



Faithful Footsteps

*Screening Procedures for Positions
of Trust and Authority in The
United Church of Canada: A Handbook.*





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Acknowledgements

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Requests for further information should be sent to:

Ministry and Employment Policies and Services
The United Church of Canada
3250 Bloor St. West, Suite 300
Toronto, Ontario
M8X 2Y4

Tel: 416-231-5931 Fax: 416-231-3103



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Part I: Guideposts on the Path

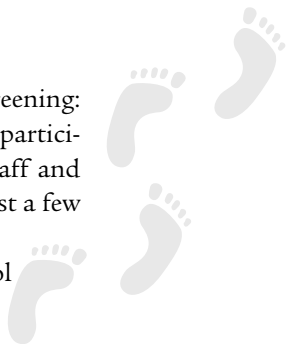


Introduction:

The United Church of Canada has a legal, moral, and spiritual duty to care for and protect participants in our church programs. This is a legal principle called “Duty of Care”, and church groups have been, and will be, held legally responsible for ensuring reasonable measures are taken to ensure safety.

This handbook is provided by the United Church of Canada to help our institutions, organizations, ministries, camps and congregations understand the principles of screening, as one measure of our “Duty Of Care”, and to put these procedures into practice in the recruitment and selection of both staff and volunteers. Screening is a process designed to create and maintain a safe environment. The process involves identifying any activity or aspect of a ministry program which, by virtue of the position, could bring about harm to vulnerable individuals. Adopting a screening policy and following it consistently tells your community that you take seriously your responsibility to offer a safe and nurturing environment for study, service, worship and personal growth.

This handbook will be a guide to the steps involved in screening: from assessing and reducing the risk of harm to program participants, to supervising and supporting program leaders, staff and volunteers. It will be useful in many contexts. To name just a few possible user groups:

- † Christian Education committees selecting Sunday School teachers, mid-week children’s program leaders, etc.
 - † Sexual Abuse Policy Committees selecting Sexual Harassment/Abuse consultants
 - † Church boards responsible for the oversight of volunteer pastoral care visitors.
 - † Church Camp Boards.
- 

- † Presbytery or Conference Youth event planners,
- † Ministry and Personnel Committees.

While this handbook provides much useful detail, it is not exhaustive.

Congregations and church-related organizations using this resource should be prepared to do some additional research, particularly with regard to the procedures for Police Records Checks in your local area, and in regard to the Provincial, Federal and Territorial Human Rights Codes of the jurisdiction in which you are working.

Additional resources are listed in an Appendix to this handbook.



Statement of Commitment:

The United Church of Canada is committed to providing a safe environment for worship, work, and study in all Pastoral Charges, congregations, institutions, agencies and organizations, or other bodies which operate under its name. The United Church of Canada seeks to ensure that all staff, volunteers and ministry personnel who work with vulnerable individuals in United Church settings share this commitment. This commitment will be demonstrated by staff, volunteers and ministry personnel showing respect for personal boundaries, protecting others from harm and abuse, and enabling those in their care to learn and grow without fear of exploitation.

As we work together to create this community of trust and safety, God's vision of Shalom sustains and guides us. We will experience the presence of the Spirit, nurturing and prodding us to be a people of compassion and grace.

Theological Statement:

Jesus came into the world to bring life in all its fullness. As followers of Jesus we are called to show love to one another, and to the world (John 13:34-35), to share our gifts and resources, and to build a community of mutuality and respect (Acts 3: 44-47). As a church, we have a primary duty to care for those who are marginalized, less powerful or more vulnerable in our community. (Deuteronomy 10:17-19, Isaiah 61:1&2)

God intends that all people enjoy a life free from exploitation and abuse. Created in the image of God, all persons have a right to be treated with respect and protected from harm.

Our church is blessed with the gifts of many that offer leadership, as volunteers, staff and ministry personnel. These people have a special calling to offer their time and talents in congregations, Sunday Schools, programs for children and youth, home visiting and many other ministries of the church. These people also are called to act with integrity and discipline as they teach and care for the people of God. The church and all its workers are called to honour the dignity of each person, as created in the image of God.

