

# **Responsible Ministry: Screening in Faith**

## **Understanding the Police Record Check Process**

The *Responsible Ministry: Screening in Faith* policy has been in effect since February, 2003. Since January, 2009 all individuals serving in a high-risk ministry are required to renew their police record check every 3 years and to obtain it through XpressChek Inc.. This memo is to address the questions and concerns that you may have regarding this requirement.

The ground has changed since 2003 when the Diocese of Toronto was one of the first organizations to institute a screening policy. At that time a “one-time” records check was deemed sufficient, however now most organizations that work with children and vulnerable adults require a renewal of the police record check. The three-year cycle of renewal was selected based on the *Sexual Misconduct Policy* training cycle and the normal terms of office for many volunteer positions.

The reality is that the Diocese processes over 1,500 police record checks a year, and there are numerous OPP detachments and 11 different police departments within the borders of the Diocese of Toronto each with their own process, cost, forms, and wait time; which is why the use of an agency like XpressChek is critical.

### **What are the benefits to the way police record checks are obtained in the Diocese?**

Aside from enabling us to deal with the sheer volume of information processing, this process ensures that the handling of all police record check information is done consistently, efficiently, confidentially, and in a way that is simple for individuals, parishes, and the Diocese to administer. Specifically:

1. There is one process, one set of forms, timeline, and price. This process can be used for any Canadian citizen.
2. There will very rarely be changes to the forms and instructions.
3. The inconvenience (and expense) of travel is eliminated—all forms are sent in by fax, mail, or email.
4. The Diocese only needs a few hours a week to keep up with the number of police record checks sent in and can now guarantee that individuals that do not have a criminal record will receive confirmation within 2 weeks from when they submitted their forms. Previously it could take up to 9 months.
5. The Diocese receives all police record check information within 48 hours of submission, and it always contains full contact information including parish name.
6. The fees for a police record check with XpressChek are consistent with the majority of fees charged by police departments. Although we appreciate that some individuals now have to pay a fee in areas where the police department does not charge one for volunteers, this affects only 20% of individuals in high-risk ministry in the Diocese.
7. The overall cost of obtaining a police record check is more than just the police department fee. Without using this process, the Diocese would have been required to hire full-time staff just to process police record checks. By using XpressChek we can almost eliminate the administrative costs associated with this process (less than \$2.00 per police record check compared to the \$30+ when using local services). The difference means a significant annual savings for your parish.
8. Email confirmation between XpressChek and the Diocese is used for clear police record checks. This reduces the amount of paper used, processing time, possibility for errors or information being misplaced, and ensures complete confidentiality as there is no physical police record being sent.
9. When an individual accurately self-declares their criminal record, the completed results are sent to the Diocese, and only includes information that is substantiated by a conviction.

For more information about the *Responsible Ministry: Screening in Faith* policy, please review the Screening section of the Diocesan web site [www.toronto.anglican.ca/screening](http://www.toronto.anglican.ca/screening).

## Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. Why does XpressChek require a photocopy of my identification?** This protects you by ensuring that the police record check actually pertains to you.
- 2. What does XpressChek do with the information I send them after my police record check is processed?** Immediately after processing, all credit card information is shredded. All other information sent to XpressChek is shredded 90 days after processing, which allows time for parishes to follow up should there be any questions.
- 3. I'm concerned about my privacy. Were issues around privacy considered when choosing to work with XpressChek?** Absolutely. The Diocese spent about two years researching a range of companies that provide similar services and one of the main factors in choosing XpressChek Inc. is their commitment to privacy and confidentiality. XpressCheck also has a privacy policy which can be found at: [xpresschek.com/privacy-policy](http://xpresschek.com/privacy-policy).
- 4. Can the OHIP/ Health Card be used as (either photo or non-photo) identification for XpressChek?**No. Ontario Health Cards cannot be accepted for identification purposes under the Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA).
- 5. Can I go to XpressChek in person to have my police record check processed?**  
Yes. It is easier to fax, email or mail the forms and payment, but you may also go to XpressChek in person Monday to Friday, between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Their offices are at 140 Yonge Street, Suite 200 in Toronto. Be sure to complete all the forms including the signature of the parish representative, and bring a photocopy of your identification and the correct payment.
- 6. When did the approved background checking service become XpressChek?**  
In March, 2014. Previously the company was called TSM. This is still the same team of people who have been working with the Diocese since 2009, it is just the name that has changed.
- 7. Who pays for a police record check? What are the options?** It is up to each parish. A variety of options are used across the Diocese: In some parishes the individual pays; in others the parish pays; in some the parish pays for employees, but not volunteers, or vice versa; in others the parish pays and individuals are encouraged to make a donation for the amount back to the parish, which issues a tax receipt. Use the payment method appropriate for you and your parish.
- 8. Do we have to send an individual payment with each form, or can we send one payment for everyone that needs a police record check?**  
You can send one payment for everyone. Please ensure that the name of the congregation and a list of who is a volunteer and who is an employee are included.
- 9. Are there some positions that must be high-risk?**  
Yes - churchwardens, parish employees, the organist, lay anointers, clergy, and anyone who does pastoral care or home visiting must be rated as a high-risk ministry.
- 10. Can someone under 18 years old get a police record check?**  
No, only individuals 18 years or older can apply for a criminal record check. Those under 18 years old may not serve in a high-risk ministry in the Anglican Diocese of Toronto.
- 11. Our parish is concerned about how many people are in high-risk positions. Can we do anything to reduce this number?**  
Yes, step 4 of the Screening Standards is to reduce the risk for potential harm: "Whenever possible, the risk associated with any ministry should be lessened or eliminated. This can be accomplished by changing the size of a group being ministered to, the number of leaders required, the location and visibility of the ministry, the level of supervision or the degree of authority associated with the position. It is much easier, and ultimately safer, to reduce the risks associated with any ministry than to apply a higher level of screening." *Responsible Ministry: Screening in Faith*, Section 2.4
- 12. Will I receive a copy or the original of the police record check after it has been processed?** No. The Diocese only receives an email confirmation that the police record check was clear of convictions. There is no physical police record check.
- 13. Can I still get a police record check from my local police department and send it to the Diocese for processing?** No. The *Responsible Ministry: Screening in Faith* policy requires that all individuals in high-risk positions complete a police record check through the approved background checking service, which is XpressCheck. Therefore, under the policy, we cannot process police record checks that are not obtained through XpressChek.

**14. I have already been screened by my employer (i.e. Teacher, CSIS clearance, or other); do I have to be screened by my parish as well? Yes.**

Every organization that works with children and vulnerable adults must conduct its own screening, including its own police record checks. This is to ensure that the standards of the Diocesan policy are followed consistently, that we meet our due diligence, and that we can provide full documentation of all screening steps should an investigation be initiated. This is also an important part of making sure that our process does not have loopholes that can be taken advantage of.

**15. Why are police record checks processed at a Diocesan level rather than by my parish? During**

the pilot project concerns were raised that a police record that had no bearing on the ministry could damage an individual's reputation in the community and that there would be no consistency in the process. By having a centralized process we can ensure a consistent, confidential process and maintain objectivity in our review. It also protects the parish by ensuring that records are maintained securely, confidentially, and indefinitely. It protects the wider Church by preventing individuals that are not suitable for high-risk ministry from moving to a parish where they are not known.

**16. Who receives a copy of the police record check confirmation letter? Original confirmation letters**

are sent to the individual. A copy is sent to the parish for all lay people, Honorary Assistants and Vocation Deacons. A copy is not sent to the parish for any other ordained position as it is kept in the Diocesan personnel file as the Bishop determines if the ordained person is suitable or not for high-risk ministry.

**17. Is the police record check the only screening step that needs to be done? No, this is only one**

step in the high-risk screening process. Each parish is responsible for ensuring that all other steps are completed and documented. The steps can be found at: [www.toronto.anglican.ca/implementing-standards](http://www.toronto.anglican.ca/implementing-standards).