

# Nakkertok Coach and Volunteer Screening Policy

## Introduction

Why does the Nakkertok Cross Country Ski Club require a Screening Policy?

The short answer is that provincial ski associations in Ontario and Quebec require that affiliated clubs have a screening policy in place. This makes sense: it is well established in common law that organizations providing programs and services to vulnerable persons have an obligation to take reasonable steps to ensure their safety and well-being.

While there was previously some debate about whether or not there was a legal duty to screen, today there is widespread agreement that such a duty exists. In other words, screening has become an element of risk management, and the organization that doesn't carry out some form of screening is likely failing to meet the reasonable standard of care that the law, and the community, expects of them.

## The Policy

The intent of this policy and the associated requirements is to support the quality and conduct of volunteers and paid staff engaged by the Nakkertok Cross Country Ski Club ("Nakkertok"). The focus of the policy is on the *positions* (as opposed to individuals) that involve the supervision of children on a regular basis within the Club.

The Policy defines two categories of positions within the club that require screening.

The first category covers positions involving a **"high-level" of trust**; the other covers positions with a **"medium-level" of trust**.

1. The **"high-level"** category will place incumbents in situations where they are frequently alone with children. (For example, out of town or on overnight trips without parent/guardian supervision). The high-level category also involves a position of significant responsibility for athletes and includes all paid or unpaid positions including (but not limited to) Team Head Coaches, Group Head Coaches, Apprentice Coaches, Assistant Coaches, Volunteer Coaches, and Team Managers.

The following screening procedure is a necessary requirement for these positions of "high-level" trust:

- written application;
- an interview and reference checks (where applicants are not well known to the organizers);
- a Police Records Check (A Police Records Check is valid for Club purposes for three years).

2. For individuals in “**medium-level**” of trust positions (i.e. all other people whose roles involve regular contact with vulnerable persons; e.g. Jackrabbit leaders) the requirement is:

a Police Records Check.

One frequently asked question is whether infrequent or one or two time volunteers who potentially supervise children would require a Police Records Check. Such individuals do not require Police Background Checks if the following three criteria are satisfied:

- the supervisory role is not a regular occurrence but represents an *ad hoc* volunteer role for a specific event;
- the volunteer in question is a parent;
- the volunteer’s own child is part of the group being supervised.

## **Additional Risk Management Measures**

In addition to the Police Records Check requirements as outlined above, Cross Country Ontario has recommended that affiliated clubs adopt the following measures as written club guidelines. Accordingly, Nakkertok adopts the following risk management or mitigation measures which have been implemented by CCO for its division-sponsored activities:

For all levels of youth instructional or training activity, including Bunny-Rabbit / Jackrabbit leader positions, to ensure that every training or lesson group is accompanied by at least two coaches; or a coach and at least one other designated, responsible adult.

That all youth instructional and training activity be based on a published schedule, with known and predictable locations, destinations, and return times.

That activities for younger Jackrabbit-age children take place in a controlled environment, with club-house, toilet facilities, etc, in close proximity to the base of activity.

That parents/guardians ensure that their children are in all respects dressed and ready for an activity of known duration.

That on occasions involving overnight trips by any youth groups (e.g. skiing to an overnight cabin), the designated coach leading the trip be supported by a sufficient number of other adults, including representation of both male and female adults where youth of both genders are involved; in any case all such trips should be accompanied by at least two 2 adults.

For overnight trips including persons under 18 years of age, to ensure that at least one adult of each gender is included in team management (coaches, drivers, chaperones) where the athletes are of both genders; where the athletes are all of the same gender, that at least one of the team management be of that gender (where that is impossible in the case of small teams, arrangement could be made with other teams at the same event to share such supervisory roles).

That coaches (or other team management) avoid to the extent possible being alone in the same room with one athlete when in lodging facilities, and that in all such cases the door of the room must be kept open.

To ensure that on any trip involving van transportation, there are sufficient drivers to relieve coaches of all or most driving responsibilities.

## **The Cost**

Nakkertok will provide a volunteer letter which will ensure that no payment for the Police Records Check is required.

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