

Thornhill United Church Policy

Police Records Checks

Adopted by TUC Council: October 2024

Replace previous version: 2020

Introduction

Thornhill United Church (TUC) accepts and supports the United Church of Canada (UCC) policy on Police Records Checks dated January 2019.

Definitions

Vulnerable Person: York Region Police defines a vulnerable person as a person who, because of their age, disability, or other circumstances, whether temporary or permanent, are (a) in a position of dependence on others or (b) are otherwise at a greater risk than the general population of being harmed by a person in a position of authority or trust relative to them.

Volunteer: York Region Police defines a volunteer as someone who performs a service but receives no compensation for doing so other than an allowance for expenses or an honorarium. This excludes anyone receiving some other form of credit, such as academic credit or fulfilling a sentence requirement.

Ministry Personnel

Reference: Police Record Checks, United Church of Canada Office of Vocation 2019

The policy of the United Church of Canada states that “when an individual applies for admission or readmission to The United Church of Canada or requests status as ministry partner, level 1 (criminal record) and level 2 (vulnerable sector) checks must be provided to the body responsible for the individual’s admission, readmission, or granting of status.”

Procedure

The policy of the United Church of Canada also sets out the following procedures:

1. “In all cases, level 1 and level 2 police record checks are to be shown to the body responsible for the formation of the candidate, the admission or readmission of the individual, or the ministry partner.
2. The police record checks must be dated within six months of the review.
3. The chair of the body responsible will consult with the Office of Vocation as needed.
4. The Office of Vocation will make a notation within the individual’s personnel file that the required police records check has been seen.
5. Annual Filing: Each year, by June 30, each candidate or ministry personnel will certify that no criminal charges have been filed against them in the preceding year. This certification will be done online.
6. Failure to provide such certification annually will require that the ministry personnel or candidate provide a current (dated within six months) level 1 and level 2 police records check to bring them back into good standing.

7. Failure to provide such certification above may affect the person's standing and may result in a recommendation from the Remedial Committee that the individual's name be placed on the Discontinued Service List (Disciplinary).
8. At Other Times: The court of accountability or designate may at its discretion and expense require that a candidate or ministry personnel provide a current (within six months) level 1 and level 2 police record check.
9. Should a criminal charge surface during a routine check, the Office of Vocation will follow-up and advise the community of faith as appropriate."

Community of Faith Lay Employees

All lay employees of Thornhill United Church are required to provide a police vulnerable sector check before commencing employment and every three years thereafter.

Procedure

1. The Ministry and Personnel Committee will provide a letter on Church letterhead outlining the following:
 - The name and address of the church
 - Employee's name
 - The reason for the record check.
2. The employee or potential employee will complete the steps required by the police department in the region where they reside.
3. The Ministry and Personnel Committee will review the police record check clearance certificate, take a copy and file it in the employee's personnel file. The original certificate remains the property of the employee.
4. TUC will pay the cost of the screening.
5. In the event of a delay in receiving "clearance" an employee may assume their position on a temporary basis but should avoid situations which require them to be alone with a Vulnerable Person.
6. If "clearance" has not been received within six weeks of the date of hire¹, the Ministry and Personnel Committee will consider the facts of the situation and may suspend or terminate the employee.
7. An employee must report any offence that would compromise their vulnerable sector screening status between official "checks" to the Ministry and Personnel Committee.
8. Should a criminal charge surface during a routine check, or during the three years between checks, the Office of Vocation will be informed, and the Ministry and Personnel Committee will follow their advice on how to deal with the matter.

Community of Faith Volunteers

Volunteers who work with Vulnerable Persons are required to provide a police vulnerable sector record check upon commencement of their work and every three years thereafter. For the purposes of this policy, the individuals involved will include but not be limited to:

- Sunday school teachers

¹ Or the time typical for the relevant jurisdiction, if longer than six weeks.

- Youth groups leaders
- Friendship Club volunteers
- Pastoral Care Committee visitors.

Procedure

1. The Administrator will annually produce a report indicating who needs to update their screening. Volunteers will be advised, and program coordinators will be asked to follow-up if necessary.
2. For a new volunteer or a volunteer who needs to update their screening, the Administrator will provide a letter on Church letterhead outlining the following:
 - The name and address of the church
 - The volunteer's name
 - The reason for the check (e.g., Sunday School Teacher) and who the volunteer will be working with (e.g., children, seniors) and a statement that the individual will not be compensated.
3. The volunteer will complete the steps required by the police department in the region where they reside.
4. The Administrator will review the police record check clearance certificate, take a copy and file it in the church office. The original certificate remains the property of the volunteer. Successful completion of vulnerability screening will be entered into the computer system.
5. TUC will pay the cost of the screening.
6. In the event of a delay in receiving "clearance" a volunteer may assume their position on a temporary basis but should avoid situations which require them to be alone with a Vulnerable Person.
7. If "clearance" has not been received within six weeks of the date the letter mentioned in step 2 was provided², the program coordinator will consider the facts of the situation and may suspend or terminate the volunteer from their position.
8. A volunteer must report any offence that would compromise their vulnerable sector screening status between official "checks" to the Administrator, who will inform the program coordinator.
9. Should a criminal charge surface during a routine check, or during the three years between checks, the program coordinator will consider how to deal with the matter.

² Or the time typical for the relevant jurisdiction, if longer than six weeks.