Jesus teaches that we must love one another. Love does not insist upon its own way (Corinthians 13:5). Where manipulation and exploitation exist in a relationship, love is violated.

The principle which supports this statement on “Screening Procedures for Positions of Trust and Authority in the United Church of Canada” is that followers of Jesus must demonstrate love, respect and honour for one another as members of the body of Christ. For Jesus reminds us that as we do to the most vulnerable among us we do unto him (Matthew 25: 35-40).

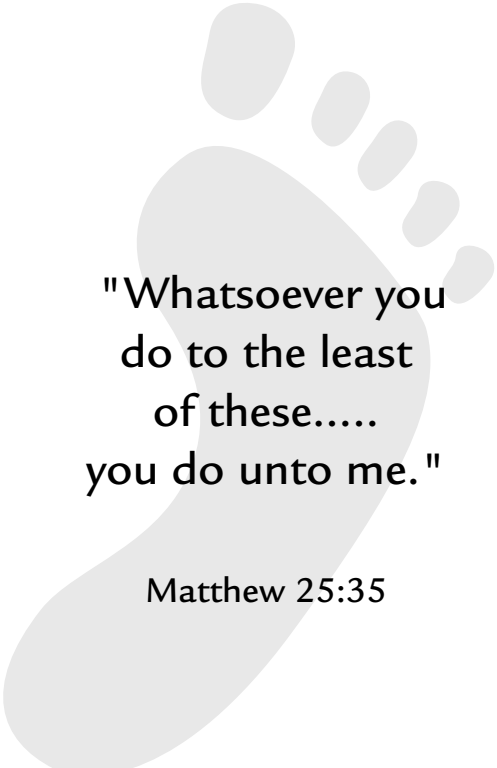
Why Now? Safety and Screening concerns in the United Church.

The United Church of Canada has been addressing the issue of creating and maintaining a safe environment for several years. The church has had national policy on sexual harassment since 1985, and now has a formal document, policies and procedures for dealing with Sexual Abuse (Sexual Harassment, Pastoral Sexual Misconduct, Sexual Assault) and Child Abuse. The preamble to that document states that “All parts of the church need to ...acknowledge the violence and our complicity in it, and to find ways to end it”. In 1997, the 36th General Council mandated the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education and the Human Resources Committee to develop policy, protocol and educational resources for the screening of people in positions of trust and authority in the United Church of Canada. The aim of this mandate is to extend to all reaches of the church the responsibility to uphold our duty of care to all who participate in programs, ministries and services offered in the name of the United Church of Canada.

We know that violations of trust (financial, physical, emotional and sexual abuse) sometimes occur within the church, and that we have not always been willing or able to respond justly to these violations; nor have we been proactive enough to prevent them from occurring. The time for this pro-active work is now! Recent court rulings on vicarious liability have underscored that institutions can and will be held responsible for the actions of their employees and volunteers. We need to inform and support all parts of our church in creating safe places for work, service, worship and personal growth.

Ministry and religious leadership is by nature a position of sacred trust. Services offered in the name of the United Church need to be held to high ethical standards. To be acting in the name of God among vulnerable people demands great integrity and trustworthiness. Adopting stringent and consistent screening measures in our church communities is an important way to communicate some key values of our faith: protection of all in our care, honouring the image of God in each person and being a trustworthy community.

This Handbook and the brochures “A Tender Trust” and “Trustworthy Care” are tools to help us in this work.



**"Whatsoever you
do to the least
of these.....
you do unto me."**

Matthew 25:35

Part II: Understanding Risk



Risk Assessment Rationale:

The term “risk management” may seem very intimidating, but it need not be. It means taking care to consider the possibility that something could go wrong and taking steps to stop, minimize, prevent or eliminate the circumstances which may lead to injury, abuse or harm to program participants. Risk management means accepting the fact that harm is possible, either by the deliberate act of an abusive person, or through carelessness or accident. A solid risk assessment in relation to a particular type of ministry or program will help you to determine the amount and intensity of the screening relevant to that position.

The next section will help you to determine the level of risk in a variety of ministry settings.

