

**CITY OF MERCER ISLAND
PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT**

**VOLUNTEER
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
MANUAL**



City of Mercer Island
8236 SE 24th Street
Mercer Island, WA 98040
206.236.3545

Parks and Recreation Department
Volunteer Policies and Procedures Manual

Volunteer Program Mission Statement

The mission of the City of Mercer Island Parks and Recreation Department Volunteer Program is to actively promote a mutually rewarding relationship between volunteers who offer their talents, skills and time and staff who will support them in their efforts to cooperatively foster stewardship of our community's parks, natural areas, and recreation and social programs.

Section 1 – General Volunteer Policy

1.a Utilization of Volunteers

Mercer Island is best served by the active participation of its citizens in all aspects of community life. Through involvement in civic, environmental and special event activities, as well as recreation, our citizens of all ages learn more about their City while forming strong bonds with one another. To this end, the City of Mercer Island Parks and Recreation Department accepts and encourages the involvement of volunteers within all appropriate programs and activities. All staff members, as well as others in leadership roles are encouraged to assist in the creation of meaningful and productive roles for volunteers.

1.b Definition of “Volunteer”

A “volunteer” is anyone, who without compensation, performs a task at the direction of and on behalf of the Department. A “volunteer” must be officially registered and/or enrolled by the City prior to performance of the task. Volunteers shall not be considered as “employees” of the City of Mercer Island.

1.c Purpose of Volunteer Policies

The purpose of these policies is to provide overall guidance, structure and direction to staff and volunteers throughout the volunteer process. These policies do not constitute, either implicitly or explicitly, a binding contractual or personnel agreement. The City of Mercer Island Parks and Recreation Department reserves the right to change any of these policies at any time and to expect adherence to the changed policy.

1.d Scope of Volunteer Policies

Unless specifically stated, these policies apply to all non-elected and non-appointed volunteers in all programs and projects undertaken on behalf of the Department, and to all sites of operation of the Department of Parks and Recreation.

1.e Role of the Volunteer Coordinator

The productive utilization of volunteers requires a planned and organized effort. The Recreation Specialist II is responsible for supervising the volunteer programs, thus, performs as the Volunteer Coordinator for the Parks and Recreation Department. This position is to provide a central contact, offering coordinated and effective management under the City guidelines for the benefit of staff and volunteers in their efforts to provide productive services.

1.f Employees as Volunteers

The City accepts the services of staff as volunteers. This service is accepted provided that the volunteer service is:

- a) Provided totally without any coercive nature
- b) involves work which is outside the scope of normal staff duties, and
- c) is provided outside of usual working hours.

1.g Scope of Volunteer Involvement

Volunteers may be utilized in many programs and activities of the Parks and Recreation Department of the City of Mercer Island, and serve at appropriate levels of skill as determined by the Volunteer Coordinator. Volunteers should not, however, be utilized to displace any paid employees from their positions.

A scope of volunteer service description will be provided to every individual outlining the general policies and procedures for volunteering. As appropriate some volunteer positions will have an additional form attached outlining specific duties for that particular job such as bus driver and courtesy desk positions. Each general description will include:

- a. The general responsibilities of volunteers
- b. Timesheet and recording reporting
- c. Reporting and supervision responsibilities
- d. Training and orientation prior to performing work
- e. Personal protective equipment to be provided

(See Attachments I – Volunteer Scope of Service Description)

1.h Safety and Welfare of Volunteers

Of paramount importance is the safety and welfare of volunteers. Accepted common sense standards of behavior will be outlined prior to the performance of volunteer tasks/assignments. Supervisors are to be trained in basic First Aid and preferably CPR. A first aid kit is to be on hand at all events and work parties. In the event of an injury, appropriate first aid is to be given, and the supervisor is to immediately complete an accident report* and submit a copy to the Volunteer Coordinator. Access to telephone and/or radio communication should be available at all events and work parties.

