The United States Bowling Congress implemented a landmark Registered Volunteer Program to protect its youth members from those who have a history of criminal behavior. This program has had far-reaching impact on bowling centers, USBC, and thousands of volunteers who help organize and administer youth bowling activities.

The Bowling Proprietors Association of America (BPAA) has endorsed the program and recommends all bowling centers participate. USBC will consult with the BPAA on an ongoing basis on all major issues involving bowling center owners.

This program was developed following recommendations of the National Council of Youth Sports (NCYS), an umbrella organization of youth sports and social organizations representing an estimated 52 million kids nationally. USBC and NCYS share a common goal of developing a consistent national program that will discourage sexual predators from migrating from one sport to another and to eliminate the need for duplicate screening for volunteers who help with more than one sport or organization.

While the main goal is to protect today’s youth, the possibility of a damaging lawsuit if children are harmed or molested by bowling center employees or USBC volunteers is a real threat. We can minimize or eliminate that threat if we take reasonable steps to remove those people from our youth programs and establish barriers that discourage sexual predators from entering our sport.

The success of the USBC Registered Volunteer Program continues to require a high level of cooperation between USBC’s volunteers and the bowling centers they serve. USBC urges urge all bowling centers to participate in the program because it will provide a valuable service to bowling and help protect our youth.

Participation: Is It Voluntary or Mandatory?

It’s voluntary. Choosing to participate in the RVP program is an important decision the center owner/management must make. Because this is such a valuable service a center can provide to its customers, USBC encourages every bowling center to participate. However, participation is optional.

Remember, no program of this type is foolproof, but participating bowling centers can minimize, if not eliminate, claims on the basis of having taken reasonable and prudent steps to protect our members.

Each center, participating or not, is asked to complete and return a Center Enrollment Form to USBC Headquarters, indicating its decision to participate or not participate. By doing so, the proprietor acknowledges he/she was given an opportunity to offer this program and may assume responsibility if a USBC Youth member is harmed by a center employee or one of its volunteers. (By failing to complete the Center Enrollment Form, USBC may, at its discretion, deny, or revoke certification of all USBC Youth activities conducted in said center.) Participating centers are asked to
include an e-mail address on the Center Enrollment Form. This will allow USBC to communicate any news, changes or important information quickly.

Further, if a center agrees to participate in the RVP, participation will be mandatory among volunteers and center employees who have regular contact with USBC Youth bowlers.

On the other hand, if a center does not participate, the center employees and any volunteers in the center affiliated with USBC Youth programs are not required to participate in the RVP.

Proprietors will be able to request and receive detailed “red light” information for any background screens conducted for their employees, provided the bowling center paid for the screenings. This will require each proprietor to have an agreement with NCSI. Proprietors interested in this option must contact the National Center for Safety Initiatives (NCSI) at 866-833-7100. Proprietors may NOT obtain detailed “red light” information for any background screens conducted for the volunteers in their centers.

Anyone 18 years of age or older who has regular physical or verbal contact with USBC Youth bowlers, holds a position of authority or supervision over USBC Youth programs, has an opportunity to establish a position of trust, and/or has an opportunity to build a one-on-one relationship through USBC Youth programs must be a USBC Registered Volunteer.

Specific roles or positions within the USBC Youth program that require registration include:

Positions of authority:
- USBC Headquarters employees
- USBC National Board and Youth Committee members
- Local Youth association board members in non-merged associations
- Local Youth Committee members in merged associations
- Local Association Manager

Opportunity to build one-on-one relationships:
- USBC Youth league officers
- USBC Youth league or tournament coaches
- USBC Youth tournament directors
- Non-family members who serve as overnight trip chaperones
Who Must Register? - cont.

Not every bowling center employee needs to go through the Registered Volunteer Program, only those 18 years of age and older who have direct, ongoing contact with USBC Youth bowlers.

For example, the following individuals may fit this criteria:

- Youth Director
- Bowling Center Manager

However, center management may request registration for other employees.

Employees who receive a “red light” do not need to be fired from their job. The RVP only requires that persons with a “red light” status not be involved in USBC Youth activities.

Disqualification Rules

Criminal offenses that disqualify an individual from participation in USBC Youth programs are derived from guidelines developed by the National Council of Youth Sports (NCYS). The NCYS considers these criteria to be consistent with the principles of the federal PROTECT Act of 2003. These serve as the basis for the screen criteria used by NCSI in making a “green light” or “red light” determination for USBC volunteers.

