

Volunteer Programs Policy

May 2023 Edition



Background

1. As per the [Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement](#), an organization is most successful when all levels of an organization recognize the opportunity to engage volunteers. Capturing and transferring the considerable knowledge and experience of passionate, long-time volunteers is imperative for Nordiq Alberta (NA), as considerable expertise resides within this large voluntary workforce. A streamlined volunteer engagement strategy, outlined in the proposed Volunteer Program Policy will allow Nordiq Alberta members to be involved at all levels of the organization, including capacity building, fundraising efforts, awareness, and program support.

Objectives of the policy

2. To strengthen the operational capacity and the ability to fulfill the mission and purpose of NA by providing screened and suitable volunteers on an as-needed basis to key positions and programs.

3. To contribute to a well-managed, organized and enjoyable volunteer experience. High volunteer satisfaction levels contribute to high member retention.

4. To provide suitable opportunities for giving and volunteering that result in volunteers attaining their personal development goals.

5. To help guide the actions of all individuals involved in the Association by defining responsibilities, communication processes, accountability and decision-making processes through consistency in decision making amongst staff, board members and volunteers.

Current Volunteer Management Practices

6. There are three major volunteer roles within NA:

- a. NA Board and committee members;
- b. NA volunteer coaches and officials; and
- c. NA event and program volunteers (general support).

Volunteers are currently managed by the NA staff and members of the NA volunteer board. The volunteer management policy exists to contribute to the strategic direction, organizational governance and running of key programs and events for the Association. Basic management includes screening, orientation, mentoring and check in.

NA affirms that volunteerism is an essential and highly regarded community value and strives to maintain and enhance volunteerism in the Association.

Definition of a Volunteer

7. NA acknowledges a “**volunteer**” as anyone who, without compensation or expectation of compensation beyond expense reimbursement, performs work at the direction of and on behalf of the Association. A volunteer is an individual:

- a) Who chooses to undertake a service or activity; someone who is not coerced or compelled to do this activity.
- b) Who does this activity in service to an individual or an organization, or to assist the community-at-large.
- c) Who does not receive a salary or wage for this service or activity.
- d) Who works within the capacity of a board member, coach, official, event organizer or coordinator without compensation, except expense reimbursement.

Philosophy of Volunteer Involvement

8. NA recognizes that volunteers are vital human resources and commits the appropriate infrastructure to support volunteer involvement in the organization.

Involvement of a Volunteer

9. The volunteer ethic is to be encouraged and respect should be paid to the feelings of volunteers in any action made on behalf of the sport of the cross-country ski community.

Training of Volunteers

10. On-boarding, orientation, certification courses, workshops and mentoring will be offered to the NA board of directors and volunteers to help train them in various volunteer skills.

Volunteer Recruitment

11. When recruiting for major volunteer roles (with the responsibility of overseeing many others or requiring specific competencies), an open selection process should be used with adequate advertising. This will allow the Association to communicate required skills and competencies, attracting qualified individuals to apply for the position. The NA Chair or Past Chair and HR specialist Board of Director shall bear primary responsibility for recruiting suitable volunteers, providing effective volunteer training, orientation and supervision, and for tracking and evaluating the contribution of volunteers to NA.

Volunteer Recognition

12. NA will recognize the efforts of volunteers through its newsletter, at the AGM awards and personal thank you notes.

Volunteer Access to Policies

13. All volunteers should be familiar with and have access to current and revised NA policies and procedures. All employees and volunteers are required to review and understand the NA *Volunteer Program Policy*.

Volunteer Responsibilities

14. The safety, welfare, and health of all members, including volunteers are a high priority in all the NA's operations. Volunteers may refuse any assignment that they reasonably believe to be unsafe.

