

National Police Certificates.

Application Procedures & Questions Regularly Asked re National Police Certificates as it effects Lions Clubs.

Introduction

Police checks are part of the risk management and screening process organizations such as Lions can adopt to ensure a safe environment when its volunteers work directly with Vulnerable Persons.

The following information is only applicable to Lions club members and their volunteers within the state of South Australia. Other States see attached appendixes.

The South Australian Government meets the cost of the police checks for such volunteers working with such vulnerable persons however to obtain this benefit eligible organizations, on application are issued with a Volunteer Organization Authorization Number (VOAN).

The VOAN is a secure number and must only be used for police checks undertaken by approved organizations such as Lions.

The VOAN for Lions in SA is 1938.

Applications for a National Police Certificate

- (1) To request a national police check, the applicant must complete a PD267, National Police Certificate application form which is completed “On-Line” from the SAPOL website, or if an applicant is unable to complete the application form on-line he/she may requesting a hard copy from the SAPOL Records Release Unit
- (2) The applicant shall then present the application form to the Authorized Officer of the club (recommended that this be the Secretary), for endorsement verifying the volunteer status of the applicant, such endorsement **SHALL** also include the Lions **VOAN**.
- (3) The applicant must then attend a police station with the form and “100 Point” identification, and a photocopy of such documents for verification.
- (4) The Police members will then send the application to the Records Release Unit via SAPOL dispatch.
- (5) The application will be processed by SAPOL and the National Police Certificate returned direct to the applicant’s residential / postal address.
- (6) It is recommended that the National Police Certificate may then be sighted by the secretary of the club and an endorsement made on the members personal record sheet, to the fact that that member has been cleared by a Police check and the relative date of the certificate.

This is the only record that is to be retained by the club / organization and the certificate remains the property of the volunteer / member.

Forms and Additional Information

The following forms and information can be found on the SAPOL

Website: www.police.sa.gov.au .

Click on the Police Checks in the Fast Find Directory:-

- Application for a National Police Certificate (PD267)
- National Police Certificate FAQs (Frequently asked Questions)

Frequently Asked Questions from Lions Members / Clubs

- Q. Can we obtain a quantity of application forms, and the secretary then submit them to the police in “Bulk”?
- A. No. You can download an application forms from the SAPOL Website after the form has been completed ”On-line”
The application will then be returned to the secretary for endorsement on the rear section .
EACH application must be then taken to your local police station and submitted ***Personally*** by the individual applicant. It is wise to take Identification (100 Point ID) to save you having to re-attend at a later date with the I/D; married female applicants need to take a copy of their Marriage Certificate as well.
- Q. Can a members’ partners or family members apply for a National Police Certificate under the Lions VOAN?
- A. Yes. If those partners or family members assist that Lions Club as volunteers, there appears to be no barrier to those members applying for a Police Certificate through your Lions Club. Bear in mind that the Secretary is certifying that the applicant is a volunteer directly connected with, and working for your Lions Club. As a Service organization, we ***should not*** be used by other volunteers to obtain a Police Clearance Certificate without fees.
- Q. If a member has obtained a National Police Certificate through another organization, do they have to re-apply to obtain another certificate through Lions?
- A. No. If members and other persons have had a **recent** National Police clearance through some other organization they will not be required to make another application just for Lions. National Police Certificates are of a personal and private nature and as such it is always to be retained by that member or person, and is not to be kept by the Club.

- Q. Does the Club keep a copy of the Police Certificate on file for later reference?
- A. No. Clubs are *not* to retain such certificates on file. As stated these certificates are of a personal and private nature and remain the property of the applicant. It is recommended that the secretary make a notation on the members' personal file indicating that that person, (or family member) has been cleared by SAPOL and the date on which such Police Certificate was issued.
- Q. For what period of time is the Police Clearance Certificate valid?
- A. SAPOL's policy states that the period of time that a National Police Certificate is considered current is the responsibility of the individual organization. The current Lions policy has not set a tenure on the validity of such certificates and therefore, at this time, they do not need to be renewed after the original application is made.
- Q. What if a member refuses, or indicates that they do not wish to make an application for a National Police Certificate?
- A. Police Certificates are of a very personal and sensitive nature. All members and our family volunteers can not be compelled to apply for a National Police Certificate. However, under the Lions Youth (Vulnerable Persons) Policy, only persons who have been passed by the Police Certificate can be directly involved in activities involving "Vulnerable Persons".
- Q. If a member, or other volunteer, has not obtained a clearance by way of the National Police Certificate, can they still assist with activities involving vulnerable persons?
- A. Yes I believe so. I do not see a problem with un-certified persons assisting with activities so long as they do not become *directly* involved with the vulnerable persons; if they are only assisting other members or volunteers who have been duly cleared and that person is not directly involved with the vulnerable persons I believe that this does not put our duty of care at risk.
- Q. Does our Lions Club have an obligation to sight the National Police Certificate of a Non Lions member before that person becomes directly involved in a Lions activity involving vulnerable persons?
- A. Yes. Again such certificates are of a very personal nature, *BUT* the Lions Policy is quite plain; those persons directly involved in activities with vulnerable persons, must have a current National Police Certificate.

How do we know that person has been cleared if a current certificate is not sighted? It is our duty of care towards such vulnerable persons, that everyone having direct contact with them has had such a clearance.

