



The Blue Card System

Queensland

Background

The purpose of the blue card system is to contribute to the creation of safe and supportive environments for children and young people when receiving services and participating in activities which are essential to their development and wellbeing, such as child care, education, sport, and cultural activities.

While many people are familiar with the blue card itself, it is important to be aware that the initial blue card screening is only the first component of a three part system which considers past, present, and future risks:

- Blue card screening to determine a person's eligibility to work with children and young people based on their known past behaviour
- Ongoing monitoring of all blue card holders and applicants which enables action to be taken to protect children and young people if the person is charged with a concerning offence, and
- Mitigating future risk through the requirement for organisations providing child related services to develop and implement child and youth risk management strategies.

Blue card screening

This assesses a person's eligibility to hold a blue card or exemption card based on their known past police and disciplinary information. This process also disqualifies certain people upfront and prevents people from working with children whose past behaviour indicates they are not eligible to enter regulated child-related employment.

Ongoing monitoring

The police information of all card holders and applicants is monitored. If the information changes, immediate steps can be taken to protect children from harm. Service providers and card holders are also monitored to ensure they are meeting their blue card system obligations and providing safe environments for children.

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Child and youth risk management strategies

Organisations who provide child-related services must have policies and procedures in place to identify and minimise the risk of harm to children. These risk management strategies are monitored and must be reviewed annually.

What is the difference between a Blue Card Check and a Police Check?

The Blue Card Check (also known as a Working with Children Check) and a Police Check are two different checks.

The Blue Card Check is an ongoing assessment of a person's eligibility to work or volunteer with children and involves a check of a person's national criminal history (including all spent convictions, pending and non-conviction charges) and other disciplinary and police information.

The Police Check is only current on the day of issue and is a list of offences from a person's criminal history which can be disclosed. It does not involve an assessment by a government agency.

Find out the main differences between a Blue Card Check and Police Check - <https://www.bluecard.qld.gov.au/faqs/general-faqs.html#Differences14>

What is an exemption card?

If you are a registered teacher or police officer in Queensland, you do not apply for a blue card and should instead apply for an exemption card when providing regulated services to children which are outside of your professional duties.

More information about exemption cards can be found on the [Police Officers Information Sheet](#) (PDF, 310KB) and [Registered Teachers Information Sheet](#) (PDF, 399KB).

What is a risk management strategy?

Safe environments don't just happen, they require ongoing planning, commitment and maintenance. Organisations falling within the scope of the blue card system are required to implement child and youth risk management strategies which address eight minimum requirements. The purpose of these strategies is to ensure that organisations have appropriate policies and procedures in place which assist in identifying and minimising the risk of harm to children and young people in regulated service environments.

Read more about [Child and youth risk management strategies](#).

Who has to apply?

To apply for a blue card, a person must be employed (either in a paid or voluntary capacity) in a category of regulated child-related employment.

The application form requires the employer's details and a nominated contact person from the organisation. The employer has the responsibility of verifying the employee's identity and must complete a declaration on the form that they have verified the applicant's identity by sighting the relevant identification documents.

Volunteers

Volunteers who work with children and young people must hold a blue card if their work falls into a category of regulated [employment](#), regardless of how often they will come into contact with children and young people, unless an exemption applies. Examples of when you require a blue card are:

- A volunteer coach or coaches' assistant of a junior sporting team, e.g. a coach at the local cricket or soccer club.
- A volunteer trainer, e.g. a trainer preparing nippers for a surf lifesaving competition.
- A chaperone for a junior sports team on an interstate or international trip, e.g. a grandparent acting as a chaperone for a junior hockey team on a trip.
- A volunteer supporting athletes at a junior swimming meet.
- A volunteer member of a board/committee for a community organisation which provides regulated activities for children e.g. the local football club.

Paid employees

Paid employees need a blue card if their work in [sport](#) or [active recreation](#) includes, or is likely to include, providing services that are directed mainly towards children, or conducting activities that mainly involve children, for at least:

- eight consecutive days, or
- once a week, each week, over four weeks, or
- once a fortnight, each fortnight, over eight weeks, or
- once a month, each month, over six months

unless an exemption applies.

Paid employees who work with a church, club or association may need a blue card and may apply under the '[Churches, clubs and associations involving children](#)' category of regulated employment.

