

## **Rotary District 5020 - Policy Guidelines for Rotary Youth Programs**

*(to complement and be used in conjunction with the Youth Exchange Abuse, Neglect and Harassment Allegation Recording and Reporting Guidelines and Manual)*

### Introduction

This Rotary District has an impressive history of programs dedicated to serving the youth of our communities, and it is important at this time to protect and maintain this great tradition of service. Rotary Youth Exchange, Rotaract, Interact, RYLA, and other youth programs initiatives have helped to define our district identity, and so many Rotarians in District 5020 regard youth services as a key reason for the enjoyment and commitment to Rotary.

So that Rotary clubs may plan for certain required changes in the administration of Rotary youth programs these guidelines have been produced to describe the key elements which should be part of strategies to ensure the safety and well-being of all participants in Rotary youth activities. These statements have been taken from the RI Abuse and Harassment Training Manual and from materials developed for the Rotary District 5020 Abuse and Harassment Prevention Training, February 2007.

Rotary International has asked all rotary Clubs in the world to address the issue of youth protection, and in so doing, all Rotarians can be confident that international exchange partners are applying protection measures that meet the same minimum standards as those within our own programs.

While the Youth Exchange Program Abuse, Neglect and Harassment Allegation Recording and Reporting Guidelines (Appendix A) is an important document for all clubs, the statements below are designed to complement recording and reporting guidelines with information pertinent to abuse, neglect and harassment prevention strategies for all Rotary youth programs.

### A Re-statement of Conduct for Working with Youth

Rotary District 5020 is committed to protecting the safety and well-being of all who are involved in youth programs. It is the duty of Rotarians, Rotarian's spouses and partners, and any other volunteers to safeguard to the best of their ability the welfare of and to prevent the physical, sexual, or emotional abuse of young people with whom they come in contact.

### Rotary Youth Services

All club and district activities involving youth, including but not limited to Youth Exchange, RYLA, Rotaract, and Interact.

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## Volunteer

Any adult involved with Rotary youth activities who has continued contact with youth. This includes, but is not limited to, club and district Youth Exchange Officers and committee members, Rotarian counselors, Rotarians and non-Rotarians, their spouses and partners that host youth for activities, host parents and any person living in a host family 18 years and older.

Continued contact is defined as persons assigned to support Rotary functions such as YEO, Counselor, Host Families assigned persons to transport students to and from meetings and events. Persons having casual contact with youth are *not* required to have volunteer applications background checks. Casual contact is defined as persons not directly responsible for the youth but who may provide incidental transportation or invite a youth to an event such as dinner, movie, sports events, weekend activities or approved travel by the Host Family and YEO, etc.

## Volunteer Selection and Screening

The following selection and screening steps must be completed prior to participation in youth activities:

*All volunteers* who have continued contact with youth must:

- complete a volunteer affidavit; (**Appendix B**)
- be interviewed in person;
- provide a list reference checks; (**Appendix C & D**)
- undergo background/criminal record checks; (**Appendix E**)
- attend training about abuse and harassment prevention.

*Host Families* must:

- undergo selection and screening steps outlined for volunteers who have continued contact with youth;
- home visits must be conducted for each family and should include announced and unannounced visits, both prior to and during the placement. The unannounced home visit may be met by visits conducted on short notice, such as calling ahead to ensure that the family is home and able to receive visitors. Home visits must be conducted annually, even for repeat host families.

*Club Youth Protection Coordinators and Counselors* must:

- undergo selection and screening steps outlined for volunteers who have continued contact with youth;
- must not be a member of a youth Exchange student's host family;
- have a full understand of the reporting procedures outlined in Appendix A.

### Youth Selection and Screening

**All students** interested in participating in District 5020 Youth Exchange program must meet these requirements:

- complete a written application and be interviewed to determine suitability for participation in the program;
- attend and participate in all district orientation and training sessions.

**All parents or legal guardians of students** interested in participating in the District 5020 Youth Exchange program must be interviewed to determine the student's suitability for participation in the program.

### Management of Screening Process – (Suggest Club Youth Protection Coordinator assume this role)

Rotary Clubs shall appoint one or more persons to carry out the selection and screening process. As well, Rotary clubs must appoint one Rotarian or non-Rotarian, who will maintain all records of criminal background checks as prescribed by law, and all waivers, and screening information in perpetuity.