A “green light” means no disqualifying disclosure, offense pending disposition, or criminal record has been found in an individual’s background screening. A “red light” determination will result in disqualification of an individual from any involvement with USBC Youth programs. Disclosures, offenses pending disposition or convictions for any of the following offenses will result in a “red light” determination. Further investigation will be required when no record of the individual can be found, information provided by the individual is missing or inaccurate, or the individual refuses to provide the required information. Failure to satisfy required information will result in a “red light” determination.

The criteria against which volunteers and applicable employees will be measured are:

R1 Any crime in an applicant’s lifetime involving force or threat of force against a person.

R2 Any crime in an applicant’s lifetime in which sexual relations is an element, including “victimless crimes of a sexual nature (including pornography).

R3 Any crime involving controlled substances (not paraphernalia or alcohol) as follows:
   a. Lifetime for crime involving distribution, manufacture, or sale of controlled substance(s).
   b. Prior 10 years for crime involving personal possession and/or consumption.

R4 Any crime in an applicant’s lifetime involving cruelty to animals.

R5 Any crime in an applicant’s lifetime involving harm to a minor.
Disqualification Rules - cont.

R6  Any felony punishable by confinement or probation for greater than one year, within the prior 10 years, that is not included in R1 through R5.
   a. Defined on the basis of exposure for the offense for which the defendant was convicted, pled guilty or pled nolo contendere. If pled down, then the crime to which the defendant ultimately pled.
   b. Defined as all crimes punishable by greater than one year in jail or prison, or probation, regardless of how characterized by jurisdiction. If range, alternate sentencing, outer range greater than one year.

Additionally, the following information will result in further investigation involving the applicant and the appropriate courts, which will lead to a determination of either a “red light” or a “green light”:
   a. Expunctions, restorations of rights, or pardons of a criterion offense;
   b. Any charge involving a child resulting in a disposition favorable to the applicant; or
   c. Arrest(s) or conviction(s) where it is not readily apparent if drugs or alcohol is involved unless it is a felony conviction as defined in R6.

Local Bowling Center Responsibility
1. Read this RVP Bowling Center’s Guide.
2. Complete, the Center Enrollment Form and return to USBC Headquarters. Fax – (817)385-8260.
3. Assign a point person who will determine who needs to enroll. The center’s point person should have final authority.
5. Ensure any employee, coach or volunteer 18 years of age or older who has regular physical or verbal contact with USBC Youth bowlers register as a USBC Registered Volunteer.
6. Monitor and ensure RVP badges are worn and remove any “not approved” volunteer from activity with USBC Youth bowlers.

Action taken against any disqualified or unregistered person is the center’s responsibility.

National Center for Safety Initiatives Responsibility
1. Conduct the background screens.
2. Review the criminal history records.
3. Make the “green light” / “red light” determination.
5. Notify USBC and the disqualified volunteer of “red light” determinations.
6. Secure the personal information in accordance with Fair Credit Reporting Act.
7. Send employee “red light” investigation reports to proprietors who request the reports.
USBC Headquarters Responsibility

1. Implement the program uniformly throughout the organization.
2. Develop and distribute administrative guidelines and materials.
3. Provide ongoing communications with USBC associations, volunteers and centers.
4. Notify the “green light” volunteers of acceptance as Registered Volunteers with a welcome letter along with an ID badge and a lanyard.
5. Send automatic renewal notices two years after the date of registration.
6. Work with the National Council of Youth Sports to encourage development of a national database and standardized national volunteer registration program.

Resources

Bowl.com, USBC’s official Website, includes additional materials pertaining to the USBC Registered Volunteer Program such as:

- **USBC Registered Volunteer Program FAQs** – This document provides answers to frequently asked questions.
- **USBC Registered Volunteer Program Rules and Policies** – This document discusses those who must be registered, as well as, specific criteria that will result in “red light” (disqualifying) back ground screens.
- **USBC Registered Volunteer Program Code of Conduct** – This document lists prohibited and recommended behavior for any one involved with USBC Youth programs.
- **USBC Registered Volunteer Program Letter to Parents** – This letter can be used by centers, and personalized, to inform parents of the centers participation in the RVP Program to protect their youth.