

Volunteer and Employee Screening

Policy Statement

All eparchial and parish volunteers and employees will be properly screened by pastors and/or leaders of parish and/or eparchial ministries to determine their suitability for ministry and/or employment.

Intent of Policy

1. To outline what is required in recruiting and selecting volunteers and employees in a ministry or program
2. To ensure current and new volunteers and employees meet set standards
3. To ensure ministries, programs and activities are managed in a safe and professional way

Procedure

The Eparchy of Edmonton follows a ten-step screening process.¹

Before Selection and Recruitment

1) Determine the risk

There are two types of ministries, **general risk** and **high risk**. The nature of the ministry and the inherent risk factor dictate the need for screening, not the character of the volunteer. For example, a volunteer who is alone with a vulnerable person necessitates a more thorough screening procedure than a volunteer who participates in a group setting.

a) Examine the potential for abuse in programs/ministries to help prevent or eliminate the risk of abuse by assessing the following:

- i) Vulnerability of those served
- ii) Nature of the service or position
- iii) Context of the service or position
- iv) Degree of supervision given or received

b) General Risk Ministry

Those involved in general risk ministry:

Examples: altar server, choir member, cantor, greeter

- i) do not require close contact with minors or vulnerable adults

¹ Volunteer Canada, Screening <https://volunteer.ca/screening>

- ii) are supervised directly or indirectly
- iii) perform duties in a strictly public setting
- iv) are not involved with parish or eparchial finances

c) High Risk Ministry

Those involved in high risk ministry:

Examples: priest, youth leader, treasurer, custodian, parish secretary, Extraordinary Eucharistic Minister, keyholder, catechist

- i) work with minors or vulnerable adults
- ii) work in an unsupervised setting where ministry, food, transportation or other necessities could be provided to minors and/or vulnerable adults
- iii) have access to confidential information
- iv) are entrusted with money, or parish and eparchial finances
- v) are keyholders and have access to church property

2) Write a position description

Volunteer/employee position descriptions:

- a) sends the message that the Eparchy of Edmonton is serious about screening
- b) clearly state responsibilities and expectations
- c) the screening procedure may change according to the risk assessment when a volunteer changes position
- d) [Position Description Sample link](#)

3) Establish a formal selection and recruitment process

- a) requests for volunteers/employees should be done publicly
- b) publicly state that screening is part of the recruitment process and that all applicants are carefully screened

Recruitment and Selection Process

4) Gather Volunteer/Employee Information Forms:

- a) All volunteers and employees must complete a [Volunteer/Employee Information Form](#) to keep accurate records of all volunteers and gather information pertaining to the ministry position
- b) All volunteers and employees must read and sign a [Covenant of Care](#), thereby committing to follow all eparchial safe environment procedures, including the Eparchy of Edmonton's [Code of Conduct](#)

5) Conduct Interviews

- a) be interviewed about their background, skills, interests and availability to determine their suitability for ministry

6) Obtain References

- a) all high risk ministry volunteers and parish and eparchial employees must provide three references by completing the [References List/PIC Form](#)
- b) references must be interviewed using the [Reference Check Questionnaire](#)

7) Obtain Police Information Checks and Vulnerable Sector Information Checks

- a) a [Police Information Check \(PIC\)](#) is requested by an eparchial office, parish, camp, or other approved organization is conducted by the police service to determine if the individual has a criminal record that would exclude them from the ministry for which they are being considered.
- b) a [Vulnerable Sector Police Information Check \(VSC\)](#) includes a check of local police records to determine the existence of a pattern of behaviour that may result in harm to vulnerable persons.
 - i. a Vulnerable Sector Check may be required when the applicant will be in a position of trust or authority with children under 18 years of age, the elderly or the disabled, or any other vulnerable person or entity.
 - ii. a position of trust or authority must be more than an opportunity for casual contact.²

After Selection and Recruitment

8) Conduct Orientation and Training

- a) clear information should be provided about the volunteer/employment position, specific tasks, procedures, including specific guidelines for working in high risk ministries
- b) training sessions are mandatory
- c) should be a predetermined probationary period
- d) volunteers are required to read and sign the back of the Volunteer Information Form, thus acknowledging the parameters of the volunteer position

9) Supervise and Evaluate

- a) provide appropriate support and supervision for all volunteers and employees

² EPS

- b) offer volunteers and employees the opportunity to give and receive feedback
- c) use the [Self-Review for Parish Ministers/Volunteers](#)

10) Follow up with ministry participants

- a) Proactively seek feedback from program participants and parishioners to monitor the suitability of the volunteer and the quality of the program offered
- b) advise volunteers and employees that regular contact with program participants is an essential part of eparchial risk management procedures
- c) advise all volunteers, employees and participants of where to call with questions or concerns
- d) use the [Participant Follow-Up Report](#)