### Prohibited Person

A person prohibited from participating in a Rotary youth program is anyone who:

- a) has been convicted of any offense, which resulted in harm to an individual, including, but not limited to assault, sexual assault, sexual harassment or neglect;
- b) has been convicted of any offense, which in the opinion of the District Youth Policy Coordinator, suggests an unacceptable risk of harm to a person in the care of that individual;
- c) is a person subject to a court order or decree prohibiting that person in being in contact with another individual or being at a specific location.

### Training

Rotary District 5020 will provide abuse and harassment prevention training for all youth program volunteers. The District Youth Policy Coordinator who will engage Youth Exchange committee members, or others who have been appropriately trained, to lead the training program, will organize these training programs. This training may take place at a district assembly and in various locales throughout the district in a given Rotary year. A calendar of district training events for the year will be published at the beginning of a Rotary year.

Special training for district leaders will be scheduled as part of the District Team Training Seminar, and a short relevant training program should be part of Youth Exchange orientation programs and, where appropriate, other youth activities.

The most recent edition of the RI Abuse and Harassment Training Manual will form the basis for these training sessions, and this document should be available in every club participating in Rotary youth programs.

### Reporting an Allegation

A child or young person involved in a program can report an allegation to the District Youth Policy Coordinator whose name and contact information will be made known to children and young people involved in Rotary youth activities. When any allegation is disclosed, this information should be immediately communicated to the Youth Policy Coordinator who will then contact the District Governor, the Rotary Club President and other district leaders, where appropriate. The Youth Policy Coordinator must ensure the procedures described in the Youth Exchange Abuse, Neglect and Harassment Allegation Recording and Reporting Guidelines (Appendix A) are followed.

If the allegation disclosed involves a youth exchange student, the reporting should follow the procedures described in the Youth Exchange Abuse, Neglect and Harassment Allegation Recording and Reporting Guidelines (Appendix A) and the District 5020 Youth Exchange Chair will immediately inform the Youth Policy Coordinator and District Governor.

### Rotary Club Compliance

It is **the duty of each club** to ensure that its members comply with the statements within these guidelines. The district will also monitor club compliance through the office of the District Governor and with the help of the district leadership team. All clubs that wish to participate in Rotary youth programs must comply with the guidelines described in this document and the attached Appendix A.

*(APPENDIX A)*  
**Rotary District 5020**  
**Youth Exchange Abuse and Harassment Allegation**  
**Recording and Reporting Guidelines**

**Introduction**

Rotarians, their families, and non-Rotarian volunteers are expected to use their best efforts to safeguard the welfare of and prevent the physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or harassment of every student with whom they come into contact.

Rotary District 5020 is committed to protecting the safety and well-being of Youth Exchange students and will not tolerate their abuse or harassment. All allegations of abuse and harassment will be taken seriously and must be handled within the reporting guidelines.

**The safety and well-being of students should always be the first priority.**

**Definitions**

Sexual Abuse: Sexual abuse refers to engaging in implicit or explicit sexual acts with a student, or forcing or encouraging a student to engage in implicit or explicit sexual acts alone or with another person of any age, of the same sex or the opposite sex.

Additional example of sexual abuse could include, but are not limited to non-touching offenses:

- Indecent exposure
- Exposing a child to sexual or pornographic material

Sexual Harassment: Sexual harassment refers to sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. In some cases, sexual harassment precedes sexual abuse and is a technique used by sexual predators to desensitize or “groom” their victims.

Examples of sexual harassment could include, but are not limited to:

- Sexual advances;
- Sexual epithets, jokes, written or oral references to sexual conduct, gossip regarding one’s sex life, and comments about an individual’s sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess;
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature;
- Displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures or drawings;
- Sexual leering or whistling, any inappropriate physical contact such as brushing or touching, obscene language or gestures and suggestive or insulting comments.

Physical or Emotional Abuse and Harassment: All other non-sexual physical or emotional abuse and harassment that affects the health and well being of the student.

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## **Is it Abuse or is it Harassment?**

Whether the alleged conduct amounts to abuse or harassment is not to be determined by the adult to whom allegations are made. After ensuring the safety of the student, all allegations should be immediately reported to appropriate Rotary and the appropriate authorities.

