

## **SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE GROUPS ACT (SVGA) 2006**

Recent events have brought this aspect of our lives into prominence once again. Unfortunately yet again it involves legislation as does every facet of life these days.

This latest piece of legislation does, of course, follow on from the Criminal Records Bureau programme introduced a few years ago.

Some Clubs and Societies have sought external advice and been advised to make use of CRB checks as a means of demonstrating the group's duty of care. In some cases this has proved to be a wise decision, highlighting potential problems for the future. Others have relied on the honesty of individuals and recommendations.

The new Independent Safeguarding Authority, established towards the end of 2009 will incorporate the existing CRB checks. A new CRB form will be introduced later this year and will constitute part of the new scheme. This scheme applies to England, Wales and Northern Ireland and becomes fully implemented on 1<sup>st</sup> November, 2010. A parallel scheme is being developed for Scotland under the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007. Anyone on the Barred List in Scotland will be barred from working with children & vulnerable adults across the UK.

One of the new definitions included defines the type of activity being carried out. For most model engineering situations groups could fall into the regulated category. The Guidelines, however, indicate that "hobby societies" where the activities are open to the general public will not be a "regulated activity" and therefore fall outside the scope of the legislation. (As a word of caution, advice needs to be sought where some sessions might be considered closed, i.e. for club or society members only, as this may change the activity to "regulated". In this case the group may need to become a registered body and the members apply for an individual ISA registration.) There is no ISA Registration charge for volunteers.

One significant change is that the registration, unlike the CRB, does not need to be renewed when a "job" changes, though subsequent RAP (Registered Activity Provider) will be able to request information on line.

In general it is not possible to give definitive information to any one individual group. Rather as an initial step each group/society should carry out risk assessments for this and other aspects of their activities and have the findings written down. These notes will always be useful and could help decision making.

In addition there may be an association of voluntary service groups in your local area (this is not Social Services) and these should be able to give you further help, or at least indicate where suitable professional advice can be obtained.

There is some good information available about these new regulations and their implementation and some are listed below.

Websites: [www.direct.gov.uk/vetting](http://www.direct.gov.uk/vetting)  
[www.isa.gov.org.uk](http://www.isa.gov.org.uk)  
[www.isa.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.isa.homeoffice.gov.uk)  
[www.crb.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.crb.homeoffice.gov.uk)

Northern Ireland: [www.dhsspsni.gov.uk](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk)  
Wales: [www.wales.gov.uk](http://www.wales.gov.uk)

Information line 0300 123 1111

A booklet (76pp) The Vetting and Barring Scheme Guidance March 2010 has been published by H.M. Government. ISBN: 978-1-84987-202-7 and may be downloaded at:  
[http://www.isa.gov.org.uk/PDF/VBS\\_guidance\\_ed1\\_2010.pdf](http://www.isa.gov.org.uk/PDF/VBS_guidance_ed1_2010.pdf)