extremely important step in the screening process. The interview provides an opportunity to talk to the potential Volunteer about his or her background, talents, skills, interests and availability. The interview also provides an opportunity to explore any serious issues that may impinge on a person's suitability for a particular ministry. During the interview, outline the responsibilities and convey the expectations of the high-risk position.

Instructions regarding interviews (to be conducted by at least two people from Parish Volunteer Screening Committee):

- Establish a safe environment, free of distractions and interruptions.
- Explain briefly the reason for the interview.
- Explain the interview process to the applicant and inform the applicant that



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notes are being taken.

- Describe the ministry and its expectations using the Position Description.
- Document the applicant's responses and keep them on file confidentially and securely.
- Ask all applicants the same basic questions to maintain consistency.
- Avoid recording any personal opinions or value judgments.
- Keep the questions relevant to the position description.
- Avoid asking questions relating to protected grounds (race, sex, gender, marital or family status, disability, or age). There may be appropriate questions in certain circumstances, for example such as whether the individual is over the age of 18 or not, but generally avoid these questions and if you have any questions please consult the Diocesan Volunteer Screening Coordinator and the Coordinator will seek legal advice.

Interview questions are to encourage responses that help to evaluate:

- Relevant work or volunteer related experiences.
- Ability to work with others
- Integrity
- Suitability
- Initiative
- Judgment

The interview is to include questions directly related to risk concerns; such an individual's attitude and interpersonal style with regard to Vulnerable Persons

Please see Appendix A, Volunteer Forms for samples of Interview questions.

7.2 Reference Checks

Reference checks may be the most effective screening step of obtaining relevant third party/objective information that is undertaken during the screening process. Reference checks are to be generally conducted for all those who volunteer in high-risk positions. For specific reference, the Position Description will set out exactly what the requirements are. References may provide further information about the



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background and skills of the applicant as well as suitability of the person for ministry. Generally at least two reference checks are to be conducted by the Screening Committee for all Volunteers in high risk positions.

Before proceeding with contacting the reference:

- Ensure that the Volunteer Information Form has been executed and a copy is in the Parish Volunteer Screening Committee's possession.
- The reference is a person detailed in the Volunteer Information Form.
- The Volunteer has signed a consent form permitting the screening committee to contact the references.
- Only the persons named as references are to be contacted.

The result of a reference check is to be documented and kept in the Volunteers' confidential file.

In situations where a doubt arises as to the suitability of a person for a ministry, the Pastor is to make the final decision.

Instructions regarding reference checks:

- Obtain a signed "Volunteer Information" form from the Volunteer asking the applicant to notify the reference that his or her name has been given as a reference.
- Initiate the conversation with the reference with a brief introduction and explain the reason for the inquiry.
- Verify that the person being addressed is the one whose name is presented as a reference.
- Upon mentioning the name of the applicant, listen carefully to the tone of the response.
- Inform the reference that their responses will not be made available to the prospective Volunteer without their consent.
- Ask the person if he or she is in a confidential setting and is able to speak freely.
- Describe the ministry position and the basic details of what role the prospective Volunteer may be involved with.
- Ask open-ended questions that require more than a one word response.



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- Maintain a written record of the interview using the “Record of Reference Check” form (enclosed with this Policy) and keep this in the Volunteer’s secure and confidential file.
- Conduct at least two reference checks (if not more) in order to obtain the broadest yet proportionate third-party perspective on the suitability of the potential Volunteer.

Please see Appendix A, Volunteer Forms for samples of reference check questions.

8.0 Police Records Checks

There are two basic types of police record checks which may be used for screening purposes. One is a basic Canadian Police Information Centre search, which shows *Criminal Code* convictions for which a record suspension has not been granted (“CPIC Police Check”). The other is the Vulnerable Sector Check, which is a more fulsome search of an individual’s personal information, charges and convictions (pardoned or not). The Vulnerable Sector Check is to be used for Volunteers working with or who may have contact with Vulnerable Persons during the scope of their Volunteer duties for the Diocese of Hamilton.

A “police record check” or “police background check” typically refers to one of three different levels of background checks:

A **criminal record check** will show any **criminal convictions** a person has received. This is the most commonplace type of background check.