All volunteers who are in event or program leadership roles* should be familiar with the Nordiq Alberta's Safe Sport framework: PREP

*Leadership roles: volunteers who are in a position of trust. “Position of trust” is a legal term that refers to a position of authority over another person or within an organization. E.g. Decision makers (board members), managers who supervise other volunteers or staff, head coaches, coaches who are responsible for any program with minors, key officials for events (e.g. event director, course planner, controller, safety chief).

Police Information Checks (PIC)

15. All volunteers who are in a position of trust or, or who have significant access to the NA assets or who are in a supervisory role and have direct access to a vulnerable person, will be required to complete a Police Information Check, and provide the results to NA. The results of Police Information Checks will be made available to the NA office personnel who will report any issues to the NA Board.

18. **Previous Police Information Checks that are no older than 12 months can be considered when beginning volunteering with the NA.** Police Information Checks include existing criminal convictions, upcoming criminal court appearances, and a scan of the local police records in the jurisdiction in which the applicant resides. PIC’s may include information on alleged crimes in which the person was not charged or convicted.

17. **Vulnerable Sector Searches (VSS)** may be requested as part of a Police Information Check when a volunteer is **solely responsible for the well-being of a vulnerable person, including children under the age of 18.** A vulnerable person is defined as a person who, because of their age, disability or other circumstances, whether temporary or permanent, is in a position of dependence on others or who are at a higher than normal risk of being harmed by an authority figure. **Merely being in contact with a vulnerable person does not necessitate a Vulnerable Sector Search** unless the volunteer is in a position with a significant degree of trust or authority and with unsupervised access to vulnerable persons.

If deemed necessary, the NA Office will request that the volunteer or staff submit a VSS. Potential volunteers are required to disclose to the NA Chair any security concerns that may be listed in a completed Police Information Check. Existing volunteers who become aware of any changes to their security clearance status must inform the NA Chair.

18. Police Information Checks will be valid within NA for three (3) years from the date they are completed.

19. Where and How to Obtain Police Information Checks:

a. NA accepts previous Police Information Checks no older than 12 months. If a volunteer is required to apply for a Police Information Check and needs a volunteer application support letter it can be obtained from the NA office.

b. Police Information Checks can be obtained from your local police department or RCMP detachment. You can also use the online services provided by Sterling Solutions partnership with

the Coaching Association of Canada. Follow the link for the on-line process
https://www.sterlingtalentsolutions.ca/landing-pages/c/cac_ace/

Police Information Check Fee Reimbursement for Volunteers

20. Volunteers who are in leadership positions and require a PIC may apply for the fee to be reimbursed by NA. Contact the NA office to receive approval prior to applying for the PIC.

Volunteer Screening

21. NA will ensure the appropriate screening of volunteers to maximize member and volunteer safety. All human rights legislation supersedes this policy.

22. NA shall require screening if the volunteer position involves situations where the individual may be alone and unsupervised with persons identified as vulnerable (a vulnerable person is an individual who has difficulty protecting himself from harm temporarily or permanently and is at risk because of age, disability, handicap or situation).

23. Police Information Checks (PIC) may be reasonable if a volunteer works in a position of trust but is not solely responsible for the well-being of vulnerable persons. Such a volunteer role does not necessitate a Vulnerable Sector Search.

24. Many volunteers, both adult and youth, will not have a leadership role, nor a supervisory role in contact with minors. These people have no screening requirements.

25. NA Board members will be required to complete a Volunteer Application (Appendix D) form and Police Information Check.

26. Coaches in leadership position with minors will submit a Volunteer Application form with listed related experience qualifications, and references and will be required to complete a Police Information Check.

27. Volunteer screening for Youth Volunteers (12-17 years old):

- a. Youth volunteers in a leadership position and in a supervisory role in contact with minors will submit a Volunteer Application form (Appendix E) and PIC.
- b. Youth volunteers NOT in a leadership position in contact with minors will submit a Youth Volunteer Agreement (Appendix B) including parental agreement.
- c. Youth volunteers NOT in a leadership role, not in direct contact with minors, will have NO screening requirements.