## **Recording Guidelines**

**For use by all adults to whom a student reports an incident of abuse or harassment**

### **1. Allegations from Student**

- a. Listen attentively and stay calm.** Acknowledge that it takes a lot of courage to report abuse.  
It is appropriate to listen and be supportive. Do not express shock, horror or disbelief.
- b. Assure privacy and the limits of confidentiality.** Explain that you will have to tell someone about the abuse and/or harassment to make it stop.
- c. Get the facts, but do not interrogate.** Ask the student questions that establish what happened and who was involved. Reassure the student that he/she did the right thing in telling you. Avoid asking “why” questions. Your responsibility is to present the students story to the proper authorities.
- d. Be non-judgmental and reassure the student.** Do not be critical of anything that has happened or anyone who may be involved. It is especially important not to blame or criticize the student.  
Assure the student that they were brave and mature to come to you.
- e. Record:** Keep a written record of the conversation with the student as soon after the report as you can, including the date and time of the conversation. Use the student’s words and record only what has been told to you.

### **2. Protecting the Student**

To ensure the safety and well-being of the student, remove the student from the situation **immediately and all contact with the alleged abuser or harasser.**

Give reassurance that this is for the students own safety and is not a punishment.

### **3. Action by Rotary in District 5020**

Club officers, and an attorney (determined by the severity of the charge), should quickly meet with parties to determine what steps should be taken to safeguard the student and the well-being of the student. These activities should be completed in confidentiality to protect the reputations of all the parties involved until decisions are made and actions are taken. **In Canada and the USA, the law requires that any claim of sexual impropriety must be immediately reported to the proper authorities.**

The complaint must also be reported immediately to the District 5020 Youth Exchange Chair or to a designated member of the District Youth Exchange Committee (Country Officer).

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The District 5020 Youth Exchange Chair must report immediately to the District Governor – who then reports to Rotary International within 72 hours.

It is probable that, even if a claim of sexual abuse or harassment were not substantiated, there would be no way that student could be returned to the original home or situation. Other arrangements must be made.

Do not tell anyone about the report other than those required by the guidelines. Care must be taken to protect the rights of both the victim and the accused during the investigation.

In the case of abuse and harassment, the adult to whom the student reports must not contact the alleged offender. Interrogation must be left entirely to law enforcement authorities. In cases of non-criminal harassment, the district chair and district governor are responsible for follow-up, and will be in contact with the alleged offender after the student has been removed from the home.

#### **4. Post Report Procedures. For use by Rotarian Counselors, YEO's, Country Contact Officers, and District Youth Exchange Chairs.**

1. Confirm that the student has been removed from the situation immediately and no further contact with the alleged abuser or harasser.
2. Make sure all Allegation Reporting guidelines are followed up.
3. Ensure the student receives immediate support services. Offer, if available, the student an independent, professional counselor to represent the interests of the student.
4. The Country Contact Officer shall contact the student's parents or legal guardian and the Sponsoring Rotary District. Outline the steps taken to safeguard the health and well-being of the student.
5. Provide the student with the option of either staying in the country or returning home.
6. Keep the District Governor informed of initial and follow up action.

#### **5. Response for Addressing Issues Within the Rotary Club for Allegations Made Against Rotarians or Non-Rotarians.**

\* Club members and host families may experience ambiguity toward their roles and may feel unclear regarding their boundaries. They need to do whatever is necessary to reassure the student of their support at all times.

\* Club members should not speculate, make editorial comments, or offer personal opinions that could potentially hinder any police investigations.

\*Comments made about alleged victims in support of alleged abusers do not support our statement of conduct or Rotary ideals.

\* Comments made against an alleged abuser could lead to a slander or libel claim filed against Rotarians or Clubs by the alleged abuser.

*(APPENDIX B)*  
**ROTARY DISTRICT 5020**  
**YOUTH VOLUNTEER AFFIDAVIT**

District 5020 is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for all participants in Rotary activities. It is the duty of all Rotarians, their spouses and partners, and any other volunteers to safeguard to the best of their ability the welfare of children and young people involved in Rotary programs or activities and prevent physical, sexual, or emotional abuse of young participants.

**PERSONAL INFORMATION:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State/Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

How long at this address? \_\_\_\_\_ (If fewer than five years, list previous residence(s) on the back of this sheet.)

Driver's license number: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy): \_\_\_\_\_

**CONSENT:**

I certify that all the statements in this affidavit, and in any attachments hereto, are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and that I have not withheld any information that would affect this affidavit unfavorably. I understand that District 5020 youth programs will deny a volunteer position to anyone convicted of a crime of violence.