A **police information check** shows the same information as a criminal record check, and additionally includes **non-conviction criminal information** such as charges, warrants, probation orders, peace bonds, and dispositions of Not Criminally responsible on account of Mental Disorder (NCR). It may also show other police contact, including contact that involved the use of a weapon or behavior which was violent, threatening or harmful. To avoid any confusion, volunteers in high risk positions should be requested to obtain a CPIC check unless their role involves contact and interaction with vulnerable persons.

A **Vulnerable Sector Check** shows the same information as a criminal record check and a



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police information check, and additionally may show more non-criminal information including **a history or profile or police contact** unrelated to any criminal act. Until recently some police forces disclosed mental health information in a Vulnerable Sector Check. This exposed persons to discrimination based on their disability.

For our purposes we will use the CPIC Police Check and the Vulnerable Sector Police Check.

- a) The original CPIC Police Check or Vulnerable Sector Check must be presented by the Volunteer at the time of screening and must be dated within 60 days of submission. It is to be acknowledged, the results recorded and kept in the confidential and secure file of the Volunteer.
- b) The police records check, whether it be a Vulnerable Sector Check or CPIC Police Check shall be returned to the individual Volunteer and no copies retained by the Parish or Diocese ..
- c) Police Records Checks are to be reviewed by the Parish Volunteer Screening Coordinator and the Pastor and the results are to be recorded and made available to the Parish Volunteer Screening Committee. Any Police Record Check with concerns should be brought to the Pastor, and if the recommendation of the Pastor and Parish Volunteer Screening Committee is to allow the individual to volunteer, then the Diocesan Volunteer Screening Coordinator shall be consulted.
- d) If the Volunteer decides not to present the required Police Records Check to the Parish Volunteer Screening Committee that relates to his or her potential volunteer position, that Volunteer shall not be accepted for that position.
- e) A criminal conviction, particularly, summary convictions related to non-violent offences or offences not pertaining to abuse (sexual or otherwise), particularly of Vulnerable Persons, does not automatically exclude an applicant from volunteering in a particular volunteer position. If a Police Records Check reveals a criminal record, convictions, pending charges, ongoing investigations, relevant occurrence report, probation, prohibition, any judicial orders, or presents any cause for concern, the Pastor must be involved in the discussion. The Pastor and the Parish Volunteer Coordinator shall inform and consult with the Diocesan Screening Coordinator before the Volunteer is accepted for any position.
- f) The Diocese generally does not assume the cost of conducting a Police Check for the police departments that charge for this service. **However, the Diocese has**



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contracted with Sterling Backcheck to provide a low-cost Vulnerable Sector screen. Please contact the Diocesan Insurance Office for further information. Individual Parishes may make the decision to assume this cost.

- g) A Volunteer who leaves a high risk ministry for one year or longer is required to provide a new CPIC Police Check or Vulnerable Sector Check, as the case may be.
- h) A new CPIC Police Check or Vulnerable Records Check must be completed every five years for high risk positions. The Parish Volunteer Screening Coordinator should undertake this responsibility ensuring that these re-checks of Police Record Checks happens and seek, as required, assistance from the Diocesan Volunteer Screening Coordinator.
- i) Offence Declarations (included with this Volunteer Screening Manual) are to be completed at the beginning of the 4th year of the 5 year screening period for all Volunteers involved in ministries where a Vulnerable Sector Check is required. Offence Declarations are to be treated as confidential and stored securely with the Volunteer's file in accordance with section 4.05 of this Manual.

9.0 Record Keeping and Confidentiality

The forms, for example the Volunteer Information form, along with any other information collected during the volunteer screening process are to be kept in a confidential file in a secure location that is not accessible to anyone but the Pastor, the Parish Volunteer Screening Coordinator, and the Diocesan Volunteer Screening Coordinator. Personal information obtained either verbally or in writing will be kept confidential. The information collected on Volunteers and potential Volunteers is to be used only for the purposes of screening and retained in perpetuity for liability reasons unless otherwise directed by the Diocesan Volunteer Screening Coordinator.



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It is important to be aware that a Volunteer may request to see his or her personal information in their file. If this occurs, consult with the Diocesan Volunteer Screening Coordinator, who may seek legal advice, particularly as to what information needs to be released to the Volunteer at law. Overall, be aware that information taken down may later be seen by the Volunteer, with the exception of notes from references as per the “Volunteer Information” Form.

