

Strengthening the Caring Community

- Step 6, Reference Check Procedures -

Responsibility for Reference Checking

The Parish Volunteer Screening Committee is responsible for checking references

Which References to Check All parishioners engaged in high risk volunteer ministry positions

The Reference

Three references must be conducted. References confirm background, gifts, skills and talents and will provide an outside opinion on the suitability of the person for this particular volunteer ministry position.

Unresponsive Reference

In the event that an applicant's reference is unresponsive within a suitable time frame, the applicant should be notified of the difficulty and asked to provide substitute references.

Written, Telephone, E-Mail References

Reference letters must be written using the Archdiocese of Toronto form.

Telephone reference checks may be adequate, using the Archdiocese of Toronto "Phone Reference Form" provided.

Avoid E-mail reference checking since confidentiality cannot be assured.

Action to be taken

- Enter the person's name, the parish's name, the title and the responsibilities for the ministry positions involved on the reference letter.
- Mail the forms out, or give them to the volunteer to give to the reference (include a self-address envelope if possible), OR conduct phone interviews.
- Keep track of returned forms, read them and ensure they are filed.

What to do When You Get a Negative Reference

- Request additional references from the parishioner.
- Inform the Pastor.

“Dos” of Reference Checking

- Do maintain confidentiality of the references' comments; this information may only be discussed with the Pastor.
- Do use only the official Archdiocese of Toronto forms.
- Do check all references! READ all references!

”Don’ts” of Reference Checking

- Don’t proceed with reference checks until you have consent.
- Don’t make exceptions for anyone.
- Don't minimize the importance of making an informed decision.