All minors are to be directly supervised by an adult. No power tools are to be used by minor volunteers under the age of eighteen.
(See Attachment II – Injury/Accident Report Form)

1.i Screening of Volunteers

Where volunteers are to be driving city vehicles or placed in direct contact with at-risk clients, such as those working with children under the age of 18, developmentally disabled persons, the frail, or the elderly additional screening procedures will be instituted. These procedures may include driving record checks, reference checks, direct background investigation, criminal investigation to check for history of abuse and/or sexual deviant behavior or other crimes of violence. These checks will be filed and renewed every two years for those on-going volunteers whose jobs require these types of checks. All volunteers to be placed with at-risk clients shall submit adequate information to allow the City to conduct these checks. Volunteers who refuse permission to conduct these checks or who fail to submit the prior information will not be accepted for placement with these clients.

The City shall provide a copy of the response from the various checks performed on the prospective volunteer upon request.

1.j Evaluation of Volunteer Program

The Volunteer Coordinator shall conduct an annual evaluation of the utilization of volunteers by the Department. This evaluation will consist of evaluating the items outlined in the Performance Measures as outline in the City's budget. The general information gathered will consist of the number of volunteers used, number of volunteer hours served, projects, events and programs where volunteers were used.

Section 2 – Rights and Responsibilities

2.a Relationship Between Volunteer and City

Volunteers are viewed as a valuable resource to the City, its staff, and its residents. Volunteers shall be extended the right to be given meaningful assignments, the right to be treated as respected co-workers, the right to effective supervision, the right to appropriate involvement and participation, and the right to recognition for work done.

In return, volunteers shall agree to actively perform their duties to the best of their abilities and to remain loyal to the goals and procedures of the Mercer Island Parks and Recreation Department.

2.b Maintenance of Records

A system of records will be maintained on each volunteer with the Parks and Recreation Department, including dates and hours of service, positions held, and awards received. Volunteers and appropriate staff shall be responsible for submitting all appropriate records and information to the Volunteer Coordinator in a timely and accurate manner. Volunteer personnel records shall be accorded the same confidentiality as City of Mercer Island personnel records.

2.c Timesheets

Individual volunteers are responsible for the accurate completion and timely submission of timesheets. Volunteers working in the community, in the parks, and at the Community Center must also sign in when beginning service and sign out when service is completed for that day on the appropriate forms.

(See Attachment III – Timesheets and Sign-in Forms)

2.d Confidentiality

Access to confidential records is restricted to designated City of Mercer Island staff. All City related business or recreation program participant information overheard or entrusted to a volunteer needs to stay confidential. It is not to be talked about among other volunteers, participants, friends, or family.

2.e Work Site

The supervisor prior to the enrollment of any volunteer shall establish an appropriate worksite. This worksite shall contain necessary facilities, equipment, and space to enable the volunteer to effectively and comfortably

perform his or her duties. Volunteer work sites are subject to the same safety requirements as are all City work sites.

2.f Dress Code

As representatives of the Mercer Island Parks and Recreation Department, volunteers, like staff, are responsible for presenting a good image to clients and to the community. Volunteers shall dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of their duties. Volunteers are to be identified as such through wearing nametags or other methods provided by the Mercer Island Parks and Recreation Department.

2.g Absenteeism

Volunteers are expected to perform their duties on a regularly scheduled and timely basis. If expecting to be absent from a scheduled duty, volunteers shall inform the supervising staff member and/or Volunteer Coordinator as far in advance as possible so that alternative arrangements may be made.

2.h Right to Reject Services/Termination

The City reserves the right to limit the use of volunteers, adjust the hours of any volunteer or to reject services as it, in its sole discretion, deems fit, in order to best achieve its public purpose and policy. No employment of any other contractual right is created by these policies. Participation in any volunteer position of the Department shall be open to any individual and no individual shall be discriminated against based upon race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin or physical, mental or sensory handicap, or on the basis of any other characteristic protected by law. Grounds for rejecting services may include, but are not limited to: unsatisfactory background check, gross misconduct or insubordination, being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, theft of property, misuse of City equipment or materials, mistreatment of clients or co-workers, failure to abide by City policies and procedures, failure to meet the standards of performance relating to the essential functions of the volunteer position, and/or failure to satisfactorily perform assigned duties.

2.i Resignation

Volunteers may resign from volunteer service with the Department at any time. It is requested that volunteers who intend to resign provide advance notice of departure and a reason for this decision to the Volunteer Coordinator.