Examples of people who need a blue card...

- Paid entertainers running games and activities with children at birthday parties, or
- Paid photographers taking photographs of children at a sporting event.

Blue cards for paid employees are valid for three years and the prescribed application fee is \$84.25.

A paid employee can commence regulated child-related work **once** their application is lodged with Blue Card Services.

Certain people are prohibited from applying for or renewing a blue card. Find out more [information about disqualified persons](#) (PDF, 428KB).

Business operators

Business operators must hold a blue card before commencing work if their work falls into a category of regulated business.

Your employees and volunteers may also require a blue card. For more information about your obligations as a business operator please refer to the Obligations for regulated organisations information sheet on the Blue Card Services website. Examples of when a business owner requires a blue card are:

- A business operator providing private coaching services to children or targeted child-related sports activities, e.g. a learn to swim school or a martial arts centre which trains junior martial artists to compete at junior championships.
- You are a personal trainer and a parent engages you to provide one-on-one personal training sessions to their child.
- A remedial massage therapist providing massage services to children.
- An executive officer of a company providing sports services to children on a commercial basis.

Business operators must also implement child and youth risk management strategies. This includes policies and procedures aimed at identifying and minimising potential risks of harm to young people, including codes of conduct, procedures for recruiting and managing staff and volunteers, as well as policies for reporting disclosures or suspicions of harm to children.

What does a blue card check cover?

A blue card check is a detailed national check of a person's criminal history, including any charges or convictions.

Also considered is disciplinary information held by certain professional organisations and, in certain circumstances, police investigative information about allegations of serious child-related sexual offending.

Who doesn't need a blue card?

You will not require a blue card if you are a volunteer parent and your child is receiving the service you are providing.

Certain people are prohibited from applying for or renewing a blue card. Find out more about [people who are disqualified from applying for a blue card](#).

A paid employee can commence regulated child-related work **once** their application is lodged with Blue Card Services.

Blue cards for paid employees are valid for three years and the prescribed application fee is \$84.25.

If you don't require screening under this category, you might still need screening under another. Please check all categories.

Are there penalties for not conducting the blue card check?

Yes, there are a range of penalties for not complying with the Commission's Act. Some offences may incur a fine of up to \$60,950 or up to five years imprisonment.

For a full list of employer and employee obligations under the Act please refer to <https://www.bluecard.qld.gov.au/offences-and-penalties.html>

Are there exemptions?

Volunteers do not need a blue card if they are:

- A volunteer parent coaching at the local sports club and their child is playing at the club
- A canteen operator at the sports ground where junior sports are played
- A team member over the age of 18 which includes a person under the age of 18
- A volunteer coach under the age of 18
- A student under the age of 18

Paid employees do not need a blue card if they are:

- A mentor for a coach of a junior sporting organisation and your role is focused on the professional development of the head coach and your duties do not involve contact with children
- An employee of a surf school providing services to the general public and a child attends with a parent.

Business operators do not need a blue card if they are:

- A personal trainer running boot camp classes for the general public and a child attends with their parent.
- A registered health practitioner providing health services to athletes under the age of 18, e.g. a physiotherapist treating a junior athlete.

NOTE: This is not an exhaustive list and even though one category may not apply, you may still require a blue card under an alternative category.

What are the requirements for visitors from other states/territories?

Under the Commission's Act, there is no exemption or provision that deals specifically with interstate visitors. However there are exemptions within certain categories of regulated employment or business that might apply to interstate visitors providing services to children in Queensland.

If you intend to visit Queensland to provide child-related services, you are encouraged to check the categories of regulated employment and regulated business to see if you need a blue card or whether an exemption might apply to you.

Action

Where can apply for a blue card?

Contact the QLD Government Blue Card Services -
<http://www.bluecard.qld.gov.au/contact.html>

This means that if you engage in more than one regulated activity, the one blue card can be used for each activity. You don't need to submit more than one application.

Resources

Where can I get further information or resources?

There are many Information Sheets and general resources on the Blue Card Services website - <https://www.bluecard.qld.gov.au/info-sheets.html>

You can call Blue Card Services direct on
1800 113 611 (free call) or **07 3211 6999** between **8:00am-5:00pm, Monday to Friday**.

Alternatively, general information is available from the Commission's website at
www.bluecard.qld.gov.au.