

STEP 1

DETERMINING SECURITY LEVEL

The nature of the ministry and the inherent level of security involved dictate the degree of screening required. There are four factors that must be considered in determining whether a Volunteer Ministry Position is High Security or General Security.

1. The Participant

Consider the vulnerability of the person(s) being served. A vulnerable person is an individual who is under the age of 18 or has a disability, impairment, or limitation that leaves them vulnerable to harm or exploitation. Some examples of a vulnerable person are small children, at risk teens, the physically, socially or psychologically challenged, and frail seniors. Vulnerable persons also include individuals who are experiencing extreme trauma or abuse and are unable to function and reason normally. In determining whether someone is a vulnerable person, consider factors such as:

- Age
- Emotional distress
- Maturity
- Isolation
- History of abuse
- Language and communication skills
- Disability
- Dependence
- Physical ill health
- Mental ill health
- Current crisis/trauma

If the person receiving the service is a vulnerable person, use the following points 2, 3 and 4 to determine whether the volunteer position is a High Security Position.

2. The Setting

The circumstances under which a service is to be delivered need to be taken into account. Will a vulnerable person receive services alone or with others? Will the service be delivered in a safe or in a questionable location? Will the service be provided in someone's home, a car, the parish hall, a campsite, in isolation or publicly? Consider the following questions:

- Does this position require work in an isolated location?
- Does this position require unsupervised contact with a vulnerable person?
- Will someone else have access to the vulnerable person while with this volunteer?
- Does the position involve transportation of vulnerable persons?
- Is there heightened potential for contact with bodily fluids, infectious diseases and illnesses?
- Does the activity take place in an intrusive or unsafe environment?

If a service is being provided in a private setting or the volunteer will be the only non-vulnerable person present when service is provided, the position should be considered High Security.

3. Intensity of the Activity

The “perceived authority” of the volunteer delivering the service is vital. The frequency and intimacy of encounters is very important. One-to-one grief counselling is a much more intense activity than the preparation and delivery of Christmas hampers. Consider these questions:

- Does the position involve physical contact?
- Does the position involve working with young children in a setting where touching, lifting, toileting, etc. are intrinsic to the position?
- Does the position involve helping a vulnerable person change clothes, bathe, or move around?
- Does the position require physical exertion or endurance, such as helping someone transfer from a wheelchair?
- Does this position involve working with extremely emotional or traumatized vulnerable persons?
- Is this a position with expected high levels of stress, emotional strain, and burnout?
- Does this position involve access to confidential participant or organizational information?
- Does this position involve handling or managing funds, chequebooks or donations?
- Is specific knowledge or skill required to fulfil this position?
- Will the volunteer typically experience emotional stressors such as loss, grief or bereavement?

If the answer to any of the above questions is yes, consider whether the setting in which the service is provided or the supervision provided is sufficient to address the security of the vulnerable persons receiving the service.

4. The Supervision

The issue of serious supervision must be considered in determining the level of security involved in a Volunteer Ministry Position. Consider these questions:

- Is this person working alone or in a group?
- How well is the person in this position supervised?
- Does the volunteer have access to his or her supervisor when needed?
- Is feedback on performance regularly sought and given?
- Are participants consulted regarding the volunteer’s performance?

If a volunteer is working with vulnerable persons with little supervision, the position should be considered High Security.

Note: As a matter of policy, all ministry positions must be examined in the light of the factors listed above to determine the degree of security involved. When there is doubt as to the degree of security, a position must be categorized as High Security.

HIGH SECURITY CRITERIA

A position is classified as either General Security or High Security. Below are the basic criteria used to classify a position as **High Security**. The conditions will be experienced in certain scenarios or combinations.

If none of the following conditions apply the position will be at the General Security level.

<p><u>Participant</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A child under 18 years of age • A physically/ mentally/ emotionally vulnerable person • Non-able-bodied or frail senior
<p><u>Setting</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolated place (including tents, cabins, private homes etc...) • A room without any windows through which the room can be entirely viewed • Motor vehicle • One-on-one setting
<p><u>Activity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visits in a home, nursing home, hospital • Overnight activity • Activity that is of high physical or emotional intensity • Directly handles money and/or funds • Has control over parish property (including being entrusted with a key to parish buildings) • Has access to highly confidential information (personal / medical / financial)
<p><u>The Supervision</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little or no supervision • No documentation of meetings/events

The criteria are not exhaustive but are used as guidelines to establish the security level of the standardized positions.