I give my permission to District 5020 to verify information given in this affidavit, including searches of law enforcement and published records (including driving records and criminal background checks) and contact with my former employers and with references provided. I understand that this information will be used, in part, to determine my eligibility for a volunteer position. I also understand that as long as I remain a volunteer, this information may be checked again at any time. I understand that I will have an opportunity to review the criminal history and, if I dispute the record as received, a procedure is available for clarification.

**WAIVER:**

IN CONSIDERATION of my acceptance and participation in the youth programs, I, to the full extent permitted by law, hereby release and agree to save, hold harmless, and indemnify all members, officers, directors, committee members, and employees of the participating Rotary clubs and districts, and of Rotary International ("Indemnitees"), from any or all liability for any loss, property damage, personal injury, or death, including any such liability that may arise out of the negligence of any of the indemnities or may be suffered or claimed by me as a result of an investigation of my background in connection with this affidavit.

I further agree to conform to the rules, regulations, and policies of Rotary International, the District 5020 youth programs and its affiliates.

**I acknowledge that I have read and understand the above affidavit, consent, and waiver and that I sign this form voluntarily.**

**Signature of Applicant:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please Print Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Business Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a member of a Rotary Club? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

If yes, indicate club name and year joined: \_\_\_\_\_

Position applied for: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you held a Rotary youth programs position in the past? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

If yes, what position and when? \_\_\_\_\_

**EMPLOYMENT HISTORY** (for the past five years, attach additional sheets if necessary)

Current Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State/Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code : \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Employment: \_\_\_\_\_ Supervisor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Previous Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State/Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code : \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Employment: \_\_\_\_\_ Supervisor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**VOLUNTEER HISTORY WITH YOUTH** (for the past five years; attach additional sheets, if necessary)

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State/Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code : \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates Held: \_\_\_\_\_ Director's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**PERSONAL REFERENCES** (may not be relatives; no more than one former or current Rotarian)

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State/Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code : \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State/Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code : \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State/Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code : \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

**QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING**

What relevant qualifications or training do you have for this position? Please describe in full.

**CRIMINAL HISTORY**

- 1. Have you ever been charged with, been convicted of, or pled guilty to any crime(s)?  
 Yes       No
  
- 2. Have you ever been subject to any court order (including civil, family, and criminal courts) involving sexual, physical or verbal abuse, including but not limited to domestic violence or civil harassment injunction or protective order?  
 Yes       No  
 If yes, please explain. Also indicate date(s) and the country and state/province in which each occurred (attach a separate sheet, if needed).

**For Club Use Only:**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

References Check by (name) \_\_\_\_\_

**(APPENDIX C)**  
**ROTARY DISTRICT 5020**  
**GUIDELINES FOR REFERENCE CHECKS**

**Who requires a reference check?**

*Any adult involved with Rotary youth activities who has continued contact with youth. This includes, but is not limited to, club and district Youth Exchange Officers and committee members, Rotarian counselors, Rotarians and non-Rotarians, their spouses and partners that host youth for activities, host parents and any person living in a host family 18 years and older.*

**Who can be a reference?**

*Friend, neighbor, work colleague, employer etc. Personal references must not be related to the applicant and no more than one former or current Rotarian.*

**When should reference checks be done?**

*Reference checks **MUST** be completed before applicant has unsupervised access to youth.*

**How should reference check be completed?**

*By telephone is sufficient.*

**How many reference checks should be done?**

*Minimum of three.*

**Who should do reference checks?**

*Club Youth Protection Coordinator, Youth Exchange Counselors and Youth Committee Members – member of the club’s board, club member assigned to do criminal record checks or outside agency contracted by the club.*

**Should the one person do all three reference checks for the same applicant?**

*Yes*

**Do references need to be done by the same person who is responsible for receiving the applicant’s criminal record check?**

*No*

**Where should the reference check information collected be stored?**

*With the Youth Volunteer Affidavit and criminal record check.*

***Access to confidential information collected in the volunteer screening process should be restricted. Interviews and background checks may uncover sensitive information that would not disqualify a potential volunteer but should be kept confidential nonetheless.***

**(APPENDIX D)**  
**Rotary District 5020**  
**Sample Personal Reference Request**

\_\_\_\_\_ has applied to volunteer with the Rotary International Youth Exchange Program (or name of pertinent Rotary program).

Description of program i.e.; This program offers students, 15 to 18 years of age an opportunity to experience the language and culture of a foreign country. Ensuring student safety is our highest priority, as a volunteer, this person will have significant unsupervised involvement. The applicant has provided you as a personal reference. Any information obtained will be kept secure and confidential.

