

Screening Policy

May 2023 Edition



Preamble

1. Nordiq Alberta promotes excellence, enjoyment and ethical conduct through community-based recreational and competitive programs that appeal to skiers of all ages. It is critical to this mission that Nordiq Alberta provides a safe and secure environment for all its participants. The purpose of adopting a screening policy is to support that secure environment by ensuring, to the extent possible, that volunteers and paid personnel who may work with vulnerable persons are subjected to a process of “screening” to ensure the safety of participants.

2. The intent of this policy and the associated requirements is not to cast doubt on the quality and conduct of volunteers and paid staff engaged by Nordiq Alberta and affiliated organizations. The focus of the policy is on the positions that create risk because of the demands and exposure of the position to vulnerable participants. The incumbents of those positions which are most affected by screening initiatives are generally the most dedicated and selfless of our leaders. It is therefore critical that this policy be implemented as sensitively as possible.

Aim

3. The aim of this document is to state the Nordiq Alberta policy on screening, to direct its adoption also at the club level and to provide procedures to support its implementation at the division (Nordiq Alberta) and club level.

Definitions

4. Junior Athletes: (References may also be made to Junior Participants, or Junior Racing Team, or Junior Racers): all participants in activities run or sponsored by Nordiq Alberta or affiliated clubs who are under 18 years of age.

5. Criminal Background Check: The process of securing information from the police about individuals, as well as to describe the form or report in which information is provided. It may include a check of national, local and regional police records. At the end of the process, a report is issued. The report may simply identify whether someone has a criminal record, or it may provide details of actual offences. Just as the process varies among police agencies, so too do the report forms.

6. Position of Trust: A position of trust identifies a situation in which someone is placed in a position of authority over another person in an ongoing relationship. A position of trust implies that someone has some degree of power over another, that the relationship is unequal. Individuals in positions of trust may be family members, friends, caregivers, volunteers or employees. A position of trust identifies a situation which may be considered risky because of the demands of the position.

7. Screening: Screening is a series of initiatives and protective mechanisms which minimize the potential for abuse or injury. These mechanisms may include:

- the requirements for applicants to submit formal applications for employment in “positions of trust” on a volunteer or paid basis (for a sample application form, see Annex A attached);
- the use of interviews for applicants to a volunteer or paid position of trust;
- the use of reference checks for such positions;
- verification of certification or qualification for the position;

- the use of Criminal Background Checks or other background checks by the hiring organization;
- the use of risk management or risk mitigation measures aimed at reducing the risks inherent in certain relationships (refer to reference point #11 for more information).

8. Vulnerable Person/Participant: Volunteer Canada uses this term to denote individuals who have difficulty protecting themselves and are therefore at greater risk of harm. People may be vulnerable because of age, disability/ handicap or circumstances. Vulnerability may be a temporary or a permanent condition. This is purposely a broad definition; one that can include children, youth, senior citizens, people with physical, developmental, social, emotional or other disabilities. Vulnerable person will also include people who have been victims of crime or accident or are otherwise left with little defense against those who would harm them.

9. It is the responsibility of Nordiq Alberta and of any Nordiq Alberta-registered clubs or other Nordiq Alberta affiliated organizations to ensure appropriate screening and that other protective mechanisms are in place to ensure the safety and security of vulnerable persons. This is the case with respect to the engagement of volunteers or paid personnel into positions of trust, particularly where those positions involve care for vulnerable persons.

10. Given the normal range of activities pursued by Nordiq Alberta and its affiliated clubs, particularly our focus on youth participation and the development of high-performance athletes, the situations that pose risk are those which involve the interaction of adult leaders (volunteers and paid) with youth participants and people with disabilities.

11. In many cases, risk management or mitigation measures can be put in place, which can serve to reduce or eliminate risk. Nordiq Alberta has implemented the following measures for its division-sponsored activities. It is recommended that Nordiq Alberta clubs adopt the following measures as common practice, and that these be made the subject of written club guidelines:

- 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 parents/guardians ensure that their children are 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 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;
- For overnight trips including persons under 18 years of age, where the athletes are all of the same gender, that at least one of the team managements be of that gender. Where that is impossible, arrangements could be made with other teams at the same event to share such supervisory roles.

- That coaches and 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.

12. These measures can considerably mitigate risk. There is a range of risk levels among the activities associated with our sport. The potential risks inherent in a typical on-snow Jackrabbit session are normally limited by its short duration and proximity to clubhouse and parents. They can be further mitigated as suggested in paragraph 11 above (e.g., by having parents accompany classes). However, with the further development of our sport, even Jackrabbit-age children are increasingly involved in a greater variety of activities, such as off-season dry-land training, which require attention to be paid to potential risks. The greatest potential risk occurs when a responsible individual is required to lead or accompany a group (or team) on an overnight trip whether on skis to a cabin in the woods or by road to an out-of-town event.

13. Characteristics of “high-risk” positions are those where the incumbents:

- are frequently alone with youth under the age of 18, or with other vulnerable participants;
- are in a position of significant power over athletes or other participants;
- travel out of town and away from parent/guardian supervision;
- may be operating a motor vehicle with youth or others as passengers.