2.j Notice of Departure or Re-Assignment of a Volunteer

In the event that the volunteer departs the City, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, or is re-assigned to a new position, it shall be the responsibility of the Volunteer Coordinator to inform the staff.

Section 3 – Recruitment and Training of Volunteers

3.a Staff Requests for Volunteers

Requests for volunteers shall be submitted in writing complete with a description of duties needed to be performed and a requested timeframe. The recruitment of volunteers is enhanced by creative and interesting jobs.

3.b Recruitment

Volunteers shall be recruited by the City on a pro-active basis, with the intent of broadening and expanding the volunteer involvement of the community. Volunteers shall be recruited without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, age, marital status, sexual preference, and/or disability. Volunteers may be recruited either through an interest in specific functions or through a general interest in volunteering which will later be matched with a specific function.

Volunteers who have not reached the age of 18 must have the written consent of a parent or legal guardian prior to volunteering and will under no circumstances be allowed to operate power tools.

3.c Interviewing

Prior to being assigned or appointed to a position, all volunteers will be interviewed to ascertain their suitability for and interest in that position. The interview should determine the qualifications of the volunteer, his or her commitment to fulfill the requirements of the volunteer position, and provide an opportunity for the volunteer to ask questions.

Supervising staff should participate in interviewing and placement of volunteers whenever possible. Final assignment of a potential volunteer should be reviewed and approved by the appropriate supervisor.

3.d Placement

In placing a volunteer, consideration shall be paid to the interests and capabilities of the volunteer and to the requirements of the volunteer position. No placement shall be made unless the needs of both the volunteer

and the supervising staff can be met. No volunteer will be assigned to work with a staff person without the consent of that staff person. Volunteers should be provided with a description of general volunteer duties and when needed, a scope of work description so there is complete understanding of the expectations of their service. This document should clearly identify the essential job functions the volunteer is authorized to perform.

Since volunteers are considered a valuable resource in performing the City's work, staff is encouraged to seriously consider creative ways in which volunteers can be of service and to consult with the Volunteer Coordinator if in need of assistance or additional training.

3.e Acceptance and Appointment

Service as a volunteer with the Parks and Recreation Department shall begin with an official notification of acceptance or appointment to a volunteer position by the Volunteer Coordinator. No volunteer shall begin performance of any position until he or she has been officially accepted for volunteer work and has completed all the necessary screening and paperwork. At the time of final acceptance, each volunteer shall complete all necessary enrollment paperwork and shall receive a copy of the volunteer manual.

(See Attachment V – Enrollment Paperwork)

3.f Re-Assignment

A volunteer who is re-assigned to new responsibilities shall receive appropriate orientation and training for that position before he or she begins work. In addition, any screening procedures appropriate for the specific position must be completed, even if the volunteer has already been working with the City.

3.g Professional Services

Volunteers shall not perform professional services for which certification or licensing is required unless currently certified or licensed to do so. A copy of such certificate or license must be on file with the Volunteer Coordinator.

3.h Orientation

All volunteers will receive a general orientation on the nature and operation of the volunteer program and a specific orientation on the purposes and requirements of the volunteer work that they are accepting in that effort.

3.i On-the-Job Training

The City will provide adequate instruction and, where necessary, training to ensure all workers perform a task properly and safely, and provide individual volunteers with adequate knowledge of City rules and requirements. In compliance with WAC Part A-2, 296-24-075, personal protective equipment should be provided by the City, if necessary, and is required to be worn when necessary to complete the work assigned. The timing and methods for delivery of such training should be appropriate to the complexity and demands of the positions and the capabilities of the volunteers. Experienced volunteers may be included in the design and delivery of volunteer orientation and training.

Those staff that will be in a supervisory capacity for volunteers shall have primary responsibility for design and delivery of on-the-job training to volunteers assigned to them. The Volunteer Coordinator shall assist with training as needed.

3.j Continuing Education

Volunteers are encouraged to improve their levels of skill during their terms of service. Additional training and educational opportunities may be made available to volunteers during their service with the City of Mercer Island Parks and Recreation Department. This continuing education may include both additional information on performance of their current volunteer assignment, as well as more general information. It may be provided either by the Department or by assisting the volunteer to participate in educational programs provided by other entities.

