

# Police Reference Checks



The matter of police reference checks (PRCs) requires regular attention by congregations and presbyteries.

## Assessing the need for a Police Reference Check:

The term police reference check may have various names across Canada depending on your jurisdiction. The Leading with Care Committee (or designate) will use the Risk Assessment guide to determine the risk in and associated with each program. (Risk Assessment Guide can be found on page 4) Each ministry position requires the completion of a Risk Assessment on an annual basis. Risk assessments must be completed whenever there is a change of leadership or any change in the program. When these assessments are completed, they should be stored in a locked metal cabinet. In order to lessen risks, have as many non-related adults as possible in leadership positions and in the area of the programs.

If number 1, 2, 3, 4 or 6 is checked as “Yes, this is true,” the ministry is automatically high risk and a PRC is necessary. Once again it is important to reduce the risk. However, if any of the other categories are also checked as “Yes, this is true,” it is imperative that leaders work to reduce this risk so the “No, this is not true” column can be checked off.

There are suggestions for reducing risk in section 3.5.2 of the Leading with Care policy.

## PRC Standards

The name of the PRC may be different from coast to coast, but generally the check is through a common database. However, local norms, criteria and costs can vary from municipality to municipality. It is important that the Leading with Care Committee (or designate) consult their local police department to determine the exact location, format and all procedures related to obtaining, completing and returning their PRC. It is also important that those requiring a PRC go the police service in the municipality where they live, not where they work.

## Insurance Companies

Insurance companies could have expectations that go beyond the standards and scope of this policy. Check with your insurance provider to ensure that the process you are using complies with the terms of your policy.

## Review of the PRCs

It is important that there is a clearly defined and transparent process by which PRCs are reviewed. A consistent team of two unrelated adults should be identified as the only people who receive and review the PRCs. These people should take all care to review the documents and ensure that the form is completed and meets the standard of the policy. If there are questions about any aspect of the results of the PRC, consult your presbytery Leading with Care team, the national office staff, local police and/or your insurance company. Care should be taken to protect everyone’s privacy at all times.

## Storing the PRCs

Keep all completed PRCs, or record of the PRC, in a locked metal cabinet along with the completed Risk Assessments. PRCs can be stored electronically; however, only the original document is considered the official proof of a completed PRC. Please be sure that all caution is taken to protect information whether in electronic or printed form. When the PRCs are no longer valid or new PRCs have been completed, destroy the old forms in an appropriate way, such as through a shredder.

Go to [www.presbyterian.ca/resources/online/275](http://www.presbyterian.ca/resources/online/275) to access the Leading with Care policy and resources for implementing the policy in

- church schools
- youth programs
- presbyteries
- synods

<b>Risk category</b>	<b>Risk factor</b>	<b>Yes, this is true</b>	<b>No, this is not true</b>
Degree of Isolation	<b>1. Teacher/leader may be alone with person served.</b>		
Degree of Supervision	<b>2. Teachers/leaders have limited or no supervision in role.</b>		
	<b>3. The activities of teachers/leaders are in a place where activities are not observed or monitored.</b>		
Access to Property	<b>4. Teacher/leader has access to personal property or money of persons served.</b>		
	5. Teacher/leader has access to confidential information related to the person served.		
Degree of Physical Contact	<b>6. The ministry job description includes touching persons served.</b>		
Vulnerability of Persons Served	7. Persons served have language or literacy barriers.		
	8. Persons served are immobile.		
	9. Persons served have challenges that contribute to their vulnerability (e.g. physical, psychological, situational).		
Degree of Physical Demands	10. The activity involves potential danger to person served (e.g. rock climbing, using a stove).		
	11. Activity involves potential stress (e.g. children upset by visit to nursing homes, support group activities).		
Degree of Trust	12. The teacher/leader develops close, personal relationships with persons served.		
	13. The ministry position involves transportation of persons served.		
	14. The teacher/leader contributes to making career or other important decisions of persons served.		
Degree of Inherent Risk	15. The activity heightens potential for the teacher/leader to be in contact with bodily fluids or disease of the person served.		
	16. The activity exposes the person served to operation or handling of potentially dangerous equipment (e.g. lawnmower).		
	17. The activity exposes the person served to handling toxic substances or results in exposure to poor air quality, noise, etc. (e.g. demolition work in an inner city mission).		