

D7040 Youth Protection Policy (2014 – 2015)

Revised: 20 October 2015

STATEMENT OF CONDUCT FOR WORKING WITH YOUTH: Rotary International strives to create and maintain a safe environment for all youth who participate in Rotary activities. To the best of their ability, Rotarians, Rotarians' spouses and partners, and other volunteers must safeguard the children and young people they come into contact with and protect them from physical, sexual, and emotional abuse.

Rotary D7040 Youth Protection Policy applies to all District activities that involve minors and other vulnerable persons. This is not limited to the Youth Exchange Program but is all inclusive including Early Act, Interact, RYLA, Rotary Adventures, Rotaract programs or any program involving youth. It would include a club that uses local students who are not part of a formal Rotary Youth Program on a highway cleanup, or other project.

Minors are usually defined as those less than 18 years of age; however, since some youth exchange students as well as some Interactors may be slightly older, they are treated as minors in Rotary's efforts to protect the Youth. Rotaractors are college age or older and are not included as minors and are not covered in Rotary's Youth Protection Policy.

In protecting our youth, there is no one process that guarantees safety. It's the combination of these deterrence measures that minimize the risk. The following list shows the 5 step vetting process for all Rotary activities or events where adult volunteers (18 years of age or older - Rotarian and non-Rotarian) have **direct unsupervised interactions with youth**. This includes members of all Rotary youth committees, host families (everyone in household age 18 and older for Youth Exchange; or one supervising adult per household for all other overnight hosting), counselors, vehicle driver, and other persons of authority including Rotaractors working with Youth, or returned youth exchange students working with the youth exchange committee) to complete the following five (5) requirements.

1. D7040 VOLUNTEER APPLICATION - is a 2 page form that the volunteer signs and submits to provide personal information, references, criminal history declaration, and consent and release section. A new application is required whenever information changes or after 3 years of no change provided there is an annual signature update in the space provided to certify no change.
2. SEXUAL ABUSE AND HARASSMENT TRAINING - A standardized, online youth protection training program is now available. This training meets the RI requirements as well as those of the US State Department, for both content and record retention. The training is good for 3 years. The way the system works is that either the District New Generations Chair (also the YPO) or the District Youth Exchange Chair will email training invitations to the adult volunteers who will be working with youth.

Individual volunteers, Rotary Clubs, or Rotary Youth Programs may currently request the training invitations by sending an email to District Youth Exchange Chair joefontes@bell.net

The information needed for each volunteer training request is as follows:

First name

Last name

Email address

Rotary Club (either as a member or affiliation)

Additional program specific training will likely be required and will be provided by that Program Committee.

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3. BACKGROUND CHECKS - these are the annual police / criminal checks that vary by the geographical regions of our District. These checks are essentially obsolete the moment they are issued, necessitating an annual update. Again, it's a deterrence measure and the search must encompass both criminal and sex offender registries. .

Procedure for Canadian Rotary Volunteers to obtain the required Criminal Background Check:

Applications can be made to the local police departments. Where available, the Vulnerable Sector (VS) check the first year, followed by annual Criminal Record Checks, or a third party background check provider, is acceptable. Information on myBackCheck is available on the district website. This is an online system and can be used without going to a police department. Cost is \$29.00 CAD, payable by credit card.

Procedure for NY Rotary Volunteers to obtain the required Criminal Background Check:

You must be signed in to www.rotary7040.com before following instructions by clicking here.

4. REFERENCE CHECKS - This is a documented follow up with the references listed on the Volunteer Application. These would be accomplished by the Rotary Club, Committee or Program that is holding the event. These are completed whenever a new application is submitted.

5. PERSONAL INTERVIEW is conducted when all of the above measures have been completed and a determination is then made to accept or reject the volunteer for working with our youth for the next year. This is completed whenever a new application is submitted.

With the exception of the training requirement where successful completion is recorded and maintained in the District's data base, clubs will retain all documents as required, including volunteer affidavits, host family applications, reference checks, criminal background checks as required, and make them available for compliance audits or other legal entities. A list of Rotarians who have completed the 5-step requirements, and are fully vetted, must be sent to the District Governor, along with the certification document.

For all other adult volunteers (18 years of age or older) who have only an **indirect or supervised interactions with youth**, (no opportunity to have a one-on-one interaction with a youth) there are no specific requirements provided at least one prescreened adult volunteer (who has completed the five step process outlined above) is supervising the event. This would apply to a 2nd adult volunteer in a vehicle with a youth, event registrars, speakers, bus drivers, etc. The minimum supervisory ratio required for any D7040 Youth event is 1 fully vetted supervising adult for up to 8 youth.

The District Youth Committees that conduct outings and events must continuously be alert not only for the abuse and harassment issues outlined above, but for the physical safety of the youth. Particular attention should be paid to the condition of buildings owned, rented or otherwise utilized where youth programs take place, or with activities that present some risk or danger. When illness, injury and accidents do occur, appropriate medical certification for individuals, clinics and other facilities that treat young people should be utilized.

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Physical contact with youth should be kept formal and limited. Whereas family hugging and kissing is acceptable in most families to show affection or to console the bereaved, adult Rotary volunteers should avoid such contact with youth.

In all cases, common sense must prevail, and a youth should never be placed in jeopardy for lack of a fully vetted volunteer. For example, you would not have a student walk home from school through an unsafe neighborhood or at night because a fully vetted driver could not be located. Keep in mind that adult Rotary volunteers are stepping in the shoes of the parents who have entrusted their children to us.