

SOCIETY OF SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL National Council of Canada

SCREENING AND DUTY OF CARE GUIDELINES

The Society, as a charitable organization, has a moral, ethical and spiritual obligation to appropriately screen its staff and members. It is not only the right thing to do, but it is also legally mandated under the principle of “*Duty of Care*”².

The goal of implementing screening procedures is to protect and safeguard the vulnerable persons⁴ served, and to provide protection to Society’s members and employees. Screening procedures are an integral part of due diligence in relation to any risk management framework.

Candidates for employment with the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul who, in their job will have contact with vulnerable persons, shall be screened as part of the hiring process

The Board of Directors of the National Council has prepared the following guidelines contain the 8 standard and essential steps that must be included in the development of the recruitment/screening process of SSVF members at any level.

The purpose of these guidelines and tool kit (appendices) has been prepared to assist all Conferences and Councils with the development and maintenance of member screening/interview procedures in their locale.

It is expected that this process will begin by January 2006 and the intent is to have all members of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul in Canada complete the screening process by 2010.

Process

The following steps must be completed by every aggregated Conference and instituted Council in the screening of all current and new Full and Auxiliary members³:

NB – Volunteers who assist the Society a couple of times a year and have no contact with those being served, do not have to be screened. For example, door to door canvassing at Christmas time, preparing hampers etc. The Conference or Council President has the responsibility to make the decision.

1. An application form is completed by the applicant. (Appendix 1 M-APPL-F-001/05-12/07), and a file is opened for the applicant.

Note: Due to the confidential nature of these documents, these files must be kept in a safe and secured place. These files may be housed in the parish offices, or in a locked file on property owned by the local Society. It is desirable that members do not keep these records in their home if at all possible.

2. A Police Records Check Request form is completed by the Conference or Council (PRCR – F- 005/05 –11/05). Application for Auxiliary Member status is exempt from this step. The applicant then takes this completed request form to the police service in their area along with the required identification as outlined on the request form.

Note: Each locale will have to make arrangements with their respective police department or authority as to the appropriate “Request Form” to be used. Keep a supply of these request form on hand to give to new applicants. Also, decisions will need to be made related any charges for the PRC. A “clean” PRC means no criminal record, no outstanding criminal charges, no contact or access or behaviour restrictions or orders made in the interest of safety or child protection.

3. After receipt of a satisfactory PRC Report (see note 2 below), an interview will be scheduled with the applicant. This interview must be conducted by two trained “full members” of the Conference or Council.

Note 1: During the period the applicant is awaiting the results of his or her PRC, he or she may attend meetings of the Conference, but may not assist with home visitations, or be otherwise placed in a position where he or she may be in contact with vulnerable individuals. The applicant does not vote at Conference meetings. It should be explained that attending meetings of the Conference does not imply acceptance as a member of the SSVP.

Note 2: Some applicants will have had a police check conducted as part of their screening application process with other volunteer agencies or part of their work. These Police Check Reports are acceptable to the Society, however, they must not be more than 24 months old from the date the applicant applies to be a member of SSVP.

The purpose of the interview purpose is to:

- a) Get to know the candidate: expand on the information provided in the *Membership Application Form*, including the results of the *Police Records Check Report*, in order to determine suitability as a member, to share ideas and concerns about serving in a safe environment. The format of questions, and interviewer’s worksheet is attached as (Appendix 3 ICL/RCR-F - 003/05 -12/07).
- b) Explain the Rule of the Society, Canadian Statutes, its Mission and Values, its spirituality, how the organization is structured how it functions.
- c) Develop the expectations of members eg time commitment, types of work
- d) Assist the candidate to understand “Duty of Care” and its implications.
- e) Review the Member Role Description (Appendix 5, GMRD-F - 004/05-12/07).
- f) Review obligations related to reporting suspected Child or Elder Abuse.*

*Note: This is particularly salient for applicants who are teachers, nurses, physicians, social workers etc. who are mandated under their respective professional colleges to report abuse.

4. Follow-up regarding the 3 references that were provided on the application form, by the applicant, must be conducted by the interviewees within 7 days of the interview. The reference follow-up is to be conducted only after the Police Records Checks results have been provided to the Screening Committee and the interview has been completed. The references should not be more than one family member. Reference Check worksheet is part of the Interview checklist and is attached as (Appendix 3, ICL/RCR-F -003/05- 12/07).

Note: The President of the Council at the next higher level, or the Spiritual Advisor, or the Parish Priest may be consulted, as appropriate, in cases where acceptance of an applicant is cause for concern.

5. Acceptance of the new applicant as a member of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul requires a duly made “*in camera*” motion at a meeting of the Conference or Council members, or Council officers when applicable.

6. *The Service Covenant and Confidentiality Agreement* (Appendix 6 SCCA-F - 006/05-12/07) is signed by the member and one of the interviewers.

7. An orientation program, as well as an ongoing development program shall be provided to members, by formal training sessions or mentoring by experienced Full Members.

Note: The National Council of Canada will provide a Train-the-Trainer Workshop related to Screening and Interviewing for those designated members of each region. This workshop will be conducted annually at each National AGA.

8. A Police Record Check must be renewed every five (5) years. A copy placed in the member’s file.

Note: This process does not include a requirement for re-interview or reference check, except for cause.

Local Responsibilities include:

The Presidents of regional councils and conferences shall establish a formalized recruitment/screening process for its members, volunteers and for the hiring of employees according to the guidelines set forth above.

All Regional Presidents are to nominate resource person/s responsible for screening process and training in their region, and submit an annual compliance report to the National Council.

The President is to appoint a minimum two-member Screening Committee, who shall be trained in the screening/interviewing process according to National Council Workshop Guidelines.

The President and/or Screening Committee is to make arrangements with local police force for the conduct of Police Records check by applicants, and determine the handling of any associated costs.

The President is to ensure that screening/interview and reference check process is conducted with tact, thoroughness and confidentiality.

The President is to institute orientation and on-going development program or mentorship program for its members.

The President of the local Conference or Council is to ensure and maintain complete, accurate and up-to-date membership records, and ensure the security of these records.

Note: Member files are to include: Membership Application; Police Check Report; Completed Interview Checklist/Reference Check Report; Service Covenant/Confidentiality Agreement, and a copy of the Conference minutes reflecting the acceptance of the candidate.

The President is to include a statement of compliance with the National Council of Canada guidelines in their Annual Report to next higher Council.

REFERENCE: Policy ADM 003, ADM-PR 002, 003, 006.

¹ Vulnerable persons: *Persons served by the Society who are in a position of material or emotional need, sick, physically or mentally handicapped persons.*

² Duty of care: *There is an inherent degree of risk in carrying on the service to those who suffer, therefore, the Society must take reasonable measures to reduce risks.*

³ Members: *Full members are those who voluntarily live the Conference's life of prayer and action by attending the meetings and through personal contact with those who suffer. Auxiliary members are those who voluntarily help the Society through their personal cooperation in any work for the service of those in need, and do not have direct personal contact with those we serve unless under supervision by full members.*

NOTE: Rev 04/07 has deleted Form revision has included putting Screening Interview questions on the back of the Interview checklist to create one document for ease of handling.. this eliminates the need for Form SIQ-F- 002/05-11/05.
The Service covenant Agreement has been modified to include the signature of "Witness" instead of « President » .

MSGL/BOD/F -Nov 12/05; Rev 11/06/rRev04/07/Rev 12/07