

Using the Risk Assessment Matrix, you can determine the level of risk for program participants and volunteers, and the necessary level of screening for your volunteer positions according to multiple categories. Your organization can use these levels of risk to develop screening policies and procedures.

This matrix does not provide a simple formula to indicate the exact level of risk, or determine what your policies and procedures should look like to mitigate that risk. Each organization will have different needs and strategies to address them. Please refer to the risk discussion guide to help you think through the results of your assessment.

	Minimal risk	Low Risk	Medium Risk ¹	High Risk
Interactions with Participants/Clients	Volunteer is in a role that involves none, or very little interaction with vulnerable population. (ex. Social media coordinator, bookkeeper or accounting volunteer)	Volunteer is in a role that involves minimal, incidental interaction with vulnerable population. (ex. Receptionist or event volunteer)	Volunteer is in a role that involves moderate, semi-frequent interaction with vulnerable population. (ex. Recreation leader or coordinator who organizes and leads group activities with vulnerable populations)	Volunteer is in a role that requires frequent or prolonged interaction with vulnerable population. (ex. Coach, youth mentors, friendly visitors)
Setting	Volunteer works in a setting that is separate and away from participants/vulnerable group. (ex. Social media coordinator, bookkeeper or accounting volunteer who works in their own office, not accessible to participants)	Volunteer works in a public, non-intimate setting, and/or open space with high visibility. (ex. Café volunteer, landscaping or outdoor maintenance volunteer)	Volunteer works in a semi-public, semi-intimate space with limited visibility. (ex. Custodian volunteer who may encounter participants/vulnerable individuals in washrooms or hallways, Sunday School security guard)	Volunteer works in a private, intimate space with no public visibility. (ex. Friendly visitors in participants' homes, youth mentors who meet at private home, or 1-1 in a space with no public visibility)
Supervision	Supervision by a paid employee or fully trained/screened volunteer is present at all times. (ex. Supervisor never leaves volunteers and participants along and is always present)	Supervision by a paid employee or fully trained/screened volunteer is present most of the time. (ex. Supervisor leaves volunteers and participants alone every once in a while)	Supervision by a paid employee or fully trained/screened volunteer is infrequent, or only on an as-needed basis. (ex. Volunteers and participants are unsupervised most of the time)	There is very little to no supervision by a paid employee or fully trained/screened volunteer. (ex. Volunteers and participants are unsupervised at all times)
Nature of the Relationship (Level of Trust and Authority)	There is no relationship or level of trust and authority present between the volunteer and a vulnerable population (ex. Graphic designer or web developer)	There are minimal, incidental instances of trust and authority present between the volunteer and a vulnerable population, over short periods of time. The volunteer does not have decision-making power over the vulnerable population. (ex. Receptionist or event volunteers, referees)	There is a moderately personal relationship and moderate degree of trust and authority developed between the volunteer and a vulnerable population, over extended periods of time. The volunteer has a moderate degree of decision-making power over the vulnerable group. (ex. Recreation leader, homework helper/tutor)	There is a one-on-one personal relationship with a high degree of trust and authority developed between the volunteer and a vulnerable population, over extended periods of time. The volunteer has a high degree of decision-making power over the vulnerable group. (ex. Coach, youth mentors, respite caregiver or healthcare aid)
Degree of Physical Contact	Volunteer has no physical contact with participants. (ex. Graphic designer, social media coordinator)	Volunteer has infrequent and/or incidental physical contact with vulnerable populations. (ex. School volunteer holds hand of student on field trip while crossing the road)	Volunteer has moderate semi-consistent physical contact with vulnerable populations. (ex. Recreation leader who may perform first-aid if necessary, or help participants in and out of chairs)	Volunteer has high degree of physical contact with vulnerable populations. (ex. Coach, respite caregiver or healthcare aid)

¹ Volunteer positions in the medium or high risk category may be eligible for the Vulnerable Sector Check (VSC) Fee Waiver under the Volunteer Screening Program. Please refer to the eligibility guidelines to determine if the VSC Fee Waiver is applicable.

OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS	BOARD/LEADERSHIP CONSIDERATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you need a police information check or vulnerable sector check based on the risk to participants? • Are your volunteer positions and associated procedures in line with existing policies for your organization? • Are the training requirements for this position appropriate given the level of risk to participants or volunteers? • Does your organization have policies or procedures in place that outline strategies to avoid unforeseen risks? <i>For example, if you have a volunteer position that is regularly supervised, what happens if the supervisor calls in sick?</i> • If you're assessing risk based on the written volunteer position, when was the last time you talked to your volunteers about how closely the written position and their work align? When was the last time you talked to your participants/clients about the volunteer position? Are you missing anything? • Are any of the assessments you made in the risk matrix dependent upon a specific volunteer instead of their volunteer position? <i>For example, you may have a volunteer who fills a role and prefers to work in isolation or with minimal interaction with clients/participants, but their volunteer position doesn't actually require them to work this way. Should it? Would you want every volunteer in that position to work the same way?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you need a police information check or vulnerable sector check from your volunteers based on insurance or parent organization requirements? Is there any room to advocate for a different approach? • Are your volunteer positions and associated procedures compliant with existing bylaws, legislation, and regulations for your organization? <i>For example, the legislation your organization was incorporated under, Occupational Health and Safety, labour standards, privacy legislation, etc.?</i> • How does the volunteer position and the volunteer's experience reflect on the organization? Are there any components of the volunteer position that could damage the reputation of your organization in the community or with funders? Are there good reasons to accept a reasonable level of risk to your organization's reputation? <i>For example, recruiting a volunteer with 'lived experience' with the program?</i> • Are there any financial risks presented by the volunteer position? Are there policies or procedures to deter or respond to theft, fraud, or misuse of funds? • Are there appropriate mechanisms in place for volunteers, operation staff, and participants/clients to provide feedback and identify unforeseen risks? <i>For example, yearly surveys, exit interviews, anonymous feedback, focus groups, etc.</i> • Does the board have a clear understand of what the responsibilities of the board, the staff, and the volunteers are? Are there shared responsibilities?

Please note, this tool and any resources developed by Volunteer Alberta do not constitute legal advice. Any specific legal concerns should be brought to a legal professional. .

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