

The Delta Mill Society



Volunteer Management

Information Regarding the
Recruitment and Use of
Volunteers

DMS Volunteer Committee –
Revised May 2015

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Volunteer Management

From the boardroom to the lowest rungs of the organizational ladder, volunteers provide time, knowledge, and skills that help the DMS accomplish more with limited resources. The economic advantages of using volunteers are compounded by the range of other capabilities they can bring to an organization: ethnic diversity and languages, professional skills, ability to provide additional dimensions of service to clients that could not otherwise be contemplated, creativity, energy and ingenuity, diversity of knowledge, connection to communities, and access to a broad network of families, friends and other contacts.

Volunteering is the most fundamental act of citizenship and philanthropy in our society. It is offering time, energy, and skills of your own free will. Volunteers affect virtually every aspect of society including health, education, social services, youth, sports and recreation, culture, the arts, and the environment. By celebrating the efforts of volunteers, we create opportunities to raise awareness about the vital contribution they have made-and continue to make-to Canadian communities and society as a whole.

Benefits of Volunteering

- Meet new people
- Cultivate personal growth
- Gain new experiences
- Take on new challenges
- Get a new perspective on your own problems
- Feel good and build self-esteem.
- Fulfill the need to be needed.
- Take pride in sharing your knowledge and abilities
- Keep your body active.
- Keep your mind active.
- Stay healthy
- Volunteer involvement strengthens communities.

We need to be mindful that

- Volunteers can choose the number of hours they donate. This, in addition to their different motivations, means matching volunteers to appropriate assignments is important.
- Because we use different types of volunteers for different types of volunteer assignments, volunteer recruitment activities and policies should be geared to the DMS's specific needs.
- Just because someone has indicated they would like to volunteer, does not mean you do not have to ask them. If you do not ask them, they will assume their services are not required with your organization, and find another that needs them.
- We lead very busy lives, and so do our volunteers. You need to be very clear about what the job is, when they need to arrive, and how long they will be required to be working.
- Volunteer assignments that require continuity, such as those with a long learning curve or relationship building with a group or an individual client will require recruitment for long-term commitment and reliability.

- Remember that volunteering is a two-way deal. We get an individual's time and talents but in exchange, the volunteer has needs he or she wishes to fulfill (see above).

For volunteers, appreciation is sometimes the only thing that motivates them to come in the first place and to continue to contribute. While for some individuals, it is enough to know they are contributing, for many, the overt recognition or expression of appreciation is the way that they achieve that good feeling.

How to create a rewarding and SAFE volunteer experience

Ensure tasks are well defined

Doing a little of this and a little of that or worse yet, putting in time doing "whatever", creates uncertainty in your volunteer about what to do or how to do it. These are opportunities for exposure to a wide variety of hazards and a high risk of injury. Ideally, a written "job description" with full instructions helps everyone understand the requirements of the job and what is expected. Carefully matching the task to the individual will also help to reduce the risk of injury.

Let them have some choice in selecting tasks

Assigning tasks that you and the volunteer have discussed not only helps the volunteer pick a task that interests them, it gives them an chance to select tasks that may help them develop skills and knowledge they think will help them in their career path. If they are doing a task that they like to do and fully understand, they will have a comfort level that should eliminate the typical feeling of discomfort or intimidation a volunteer especially a young volunteer may experience.

From the safety point of view, consider the nature of the tasks assigned.

Complex tasks may not be suitable for the volunteer who only comes in occasionally, as they may not remember the sequences required and may miss a step, exposing themselves and perhaps another person to injuries. Repetitive tasks or ones that are physically demanding are usually not suitable for anyone to do for an extended period. To avoid boredom or loss of concentration, consider job rotation. Tasks that carry responsibilities that can affect the health and safety of others may not be appropriate for young or elderly volunteers. Young volunteers will need more time with you in training, demonstrating and supervising. Their ambition and skills will reward your investment.

Orientation. Everything they need to know and more.