Factors to consider in determining risk:

The programs and activities of churches and institutional ministries have many different levels of risk attached to them, depending on several factors:

- ‡ The participants: how vulnerable are they? How old are they? How dependent are they? Are they ever alone with the leader/staff/volunteer?
- ‡ The setting: is the room safe? Is there a window in the door? Is it an off-site public space or in a private home?
- ‡ The activity itself: is the activity carried out in a group or one-on-one? Is it a physically active event? Is it an activity that demands privacy (i.e. hospital visiting or counselling)?
- ‡ The supervision provided: is there documentation kept on the events? Are spot checks conducted on programs on a regular basis?
- ‡ The nature of the relationship between participant and leader. Is there a significant power differential between participants and leaders? Are leaders in a position of trust? Does the activity itself depend on the fostering of a close and personal relationship (i.e. friendly visiting, mentoring.)



Understanding the nature of the risk will help church groups to determine the kind of screening, training and supervision needed to make activities as safe as possible for those who are involved.



Risk Assessment Matrix

It can be useful to group positions according to their level of risk.

- † **Low Risk:** minimal or no contact with children or other vulnerable people or programs take place in large groups.
- † **Medium Risk:** activities with vulnerable people, but no private or one-on-one sessions.
- † **High Risk:** position presents opportunities to be alone with children or vulnerable persons, or opportunities to exert influence over youth or seniors.

Some **activities** are of higher risk in some factors than others. This tool can be used by a group to visually represent their assessment of the risk level of various activities which may be part of a position's job description.

Position Title: _____

Risk Factor	Assessment										Risk Level		
Participant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	L	M	H
Setting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	L	M	H
Activity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	L	M	H
Supervision	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	L	M	H
Relationship	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	L	M	H

(for each risk factor, circle the number which best describes your assessment of the level of risk for this position. 1=lowest. 10=highest)

Example: “The junior high youth group leader, a single man aged 19, wants to take a co-ed group of nine teens to a weekend retreat at a member’s lake side cottage. He has asked one of the mothers

to attend the event as the on-site cook. There are no other adults attending. Two vans can accommodate all the passengers, so no additional drivers are required.”

The following chart offers some additional examples.

Risk	Low	Medium	High
Participant	· Able-bodied adult	· 15-year-old	· Disabled teen · Infirm senior · Child or infant
Setting	· Meeting room or hall · Worship space · Off-site public space	· Classrooms with windows in doors	· Tents or cabins · Participant’s home · Off-site home · Meetings with youth or children · Car
Activity	· Bible study · Greeting	· Youth group · Sunday school class with two teachers · Hospital visiting · Nursing home visiting	· Youth sleepover · Sunday school class with one teacher · One-on-one home visits · One-on-one music or religious instruction · Counselling
Supervision	· Supervisor present · Always in large groups	· Occasional · Some documentation of meetings/ events	· Little to none · No documentation of meetings/ events
Relationship	· Equality/peers	· Instructor · Group leader	· Support person · Mentor, personal counsellor, spiritual advisor

* This chart adapted from “Screening in Faith,” a Volunteer Canada Resource.

Sometimes workers are active in more than one position. It is important that a person be screened for the position with the highest level of risk.

Options for reducing risk:

Once a risk assessment is completed, there are various options to consider for reducing the risks.

a) Eliminate the activity:

You may decide the risks are too high for the activity to continue. (E.g. No more cooking classes with the nursery kids; Late night swim at youth retreat is discontinued.)

b) Modify the activity:

You may make changes to how the activity is carried out. (E.g. Home visiting is done with teams of two visitors.)

c) Transfer the liability:

You may choose to have the service or program offered by someone else with professional expertise. (E.g. hire a bus service to transport elderly parishioners to worship rather than organize volunteer drivers.)

d) Assume the risk:

You may decide that despite potential risks the program is essential to the nature of your ministry and so continue to offer it. (E.g. Crisis Counselling for youth is deemed a valuable and important ministry and you continue it.)

e) Minimize the risk you assume:

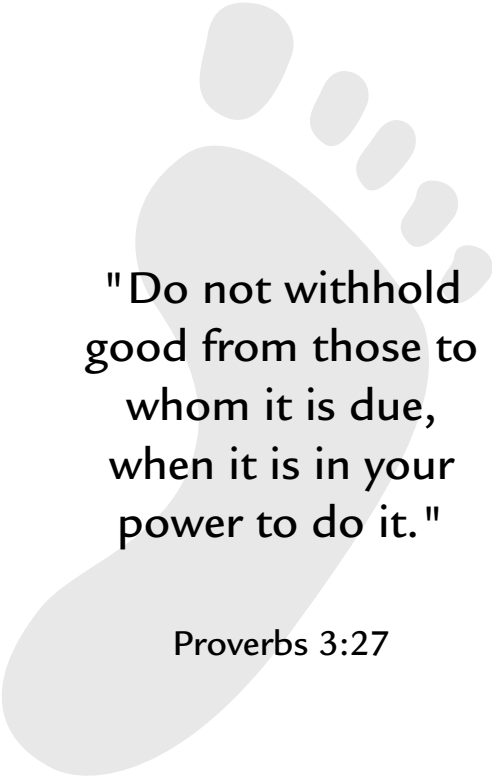
If you choose to continue to offer programs with significant risk, you should adopt other measures to reduce and avoid the risks and potential losses. Purchasing insurance is one way to do this, and screening is another.

A word about Insurance:

Insurance is an important resource to cushion an organization's liability if things do go wrong. Check with your local insurance advisor about the kinds of insurance available to your group for its work. Do not rely on insurance as the only measure to minimize risk. More and more often, insurance companies themselves are requiring clients to practice diligent screening as a part of their approach to risk reduction.

In summary:

Having undertaken a thorough risk assessment, and made choices about reducing risk, the chance of something going wrong has been lessened. You will be certainly in a better position - ethically, morally, spiritually and legally- if something untoward should happen.



**"Do not withhold
good from those to
whom it is due,
when it is in your
power to do it."**

Proverbs 3:27

Part III: Steps in Screening



Where does Screening fit?

The policies for screening are set before there is ever a candidate in mind. It begins with a clear position description and ends when the position is no longer needed. Screening is not about individuals; it is about creating and maintaining a safe environment through careful matching of tasks and skills.

10 Steps in Screening:

1. Define the nature of the position and write a job description.
2. Determine the nature of the risk.
 - Participants
 - Setting
 - Activity
 - Supervision
 - Relationship
3. Recruit based on the job description and skills needed.
4. Use an application form, to keep track of important information about the applicants
5. Interview prospective candidates (can be very formal process or fairly conversational, depending on the task).
6. Check references given on application form.
7. For highest risk positions involving significant trust and vulnerable individuals, consider a police records check.
8. Provide orientation and training to persons newly placed in church positions.
9. Provide supervision and evaluation feedback regularly and formally.
10. Check with program participants on how the leader/ministry volunteer is doing.

The next sections will detail the screening process step by step.

A. Pre-selection: Steps 1-3

The important groundwork for a screening process occurs long before the recruitment of individuals begins.

1. Job descriptions:

Job descriptions are very powerful tools. They define the boundaries and guidelines for the task and help to define the risk inherent in the position. Clear job descriptions protect the workers by formalizing roles and also send a clear message to any potential abuser that safety of participants is a primary value. Ensure that a written job description contains the following pieces of information:

- † Job title
- † Participant group
- † Length of appointment
- † Goals of the job
- † Outline of responsibilities
- † Boundaries and limits of the position.
- † Skill, experience, qualifications required
- † Personal traits and qualities needed
- † Orientation and training available
- † Support, supervision and evaluation provided
- † Mandatory activities
- † Screening measures implemented in selection process.

If there are clear standards and limits on a worker (i.e. not to visit children in a one-on-one setting), make sure these are stated in the job description.

2. Risk Assessment:

The previous section (Part II: Understanding Risk) provided significant detail on this process. See the Appendix for a practice session with some additional examples.

3. Recruitment:

The worst kind of recruitment in terms of the safety of vulnerable persons goes something like this: “Help! We are desperate for assistance. If we don’t get the workers, the program will be cancelled!” This sense of urgency does not always attract the type of worker your group needs or wants.

