



VOLUNTEERS' RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Every volunteer has the **RIGHT** -

1 To be satisfied with their volunteer role

Consideration should be given to preferences, experience and personality. If you feel ready for new tasks, it is advised to approach the supervisor and discuss options. The supervisor needs to be aware of the volunteer's skills.

2 To be treated as a co-worker

To have support and respect from co-workers (paid workers and volunteers), and to share appropriate responsibilities with them. Know what is expected – check and obey the rules and regulations of the organization

3 To be treated fairly

Volunteers have the right to orientation, guidance, direction, and regular evaluation. As well, the right to make suggestions and respect shown when offers an opinion.

4 To receive adequate information and a clear role description

If working for a service the right to know as much as possible about their policies, programs, and consumer group. A written role description outlining duties can be provided. You need to have a general idea of what is expected of you. If in doubt, ask questions. Not every role has set rules, but general guidelines should be available in case of emergencies that sometimes call for a quick decision. Information regarding correct procedures to follow in the case of mishaps or accidents is also important.

5 To orientation and education

An effective orientation by the organisation allows the volunteer to decide if h/she with fit it! Training can include an introduction to the skills required, continuing education and on-the-role supervision and feedback. Orientation and training should be a prerequisite for an organisation starting a voluntary program. If the organisation cannot provide adequate orientation, in the form of supervision and training, then they should wait until they can. Education allows volunteers to be much more confident about becoming a volunteer.

6 To protection

Organisations need to have insurance policies to cover volunteers in case of accidents whilst volunteering. It is useful to know exactly what the policy covers and this information should be accessible to the volunteer. Occupational Health & Safety Policies and mandatory training policies also exist to protect staff in the performance of their duties. Volunteers must adhere to these policies where they exist.

7 To a variety of experiences

The right to ask for a new role when you feel ready to move on. To feel comfortable enough with your supervisor to be able to discuss your options. It is recommended that you start working minimal hours. For example: 3 to 5 hours one day a week and then, if you are enjoying your work, approach your supervisor advising that you have some more free time available and they could utilise your skills on other days if they have a need you could fill. Give yourself at least 3 to 4 weeks to see what your tasks will be and to get used to your environment, before you decide if the role is not for you.

8 To get recognition

Examples of recognition include: genuine thanks for volunteer effort, receiving an award or certificate, or being promoted to another role. All volunteers deserve some form of 'thanks' for the work they do. Volunteers need to be "asked" rather than "told". Volunteers can be introduced to staff when first starting and be introduced to new staff when they commence work.

9 To know why – if seen to be unsuitable for a task

If you are not performing a role well, volunteers need to be told what it is they are not doing. This should be done as soon as possible, and in a way that also takes into consideration what is being done well.

10 To say "NO"

Volunteers have the right to know what tasks are expected and to say 'no' if they feel uncomfortable doing them. Saying 'no' can be difficult. Receiving a clear definition of what is expected in the initial stages ie. A written role description will make it easier to say 'no'.

Every volunteer has the *RESPONSIBILITY* -

1 To be dependable

It is very frustrating when people make promises they can't or don't keep. Being reliable is very important.

2 To be willing to learn

Find out all that you can about the role and attend training programs when offered.

3 To be patient

If working with people who have special needs, allow them as much independence as possible. Don't take over – independence is important for some people. Try to be aware of special needs ie. Walking or hearing difficulties.

4 To keep information confidential

The things that you learn about people, on or off site, should be kept to yourself. Discuss client difficulties with your supervisor or a nominated person.

5 To speak up

Give suggestions to people that you work with and ask about things that seem unclear. Don't keep your problems to yourself. It is important to speak up and ask questions if unsure. Having a 'buddy' or support person can be helpful within the organisation.

6 To work as part of the team

When working with other people, no one individual is the 'star performer' – everyone is equal. Keep a good working relationship with workmates. Co-operation and expectations should apply to volunteers and paid workers alike.

7 To be open minded

Respect other people's opinions, even if you don't agree with them. Don't try and make people accept your views and standards. If you don't agree with the organisation's philosophies, aims and goals, it is a good idea to acknowledge this and decide whether or not to work with them.

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A Community Services initiative of Wollongong City Council funded and supported by the Commonwealth Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA), NSW Department of Community Services (DOCS) & DADHC Home and Community Care Program