



Whether you are a member of senior management at a school, retirement residence, long-term care facility, faith community or non-profit organization, you and your counterparts face a common risk. That's because your employees, professional staff members and volunteers work with, or have potentially unsupervised contact with, vulnerable persons — children, elderly people, and physically or mentally challenged individuals. A key and critical concern is that a vulnerable person in your facility may become the victim of some form of abuse — for example, physical, sexual, verbal or financial. The ramifications of such an incident are both tragic and far reaching for children, elderly people, refugees and physically or mentally challenged individuals.

A highly rigorous hiring practice

There are a number of steps you must take to help manage this risk. First and foremost, your organization must institute a highly rigorous hiring practice to screen the suitability of all applicants — whether they are looking for employment or a volunteer position. In addition to providing professional qualifications, a summary of previous experience and personal references, applicants must also produce a clean Criminal Records Check as well as a Vulnerable Sector Check.

While a Criminal Records Check may be sufficient for many types of organizations, it needs to be

A personal responsibility

Applicants are personally responsible for initiating both types of checks and submitting them to you. In this way, their privacy rights are not violated and the decision to share the results is in their hands. It is important that applicants go to their neighbourhood

The Criminal Records Check

The Criminal Records Check — also referred to as a criminal background check, police clearance, or police certificate — is processed through the National Canadian Police Information Center (CPIC) database. CPIC is a centralized facility managed by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) in Ottawa and shared by local police and RCMP across Canada.

While the Criminal Records Check can vary based on the initiating police jurisdiction, it will include :

- A record of crimes for which the individual has been convicted and for which a pardon has not been granted. Actual details about such criminal convictions cannot be released without fingerprint verification

supplemented by a Vulnerable Sector Check for people working with vulnerable individuals. Teachers, sports coaches, social workers, day-care workers, long-term care workers, nurses, youth leaders — as well as the volunteers who assist them — are some examples of positions requiring a Vulnerable Sector Check.

There are typically costs associated with obtaining these checks. These costs are determined by the individual jurisdiction.

police departments to arrange for these checks. This allows police to research their own databases for information about local problems or complaints, or provincial statute violations.

- Disclosure of criminal history, as provided by the applicant The Criminal Records Check will not include:
 - Outstanding entries such as charges, warrants, probation and prohibition orders
 - Convictions that have been “pardoned” (now called convictions where “a Record Suspension has been granted”)
 - Convictions under provincial statutes
 - Information from international sources
- Cases where the applicant has been found guilty by reason of mental disorder

The Vulnerable Sector Check

Designed to protect the most defenseless from dangerous offenders, the Vulnerable Sector Check discloses more detailed information with respect to criminal offences, including those that have been pardoned. The initiating police jurisdiction will use the CPIC system as well as their database to conduct a background search based on the applicants name, gender and date of birth. If the gender and date of birth match to a pardoned sex offender record or if the electronic search is inconclusive, the applicant will be asked to submit a set of fingerprints to confirm their identity.

Among other relevant information, the Vulnerable Sector Check includes :

- Criminal convictions
- Outstanding charges before the courts
- Probation information (including restraining orders and peace bonds)
- Federal or provincial parole information
- Disclosure that the applicant is suspected of committing a criminal offense or that the applicant is involved in a serious criminal investigation
- A search of pardoned sex offender records in the RCMP National Repository of Criminal Records. Since 2001, as a result of amendments to the Criminal Records Act, criminal records of pardoned sex offenders can be made available to organizations that work with vulnerable people.

Abuse: a zero tolerance policy

To help mitigate the risk of abuse, you must do everything possible to hire the right people and bring the right volunteers on board. That's why the Criminal Records Check and the Vulnerable Sector Check must be integral to your recruitment process. These checks should be repeated on a regular basis, for example every three or five years.

However, safeguarding the security and well being of individuals in your care and protecting your organization and its reputation, requires an ongoing multi-pronged approach. Your management team must develop clearly defined abuse prevention

policies and procedures. This roadmap should include a comprehensive orientation program, ongoing staff training and education, as well as staff and volunteer supervision. It should also set out the ways in which you can create and sustain a culture of care and respect for everyone. And finally, there must be a simple, confidential reporting mechanism for people who experience, witness or suspect abuse.

For more risk control information, please consult an Ecclesiastical Risk Control Specialist in your region or visit www.ecclesiastical.ca

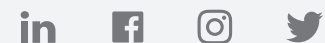
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