Think carefully about how to recruit for positions of trust in your community. Where will you advertise? Who will you invite to apply? Do not create the impression that all applicants will be accepted. Be clear that you employ careful screening measures and include that information in responses to any inquiries. This will allow persons to screen themselves out early if they would not feel comfortable participating in a screening process.

B. Selection Process: Steps 4-7

Once you have begun to recruit the following steps are necessary to make sure good documentation is kept on the selection process:

4. Application forms:

These are useful tools for even relatively basic positions. It provides program coordinators with contact information on applicants. It gathers the basic information on the person's relevant experience and gives the organization permission for reference checks (and Police Records or Abuse Registry Checks if necessary). It will be essential that you check with the Human Rights Commission or Council in your province or territory for lists of the type of questions you can and cannot ask in an application form. There are several prohibited grounds for discrimination which must not be breached. (Note: Doing a Police Records Check requires a date of birth. Since this violates human rights, you must be aware that you may not initiate a Police Records Check until a position has been offered. The offer is made contingent upon passing a Police Records Check.)

5. Interviews:

Interviews are an essential part of the screening process. The interview allows an opportunity to talk to potential candidates directly and assess the "right fit" of person to position. Interviews do not have to be highly formal in structure, but they do have to be consistent for all candidates if they are to be fair. Ask similar questions of all candidates. Be aware again of relevant Human Rights laws as discussed in the section on Application forms. Some things to consider in designing an interview format are:

- † Conduct the interview using a panel of at least two interviewers.
- † Choose an appropriate setting for the interview.
- † Describe the job to the applicant using the established job description.

- † Describe the screening processes for the specific position.
- † Document the applicant's responses to the interview questions and retain them in their personnel or volunteer file if they are selected.
- † Look for attitudes toward children, vulnerable adults and others which do not fit with those of your organization or church.

The interview questions should elicit the kind of responses which help you to judge the candidates' relevant experiences and education, ability to work within the values and principles of your organization, and personal integrity. It is important that members of the interview team understand and have a commitment to confidentiality. Any information received about unsuccessful candidates in the interview process should be treated as confidential, and notes shredded or otherwise securely disposed of.

6. Reference Checks:

A reference check may be the most effective screening tool you can use during the selection process. These people will offer you an outside perspective on a candidate's suitability for a particular position or type of work. However, references must be followed up and authenticated! If written references are provided, follow up by telephoning the person and asking for further specific detail. Human Resources professionals report that candidates sometimes provide names expecting that no one will ever contact these people. It is a good practice to use a consistent list of questions to ask references, and to check with more than one reference on a candidate's list. In the interest of consistency, one person on the screening or selection team may do all the follow-up reference checks. Make sure you inform the reference of the nature of the position and solicit their opinion about the candidate's suitability in this situation. (E.g. "Terry would be working in close contact with elderly people, in a home-visiting situation. Would you be comfortable with Terry having this kind of contact with an elderly relative of yours?") Listen to tone, attitude and hesitancy of the reference person as well as to the words they use.

7. Police Records Checks:

Most people assume that screening is equated with Police Records Checks. This is not the case. The Police Records Check (PRC)

should never be the first, the last or the only screening measure used. Your church or ministry or organization must know what types of Offenses are relevant to the position for which the screening is being done. For example, if a person has a civil disobedience conviction for protesting at a nuclear power station, would that preclude them from being a pastoral visiting volunteer? Would an impaired driving charge prohibit someone from being a Sunday School teacher? You may determine that some classes of conviction would automatically preclude someone from a position of trust and authority (e.g. fraud, assault, sex-related offenses). Your board will have to have a thorough discussion of these issues as you work to define your screening policies.



You must have the written permission of the applicant to proceed with a PRC. An initial permission can be given on the application form, but it is also wise to have a separate release form signed by the applicant which will be given to the police force conducting the records check. (A sample form is in the appendix of this handbook.)

There are significant limitations to Police Records Checks which you need to know:

- They are only good up to the day of checking. (You may wish to have a schedule for how often you will repeat these checks. I.e. every three years.)
- The individual may be using a false name, or false birth date, so that there are no matches found in their record.
- If the conviction occurred when the person was a youth, the information is protected under the Young Offenders Act. You will not have access to this information.
- Some sex offenders and abusers have never been convicted of a crime, so there will be no record to uncover.
- Not all police forces check the same data sources for records. You will need to know what information your local force has access to, and you may wish to widen the search of records to other jurisdictions. (Be aware of the expense incurred for each police records check. If it essential to the screening for the position, you will need to plan your search budget to do the job thoroughly.)

