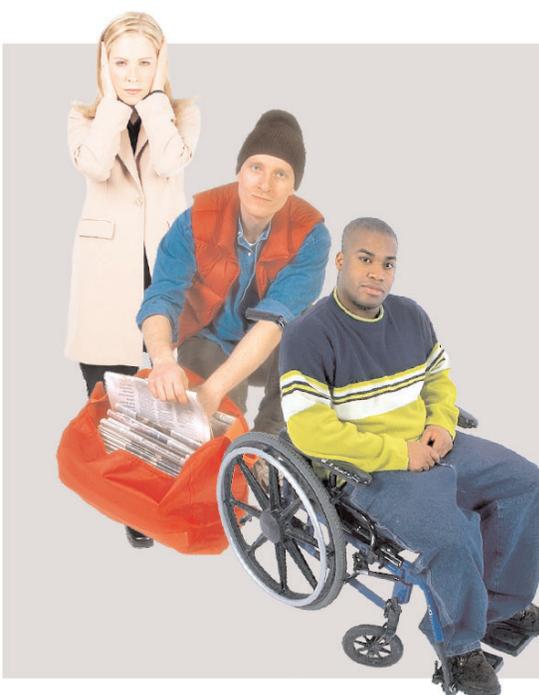


Risk Bulletin

A Report on Risk Management and Insurance Brokering



Working with Vulnerable Adults* Procedures for Safeguarding Clients and Workers

An organization working with vulnerable adults should have a philosophy of adopting practices to minimize the possibility of harm or accidents happening to vulnerable adults and to protect workers from the necessity to take risks and leave themselves open to accusations of abuse or neglect.

Evidence of this philosophy is demonstrated by the following:

1. The organization has adopted a policy of zero tolerance for any abuse as demonstrated by the following:
 - Clearly written down policies and procedures which include definitions of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and neglect
 - Implementing and enforcing policies and procedures
 - Timely reviews and revisions of issues and decisions
2. The organization takes reasonable steps to ensure that only suitable people are recruited and selected. The key following processes should be included:
 - Job description that identifies the minimum level of personal qualities and skills required to fill the position
 - Application form that collects all relevant information about the applicant including past experience working with vulnerable adults
 - Screening interview to assess the applicant's suitability for the position
 - Criminal records check to ascertain whether the applicant has been convicted of a criminal offence e.g. sexual assault of a vulnerable adult
 - Reference checking to ascertain whether the applicant is considered suitable to work with vulnerable adults
3. When an applicant has been accepted, the following processes should apply:
 - Orientation - mandatory participation in a planned program that enables the worker to get to know the organization and the organization's vulnerable adult protection policy (including vulnerable adult abuse and prevention awareness)
 - Probation - the appointment should be conditional on the successful completion of a probationary period to assess the suitability of the new worker to work with vulnerable adults and his or her commitment to the organization's policies on safe practices

*A vulnerable adult is defined as a person 18 years or older who has the functional, mental or physical incapacity to care for him/herself or, who has a developmental disability.

- Additional training - to maintain quality standards and good practices training should be provided on an ongoing basis
 - Records - details of recruitment, selection and orientation should be recorded
4. There should be a supervisory system for workers which includes:
 - An initial review half way through the probationary period which includes an assessment of the worker's understanding of the organization's vulnerable adult protection policy
 - Review at the end of probation to confirm the worker in the position or to extend his or her probationary period
 - An annual review to assess the general performance of the worker including competence to perform tasks, the development of relationships between workers and vulnerable adults and any incidents or activities that take place where workers may be putting themselves in vulnerable positions
 - Records kept of all performance management meetings and discussions
 5. Codes of conduct between workers and vulnerable adults should be established to avoid the possibility of misunderstanding or the potential for allegations of misconduct. The following should be addressed:
 - Workers should be sensitive to the risks involved in participating in contact sports and activities
 - While physical contact is a valid way of comforting, reassuring and showing concern for vulnerable adults, it should only take place when it is acceptable to all persons concerned
 - Workers should never physically punish or be in any way verbally abusive to a vulnerable adult, nor should they even tell jokes of a sexual nature in the presence of vulnerable adults
 - Workers should be sensitive to the possibility of developing favoritism or becoming over involved or spending a great deal of time with any one vulnerable adult
 - Vulnerable adults should be encouraged to report cases of bullying to either a designated person or a worker of their choice. Complaints must be brought to the attention of management.
 - Everyone involved in the organization should respect the personal space, safety, and privacy of individuals
 - It is not recommended that workers give lifts in their cars to individual young people, especially for long journeys
 6. There should be a system for responding to accidents and complaints or to alleged or suspected vulnerable adult abuse including:
 - Procedures for dealing with accidents and complaints e.g. emergency numbers displayed, incident report forms, formal complaints procedure for vulnerable adults and legal guardians
 - Procedures for dealing with suspected vulnerable adult abuse e.g. defined responsibilities for workers, standard reporting procedures
 7. There should be a system to address situations where allegations of vulnerable adult abuse are made against a worker within the organization which includes:
 - Reporting procedures in respect of the vulnerable adult
 - Clear, written procedures on the action to be taken for dealing with the worker
 - Advising vulnerable adults and workers of steps to be taken if they wish to report suspected abuse

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This Risk Bulletin provides a general overview of risk management guidelines applicable to the subject of working with vulnerable adults and is provided as a service for our clients and for informational purposes only. Implementation of a risk management program requires the input of a number of professional consultants including financial, human resources, corporate governance and legal counsel. Marsh Canada Limited assumes no responsibility for any loss or damage sustained in reliance on the Risk Bulletin.

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