Adult Volunteer Waiver & Youth Volunteer Agreement

28. The Adult Volunteer Waiver (Appendix A) and Youth Volunteer Agreement (Appendix B) (which requires parental agreement) must be signed by the following volunteers prior to volunteering:

- a. All volunteers whose positions do not require a Police Information Check (PIC) and who will be in supervisory roles in contact with minors (e.g. volunteers in youth programs, camps, training events where no parental/guardian supervision is required).

NA Volunteer Position General Descriptions

29. Position postings and descriptions will clearly set out responsibilities of the positions and will indicate any screening requirements.

30. Board member roles are volunteer roles. Refer to the [NA board policy manual](#) for a detailed description of the NA Board roles.

General Volunteer Roles

31. Nordiq Alberta has many volunteer roles that take place at events and during programming:

- a. **Cross-country ski events:** Generally, at cross-country ski events (competitions, club events etc.) volunteers do not work with minors in a supervisory role. Coaches or parents/ guardians of the minors are responsible for supervising their own children or group, the coaches being from member clubs and bound by the internal volunteer policies of those organizations. Anyone who aids in the organization and delivery of an event or program in an open and observable environment in any capacity that does not require any certification or previous training is considered to provide general volunteer support. These volunteer roles may be event or program specific and will be explained at the event or program location, or in advance, by a volunteer supervisor, event official or coach. Examples of such roles include: registration desk, hospitality, timing, course marshals, and setup. Time commitment and the role's details can vary for each event. This position does not require a Police Information Check, volunteer waiver or agreement.

- b. **Youth programs:** For youth programs, camps, or youth training events that require participants to register, volunteers are in contact with minors in supervisory roles meaning that they are responsible for supervising the children's activities without the parent's/guardian's presence. This position requires a Police Information Check.

- c. **Volunteer coaches:** Coaches are responsible for planning, organizing and delivering an appropriate range of sports activities and programs for individuals and groups. Typical responsibilities include: developing training programs, undertaking administrative tasks, and teaching relevant skills, tactics and techniques. Generally, the head coach is responsible for identifying strengths and weaknesses, monitoring and enhancing performance by periodization and training plan design, ongoing encouragement, constructive feedback and competition support. Assistant coaches are responsible for supporting the head coach with program supervision, organization and delivery. Coaches in leadership roles need to obtain training through the [NCCP Coaching Certification system](#). Time commitment and the role's details vary for the different programs. This position requires a Police Information Check.

- d. **Assistant coaches:** who are not in leadership roles and who are supervised by other coaches must complete the Adult Volunteer Waiver or the Youth Volunteer Agreement.
- e. **Event officials:** All volunteers who are event officials have leadership roles. Event officials give instructions to and oversee the work of other volunteers and may be charged with ensuring the safety of event participants. They require adequate training and certification to meet the requirements of their role and must complete the Adult Volunteer Waiver.

Volunteer Supervision and Evaluation

32. Volunteers may be supervised and if so, are expected to follow instructions. Program participants or supervisors may evaluate volunteers during the program or as a follow-up activity.

Volunteer Management Success Criteria

33. Volunteer management will be built on the values and best practices outlined in the Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement (CCVI). The CCVI lists the following standards for volunteer involvement:

- Volunteers have rights. NA recognizes that volunteers are a vital human resource and will commit to the appropriate infrastructure to support volunteers.
- The organization's practices ensure effective volunteer involvement.
- The organization commits to providing a safe and supportive environment for volunteers.
- Volunteers have responsibilities. Volunteers make a commitment and are accountable to the organization.
- Volunteers will act with respect for beneficiaries and community and act responsibly and with integrity.

The success of volunteer management is reliant on the successful integration of these values and should be evaluated and enhanced on an ongoing basis.

Volunteer Insurance

34. Insurance for NA volunteers is provided through the NA insurance policy as long as they are members of NA.

Volunteer Management Process

35. NA will utilize a 10-step process to implement the volunteer policies.

1. Determine policies & risks

- Policies identify the potential risks to participants/organization.