Confidentiality is again an issue at this point. You will need to be responsible for holding this personal information in confidence,

securing any paper records in locked files, and ensuring that access to this information is limited to those who need to know it for clearly documented policy reasons only. Be vigilant and just in your practices of confidentiality and information storage. Clearly, this tool may be of great importance in screening for some positions, but it may not be either appropriate or necessary for others. Your risk assessment will be your guide.

Child Abuse registries

A few provinces and/or Child Welfare jurisdictions keep registries of persons with convictions or charges of child abuse and child sexual abuse. If the position for which you are screening requires close contact with children or youth, your group may want to see if doing Child Abuse Registry Checks is possible in your area. Contact the government agency responsible for Child Welfare in your area for more information on this. Be prepared to present your rationale for needing this information. Legally, you will certainly need the applicant's signed release before you can proceed with this kind of a search.

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C. Volunteer/Personnel Management: Steps 8-10

You have done your risk assessment, got a solid job description in place, recruited, interviewed and checked references. You feel you have made as good a choice as possible. However, it is not enough to be cautious in the selection and then let the person have free rein once on board. This section deals with the ongoing screening which takes the shape of providing orientation and training to your personnel. Screening continues with the processes of active supervision and evaluation, while the person works.

8. Orientation and training:

It is worthwhile to have a designated period of time as a probationary period, to allow both your organization and the newly placed worker to decide if the match is good. This is a time for teaching the fine points of policy and training in the standards of care related to work with participants who are vulnerable. Orientation is a responsible way to integrate new workers into your group and to provide support as a person learns the ropes.

Orientation to the specific job task can be done by partnering with a more experienced worker, or through formal sessions. At the end of the probation period, you will have observed enough of the person's work style and skills to confirm the appointment, to reassign the person to other work or to terminate their services. With volunteers, it is important to help them realize that there are many opportunities for their talents to be shared. If they are not appropriately skilled for work with vulnerable individual, you may be able to support them in seeking other ways of serving in the church community. Orientation and training events should be mandatory. Refusal to attend these events may be a signal to selection committees that something is not quite right.

9. Supervision and Evaluation:

Supervision is a way of supporting individuals in their work settings and monitoring the safety of programs. Evaluation can be done periodically to assess the individual's work performance and address any areas of needed skill development or goals for learning. If people are not used to supervision or evaluation it is helpful to clarify the purpose of this kind of monitoring.

- † It ensures a standard level of practice.
- † It creates an opportunity for an individual to reflect on their learnings in their position and improve their work.
- † It protects participants.
- † It can protect workers against false allegations of wrongdoing.

The supervision and evaluation expectations should be clearly outlined in the job description and should use the job description as a reference point. The amount and frequency of supervision will be determined by the level of risk in the position: the higher the risk level the more frequent and intense the supervision.

For example: A Sunday School Superintendent plans to drop in and do a spot check on classes at least once a month. Teachers know to expect a random visit during their lesson time.

Another example: A Pastoral Counsellor meets bi-weekly for one hour with a professional supervisor to review all current cases and the documentation of all sessions. Notes are kept on the supervision sessions and all documents are signed and filed. A formal evaluation is conducted semi-annually.

Design a supervision schedule and evaluation tool that makes sense for each position in your organization.

10. Follow-up:

An excellent source of information on how a particular worker interacts with program participants is the participants themselves, their family members or other care-givers. It is important to let workers know that you will be approaching participants for feedback on job performance. This can be simply framed as part of your regular risk-management activities and that there is nothing personal about this checking procedure. Supervisors need to foster good relationships with program participants and/or family members so that they know their concerns will be heard and respected. You must also understand that if information from participant feedback is to be shared with the worker, confidentiality of the participants must be protected.

Value and support those who offer their time, talent and ministry to those who participate in your programs. Through supervision, evaluation and follow-up, you will demonstrate your commitment to the growth and learning of your workers and participants, and the protection of all.

