

Rivers West District Expanded Voluntary Self-Identification Frequently Asked Questions - A Resource for Member Organizations

1. What is voluntary self-identification?

Self-identification refers to the voluntary, confidential, self-described declaration of heritage or identity. In 2007, Provincial Sport Governing Bodies and other affiliate members of Sask Sport Inc. (Sask Sport) were influential in implementing Voluntary Aboriginal Self-Identification. This process assisted members in better understanding Indigenous participation within their sport and to support enhanced servicing.

2. Is it discriminatory to ask about heritage?

No. Under the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, it is not a discriminatory practice to collect information if it is intended to enhance one's experience. It can be used in adopting or carrying out a special program, plan, or arrangement designed to eliminate discrimination of groups of individuals (*Canadian Human Rights Act*, 2004, Section 16 (3)).

3. Are organizations allowed to ask these questions?

Sask Sport has consulted with the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission in this regard and received confirmation that Sask Sport, and its members, are not prohibited by The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code from inviting participants to voluntarily identify personal information. The Commission did caution that once information is gathered, it cannot be used in a way that might constitute a prohibited preference. In this case, one may not be excluded and/or specifically sought out because of their: religion, creed, marital status, family status, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, colour, ancestry, nationality, place of origin, race or perceived race, receipt of public assistance, and/or gender identity. Therefore, it is well-advised that membership processes make clear that information is voluntary and will be used to enhance inclusion, not be used for prohibited preference, as per The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code.

4. Will this information be kept confidential?

The Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA) as outlined by the Federal government explains how personal information can and cannot be used, stored and/or shared. Information is to be held in confidence; a limited number of specific personnel have access to a member's registration. General numbers which are reflective of overall membership demographics may be shared but this will not include individuals' personal information.

5. Why has voluntary self-identification been expanded to include additional options for member identification?

Changing societal norms have resulted in a desire for individuals to have the opportunity to self-identify in a meaningful way. The enhanced Voluntary Self-Identification provides an opportunity for members to identify as they choose and organizations to better understand their membership.

6. How has the voluntary self-identification been expanded?

Sask Sport recommends that member organizations make changes to the collection of personal data and information in the following areas:

Gender Identification- Where organizations are currently tracking gender within membership applications, expand existing options to include an option to self-describe

gender.

Heritage- Include options for members to identify as First Nation, Métis, Inuit, Newcomer, as well as an option to self-describe heritage.

Disability- Provide an opportunity for members to identify as an individual with a disability or to self-describe.

7. Can individuals identify in more than one area?

Yes, if an individual feels that they are represented within multiple categories, and wish to disclose this information, they are more than welcome to.

8. What if a member does not want to self-identify?

This is **100% voluntary**. If a member chooses not to self-identify, that is their right. They should feel no additional pressure to declare any information they do not wish to.

9. Why is this information beneficial to collect?

Providing the community with the option to self-identify supports an inclusive and welcoming environment across the sport system. Including the option for an individual to self-describe is a signal to individuals that your organization is an inclusive environment in which all are welcome.

10. Where can applicable definitions for the expanded self-identification terminology be found?

Definitions of the terms used with the expanded self-identification document are provided within the **Sample Voluntary Self-Identification resource**. They can also be found at <http://www.sasksport.sk.ca/resources.php>.

11. Is there a need to have individuals self-identify every year?

This is dependent on the type of registration system that an organization uses and will need to be discussed with the specific provincial sport governing body, or other organizations, that individuals are registering with.

12. What if the numbers being reported are not 100% accurate?

While no data will ever be 100% accurate, the new, expanded, voluntary self-identification will provide organizations with knowledge that they can use to better understand their membership. It also provides information in areas identified as strategic priorities.

13. Who is responsible for educating member organizations and individual members?

It is important for member organizations to further educate their clubs and individual members. In support, Sask Sport has created three resources that will assist in this process. The first is a sample **Frequently Asked Questions** document that supports discussions around the expanded self-identification within a provincial organization. The second is a **Sample Resource that can be given to Individuals** upon registration that may ease any hesitation they feel with self-identifying. Individuals may feel uncomfortable self-identifying because they are unsure how the information will be used and stored, whether it will be shared, or may fear that they will be treated differently if they choose to self-identify. This document is meant to educate and ease these concerns. The third and final supporting resource is the **Sample Voluntary Self-Identification**, containing the sample expanded self-identification questions and the applicable definitions of terms used.