- Q. Our Club is involved in a large activity each year with people who would be regarded as Vulnerable Persons. Most of these “vulnerable persons” are accompanied by a family member (as a support person), and a carer, who have had a Police Clearance. We are also assisted in this activity by other organizations and individuals who are unlikely to have had a National Police Certificate check. What is our Club’s position as far as those other volunteers are concerned?
- A. The Lions can not be responsible for other volunteers obtaining the necessary National Police Certificate on such a wide basis. However, we should not be using Lions or our clubs VOAN for the purpose of them obtaining such a clearance without fees. If they do not have the necessary clearance they still may be able to assist in the activity without direct contact or involvement with the vulnerable person. SAPOL is quite specific in its assessment of a club volunteer and the certification thereof. SAPOL has stated that they may require an audit on the requests for volunteer fee waivers, to ensure such applications and certifications are legitimate. I suggest that the Lions Club would not want to be caught out abusing the system meant to help us, and similar organizations.
- Q. Is the National Police Certificate issued by SAPOL, VicPOL, or NSW Police acceptable and valid in other States or Territories within Australia?
- A. Yes. These National Police Certificates are actually referred to as a National Certificate by the police; the checks on the individual applicant is done on the National Police Data Base and is valid throughout Australia. Some States may call the certificates by a different name (Green Card etc) but they are all National Police Certificates.

Brenton JONES
Constitutional & Bylaws Chairman
As revised February 2010

Appendix "A"

National Police Certificates – VICTORIA

Application for a National Police Certificate

- (1) To request a national police check, the applicant must complete a "Consent to Check and Release National Police Records" form which is downloaded and completed "On Line" and printed from the VicPol web site.
- (2) The applicant must then obtain copies of relevant Identification Documents (100 Points as described on the web site) pertaining to the applicant and have the copies of the documents witnessed and certified by an approved officer . There is an extensive list of approved officers but include, Police Officer, Bank manager, Pharmacist, Justice of the Peace.
- (3) Each Lions Club, being a volunteer body, has been issued with a CVF Number (Community Volunteer Fee number) which must be included on the application form thereby claiming a reduced application fee. At present this fee is \$14.50 per application but may vary each fiscal year .. check fees on line with VicPol.
The application requires a certification by that clubs authorizing officer (Secretary?) to certify that the applicant is a volunteer working for the Lions Club. The authorizing officer will be aware of the specific CVF number for that particular Lions club.
- (4) The application form, Certified copies of I/D, plus the required fee must be posted directly to :-
Victorian Police
Public Inquiry Service
PO Box 418
Melbourne Vic 8005
- (5) The application will be processed by the Victorian Police and the Nation Police Certificate will be returned **Direct** to the applicant's residential / postal address.
- (6) It is recommended that the National Police Certificate may then be sighted by the secretary of the club and an endorsement made on the members personal record sheet, to the fact that that member has been cleared by a Police check and the relative date of the certificate. This is the only record that is to be retained by the club / organization and the certificate remains the property of the volunteer / member.

Forms and further information

Forms and further information can be found on the VicPol web site:

www.police.vic.gov.au .

Select "Our Services" from the side menu

Click on "Police Record Check"

(as at May 2010)

Appendix "B"**National Police Certificates – N.T.*****Application for a National Police Certificate***

- (1) To request a national police check, the applicant must complete a "Criminal History Check & Consent to Release National Police Certificate" form which is downloaded and completed "On Line" and printed from the NT Police web site.
- (2) The applicant must then obtain copies of relevant Identification Documents (100 Points as described on the web site) pertaining to the applicant and have the copies of the documents witnessed and certified by an approved officer . There is an extensive list of approved officers but include, Police Officer, Registered Medical Practitioner, Legal Practitioner, Justice of the Peace.
- (3) The application requires a certification by that clubs authorizing officer (Secretary) to certify that the applicant is a volunteer, working for the Lions Club; see Section E of the application form.
This will ensure that the application is dealt with under a reduced "Volunteer" fee of \$5.00
- (4) The application form, Certified copies of I/D, plus the required fee may be posted directly to
NT Police
PO Box 39764
WINNELLIE NT
OR
Delivered in person to
SAFENT
Ground floor, 77 Smith Street
DARWIN
- (5) The application will be processed by the NT Police and the Nation Police Certificate will be returned **Direct** to the applicant's residential / postal address.
- (6) It is recommended that the National Police Certificate may then be sighted by the secretary of the club and an endorsement made on the members personal record sheet, to the fact that that member has been cleared by a Police check and the relative date of the certificate.
This is the only record that is to be retained by the club / organization and the certificate remains the property of the volunteer / member.

Forms and further information

Forms and further information can be found on the NT Police web site:

www.nt.gov.au/safent

Select "Police" from the side menu

Click on "Record Check"

(as at May 2010)

*Appendix "C"***National Police Certificates – N.S.W.*****Application for a National Police Certificate***

Unlike other States, NSW appears not to have any provision for volunteer organizations to recommend Police checks are part of the risk management and screening process organizations such as Lions, that can be adopt to ensure a safe environment when its volunteers work directly with Vulnerable Persons.

It would appear that a National Police Certificates is only for persons seeking clearance for certain categories of employment. There appears no provision for a subsidized or reduction in fees for such police clearances for volunteers.

Working With Children Checks

It is a Legal requirement in NSW that Volunteers working with children in some High Risk roles must undertake Police Checks. These are volunteers who mentor disadvantaged children in family-like relationships, or provide intimate personal care for disable children.

All other volunteers working with children must sign a Volunteer/Student Declaration.

The provisions as may be required for Lions volunteers to undertake in NSW appear somewhat complex and there is some uncertainty as to the exact procedures that Lions should undertake, I would therefore strongly recommend to members and Lions volunteers to inquire with their State Police to seek further guidance as to the procedures that may be necessary for Lions to follow when pursuing our normal activities which bring us into to contact with Vulnerable Persons.

Further information

Forms and further information can be found on the NSW Police, and NSW Commission for Children & Young People web site:

(as at May 2010)