

## **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ADULT BACKGROUND CHECKS FOR NHYLA VOLUNTEERS**

### **Introduction**

The New Hampshire Youth Lacrosse Association (NHYLA) requires all coaches to be (at least) US Lacrosse level 1 certified. As such, all coaches are subject to the rules and requirements of US Lacrosse as they pertain to adult participation and interaction with our youth participants. Part of the US Lacrosse certification does require a background check by NCSI, initiated through US Lacrosse. Programs in NHYLA will have other volunteers that will have direct access to youth participants and it is recommended that these programs complete background checks for any member that has direct access to youth participants.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer coach or team parent, are interested in supporting youth lacrosse in your community where you will have direct access to youth participants or are a board member or administrator of a local NHYLA program, please read the following because NH is unique and there are some things you need to know.

NHYLA Rule 1.2.e requires that all head and assistant coaches be US Lacrosse level 1 certified. Rule 1.2.f requires that if an 8U or small field 10U team has a “parent helper”, that person must be a US Lacrosse member and successfully complete a background check.

### **US Lacrosse Requirements**

US Lacrosse, the national governing body for lacrosse, considers player safety to be among its highest priorities. This responsibility includes working diligently to protect athletes from abuse within the sports environment. Fueled by this commitment, US Lacrosse is adding two new requirements to all adult coach memberships -- a **national background screening** and **online SafeSport training**.

The national background check will go into effect with all coach membership purchases and renewals on and after **October 14, 2018**. The online training course will be launched on that date or soon thereafter. Both of these requirements will be provided at no additional cost to members. A coach who fails to initiate the national background screening within 10 days of joining the organization will have their membership converted to the Fan/Friend category and will not have the insurance coverage benefit. Similarly, once the SafeSport training is launched, coaches will have a specified period of time (yet to be determined) to complete the online training. Failure to meet this requirement will also result in a membership status change to the Fan/Friend category.

US Lacrosse is partnering with [NCSI \(National Center for Safety Initiatives\)](#) for the background screenings and the [U.S. Center for SafeSport](#) for the online training service. While national background checks are not a new practice at US Lacrosse – the organization has required the screenings for selected initiatives for many years – the online training requirement is driven in part by the SafeSport Authorization Act, passed earlier this year by Congress. That law seeks to protect youth athletes by expanding existing mandated reporter laws, requiring completion of abuse awareness and prevention training, and instilling policies that limit one-on-one interactions.

The paramount principal for US Lacrosse is that any and all forms of physical and sexual abuse and/or misconduct are strictly prohibited. “We have a duty to lead on this critically important issue,” said Steve Stenersen, president and CEO at US Lacrosse. “Making the transition to mandatory background screenings for member coaches, introducing required educational resources to properly train stakeholders, and developing consistent protocols and policies for local lacrosse organizations are all essential to establishing an environment that prevents predators from entering our sport.” US Lacrosse will be providing members with

additional information and details prior to the October 14 implementation date to further clarify the process for both the mandatory national background check as well as the online SafeSport training.

Launched 2013, the [US Lacrosse SafeSport initiative](#) is designed to provide safeguards against all forms of physical and sexual abuse or misconduct. As part of that initiative, US Lacrosse developed a [Standard for Athlete Safety & Protection](#), outlining both prohibited and prescribed conducts and behavior guidelines for all adult members of US Lacrosse who interact with youth.

## **New Hampshire Requirements**

As stated above, in order to be a coach and receive liability insurance through US Lacrosse, you must submit to a background check by the National Center for Safety Initiatives (NCSI), a private company. While this company has the ability to perform a National background check, its access to information in New Hampshire is limited due to the way NH funds its courts. So what does that mean to you?

The US Lacrosse Safe Sport Criminal Background Screen Policy has a list of offenses that would be disqualifying for an adult volunteer. Any felony is a disqualifier. There are other disqualifying offenses, however, that might only be misdemeanors, but are still disqualifiers.

**The problem?** The NCSI background check may not show these misdemeanors. Why? Misdemeanors are often tried at the Circuit Court level in NH. Circuit Court information is only available to outside agencies, such as NCSI, through each individual Circuit Court. It is not cost-effective for NCSI to contact each individual Circuit Court to obtain necessary information. That being the case, they only check Superior Court information. This means you might not see something that could disqualify one of your coaches and if something bad happens, your organization could be held liable for not doing due diligence on your volunteers.

**The solution?** The only central repository of Circuit Court information in NH that could show disqualifying misdemeanors is at the NH Department of Safety, Division of State Police, Criminal Records Unit in Concord. In order to have this information checked, a Criminal History Record Information Release Authorization form needs to be completed for each person being checked. The normal fee for this service is \$25, however, because most, if not all, of NHYLA's member communities are non-profit organizations or municipalities, a Reduced Fee Form for each background check can be completed, which reduces the fee to \$10 each. This background check will cover all felonies AND misdemeanors in the State of NH only. Keep in-mind that each of these forms needs to be notarized so it's very helpful if someone in your organization is a Notary Public.

To insure that you're doing your due diligence, you should be doing BOTH the NCSI check through US Lacrosse AND the NH State Police check.

**Another thing to think about...** Do any of your coaches or volunteers carpool with a bunch of players (other than their own kids) to practices or games, etc.? If so, that could open up your organization to liability if you haven't done a Driver Record Check on that volunteer. Driver Record Checks can be done by completing the NH Department of Safety's Division of Motor Vehicles Release of Motor Vehicle Records form. As with the Criminal Records check, the Motor Vehicle check form also needs to be notarized so, again, it helps if someone in your organization is a Notary Public. This check costs \$15.

## **Summary and Links**

We realize this may be a lot to absorb if you don't work with this type of information on a regular basis. If you have questions, feel free to contact Jeff King, Recreation Director for the Town of Peterborough, at [jking@peterboroughnh.gov](mailto:jking@peterboroughnh.gov) or call his office at 924-8080. Jeff and the Peterborough Recreation Department (PRD) have been involved with NHYLA since 2004. The PRD was the first municipal recreation department in NH to perform local, state, and national background checks on its volunteers. Jeff King has partnered with Jeff Kellett, the Chief Administrator of the NH Central Repository for Criminal Records, multiple times to present this information via educational seminars to municipal recreation departments via the New Hampshire Recreation and Park Association. Both are happy to help you as this whole process is about protecting children.

### **US Lacrosse Safe Sport Criminal Background Screening Policy**

<https://www.uslacrosse.org/sites/default/files/public/documents/safety/Background-Screening-Policy-2017b.pdf>

### **US Lacrosse Safe Sport Contents for Athlete Safety and Protection**

<https://www.uslacrosse.org/sites/default/files/public/documents/safety/standard-for-athlete-safety-2018.pdf>

### **NH Criminal History Record Information Release Authorization Form (DSSP256)**

<https://www.nh.gov/safety/divisions/nhsp/ssb/crimrecords/documents/dssp256.pdf>

### **NH Criminal Records Release Reduced Fee Form**

<https://www.nh.gov/safety/divisions/nhsp/ssb/crimrecords/documents/crfeform.pdf>

### **NH Release of Motor Vehicle Records Form (505)**

<https://www.nh.gov/safety/divisions/dmv/forms/documents/dsmv505.pdf>

### **NHYLA Rules (as of March 2018)**

<https://s3.amazonaws.com/files.leagueathletics.com/Text/Documents/15702/89337.pdf>