

Policy: Criminal Reference Checks - Members and Volunteers

Updated November 2024

Policy:

The Owen Sound Little Theatre (OSLT) reserves the right to request a completed and satisfactory criminal reference check from any or all members. This measure ensures the safety and security of individuals and property on its premises and under its care. This policy applies to all individuals seeking membership with OSLT.

Process:

1. As part of the communications process, it is essential to indicate on all external postings and during any preliminary discussions with new members and volunteers that a criminal reference check may be required. For example, it will be added to the membership application form and to the membership section of the website.
2. This criminal reference check will only apply to members who are 18 years of age or older. Criminal records for persons under 18 cannot be released and therefore, all members & volunteers under the age of 18 will be supervised by an adult 18 years of age or older.
3. OSLT will accept criminal reference checks completed within the past six (6) months.
4. If the findings of the criminal reference check indicate “may or may not have a record” the theatre’s Executive Director and a member of the Board of Directors will discuss this with the member or volunteer. The presence of the above mentioned statement does not mean a person cannot be a member or volunteer for OSLT, however, more information will be required.
5. If the statement in #4 presents itself, the member will be advised that they must attend their local police station and request (at their own expense) a clearance letter and have a Vulnerable Sector search completed. If they agree to do this, once obtained, the documents will be submitted to the OSLT to determine if the information constitutes a risk to the organization. If the member chooses not to obtain the additional documents and Vulnerable Sector search, they will be advised they cannot be a member of OSLT.
6. Once a clearance letter has been obtained and a Vulnerable Sector search completed and submitted, the Executive Director and a member of the Board of Directors will review the documents and consider the following factors:
 - A. The nature and number of conviction(s)
 - B. Length of time since the conviction(s)
 - C. Responsibilities of the member
 - D. Relevance of the criminal conviction
 - E. Potential risk to OSLT if the person is permitted to be a part of OSLT

7. Convictions of a certain nature automatically disqualify a person from being a member or volunteering with OSLT, those include:
 - A. Any assault or violent offence conviction(s)
 - B. Any sexual offence convictions(s)
 - C. A designation on the national, or any provincial, sex offender registry
 - D. A designation on the national, or any provincial, dangerous offender registry
8. If, after the review as indicated in #6, it is determined there is a risk to the organization, the member will be advised verbally and in writing that their criminal record prevents them from being a member or volunteering with OSLT.
9. All information obtained regarding criminal reference checks is to be viewed only by the theatre's Executive Director and the Board of Directors and the contents are considered confidential. Documents obtained from members/volunteers will be kept in a separate file in a secure location.
10. Members / volunteers may ask for a copy of their criminal reference check.
11. Any existing members or persons currently volunteering for OSLT (including members of the Board of Directors) will be asked, in writing, the following question: Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence for which a pardon has not been granted?
 - A. If the person answers no, they will be asked to complete and sign a Criminal Reference Check Waiver.
 - B. If the person answers yes, they will be asked to follow the same criminal reference check procedures for new members as outlined above.
14. All members will be required to sign a new criminal reference check waiver annually.
15. An individual can appeal an OSLT decision based on information in a criminal reference check by submitting in writing to the Executive Director and the Board of Directors the following information: Name, Contact Information, and Reason for Appeal.
 - A. Appeals will be reviewed by the theatre's Executive Director and Board of Directors to determine the risk to the organization. Results will be shared with the person verbally and in writing.