

FEBRUARY 22, 2011

## FINGERPRINTING FOR VULNERABLE SCREENING- FAQs

In July of 2010, the RCMP changed the requirements for fingerprinting people who plan to work with the Vulnerable Sector. While that change assists in protecting the vulnerable in our society, it has resulted in delays not previously experienced. The following are some of the frequently asked questions about the fingerprinting process and why delays now occur. It is hoped that they will be useful in answering your questions.

### *Who is affected by the backlog in Background Checks?*

Anyone who wishes to work with vulnerable people will be affected by the backlog. A vulnerable person means a person who, because of their age, disability or other circumstances, whether temporary or permanent, are:

- a) in a position of dependence on others, or
- b) are otherwise at a greater risk than the general population of being harmed by a person in a position of authority or trust relative to them.

### *Why is there a backlog in Background Checks?*

One reason for a backlog is because the Greater Sudbury Police Service has experienced larger volumes of background checks because more agencies are making use of this important service.

However, the main reason for the backlog is a decision made by the RCMP in July of 2010. The decision addressed a situation with those who have legally changed their name in Canada. In most provinces and territories, fingerprints are not taken when a person changes their name. This can lead to risk in the vulnerable screening process once the person has received a pardon for a sexual offence – one that may reasonably put the vulnerable at risk. To properly screen people who may have been sexual offenders and have received a pardon, the RCMP introduced a change to the vulnerable screening process. This has caused a large effort in verifying the identity of people who may apply to work with the vulnerable.

### *Why did I have to get fingerprinted and others did not?*

Due to the name change problem in Canada, the RCMP now performs two queries against the file of pardoned offences. The first query is the same as it always was – a query using the name, gender and the date of birth of the applicant. If nothing was returned on the query, a query is done by just date of birth and gender to identify pardoned sex offenders who had changed their name. Therefore, if you have the same date of birth as someone who has a pardoned sex offence, then you are a potential match and only fingerprinting will properly determine your identity.

### ***What impact did the RCMP change have?***

The number of possible matches against the file of pardoned offences went up dramatically in virtually all police services across the country. Previously the Greater Sudbury Police Service did the majority of vulnerable checks within 1 week, and now the wait can be much longer than that.

### ***Why do these possible matches need to be confirmed by fingerprints?***

Possible matches have to be confirmed by fingerprints to determine that they **are not** the pardoned sex offender. In almost all of the possible matches, the applicant is not the pardoned sex offender, but only through fingerprints can the person's identity be verified.

### ***How quickly can I be fingerprinted?***

You may attend the Records Branch at Greater Sudbury Police Service on any Thursday (unless otherwise advised) between the hours of 10am and 3pm to be fingerprinted. It is strongly advised to call in advance to make sure someone will be available. (675-9171). This service is offered on a first come first serve basis and you must bring identification.

### ***What happens with my fingerprints after they are taken?***

The fingerprints are sent to Ottawa for positive identification, which takes from 4 weeks to 120 days. The RCMP destroys fingerprints sent to them for the purposes of Vulnerable Screening. The Greater Sudbury Police Service will then keep the reply on file for 5 years in order to speed up future applications for that applicant. The RCMP request a \$25.00 certified cheque or money order made payable to "***The Receiver General of Canada***" to process this request. The RCMP will waive this fee should the record check be required for volunteer purposes. However, the RCMP will request a letter from the organization stating that the applicant is in fact a volunteer.

### ***How does this impact employers and volunteer agencies?***

The change in screening applicants is a good one in that it protects the vulnerable in our society. We simply ask that employers and volunteer agencies be patient and understanding because these delays are not the fault of the applicants.

The Greater Sudbury Police would like to ask employers to look at their process and ask for record checks earlier if they know that checks will be needed (charity events, etc.).

### ***Where can I find more information?***

The RCMP web site supplies more information at:  
<http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/cr-cj/vulner/index-eng.htm>