

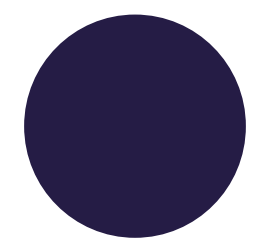
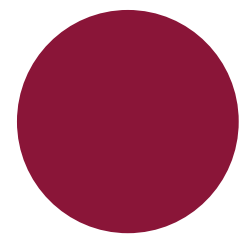


WEBINAR

Risk Assessments and You

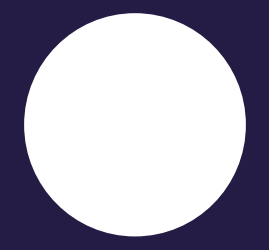
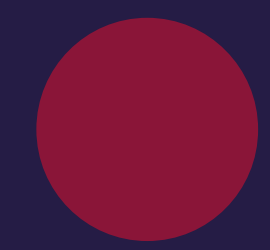
2025 Volunteer Screening Program





Land Affirmation

Land Affirmation



What is the Volunteer Screening Program (VSP)?

A partnership between Volunteer Alberta and the Government of Alberta to support nonprofits to develop deeper understanding of volunteer screening and engagement towards the broader goal of community safety.

Includes

- Educational resources and tools
- Vulnerable Sector Check Fee Waiver
- Screening Development Micro-Grant



*Volunteer Alberta does not provide legal advice. Please consult a legal professional for any concerns specific to your program.



What is risk?

Risk describes the uncertainty surrounding possible outcomes that could result in a negative impact.

MYTH: Having risk badly reflects on your organization

FACT: Naming risks allows you to become aware of it,
allowing you to address it

Types of Risks and Examples

Organization

Volunteer misrepresenting the organization through speaking or acting inappropriately

Policies become outdated resulting in noncompliance with current legislation

Program users

Vulnerable program users not adequately supervised

Service users suffering harm through abuse by a volunteer

Volunteers


Volunteer receives inadequate training so is unaware of how to respond to aggressive program users

A volunteers shift partner does not show up so they must complete all tasks alone

Staff

Staff suddenly quits due to overwork/burnout

Theft of personal items by program user



So what is a risk assessment?

A risk assessment is the process by which you identify the possible risks that might be present or could occur.

It may also include assessing the mitigation factors that are currently in place to lessen or control those risks

They can:

- Help you better achieve your mission
- Help protect your program users
- Reassure funders
- Make your volunteer programs more safe

Assessing Risk– Possible Practices

Checklists allow you to list potential risks and then scale them based the likelihood of the risk occurring and the level of impact of the risk.

Helpful Tip: Create a risk matrix to help you standardize your risk measurements and reduce the impacts of subjectivity

Risk Identification

Identify any possible risks (ex. high degree of physical contact, access to confidential information, frequently interacts with clients in a private setting, high stress environment leading to aggression, etc)	What is the likelihood of the possible risk occurring?	What is the severity of the possible risk?
	Low Med High	Low Med High
	Low Med High	Low Med High
	Low Med High	Low Med High
	Low Med High	Low Med High
	Low Med High	Low Med High
	Low Med High	Low Med High
	Low Med High	Low Med High

! The Risk Assessment Matrix can be used to identify risks that may be present.

Potential Risk Description	Likelihood	Severity	Rating	Action Taken to Minimise Risk
	Without Controls & Precautions			
	With Controls & Precautions			

Assessing Risk—Possible Practices

Individual Position Assessments focuses on the volunteer positions separately to better understand the nuances of specific roles, and what risks may be involved.

Helpful Tip: Make sure your role descriptions are up to date! This helps ensure “paper” matches “practice”.



VOLUNTEER POSITION DESCRIPTION - TEMPLATE Risk Assessment & Policy Considerations

This template supports volunteer position descriptions to include risk assessments and policy considerations. Aligning the various responsibilities of volunteer positions with potential risks and related policies can inform the screening processes and the development and/or refinement of policies.

POSITION TITLE: _____

POSITION DETAILS	RISKS	POLICY
PURPOSE OF POSITION		
DUTIES / ACTIVITIES		
CLIENT / PEOPLE SERVED		
LOCATION / SETTING		
TIME COMMITMENT		
SUPERVISION / TRAINING / ORIENTATION		
OTHER DETAILS		



This resource was developed as part of the Volunteer Screening Program, which is generously funded by the Government of Alberta

Adapted from the Volunteer Canada Screening Handbook

Last updated: April 2020

Assessing Risk—Possible Practices

Seeking Feedback by collecting information from volunteers, staff, and program users to learn about the program through those who interact with it directly. Can be done through surveys, interviews, or suggestion boxes.

Example Questions:

- How safe do you feel?
- What words come to mind when you think of attending this program?
- Do you feel well prepared for this role?
- Do you know how to report an incident?
- What's something you wish you could do in this program?
- What would you tell a potential volunteer about this program?

Who should be in charge of a risk assessment?

It depends!

Ideally it should involve those directly connected to the program being assessed, like the Volunteer Coordinator for example. Having a team of people working together can help lighten the load, while also deepening your understanding.



After an Assessment: Responding and Monitoring Risk



Avoid: Removing the related task, role, event, or program entirely

Transfer: To move the responsibility of managing the risk from one source to another

Mitigate: Enacting a strategy to act against the risk and then monitoring the result

Accept: You acknowledge the risk but do nothing further

The Swiss Cheese Method

Layering up your risk assessment strategies to cover the gaps other strategies may have.

But be sure to apply the principle of *Reasonable measures, Reasonably applied* – your risk mitigation measures shouldn't become too burdensome on your organization or create barriers for volunteer engagement.

REMEMBER: Volunteer Screening isn't a Risk Assessment!



- Volunteer Screening is a tool to help mitigate risk
- Risk assessments can inform your volunteer screening AND reviewing your screening practices can be part of your risk assessment
- Understand how and why your screening steps are used
- We encourage volunteer participation in all steps to promote relationship building



The Relationship between Policy & Risk

- While not every policy is directly made to manage risk, they do establish responsibilities, expectations, and guidelines that can inform good practices to manage risks
- Policies help ensure that we are proactive, and can help inform your team of what should be done, and how to deal with scenarios should they occur
- Policies should be regularly reviewed, and this is recommended to be a part of your risk assessment process as well

Risk Management and Insurance

Insurance is a big tool to manage risks and liabilities BUT it shouldn't be the only thing you consider when considering risk management. Here are some tips when dealing with insurance:

- Find an insurance provider who knows about nonprofits and organizations like yours
- Prepare and keep an updated list of your assets related to your organization
- Always keep your insurance provider updated on changes to your organization's operations
- Get comfortable talking with your insurance provider and maintain the relationship regularly.



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