The Principle of Confidentiality:

You can see that doing a detailed screening process will give the screening group access to a great deal of personal information about applicants. Your group will need clear policies to maintain the confidential nature of the information acquired. Think carefully about who needs to have access to this information and how long any documents (i.e. Police Records Check material) will be kept on file. Out of respect for those who serve in your organization it is absolutely necessary that this information be kept in a secure location and access strictly controlled. It would be advisable to have members of your screening committee sign a pledge of confidentiality to indicate that they understand the importance of this principle. (A sample of a confidentiality pledge is included in the appendices of this handbook.)

Part IV Conclusion:



Church communities need to be places where there is welcome and safety for people of all walks of life. In applying screening measures to selection processes for work in churches we are not intending to “bar the doors” against certain types of people. We need to recognize that God works changes in the lives of individuals, and that the church celebrates personal growth and transformation. At the same time, it is essential that the church be vigilant in its efforts to create and maintain safe environments and safe services for all participants. This will mean that some types of high-risk positions will not be open to all applicants. Faithful stewardship of human resources will allow other kinds of opportunities to be open to those who are not suitable for work with vulnerable people.

In church related institutions (such as camps, schools, residences, nursing homes), clearly established standards of care, and training and experience standards for staff, will be needed to ensure quality of service. The General Council Executive (October 1999) passed a motion mandating that: “all camps, schools, residences, outreach ministries, and congregations using the name of ‘The United Church of Canada’ and all groups incorporated under Appendix IV of The Manual shall follow the national standards of the church in relation to the protection of vulnerable people served by church ministries.” It is also incumbent on these organizations to ensure their compliance with the regulations of Provincial or Territorial Licensing bodies relevant to their work.

Know your own context:

It will be up to your church or organization to make these screening guidelines work in your particular context. Each community / church/organization is different due to many factors: the province/territory; the type of community (urban, rural, large, small, isolated, cosmopolitan); types of programs offered; and the

numbers of volunteers and staff involved. All these things will affect the kind of screening policy you adopt. Low-risk positions may be well served by a group session on policies and expectations. Medium and high-risk positions require more thorough screening. Remember that screening is not about individuals. It is about safety for all participants and workers.

Hope and Faith, but no guarantees!

There is no way to absolutely guarantee that no harm will ever come to any participants, staff or volunteer in a program or service. But your organization exists and serves because there is a human need, and in faith you step in to offer support and service.

Thanks be to God!

Church ministries and organizations need to guard against charges of negligence by diligent screening and other safety policies. Adequate insurance is needed to safeguard the future of your programs. These things are needed. What is **essential** is that United Church of Canada congregations, ministries, camps, residences and other organizations minister in a spirit of faith and hope, responding to the gospel call to love and serve others.

Spread the Word:

Be sure to tell the members of your church, your organization, and your program participants why you are adopting (or continuing) a screening policy and the types of screening measures you will use. You will be communicating your commitment to safety and will give witness to your ethical, moral and spiritual responsibility to promote trustworthy care and service. As you develop your expertise in screening, you may also become advocates and resources to other churches or organizations that are just beginning to learn about screening.

By walking in these Faithful Footsteps, our programs, ministries and institutions will be better able to be places of wholeness, healing, trust and care.

APPENDICES

Appendix A:

Some further examples:

Practice Session on Risk Assessment:

Three examples and some good questions.

A. Children's Choir Director: The children's choir meets once a week after school and the accompanist joins the group only on the practice before an anthem Sunday; there is no church secretary.

B. Lay Pastoral Visitor: Selected congregation members visit elderly, ill or shut-in members in their homes on a monthly basis for prayer and fellowship.

C. A United Church seniors' residence invites a local church member who is a financial advisor to offer a seminar on budgeting and investing for seniors. Some residents ask her for individual sessions.



Questions:

1. What are the potential risks?
2. How likely is it that the potential risks will occur?
3. What might be the consequences?
4. Can we accomplish our ministry goals if we eliminate this activity?
5. How can we modify the activity to reduce the risk?
6. Can we assume the risk?
7. What will be lost/gained if we reduce risk in this activity?

