

**RECREATION NOVA SCOTIA  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
GOVERNANCE MANUAL**

**POLICY TYPE: GOVERNANCE PROCESS**  
**PLOICY TITLE: SCREENING POLICY**

**What is screening?**

Screening is an ongoing process designed to identify any person whether paid or unpaid, volunteer or staff – who may harm children, youth, other vulnerable persons, or the association.

**Why screen?**

We want to do a better job protecting participants, partners, members and the association.

We want the right person to take on the right responsibilities.

We want to avoid dealing with problems that arise from poor recruitment.

We are obligated to do everything reasonable to protect those in our care.

***Duty of Care*** is a legal principle that identifies the obligations of individuals and organizations to take reasonable measures to care for and protect their clients.

There is always risk – those not working directly with vulnerable groups...the “safe positions” - can and has presented a risk.

**Screening measures should be chosen on the basis of:**

The organization’s awareness of its moral and ethical responsibilities and legal obligations.

The organization’s decisions about basic principles and values, including decisions about the way in which volunteers and other un-paid staff will be treated.

The results of the risk audit conducted and the organizations assumption of certain risk

The positions developed and designed with risk management considerations in mind, and the relevant position descriptions.

**A BLANKET APPROACH TO SCREENING WILL NOT WORK! SCREENING MEASURES HAVE TO BE CHOSEN TO SUIT THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POSITION IN QUESTION; PARTICIPANT, ACTIVITY, SETTING, AND SUPERVISION.**

## **THE RECOMMENDED PRACTICES FOR SCREENING:**

### **1. Position Design: Ensure all positions/committees have job descriptions and/or terms of reference as well as an orientation.**

#### RNS Board of Director Positions and Committees

Past President

President

President Elect

Vice President Board Development

Vice President Finance

Recording Officer

Director-at-Large

Board Committees

Ad Hoc Board Committee Members

To be included: Title, participant group, goals of position, activities and tasks, outline of responsibilities, boundaries or limits, skills required, personal traits needed, training available, support and evaluation provided, mandatory activities, work conditions, benefits to the volunteer, screening measures.

Establish behaviour standards and communicate them to your volunteers and staff through the job descriptions and/or terms of references (i.e.: Board code of Conduct).

Establish low, medium and high-risk rankings for the positions

#### RNS Positions

Board of Directors: Low to Medium

*Low Risk positions (minimum or no contact with children/ minimum or no financial authority or responsibilities)*

### **2. Hiring/ Recruiting Phase**

What do you need to know about the applicants in order to make good decisions about accepting or rejecting their application?

Their professional qualifications?

Attitudes towards clients?

About any involvement they may have had with the police?

Interest in / knowledge of policy governance?

Provide your resume/ curriculum vitae

Use an Application form for all positions noted above

Seek permission to do a reference check - the reasons for asking for references to be included on the form

*Benefit: signals the seriousness of the organization, provides a paper trail.*

Note: Question regarding Criminal Conviction: Acceptable Practice: Asking whether applicant has been convicted of an offence for which no pardon has been granted.

The CHRA permits discrimination on a criminal conviction for which a pardon has not been granted. However, it discourages inquires into unpardoned criminal convictions unless the particular conviction is relevant to job qualifications; e.g.: a theft and fraud conviction is relevant to a job requiring honesty, but a conviction for marijuana possession is not. The Nova Scotia Human Rights Act does not protect criminal records.

Application form will include a question worded: “ have you been convicted of a criminal offence involving abuse, harassment, theft, and/or fraud for which no pardon has been granted?”

### **3. Conduct Reference Checks**

A reference check may be the most effective screening step during the hiring process. References will confirm the background and skills of the applicant and will provide an outside opinion on the suitability of the person for the position RNS will conduct reference checks on the following positions:

Board of Directors

RNS will obtain consent to conduct the reference check.

RNS will not make exceptions for anyone.

### **4. Orientation and Training**

Board of Directors: No probationary period. Refer to code of conduct, training supported, and orientation at first Board meeting

### **5. Supervision and Evaluation**

Board of Directors: This occurs at each Board meeting through the Board Self Evaluation.

### **INTRODUCING SCREENING PRACTICES TO EXISTING VOLUNTEERS**

While it may be difficult to ask someone who has already been accepted by RNS to submit to screening measures, remember where your first duty lies – the safety and protection of participants, staff and the community. Minimize the reactions by ensuring that screening doesn't come as a surprise to anyone – identify this policy and the procedures in your documents, orientation and training.