Unsupervised Volunteers Background Check Policy

Volunteer Coordinator

Revision Date: 4/25/2017

Authority: Iowa Code 455A.4(1) "a"

Contents: This policy describes the background check requirements that apply to unsupervised DNR volunteers who are responsible for the safety and welfare of persons under the age of 18.

Affected Offices: All

Whom to Contact for Policy Questions: Volunteer Coordinator

Intent of Policy: This policy is intended to establish a uniform process for conducting background checks of unsupervised DNR volunteers who are responsible for the safety and welfare of persons under the age of 18. The policy establishes when background checks will be conducted, how they will be conducted, and how results of the background checks will be interpreted for approval/disapproval of the volunteer.

Policy:
The DNR is interested in managing risks for the State, the public, and our volunteers. In order to help provide a safe environment for everyone, the DNR adopts these requirements for its unsupervised volunteers who, on behalf of DNR, are responsible for the welfare and safety of persons under the age of 18. For purposes of this policy, "unsupervised" means without a DNR employee present in the immediate vicinity. This policy shall also apply to campground hosts.

Requirements
Volunteers subject to this policy shall comply with the following requirements:

A. Must be 18 years of age or older.

B. Must have the required license or permit to engage in the volunteer activity, if applicable.

C. Must be capable of managing the safety of minors. This may require the volunteer to possess certain physical and mental capabilities to be able maintain the safety of the activity participants.

D. Must provide DNR with the proper paperwork to conduct background checks for criminal history. DNR will check criminal history databases maintained by the Iowa Department of Public Safety and the FBI, as well as the national sex offender registry.

E. Volunteers are responsible for the costs of fingerprinting required for a national background check. Fingerprint-required national background checks will be performed only when an individual first volunteers for DNR. Subsequent background checks will use the Iowa criminal history databases maintained by the Iowa Department of Public Safety and the national sex offender registry.

F. Background checks must be conducted at least once every five years while volunteering with DNR. DNR reserves
the right to require additional background checks at any time.

G. To pass a background check, the volunteer must not be restricted, as described below.

**Restrictions**
If the individual meets any of the following criteria, either at the initiation of their volunteering or during the course of their volunteering, they will not be allowed to lead or manage persons under the age of 18 on behalf of DNR as an unsupervised volunteer:

1. Any conviction related to domestic violence, assault above simple assault, contributing to the delinquency of a minor, harassment, or making terroristic threats; or any child/dependent adult abuse or neglect.

2. Within five years of volunteering, any conviction above a simple misdemeanor related to firearms violations, drugs, alcohol, operating a boat or vehicle while intoxicated, or theft.

3. Is registered or is required to register as a sex offender in any jurisdiction of the United States or Canada.

4. Within five years of volunteering, has had hunting, trapping, or fishing privileges suspended or revoked in any jurisdiction within the United States.

The DNR reserves the right to consider any other criminal behavior to determine whether an individual can safely lead or manage persons under the age of 18 on behalf of DNR as an unsupervised volunteer.

**Exceptions**
Individuals with an active Iowa teaching license who have not had hunting or fishing privileges revoked in any jurisdiction within the United States within the last five years are not required to undergo a background check under this policy. Proof of an active Iowa teaching license must be provided to DNR before the volunteer can be approved.

This policy does not apply to volunteer positions for which background check eligibility criteria have been established in Volume 571 of the Iowa Administrative Code.

**Disclaimer**
A volunteer must not subject the persons under his or her supervision to unlawful, inappropriate, or abusive treatment. Such activity would be outside the scope of the volunteer’s service particularly, but not solely, for purposes of tort liability protection pursuant to Iowa Code section 669.24.

Director, Iowa Department of Natural Resources

Date