Appendix B: Other tools

Screening Checklist:

- For each position, check each item as completed.
- Develop and job description for the position needed.
- Identify level of risk for position:
 - participants
 - setting
 - nature of the activity
 - level of supervision
 - nature of the relationship between position and participants
- Revise job description with appropriate standards and expectations based on the risk assessment
- Determine the screening measures for the position appropriate to the level of risk.
- Design application forms for the position.
- Plan appropriate recruitment for the particular position. (Advertising, targeted recruitment, referrals, etc.)
- Develop reference check questions based on job description.
- Develop training and orientation process.
- Develop guidelines for supervision.
- Develop evaluation forms and standards.
- Document policies regarding termination, confidentiality, and access to information.
- Ensure security of documentation.
- Conduct the search, and inform all applicants of required screening procedures.
- Obtain permission from short-listed candidates for Police Records Check and Child Abuse Registry check, if relevant to the position.
- When reference checks are completed, make selection.
- If Police checks are required, make appointment contingent on an appropriate PRC outcome. When Police Records checks are obtained, confirm selection.
- Supervise, support and evaluate workers as per policies.
- Terminate the worker's services, if appropriate, and document the process.

Sample Consent for criminal records search

Full Name: _____
Surname given names

Place of Birth: _____
City province country

Other names: _____
(maiden, birth, aliases)

Birth Date: _____
(year/month/day)

Current Address: _____

Whereas I am interested in being considered for a sensitive position of trust with vulnerable individuals in Starfield United Church, and I am required by Starfield United Church to disclose whether or not I have any convictions or have been charged under any federal or provincial enactment:

And whereas I understand that disclosure of a criminal record may not necessarily preclude me from performing the duties I am interested in:

And whereas I understand that, if Starfield United Church should decide any conviction or charge disclosed might preclude me from being involved, I will be given an opportunity to see and discuss that criminal record to determine whether or not my criminal record indicated that I present a risk to participants:

I therefore authorize the (relevant police service) to determine whether or not I have a criminal record and to make to Starfield United Church a full and complete disclosure of any record they may find. I understand that I may be fingerprinted to verify a criminal record.

signature

date

Sample Letter to Police Departments

RCMP Detachment
Smalltown, SK

Dear Sargent _____:

{name of applicant} has consented to release of information regarding criminal records in his/her name relating to any drug and alcohol, fraud, assault or abuse convictions to the Starfield United Church Screening Committee. Please check this individual's record and indicate the results on this form

Please forward the completed form and fingerprints if necessary to:

Chair of the Screening Committee
Starfield United Church
(Address)

Please mark this correspondence **CONFIDENTIAL**.

signature	title
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Police use only - Results of records Check

Results of record search is merely a record or lack of official contact with police agencies, not an affirmation of good Character.

A search of (check appropriate category):

- The Central Repository for Criminal Records of Canada
- Index of (police agency conducting check: i.e. RCMP)

In the above name and birth date shows:

- No record
- A Central Repository Record exists, has been verified by fingerprint comparison, and a copy is attached.
- A record exists on the local index, and a copy certified by the individual is attached.

name and signature	badge number	date (y/mo/day)
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Appendix C: Where to find more information.

You are encouraged to seek further training or workshops from the Volunteer Centre or Volunteer Bureau in your local area. These centres have lending libraries and video resources which will be useful to you.

For a list of Volunteer Centres across Canada, contact:

Volunteer Canada
430 Gilmour St.
Ottawa, Ontario
K2P 0R8
1-800-670-0401 or (613) 231-4371

This information (and much more) is also available on the Volunteer Canada website: www.volunteer.ca

From the United Church Conference Office in your area, you may get multiple copies of two educational brochures:

“A Tender Trust: Helping Churches to provide safe service”
“Trustworthy Care: Helping organizations provide safe service”

The following resources were instrumental in the background research for this handbook:

Screening in Faith:

A National Education Campaign on Screening Resource
Published by Volunteer Canada, 1999.

Street, Lorraine, *THE SCREENING HANDBOOK:*
Protecting Clients, Staff, and the Community, 1996.
Canadian Association of Volunteer Bureaux and Centres.



