

Criminal Record Checks and Vulnerable Sector

Background

Representatives from Canadian police services, federal and provincial ministries of public safety and the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada announced in January 2010 revised practices regarding the release of criminal record information. Criminal Record Checks (CRC) are a valuable risk mitigation strategy to reduce the risk of harm to vulnerable populations.

Volunteer-based organizations are required to conduct Vulnerable Sector Screening only where the organization self identifies the positions where the applicant will be interacting with or in the care of vulnerable persons.

A vulnerable person is identified as an individual who has difficulty protecting themselves and is therefore at greater risk of harm. People may be vulnerable because of age, disability, or circumstances.

Various individuals who have served on Host Society Security Directorates were consulted. These individuals include active and retired RCMP and police personnel. Based on their input and knowledge of premasters and operations of the BC Winter and BC Summer Games, the policy below was developed.

Policy

- The BC Games Society has evaluated the standard volunteer positions by task in a BC Winter or BC Summer Games based on the duties involved, access to confidential information, and potential access to vulnerable persons and has clearly indicated specific volunteer positions that are required to have a CRC (see Task List and Job Description Document). The determination of the requirement for a CRC is done by Task when the volunteer is assigned. The Host Societies may only add additional tasks to the standard list of tasks identified by the BC Games Society with the approval of the BC Games Society. Any changes to the tasks requiring a CRC is be assessed based on access to confidential information, and potential access to vulnerable persons.
- Due to the unlikelihood of any Games volunteer being completely alone with any athlete, coach, official, or other volunteer, the BC Games Society does not designate any participants (athletes, coaches, officials, or volunteers) within the BC Winter and BC Summer Games structure as a 'vulnerable person'. Therefore, identified volunteers will only be required to obtain CRCs and will not require additional vulnerable sector screening.
- Games volunteers and BC Games Society staff are advised not to put themselves in one-on-one situations with Games participants and volunteers. This will be incorporated into procedure documents, handbooks, volunteer training sessions, and ongoing discussions with the Host Society Boards of Directors.

- Since all BC Games Society staff either work in the host community or have access to the participant database, all BC Games Society staff will have a CRC with a Vulnerable Sector Check conducted every two years. This will be completed in December of each odd calendar year. Any new staff will obtain a CRC upon entry into the BC Games Society organization.
- BC Games Society staff will register each Host Society with the Ministry of Justice's online criminal records checks process as a means for obtaining the majority of the CRCs required for the Games. As a note, the Ministry of Justice system does a vulnerable sector check for all organizations that work children; therefore, this will be part of the check for the Games.

References

- Volunteer Canada – national volunteer information website
See section on Screening: <http://volunteer.ca/topics-and-resources/screening/screening-webinar-files>
- Canada News Centre – federal government news and information service website
<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-eng.do?nid=528419>
- Task List and Job Description (BC Games document)
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