Essential Volunteer Policies and Procedures



Guide

Creating written policies and procedures is good practice for volunteer-involving organisations. They provide clarity about the rights, responsibilities, and expectations of volunteers.

Make policies work for you

Volunteer groups and organisations of any size can benefit from writing down their policies and procedures. Such documents do not need to be long or cover every aspect of what you do. Rather, for key issues, think about:

- your general approach to the issue
- who the issue specifically affects
- who is responsible for dealing with it
- what steps should be followed

Where possible, use clear plain language without abbreviations or other terms that people may not be familiar with.

Provide clear information

Policies and procedures provide clear guidance on the expectations of an organisation. Make sure volunteers are made aware of the policies which affect them, preferably when they start volunteering or are inducted into the organisation. Ensure that they feel comfortable clarifying any questions they might have, asking for further support (e.g. training) and providing feedback about the policies. These are 'living' documents that rely on the input of the people that they affect to remain useful and relevant.

By highlighting your policies and procedures, you make volunteers aware of them. This shows that your organisation has thought through its response to issues that affect them and their work.

If things go wrong, you will have an agreed starting point to resolve issues in everyone's best interest.

Policies and procedures work together

A policy states what is required. It is a document that outlines an organisation's clear expectations with respect to standards of behaviour and performance. It provides clear guidelines and boundaries.

A procedure states how by providing detailed information on the process that employees and volunteers can refer to when a certain situation arises.

Determine which policies

Policies and procedures govern the 'why' and 'how' for activities in your organisation. They provide a standard for everyone to follow and give information on key areas. They are also an important part of risk management and can provide a basis for performance management processes. The policies and procedures required for your organisation depend on the types of programs and services you deliver.

We have provided many helpful guides on our website, such as:

- The principles of volunteering
- Recruiting volunteers
- Volunteer screening
- » Orientation for new volunteers
- Managing volunteers for retention
- Dealing with conflict

- Sexual harassment
- Protecting privacy for volunteers
- Confidentiality and intellectual property
- Insurance and liability
- Health and safety

Your organisation could consider implementing policies and procedures on the following topics to guide workplace operations, interactions, and behaviour. You may also require other policies for issues specific to your operations.

Some questions or prompts are provided as a starting point only:

Rights and Responsibilities

Organisational and volunteer rights and responsibilities

Insurance

What is and is not covered under insurance?

Dress Code

What dress code is expected?

Intellectual Property

Do volunteers give over rights to their intellectual property?

Recruitment and Selection

Note if volunteers will be engaging with vulnerable people

Volunteer Agreement

Is there a standard volunteer agreement?

Induction and Onboarding

What induction is provided for new volunteers?

Training and Support

What training is provided to volunteers?

Wellbeing

Do volunteers have access to counselling?

Supervision and Peer Support

Mechanisms to network and debrief with others?

Coaching and Mentoring

Is mentoring or coaching provided?

Security

How are volunteers protected?

Incident and Injury Reporting

What incidents need to be reported? How are they reported?

Reimbursement

What out-of-pocket expenses are reimbursed?

Media and Communications

Media interviews and use of social media

Use of Private Motor Vehicle

Is comprehensive car insurance needed? Cover for any accidents?

Records Management

Are volunteers reporting or archiving? How are personal records stored?

Best practice

Australian best practices in volunteer management have developed over time. This is exemplified in the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement, a best practice framework to guide volunteer involvement. The National Standards can be used flexibly, recognising that volunteering takes place in highly diverse settings and ways.

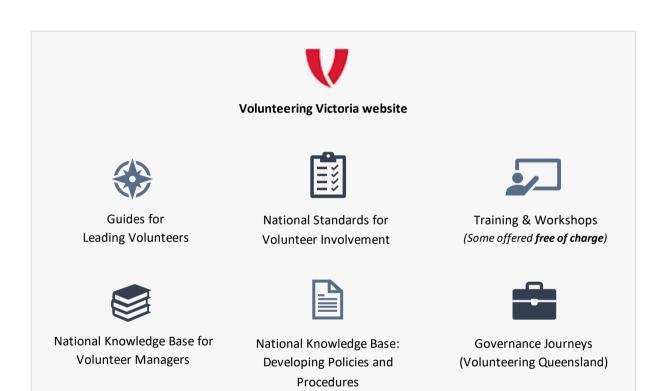
Further information

As Victoria's peak body for volunteering, you can always come to us for reliable resources and advice. Below are some helpful links and resources to continue your understanding of *Essential Volunteer Policies and Procedures*.

» The <u>Volunteering Victoria website</u> is your go-to resource for all things volunteering, with timely and reliable support, training, resources, and expert advice.

Can't find what you're looking for?

Contact the Volunteering Victoria team at info@volunteeringvictoria.org.au anytime with your questions.



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