The list of current volunteers in each ministry in Parishes, is to be updated at least once a year by the Parish Volunteer Screening Committee or in the case of the Chancery Office and the Cemeteries by the Diocesan Screening Coordinator.

The files of current volunteers should be reviewed **annually** to find out if the information is correct. The volunteers or the ministry leaders are responsible for informing the screening committee of any changes in personal information and changes in ministry(s).

The files of the Volunteers that are no longer volunteering, are to be pulled from the active files, dated as to the day they left active ministry (or as close to it as possible) and stored in a secured and confidential filing system that is not accessible to anyone except the Pastor, the Parish Volunteer Screening Coordinator, and the Diocesan Volunteer Screening Coordinator.

10.0 Orientation and Training

1. All current and new volunteers must participate in an orientation session. The sessions are to be offered at least once a year.
2. All volunteers in high risk positions are to receive a copy of the Screening in Faith and Guidelines for Volunteers. The screening committee is responsible for providing every volunteer with a copy.
3. Volunteers are to be given appropriate training to perform their duties without putting themselves or others at risk. Ministry Leaders are responsible for this training.
4. When orientation and training have been completed, the screening committee will document this on the volunteer’s file.



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11.0 Ongoing Support & Enrichment

1. The level of support is to be based on the level of risk involved in the volunteer position.
2. The screening committees will identify current support practices and establish a process for support when necessary in conjunction with the ministry leaders.
3. All emergencies or problem incidents must be reported to the Pastor.

12.0 Participant Follow-up

Participant follow-up is to be a regular occurrence for high risk ministries.

13.0 Screening Volunteers

As set out above, the screening requirements may vary from one Volunteer Position to another depending upon the level of risk associated with a particular ministry. Screening begins before an individual starts volunteering and ends only after the individual leaves the ministry.

13.1 Applicant's Forms

A "Volunteer Information" form is to be completed for all ministry positions unless the potential Volunteer is applying for a Position Description which is low risk and the potential Volunteer is a registered member of a Parish. The completion of this form is intended to ensure that adequate records are kept. This form collects such basic information as the individual's name, address, phone number, and any previous experience as a Volunteer. This form provides the Parish Volunteer Screening Committee and the Diocese with the necessary permissions, when required to conduct reference checks and reviewing results of CPIC Police Checks.

For low risk positions, the Parish Volunteer Screening Committee is responsible for providing the Volunteer with the relevant Position Description and for ensuring that the necessary "Volunteer Information Form" or official registration in the Parish along with the "Volunteer Acknowledgement of Responsibilities" are completed. Ministry leaders or Pastors may assist the Parish Volunteer Screening Committee in carrying out these tasks.



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For high risk positions, the Parish Volunteer Screening Coordinator is responsible for providing the prospective Volunteer with the relevant Position Description and ensuring that the necessary “Volunteer Information Form” and “Volunteer Acknowledgement of Responsibilities” are completed. Pastors may assist the Parish Volunteer Screening Coordinator in carrying out these tasks. Members of the Parish Volunteer Screening Committee are then to follow up by conducting an interview, completing the reference checks and, when applicable, reviewing a CPIC Police Check or Vulnerable Sector Check.

The forms, along with any other information collected during the volunteer screening process, are to be kept in a confidential file in a secure location that is not accessible to anyone but the Pastor, the Parish Volunteer Screening Coordinator, and the Diocesan Volunteer Screening Coordinator. The information collected on Volunteers and potential Volunteers is to be used only for the purposes of screening and retained **in perpetuity** for liability reasons unless otherwise directed by the Diocesan Volunteer Screening Coordinator. All information collected during volunteer screening is to be kept and maintained in accordance with the record retention policy of the Diocese.

14.0 Guidelines for Declining Applicants

Grounds for declining applicants for a volunteer position may include:

- Unable to fulfil the time commitment of the position.
- Lacks the skills and qualifications required as outlined in the Position Description.
- The Pastor or the Volunteer Screening Committee has information that would prevent the applicant from participating, such as a negative interview and/or several negative responses from the reference checks.
- The applicant has information on their Police Records Check directly relevant to the position to which they have applied.
- The applicant refused to participate in the volunteer screening process.

