

Balloon Federation of America

BFA Youth Program - To ensure the Future of Ballooning

YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY - FAQ

What is the BFA's Youth Protection Program?

It is a comprehensive program based on the BFA's Youth Protection Policy, which sets basic requirements for BFA Youth Program Activity staff and volunteers who work with youth under age 18. The program requires training and background checks and includes standards to assure the safety of young participants in every BFA Youth Program Activity.

What is the purpose of the Program?

BFA has established the Program to institute and maintain high youth protection standards for BFA Youth Program Activity staff and all volunteers who work with youth. We must earn and sustain the confidence of the families who have trusted their youth to us. It is intended to be a "best practices" program for the benefit and protection of youth and volunteers.

Why is this needed?

Youth are relatively unskilled, innocent, and vulnerable. When participating in learning and growth opportunities, they require protection against injuries arising from their own or others' lack of skill and experience, or in rare cases from intentional mistreatment. BFA's Youth Protection Program is intended to address these concerns, with parental awareness and consent.

Who is the company doing the background check? Can I trust them?

AmericanChecked <http://americanchecked.com/> is a nationally accredited background check company who provides secure screening services to a variety of industries. The U.S. Forest Service, as well as colleges, public school systems, and businesses of every size utilize its services. The BFA believes they will provide outstanding service while treating our volunteers' data with the utmost security and sensitivity.

How is my data protected once it is submitted?

Your data is never shared with any outside vendor at any time. The highest levels of security are also maintained at all levels.

Who will be affected?

All BFA Youth Program Activity Staff acting in supervisory roles with youth are required to adhere to the BFA Youth protection policy and its standards.

What is involved?

Participation is easy. Once you have volunteered as BFA Youth Program Activity Staff you will be asked to complete training and then a secure background check. The program also provides standards for supervision, parental and guardian involvement, contact with youth, prohibited activities including use of hazardous materials or dangerous equipment, discipline, reporting, records, and others.

How long will the background check take to complete?

After information is submitted for the background check, we expect verification to take no more than 10 business days.

How often will I have to do this?

All Staff will participate in activity specific training on a yearly basis. This allows us to help our staff and volunteers stay up to date on best practices into the future. Background check requirements vary state by state and will be required at a minimum of every three years.

Who is paying for the background checks?

BFA is paying all costs connected with the administration of the Youth Protection Program.

How will I be able to prove that I have completed the requirements in this program?

Upon successful completion of the background check, each volunteer will receive an email confirming he or she has successfully met the basic requirements of the BFA Youth Protection Program. Confirmation of your completion will be sent to the BFA. The BFA will maintain those records permanently.

Do I have to supply my Social Security Number (SSN) as part of the background check?

No, that is optional and entirely your choice. Providing your SSN will speed the process and ensure accuracy of the information. AmericanChecked takes extraordinary measures to protect this information if you supply it. You will be contacted by BFA if additional information is needed to successfully complete your registration.

Does this indicate suspicion of our volunteers?

Not at all. The BFA Youth Protection Program follows current best practices for protection of youth in learning and growth activities. The process should give peace of mind to parents and guardians of children in the program. It is like the standards established in other youth programs throughout the country.

What if I do not complete the program requirements by the deadline?

If you are a BFA Youth Program Activity staff volunteer in a role that requires youth protection training and a background check, and do not successfully complete the requirements, you will not be able to participate in the BFA Youth Program Activity until you are able to complete the requirements.

What if the background check reports something incorrect and rejects my application? Will I be able to see the contents of the background check to correct the record?

BFA and the background check administrator are taking every precaution to confirm that all information is current and correct. If a reporting error has occurred, contact the BFA Youth Chair or the BFA Office immediately. We will work with you to quickly correct any error that may have occurred.

Who should we contact in case we have further questions?

Please email YouthPrograms@BFA.net with any further questions