Revising Security Protocols

Determining and protecting the amount of personal information to collect from your volunteers is more important than ever. Groups and organizations are looking for manageable and accessible ways to organize and secure this data.

Privacy refers to one’s ability to control the disclosure of personal or sensitive details, as well as deciding who is permitted access to this information. It is important to consider how to safely gather and store information from new volunteers. This can range from onboarding documents to vulnerable sector checks. In keeping with leading practices, organizations must ensure that federal and provincial laws (such as PIPEDA and PHIPA) are followed to protect all staff and volunteers.

Risk Management To Protect Volunteers

- Develop a list of what data you collect, where it is stored, how it is used, and who it will be shared with
- Determine how long you need to keep data according to laws such as PIPEDA and how to get rid of data once the time has passed – the minimum time should be one year
- Reduce sharing and only restrict volunteers from sending sensitive information by email unless through encrypted email software, such as Outlook and Apple Mail

Protecting Your Organization

- Protect phones by using “soft-phone” services such as Jive, which allow volunteers to call clients using their own cell phones in a secure way
- Use a secure portal to share sensitive and/or large amounts of information such as OneDrive and Dropbox
- Avoid sending important information over email, there is always the risk of sending an email to the wrong recipient, which could result in a leak of important information
- Use virtual shredders such as Freeraser and Kernel File Shredder and remind volunteers to shred documents at their home rather than recycling them

Privacy and Remote Work

While virtual volunteering opportunities are a great way of keeping volunteers engaged, your organization may be entrusting volunteers with sensitive information that needs to be protected. Organizations must consider how to screen and train volunteers in this area, ensuring they offer the appropriate support, knowledge and information for volunteers to successfully adhere to safety and privacy protocols.

- Is there anyone besides the volunteer who will have access to the computer/laptop used to carry out tasks?
- Do they have anti-malware/anti-virus software to protect their computers?
- Are they prepared/understand how to follow guidelines to promote information safety guidelines?
- Is there any software you can provide to volunteers to increase data security?

Other Resources

- Privacy & Personal Information Policy (VT’s Sample)
- Virtual Youth Volunteering: Safety & Privacy
- New Program Policies & Procedures