The information that a Volunteer has been declined must never be made public. If there is any uncertainty about whether to decline a Volunteer, the Pastor shall make the final decision in consultation with the Diocesan Volunteer Screening Coordinator.



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Notifying Unsuccessful Volunteer Applicants

When the Parish Volunteer Screening Coordinator believes that a potential Volunteer is not suitable for a ministry position they must report their findings to the Pastor and provide him with all relevant information in order for the Pastor to make a final determination.

The Pastor or the Parish Volunteer Screening Coordinator informs the Ministry Leader that a particular applicant in their ministry will not be volunteering. The Ministry Leader, along with anyone else, is not to be told of the details as to why a particular applicant will not be volunteering in their ministry as this information is confidential.

Procedure for Removing or Reassigning a Current Volunteer

The removal of a current Volunteer is a serious but sometimes important step. Depending on the nature of the problem that may arise with the Volunteer, a reassignment may be appropriate. Reassignment is only potentially appropriate when there is no question about the safety and well-being of Participants and other Volunteers. The Pastor is to speak in person to the Volunteer if issues arise. The primary emphasis when reassigning or removing a Volunteer is based on the requirements of the ministry, for example: the ministry is not suited to your skills, gifts or talents.

- The Pastor meets with the Volunteer to discuss the problem, and places a record of the discussion in the Volunteer's file.
- If the Volunteer has been unclear as to the scope of his or her activities and responsibilities, reference should be made to the position description that he or she received prior to undertaking his or her duties.
- Emphasize the importance of a proper match between the skills of the Volunteer and the requirements of the ministry.
- If after consultation, the problem still exists the Volunteer must be told to consider a different position, or the Volunteer is to be removed from volunteering within parish ministry.

If a current Volunteer is being considered for reassignment, the Pastor must consult the Diocesan Volunteer Screening Coordinator.



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15.0 Volunteers Who Transfer or Volunteer in Multiple Parishes

Screened Volunteers who transfer from one Parish to another Parish within the Diocese are to be re-screened to the appropriate level. For high risk screening, one of the references is to be from the previous Pastor. Any questions regarding this procedure are to be directed to and decided upon by the Diocesan Volunteer Screening Coordinator.

Screened Volunteers, who volunteer in more than one Parish at the same time, are to submit the Volunteer Acknowledgement of Responsibilities Form and Volunteers Working in More than One Parish form included in Appendix A of this Manual and report to each relevant Parish Volunteer Screening Committee that they are volunteering in.

16.0 Volunteer Driver Policies

1. The minimum age for volunteer drivers is eighteen.
2. Drivers must hold a valid Ontario Driver's Licence "G" and carry a minimum of \$2,000,000.00 of personal liability insurance.
3. Drivers must consult their insurance company or check their policy before driving to ensure coverage is available when transporting volunteers.
4. Drivers must complete a Diocese of Hamilton Volunteer's Driver Form.
5. The driver's vehicle must be mechanically fit with seatbelts that are in working condition.
6. Routes that the volunteer drivers take should be predetermined.
7. Volunteer drivers can refuse to drive when the weather is inclement or road conditions are dangerous.



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8. A copy of the list of passengers for each driver must be left at the parish office or with the appropriate parish contact person.
9. A list of passengers' names and emergency information will be given to each driver. This information is confidential and is to be kept in a safe place. This information must be returned to the parish when the drive is finished.
10. Permission slips must be signed by parents or guardians to allow a child or youth (under 18) to be transported by a volunteer driver.
11. Telephone the parish or contact person if an unforeseen situation arises which will result in a major delay.
12. Drivers may not make any unscheduled stops or side trips while driving on behalf of the parish.
13. Drivers must not drink or have alcohol in the vehicle while carrying out their volunteer driving assignment.
14. Drivers must not smoke in the vehicle.
15. Drivers must never drive alone with a single child. Always have two children or youth or ask another adult to accompany the volunteer driver.
16. Drivers have the right to let their passengers know if the passenger's behaviour is inappropriate.
17. Drivers shall carry no more passengers than the number of seat belts available.