

# Essential Volunteer Policies and Procedures

**Writing policies and procedures is good practice for organisations that work with volunteers. 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.

For key issues, think about:

- » Your general approach to the issue.
- » Who the issue impacts directly.
- » Who is responsible for dealing with the issue.
- » What steps should be followed.

Where possible, use clear plain language without words that people may not be familiar with.

## **Provide clear information**

Policies and procedures guide people on the expectations of an organisation. Make sure you provide your volunteers with the policies which affect them. It is best to do this when they start volunteering or are inducted into the organisation. Make sure they feel comfortable to ask questions and give you support about the policies and that they can ask for support or training. These documents should be updated regularly so that they are relevant.

Keep talking about your policies and procedures so that your volunteers are aware of them. This shows that your organisation is prepared to deal with 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 is a document that explains what behaviour and performance is required and expected.** It provides clear guidelines and boundaries.

**A procedure says how** staff and volunteers should act in each situation when it arises.

## **Determine which policies**

Policies and procedures explain how things are done in your organisation and why. They depend on the types of programs and services you deliver.

Policies and procedures:

- » Provide important information and a standard for everyone.
- » Play an important part of risk management.
- » Can help with performance management processes.

Our website has many helpful guides, for example:

- » 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 implement policies and procedures on the following topics to guide workplace operations, interactions and behaviour. You may need other policies for issues specific to your organisation.

These 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 have rights to their intellectual property?*
- » **Recruitment and Selection**  
*Will volunteers be working with vulnerable people?*
- » **Volunteer Agreement**  
*Is there a standard volunteer agreement?*
- » **Induction and Onboarding**  
*What induction is there for new volunteers?*
- » **Training and Support**  
*What training is there to volunteers?*
- » **Wellbeing**  
*Can volunteers get counselling?*
- » **Supervision and Peer Support**  
*How do people network and debrief with others?*
- » **Coaching and Mentoring**  
*Is there mentoring or coaching?*
- » **Security**  
*How are volunteers protected?*
- » **Incident and Injury Reporting**  
*What incidents must be reported? How is it done?*
- » **Reimbursement**  
*What expenses are paid back?*
- » **Media and Communications**  
*Media interviews and use of social media.*
- » **Use of Private Motor Vehicle**  
*Is comprehensive car insurance needed? Is cover for any accidents needed?*
- » **Records Management**  
*Are volunteers reporting or archiving? How are personal records stored?*

## Best practice

Volunteering takes place in different settings and ways. Australian best practices in volunteer management have developed over time. The [National Standards for Volunteer Involvement](#) guides volunteer involvement. The National Standards can be used flexibly.

## Further information

As Victoria's peak body for volunteering, you can always come to us for information and advice. Below are some helpful links and resources to learn more about *Essential Volunteer Policies and Procedures*.

- » The [Volunteering Victoria website](#) has timely and reliable support, training, resources and advice.

### Can't find what you're looking for?

Contact the Volunteering Victoria team at [info@volunteeringvictoria.org.au](mailto:info@volunteeringvictoria.org.au) anytime with your questions.

