



October 28, 2013

Volunteer Agencies

RE: BC Criminal Records Review Act Amendments

On February 21, 2013 the Minister of Justice announced that the Criminal Records Review Act (the Act) would be amended to provide free criminal record checks for eligible volunteers working with children and/or vulnerable adults. The amendments also allow for individuals currently covered under the Act and new volunteer clients to share the results of their criminal record check with other registered organizations. The Criminal Records Review Program (CRRP) will implement these changes on November 30, 2013. Below is a brief summary of the amendments and improvements to the CRRP.

- Organizations that have volunteers who work with children or vulnerable adults may choose to register as a volunteer organization under the Act. The CRRP will then provide criminal record checks free-of-charge as part of the BC Government's ongoing commitment to support the non-profit sector. Enrolment is not mandatory and volunteer organizations may choose not to register and continue using their current processes and providers.
- Additionally, at no cost, volunteers may share the results of their clear checks with other registered organizations through the CRRP online service reducing the need for multiple checks.
- A new secure and efficient online service has been developed to manage the criminal record check process for new and sharing checks. Registered volunteer organizations that enrol for this service will obtain a link for their volunteers to follow. Applicants will then have to verify their identity through a process similar to activating a credit card online. Use of the online service will greatly decrease the time required to complete a check and reduce the administrative burden for organizations and applicants.

- Volunteer agencies that register with the CRRP to conduct their volunteer checks will gain access to the same risk assessment process that is currently provided to employer organizations. The CRRP will review the relevant criminal history of the applicant, investigate the circumstances of offences, and the Deputy Registrar will make a determination on whether the individual is a risk to work with children and/or vulnerable adults. Individuals who are determined to be a “risk” will not be allowed to work with children and/or vulnerable adults, as appropriate.
- Volunteer have the option to deregister from the CRRP at any time by notifying our program in writing.
- To further enhance the protection of children and vulnerable adults, the CRRP will require fingerprints for those who share a date of birth and gender with a pardoned sex offender (vulnerable sector check) as per the national RCMP policy. These prints will be at the applicant’s expense as required by their local police agency. However, in almost all circumstances, an individual will only be required to be fingerprinted once every ten years through our program.

In preparation for the volunteer initiative, the CRRP is updating forms, policies, and education materials. Please continue to monitor our website for information and updates at <http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/criminal-records-review/index.htm>

Any questions about these changes may be directed to the Criminal Records Review Program at 1-855-587-0185 or sgspdps@gov.bc.ca



Fraser Marshall
Registrar
Criminal Records Review Program

*the term “employees” includes but is not limited to: members of regulated professional governing bodies, post secondary students with a practicum working with children or vulnerable adults, licensees and staff of licensed child care and adult care facilities, operators and staff of unlicensed child care facilities

*the term “volunteers” means: an individual who voluntarily provides services to a specified organization and receives no monetary compensation for the services