2. Write clear volunteer position/role descriptions

- Set guidelines and behavioural standards for volunteer positions and clarify roles and responsibilities.
- Using the [VOLUNTEER POSITION DESCRIPTION - TEMPLATE](#) - provided by Volunteer Alberta - create specific role descriptions for each volunteer position.

3. Establish a formal recruitment process

- Due to the small size of the cross-country ski community most volunteers will be recruited informally. For leadership roles, prior to or after recruitment, candidates should be guided through a formal screening process.
- Commit to a thorough recruitment process that is clearly communicated to potential volunteers.

4. Use an application form

- Utilize a standardized application form for leadership role volunteer positions that collects basic information to process the application.
- Limit the collection of information to what is necessary and ask for permission to call references and seek permission for Police Information Check, with Vulnerable Sector Search if necessary, for the role.
- Respect human rights legislation.
- Application template.

5. Conduct interviews – get to know the volunteer

- Communicate expectations and assess the suitability of the candidate for the role. Ask about past employment and volunteer positions. Remember to use your intuition.
- Example interview questions – [Volunteer Alberta Handbook page 27](#).

6. Follow-up with references

- Conduct more than one reference check. Explain the position/role, the potential vulnerability of participants, and ask for open comments.
- Example reference check questions – [Volunteer Alberta Handbook page 28](#).

7. When necessary, request the appropriate Police Information Check

- If a Police Information Check is necessary for a volunteer role, contact the local police service to clarify which type of check is required. Include the volunteer role description for the benefit of the police service, your organization, and the volunteer during this process.
- To determine if Police Information Check is necessary follow the [Screening Template](#).

8. **Conduct orientation & training sessions**
 - Ensure that the candidate is aware of organizational structures and policies, and assess their approach, work style, and skills. Decide if the candidate is the right person for the volunteer role.

9. **Supervise & evaluate**
 - For volunteers in leadership roles using the position description as a reference point, evaluate the volunteer at least once a year. Evaluation can be as simple as following up about involvement, ensuring comfort with the role and asking if any support is needed.

10. **Participant/recipient follow-up & feedback**
 - Listen to feedback about the service provided by the volunteers. If applicable, arrange for participants to fill in a feedback form regarding services offered, organization and volunteer program delivery.

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:

Disclaimer:

1. 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 "RELEASES") 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 Releases.

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 snowy icy surfaces 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 Releases 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 Releases 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 Releases.

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: _____ Date: _____

Volunteer's Signature: _____ Volunteer Role: _____

Appendix B: Nordiq Alberta Youth Volunteer Agreement

(For Those Under 18 Years Old, as of date of volunteering)

By signing this document, you will waive certain legal rights, PLEASE READ CAREFULLY.

IN CONSIDERATION of allowing my minor child/ward to volunteer in the programs, activities and events of Nordiq Alberta, **I ASSURE TO YOU THAT:**

1. I am the parent/guardian of the participant having full legal responsibility for decisions regarding the participant .
2. I believe that my minor child/ward is physically, emotionally and mentally able to participate in the programs, activities and events of the NA (hereinafter referred to as the Association) as a youth volunteer.
3. I hereby acknowledge that I am aware of the risks and hazards associated with or related to the cross-country ski programs, activities and events of the Association, which include without limitation, competitions, training sessions, camps, clinics of all kinds (hereinafter called the Activities).
4. I fully understand that cross-country skiing is an activity where my minor child/ward will travel by ski or foot or other means in areas that may contain harsh terrain, and exposure to variable weather conditions.
5. Furthermore, I am aware that:
 - a) Injuries sustained to my minor child/ward can be severe, even deadly, and result in reduced mobility and losses of any kind;
 - b) My minor child/ward may experience anxiety while challenging himself/herself during the Activities;
 - c) My minor child/ward's risk of injury is reduced if they follows all rules established for participation as described in the program/event
 - d) My minor child/ward's risk of injury increases as he/she becomes fatigued.