**Reference Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Association with Applicant: Relative \_\_\_\_ Business Associate \_\_\_\_ Co-Worker \_\_\_\_ Friend \_\_\_\_

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you known applicant? \_\_\_\_\_

What experience does the applicant have with working or volunteering with young people?

In what activities have you observed applicant with teenagers or younger children? How are you aware of the applicant's activities?

Do you have any direct knowledge of any violent or anger management incidents directly involving this person?

Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

If yes, please explain:

Do you have any direct knowledge of any incidents of inappropriate behaviour involving minors?

Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

If yes, please explain:

Do you have any direct knowledge if this person has any substance abuse or mental health problems?

Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

If yes, please explain:

Does the applicant possess the skills and personality to be a positive influence and offer a good relationship for teens from other countries and cultures? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

If no, please explain:

Would you feel comfortable leaving one of your children in this person's custody? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

If no, please explain:

What other information can you provide to help evaluate whether this person is qualified to participate in the Rotary Youth Exchange Program?

Signature of person doing reference check \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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**(APPENDIX E)**  
**Rotary District 5020**  
**GUIDELINES FOR**  
**CRIMINAL RECORD CHECKS**

Who requires a criminal record check?

*Any adult involved with Rotary youth activities who has continued contact with youth. This includes, but is not limited to, club and district Youth Exchange Officers and committee members, Rotarian counselors, Rotarians and non-Rotarians, their spouses and partners that host youth for activities, host parents and any person living in a host family 18 years and older.*

When should criminal record checks be done?

*Criminal record checks **MUST** be completed before applicant has unsupervised access to youth.*

How often does someone involved in a Rotary youth program need to have a criminal record check completed?

*Only accept criminal record checks done within the last 12 months.*

Is there a cost to get a criminal record check done?

*In the normal sense the record check would be completed free of charge by the local police agency, however throughout the province there may be some agencies which charge and in such cases it is suggested the local Rotary Club deal directly with the local police agency to see if some sort of deal can be worked out -- although this may not always be possible. In those rare cases where an applicant may have a Criminal Record and there is a need to confirm the record through the submission of fingerprints - then there is a charge to do so, the cost will vary depending on the jurisdiction.*

Who in the club should receive the criminal record checks?

*It is suggested a lawyer, law enforcement official or Club Youth Protection Coordinator, Youth Exchange Officer of the club should receive all criminal record checks. All applicant information must be kept confidential. Once applicant process is complete (volunteer affidavit, reference checks and criminal record check), information should be kept in a secure place by the lawyer or law enforcement official*

How long does the above information need to be kept on file?

*No statute of limitations on sexual abuse or harassment.*

**CANADIAN Criminal record check process:**

- Applicant must go to police station within their municipality or jurisdiction of residence and fill out the criminal record check request form;
- Allow two weeks for the criminal record check to be completed by the police (it may take less time);
- Applicant will need to return to the police station to pick up the completed criminal record check;
- Criminal record check should be placed in a sealed envelope by the applicant;
- Completed criminal record check should be opened **ONLY** by the person who receives all criminal record checks for the club;

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- In most cases the no record box will be checked;
- In a case where there is a criminal record indicated, the applicant **MUST** obtain a copy of this record from the police. It is best to advise applicants in advance, when they pick up their criminal record check, if a record is indicated on the form details regarding this record will be necessary. These details should be enclosed with the completed criminal record check in the sealed envelope and passed on to the person in the club who receives all criminal record checks;
- Depending on the details of the criminal record it will be up to the lawyer, law enforcement person or Youth Exchange Officer to decide if the applicant is suitable to be involved with the Rotary Youth Exchange program. This is confidential information and should not be discussed with other members of the club. The District Youth Policy Coordinator is contact person if in doubt.

***US Criminal record check process (can all be done on-line [www.wsp.wa.gov](http://www.wsp.wa.gov)):***

- Establish and account with W.A.T.C.H. (Washington Access to Criminal History);
- Complete the W.A.T.C.H. form on each person requiring a criminal record check;
- Allow up to one week for the criminal record check to be completed;
- Record will come back with one of the following:
  - no exact match – which means there is no conviction record in the WSP database that matches the search criteria used (in other words the person has not been found possibly a misspelled name);
  - a candidate listing – which means there is a candidate list of record that matches or closely matches the search criteria used and the ability to immediately retrieve a transcript of record;
  - a duplicate match – indicating there are two or more exact names and date of birth matches to the search criteria used – if this happens contact the Section at 360-705-5100 for further instructions;