

know risk

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Working with children check – Western Australia

What Is The Working With Children Check?

The Working with Children Check is a national criminal record check that is compulsory for people who carry out child related work in Western Australia. Its purpose is to check if an applicant has a criminal history that may place children at risk of harm. The Checks began in 2006 and will be incrementally phased in over five years.

Who Requires A Check?

Employees and volunteers who participate in child-related work as prescribed in Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004 involving regular contact with a child, must obtain a Check.

Organisations and employers need to ensure that employees and volunteers who are required to obtain a Check, do so.

Furthermore when an application for a Check is made, the employer must sign the Application Form.

Who Is Exempt?

Volunteers under 18 years of age; volunteer parents whose child participates in the activity (except for overnight camps); short-term visitors to WA, for 2 weeks after their arrival, and for no more than 2 weeks in a 12 month period are exempt from the Checks.

What Are The Application Outcomes?

Applicants may be issued with either:

- An Assessment Notice in the form of a Working with Children Card that will include a photograph, signature and Assessment Number. The Card is valid for 3 years,

subject to changes in a person's criminal history. During this time, the person issued with the Notice may present their card to any employer as proof of a Working with Children Check.

- A Negative Notice or an Interim Negative Notice which prohibits a person from "child related work". Strict penalties apply to people who do not comply - a fine of up to \$60,000 and up to 5 years imprisonment.

You Must Not

Employ someone in child-related work if you are aware they have a current Interim Negative Notice or Negative Notice. To do so is a criminal offence with a penalty of \$60,000 and 5 years imprisonment. It is important this information be treated sensitively.

Phase in Dates

The Working with Children Check commenced in 2006 and phasing-in of the Checks will occur over the next five years to 2011. For details about the introduction dates for specific types of child related work please refer to the Working with Children website at: www.checkwwwc.wa.gov.au.

Summary

While the Working with Children Check must be complied with, it cannot solely be relied upon to determine the suitability of a worker or volunteer. The check is only ONE of the strategies that organisations must establish to ensure that people who work with children are suitable to do so.

Organisations must ensure that other measures are in place to assess a person's suitability to work with children, including interviews, thorough reference checks, a code of conduct, vigilant supervision and regular training.

Source: <http://www.checkwwwc.wa.gov.au>

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