Take your time to explain the safety precautions and ensure they know all the potential hazards, as well as any safety equipment that needs to be used or worn. Make sure you include emergency procedures such as fire, first aid, injury, alarms and others as applicable. Provide written instructions if available for the volunteer to take home and review, especially if they only volunteer periodically.

Avoid information overload.

You may want to break up the orientation and training into smaller sessions. Discuss past incidents and near misses to demonstrate risks. Talk about how these situations could have been avoided and the type of corrective action you took.

Tips for Training Teens

1. Make orientation and training match the learning abilities of your volunteers and have it delivered by a person who is skilled at working with young, inexperienced persons.
2. Keep orientation interactive, asking volunteers to draw on their experience and encouraging them to provide input, ideas and suggestions.
3. Make orientation and training practical - cover what you need to cover don't get off track
4. Guide them: provide rules and consequence when rules are not followed.
5. Have them explain instructions back to you to verify everything is well understood. Assumptions will not help anyone.
6. Evaluate - Did the learning take place? Are they applying the learning? Did they perform their job correctly and safely?
7. Provide positive reinforcement when a job is performed well, and safely.
8. When tasks or circumstances change, provide new instructions, demonstrations and validation that they understand the new job.

Demonstrate the jobs to be done

Break it down into small tasks if necessary so that every step is well explained and, most importantly, well understood. Demonstrate again and focus on all safety precautions that are part of the task. Ask the volunteer if they can see anything about the job that may pose a risk and discuss how to prevent injuries those risks may pose. They may recognize things you had not thought of.

Have the volunteer perform the tasks until they can do it exactly as required. Get the technical steps right first. Being able to do it a little faster will come with experience. Encourage questions if they aren't coming. Tell them that, as part of the training, you want them to ask you three questions about the job. Repeat the task until it is learned.

CHECK IT OUT!

Before a volunteer uses it, have powered equipment checked out to ensure it is in top running condition and that all safety devices are present and working properly.

Watch over and guide them

Let them perform the job alone when they've demonstrated that they've learned the task. Check in on them periodically a word of encouragement, a helpful suggestion or just a smile will go a long way in encouraging good work habits.

Correct any unsafe work habits or behaviours you see or become aware of immediately don't let the behaviour continue. Make sure safety standards are maintained throughout the placement. Be sure they know where to get help if you're not immediately available. Make sure others who are working with the young volunteer also follow the safety rules. Mentors will set the pace.

Encourage and reward

Encourage them to report hazards. We can only correct what we know about! Encourage initiative and respect suggestions. Rewards don't have to be large a smile, a kind word and a positive comment from you, their mentor and possibly their first supervisor, are a great reward for someone new to work.

Fact: Far too many young people who are new to work suffer injuries that could have been prevented.

We believe this does not have to happen.

We will work together to keep our volunteers safe!

Appendix

Everyone has a role in ensuring a safe volunteer experience

<i>As the sponsoring agency we will:</i>	<i>As a volunteer I will:</i>	<i>As the parent/guardian of the volunteer, I will:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a safe and healthy work environment • Encourage our young volunteers to raise concerns, ask questions and provide suggestions and ideas on making the tasks safer. • Respond to concerns, questions, suggestions and ideas brought to our attention. • Make sure that volunteers are aware of and follow established safety practices at all times. • Ensure young and new volunteers are closely supervised and get the training they need to perform their tasks safely. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask questions. • Ask for training and a demonstration of new tasks I'm assigned. • Say no if the task is beyond my capabilities. • Not assume I know how to do something if I've never done it before. • Discuss the tasks I'm asked to do as part of my volunteer work at home. • Immediately report any unsafe conditions or practices that I observe to the sponsor. • Report all injuries to my sponsor, no matter how minor they may seem to me. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to my teen about the tasks they are assigned and what's involved in doing those jobs - not just at the beginning, but throughout their time with the organization. • Ask about the orientation, training and supervision they receive. • Ensure my teen reports injuries and safety concerns to his/her sponsor at the organization. • Encourage my teen to say no to tasks that are beyond his/her capabilities or impose undue risks to their safety.
<p>Together we can prevent work-related injuries.</p>		