

# **FIRST FRC Volunteer Screening**

## **Introduction**

*FIRST* realizes a measure of responsibility and strong moral interest in the safety of program participants and volunteers. *FIRST* wants participants and their parents/guardians to know about the procedures in place to assure that their experience with a *FIRST* program is exciting and fulfilling. The purpose of this document is to outline existing procedures that are used for volunteer screening for the *FIRST FRC* program. The procedures described in this document pertain to *FIRST* programs taking place within the United States and Canada and for volunteers who reside in the United States and Canada.

## **FIRST Robotics Competition (FRC) - Event Volunteer Screening Procedures**

Volunteers who have applied to *FIRST* and who participate in any capacity in the on site event activities of a *FIRST* Regional or Championship FRC event must be screened. Volunteers include: all volunteers who participate on the days of the regional event, Regional Planning Committee Members, Senior Mentors and AmeriCorps\*VISTA members.

Screening is an important component of the volunteer application process. Volunteer applicants apply through the Internet-based Volunteer Information and Matching System (VIMS), or for late applicants, by filling out the *FIRST* paper registration form at the event. Volunteers under the age of 18 must obtain parental/guardian consent on their online registration or standard *FIRST* paper registration.

## **First Time Volunteer Pre Event Applicants**

First time volunteer applicants, using the VIMS system to register (in advance of a *FIRST* event) in addition to their own personal contact information, are required to submit the name and contact information for two personal references who will be contacted by the *FIRST* screening service for reference verification.

The full screening process for first time volunteer applicants consists of the following steps:

1. A check of the publicly available U.S. State Sex Offender Registries on the Internet to ensure that no applicants are listed. Most States maintain a web site listing people who have been convicted of sex offenses, and these lists may be consulted at no charge and without the individual's permission. The web addresses for these listings can be found on the web at [www.fbi.gov/hq/cid/cac/states.htm](http://www.fbi.gov/hq/cid/cac/states.htm).
2. Two reference checks on each applicant applying before the event to determine suitability to serve as a volunteer at the event. The two references that applicants enter into VIMS will be contacted. The reference check process will ask about the applicant's suitability to volunteer at the event. *FIRST* will provide suggested questions and training to the screening service that will be conducting reference checks.
3. An interview with each applicant to determine suitability for serving as a volunteer at the event. Applicants will be asked about their background working with young people and their motivations for getting involved.
4. Volunteer Coordinators will be able to see in VIMS when the screening process is complete and they will notify applicants of their volunteer assignment at each event.
5. All volunteers must complete a signed *FIRST* Consent and Release Form in order to participate in an event. This form must be completed at each event at which a volunteer participates.
6. Picture identification is required of all volunteers when checking in at the event volunteer registration area.

### **Previously Screened Volunteer Applicants**

The screening process for applicants who have been volunteers for *FIRST* for the year just prior, who have been fully screened within the previous 5 years by *FIRST*, and who have not been the subject of reported problems, will consist of the following steps:

1. A check of publicly available U.S. State Sex Offender Registries on the Internet will be undertaken to ensure that no applicant is listed. Most U.S. States maintain a web site listing people who have been convicted of sex offenses, and these lists may be consulted at no charge and without the individual's permission. The web addresses for these listings can be found on the web at [www.fbi.gov/hq/cid/cac/states.htm](http://www.fbi.gov/hq/cid/cac/states.htm).
2. These volunteers do not require new or updated personal references and they will not be contacted again for a personal interview.
3. All returning volunteers must also complete a *FIRST* Consent and Release Form in order to participate in an event. This form must be completed at each event at which a volunteer participates.
4. Picture identification is required of all volunteers when checking in at the event volunteer registration area.

### **Walk-on Applicants**

Volunteer applicants who arrive on the day of the event, and have not pre-applied through the *FIRST* Volunteer Information and Matching System (VIMS) and have not been screened for the event or for prior events are considered "walk-on" volunteers. The procedure used for this category of volunteer will consist of the following steps:

1. Volunteers will complete a standard *FIRST* paper registration form at the volunteer registration area of the event. Picture identification is required. This paper registration will be sent to *FIRST* Head Office immediately after the event.
2. This walk-on volunteer will be assigned to a position supervised by a screened Key Volunteer, generally assisting a team of pre-screened volunteers at the event. These walk-on volunteers are assigned to work with other, pre-screened volunteers, not to any individual volunteer assignment, where they would be working without direct supervision.
3. An alternate assignment for a "walk-on" volunteer would be to be assigned to a "buddy" volunteer who has been pre-screened and with whom the "walk-on" volunteer would work for the duration of their volunteer time at the event.
4. Walk-on volunteers must also complete a signed *FIRST* Consent and Release Form in order to participate in an event. This form must be completed at each event at which a volunteer participates.
5. Picture identification is required of all volunteers when checking in at the event volunteer registration area.