I UNDERSTAND AND AGREE, on behalf of myself, my heirs, assigns, personal representatives and next of kin that my signing of this document constitutes that:

6. I forever release, waive and discharge the Association and any other person or organization participating in, or connected with, the Activities from responsibility and liability for any and all claims, demands, actions, damages and costs which might arise out of my minor child/ward's participation. I understand the Association to mean: the Alberta NA, including their respective directors, officers, committee members, members, employees, coaches, volunteers, officials, participants, agents, owners/operators of facilities and representatives.
7. I am allowing my minor child/ward willingly and my minor child/ward is participating voluntarily as a youth volunteer in the Activities.
8. I agree that there are risks as described above and my minor child/ward will be exposed to these risks and hazards.

9. I agree to accept all these risks and hazards and be responsible for any injury or other loss which my minor child/ward might receive while participating in the Activities.

PARENT/GUARDIAN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND CONSENT

10. I acknowledge that the personal information of name, age, email and address (summary information only) may be given to NA and Nordiq Canada for use in their secure database for the sole purpose of keeping track of participation at the provincial and national levels. This information will not be given to any other organization.
11. I consent to the non-commercial use of photographs, videos and recordings taken during the Activities.
12. By printing and signing my name as parent/guardian below, I agree that I am the parent or legal guardian of the youth volunteer named below and I agree to be bound by this Legal Agreement even if I have not read the Agreement.

Event/Program: _____ Date: _____

Youth Volunteer Name*: _____ Youth Volunteer age: _____

***Youth to complete the YOUTH VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT on the next page.**

Appendix C: Nordiq Alberta Youth Volunteer Agreement
(For Those Under 18 Years Old as of date of volunteering)

Youth Volunteer Acknowledgement:

I, _____ (youth volunteer name) **will never be alone with a minor unless my volunteer position requires me to have completed a Police Information Check.**

I understand that my acceptance as a volunteer with NA is with a clear criminal record and I will notify the NA if my status changes.

I understand my position description and will execute my duties to the best of my abilities.

I will follow all instructions given to me so that my risk of injury is reduced.

Youth Volunteer Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Appendix F: Volunteer Application Form

Nordiq Alberta (Na) Volunteer Application Form

Application Date: _____
Volunteer Position Sought: _____
Name: _____
Age: _____
Home Address: _____
Phone: _____

EMPLOYMENT or education

Current or previous employer, if applicable:
Position/Title: _____
Year of Employment (starting, ending): _____
Company/Employer: _____
Address/contact: _____

SKILLS & EXPERIENCE

Special training, skills, hobbies, certifications: _____
Groups, clubs, organizational memberships: _____
Please describe your previous volunteer experience (include organization names, services):

REFERENCES

Please list two people who know you well and can attest to your character, skills, and dependability. No family members please. Suitable references include your current or last employer or someone who knows you through a volunteer position, school etc.

Name	Relationship/Organization	Length of relationship	Phone number or email

Police Information Check

If your volunteer role has direct contact with children in a supervisory role, you will be required to complete Police Information Checks. Have you ever been convicted of a crime? [If yes, please explain the nature of the crime and the date of the conviction and disposition.] Conviction of a crime is not an automatic disqualification for volunteer work.

Are you able to either provide a Police Information Check result which is not older than 12 months, or apply for a Police Information Check and disclose the result to the NA Office personnel? (If not explain why).

Please read the following carefully before signing this application:

I understand that this is an application for and not a commitment or promise of volunteer opportunity. I certify that I have and will provide information throughout the selection process, including on this application form and in interviews with NA, that is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand the NA is collecting, using and storing my personal information to establish and manage a volunteer relationship and that this information is protected by the NA privacy policy. I understand that information contained on my application will be verified by NA.

Signature of the applicant: _____ Date: _____