

CHILD PROTECTION PROTOCOL

Recognizing our liability involving our volunteers who work with minors and to ensure a safe environment for all the members that we serve, it is important that the Rhode Island State Grange follow the National Grange's "*MISSION STATEMENT*" that "we provide a place where children, youth and adults can grow, develop their talents and social skills, and learn leadership techniques." In order to protect our liability and to follow our mission, a policy not only is necessary, but also in many instances is being required.

Awareness in the community of providing children with a safe environment is increasing. Parents are concerned about the welfare of their children, and want to be assured that the people working with their child are appropriate role models. Junior Grange leaders and members working with youth are in a very privileged and powerful position in their relationship with young people. The Grange needs to ensure that they respect this position and that at all times their behavior and attitude can never be accidentally construed as abusive. The Grange has a responsibility to protect all of its members, youth and adult.

It is our wish to assure the general public of the high moral character exhibited by Grangers, the Junior Grange leaders and members working with youth. We have the utmost confidence in our tireless volunteers who do an outstanding job providing programming and educational activities for our young people. However, to provide parents with a measurable standard of public safety, we have reviewed the policies in practice by other organizations and have found that, in order to protect leaders and children and provide parents with a measurable assurance, a policy should be adopted.

Following is the Rhode Island State Grange Policy Concerning Screening of Volunteers who have the potential for unsupervised contact with Junior Grangers or youth. It is our belief that through this simple process, we can clearly demonstrate with documented proof what we already know to be true, that we have confidence in the exemplary and outstanding team of Grangers working with our youth and that our adults provide sound role models for our young people to follow, posing no risk to our youth.

RHODE ISLAND STATE GRANGE SCREENING OF VOLUNTEERS POLICY

APPLICABILITY – in keeping with the established protocol, this screening policy applies to all individuals who may by the nature of their work as volunteers in the various programs of the Grange that have the potential for unsupervised contact with Junior Grangers or youth. These individuals include but may not be limited to the following positions: State Grange officers of Master, Overseer, Junior Deputy, Junior Director, and Youth Director; Junior Leaders and Assistant Leaders; also, because Washington County Pomona owns and operates a large fair with many activities for children, Fair Chairman and Children's Games/Contests Department Heads and assistants.

PROCESS – Each volunteer will be required to fully complete a Rhode Island State Grange Screening Release and Authorization Form. Refusal to submit a fully completed Screening Release and Authorization Form will be cause for immediate dismissal from the program. Screening checks serve as an important part of the selection process. The Rhode Island State Grange will process all Screening Release and Authorization Forms. The Rhode Island State Grange will ensure that all screening checks are held in compliance with applicable federal and

state statutes and remain strictly confidential. The Rhode Island State Grange will not receive a copy of the applicant's criminal background check. The Grange will only be notified whether or not there are disqualifying criminal activities on record.

DISQUALIFICATION – It is the policy of the Rhode Island State Grange that any volunteer under this screening policy found guilty in a court of law for any of the following offenses shall be disqualified to hold any volunteer position listed above. The following list of criminal activities is not considered to be all inclusive and the Rhode Island State Grange may add any criminal activity it feels would be in the best interest of the State Grange: adultery, assault/battery, burglary, child abuse/neglect, controlled substance, domestic assault, domestic violence, embezzlement, kidnapping, racketeering, rape, sexual assault, robbery, sodomy, arson, bigamy, bookmaking, manslaughter, murder, prostitution, larceny, weapons, driving while intoxicated, child molestation.

NOTE – The Rhode Island State Grange reserves the right to make the sole determination concerning information of any volunteer decision arising out of the Screening Check. In the event the screening process reveals adverse results and indicates that the individual is not fit for the volunteer position and/or to work with youth, they shall immediately be notified that they do not qualify. Under this policy “hearsay” is not disqualifying information but does require the Rhode Island State Grange to pursue and verify or discredit the information to be best of its ability with local or state policing authorities.