14. Characteristics of “medium-risk” positions are any other positions where the incumbents have prime responsibility for vulnerable persons, even where those situations have been mitigated as suggested above – e.g., Jackrabbit leader.

15. It follows that a Junior Racing Team coaching position should be considered a high-risk position. Similarly, persons who may form part of Team Management staff (Managers, Drivers, and Chaperones) may also be required to fulfill some of the screening procedures listed below, particularly where such roles are seen as on-going or recurring appointments, rather than occasional assignments. Depending on the kind of activity, a leader of Jackrabbit-age children could also be operating in a high-risk situation.

16. Nordiq Alberta understands that the Police Record Checks Reform Act, 2015 requires the individual to consent in writing before requesting a criminal record check (such as an E-PIC). The Act also requires the individual to consent in writing for any disclosure of the results to the requesting organization.

17. For the purposes of this Policy, Nordiq Alberta defines a young person as someone who is younger than 18 years old. Nordiq Alberta understands that it may not request to see a young person’s youth record. When screening young people, Nordiq Alberta will:

- a) Not require the young person to obtain a criminal record check; and
- b) In lieu of obtaining a criminal record check, require the young person to submit up to two (2) additional letters of reference

Application of Screening Policy

18. It is required that all members clubs and other organizations affiliated with Nordiq Canada (including any teams/activities sponsored by Nordiq Canada) adopt a screening policy and procedures, as

recommended in this policy, and adapt it to their circumstances. Such a club screening policy must include:

For supporting staff in “high-risk” positions (e.g. Team Managers, Team Head Coach, Apprentice Coach(es), Waxing Coach), whether paid or unpaid, accompanying athletes to a race-series, training camps or other activity

- a) written application;
- b) an interview and reference checks (where applicants are not well known to the organizers);
- c) a criminal background check (a current Criminal Background Check is less than 3 years old) (See reference point #20)
- d) Recommended Training for these positions include: Rule of Two and Safe Sport Training (See *Required Training Policy*)

For individuals in medium-risk positions (i.e. all other people whose roles involve regular contact with vulnerable persons):

- a criminal background check (a current Criminal Background Check)

References

19. Volunteer Canada: <https://volunteer.ca/screening>

Appendix A – Nordiq Alberta Adult Volunteer Waiver (for roles supervising minors)

WARNING! By signing this document, you will waive certain legal rights, including the right to sue. Read carefully.

Cross-country ski Program/Event & Date _____

This is a binding legal agreement. As a Volunteer in the above Cross-country ski Program/Event, I acknowledge and agree to the following terms:

1. Disclaimer: The Nordiq Alberta (NA), their respective directors, officers, committee members, members, employees, coaches, volunteers, officials, participants, agents, owners/operators of facilities, representatives, and any other person or organization participating in, or connected with, the Cross-country ski Program/Event (hereinafter collectively referred to as the “RELEASEES”) are not responsible for any injury, personal injury, damage, property damage, expense, loss of income or loss of any kind that I might suffer during, or as a result of, the activity, caused in any manner whatsoever including, but not limited to, the negligence of the Releasees. Description of Risks
2. I acknowledge and fully understand that Cross-country skiing is an activity, which includes, but is not limited to, skiing or other means of moving on snow icy surface in areas that may contain harsh terrain, and exposure to variable weather conditions.
3. I acknowledge that injuries sustained can be severe, even deadly, and can result in reduced mobility or loss of any kind.
4. I am aware that my risk of injury is reduced if I follow all rules established for the event participation. Description of Volunteer Responsibilities
5. I will never be alone with a minor, unless my volunteer position requires me to have completed a Police Information Check.
6. I understand that my acceptance as a volunteer is with a clear criminal record and I will notify the NA if my status changes.
7. I will follow NA’s Volunteer policies including all relevant procedures and all instructions given to me.
8. I understand my position description and will execute my duties to the best of my abilities.
9. I acknowledge and fully understand that there may be periods of time during the Cross-country ski event when I will be alone in the terrain and that I am ultimately responsible for my

own safety. Release of Liability In consideration of the Releasees allowing me to volunteer, I agree:

10. To freely accept and fully assume all risks arising out of, associated with or related to my volunteering.

11. To be solely responsible for any injury, loss or damage that I might sustain while volunteering.

12. To forever release, waive and discharge the Releasees from liability for any and all claims, demands, actions, damages and costs that might arise out of my volunteering, even though such risks, injuries, loss, death, damage, claims, demands, actions or costs may have been caused by the negligence of the Releasees. Acknowledgement and Consent

13. I acknowledge that I have read and understood this Waiver and Release of Liability Agreement prior to signing it, that I have executed this Agreement voluntarily, and that this Agreement is to be binding upon myself, my heirs, executors, administrators and representatives.

14. I acknowledge that my personal information (name, age, email and address - summary information only) may be given to the NA and Nordiq Canada for use in their secure database for the sole purpose of keeping track of participation at provincial and national levels. This information will not be given to any other organization.

15. I consent to the non-commercial use of photographs, videos and recordings taken during the activity.

16. I acknowledge that by signing this Agreement, I agree to be bound by all that is contained in this Legal Agreement, even if I have not read the Agreement.

Volunteer's Name: _____

Volunteer's Signature: _____

Volunteer Role: _____

Date: _____