Section 4 - Supervision and Evaluation of Volunteers

4.a Supervision of Volunteers

Each volunteer with the Parks and Recreation Department must have a clearly identified supervisor who is responsible for direct management of that volunteer. This supervisor may be a staff person, a trained adult volunteer, or other designated person. This supervisor shall be responsible for day-to-day management and guidance of the work of the volunteer, and shall be available to the volunteer for consultation and assistance. An adult must supervise minors under the age of eighteen.

4.b The Volunteer as Volunteer Supervisor

After consulting with the Volunteer Coordinator, a volunteer may be assigned to act as a supervisor of other volunteers. The supervising volunteer is under the direction of the Volunteer Coordinator or staff designee.

4.c Volunteer/Staff Relationships

Volunteers and staff are considered to be partners in implementing the mission and programs of the Department, with each having a complementary role to play. It is essential for the proper operation of this relationship that each partner understands and respects the needs and abilities of the other.

4.d Staff Volunteer Management Training

An orientation on working with volunteers will be provided to all staff. In-service training on effective volunteer utilization may be provided to those staff members who are highly involved in volunteer management.

4.e Staff Involvement in Volunteer Evaluation

Supervising staff shall be involved in all evaluation and work assignments of volunteers with whom they are connected.

4.f Lines of Communication

Volunteers are entitled to all information pertinent to the performance of their work assignments except that information which the City deems to be confidential. Lines of communication operate in both directions, and exist both formally and informally. Volunteers should be consulted regarding decisions that would substantially affect the performance of their duties.

Volunteers and their supervisors are responsible for regular communication with the Volunteer Coordinator. The Volunteer Coordinator shall be informed of any substantial change in the work or status of a volunteer and shall be consulted in advance of any corrective action.

4.g Standards of Performance

Standards of performance may be established for on-going volunteer positions. These standards may list the work to be done in that position, measurable indicators of whether the work was accomplished and appropriate timelines for accomplishment of the work.

4.h Request for Volunteer Feedback

The Department may, from time to time, seek feedback from its volunteers in an effort to improve its volunteer programs.

Section 5- Volunteer Support and Recognition

5.a Hospitality

A lunch will be provided for the volunteer on the day of volunteer work. Volunteers must sign the volunteer lunch sign-in sheet at the café prior to receiving their lunch.

5.b Access to City Property and Materials

As appropriate, volunteers shall have access to City of Mercer Island Parks and Recreation property and materials necessary to fulfill their duties, and shall receive training in the operation of any equipment. Under no circumstances shall a volunteer operate any power equipment.

5.c Insurance

Liability and accident insurance is provided for all volunteers over the age of 14 engaged in volunteer work with the City of Mercer Island Parks and Recreation Department. Coverage is through the WCIA, paid by the City. Volunteers over the age of 55 years and properly registered with RSVP (King County Retired Senior Volunteer Program) have additional accident and liability insurance provided through this program. Volunteers must report their hours by the first of each month to maintain these coverages.

When appropriate, a copy of a volunteer's personal insurance information will be made, as personal insurance is always the primary coverage, with WCIA and RSVP following.

5.d Annual Recognition Event

An annual volunteer recognition event will be held to highlight and reward the contributions of volunteers to the City of Mercer Island, Parks and Recreation Department. A follow-up evaluation form will be randomly distributed following the event.

5.e Informal Recognition

Thank you letters, e-mails and/or verbal thanks are to be given to all volunteers as appropriate. All staff and volunteers responsible for volunteer supervision are encouraged to undertake on-going methods of recognition of volunteer service on a regular basis throughout the year. These methods of informal recognition should range from a simple “Thank You” to a concerted effort to include volunteers as full participants in program decision-making and implementation.

5.f Volunteer Career Paths

Volunteers are encouraged to develop their skills while serving with the Parks and Recreation Department, and are to be assisted through promotion to new volunteer jobs to assume additional and greater responsibilities. If so desired by the volunteer, the Department shall assist the volunteer in maintaining appropriate records of volunteer experience that would assist the volunteer in future career opportunities, both paid and volunteer. Letters of recommendation for college and/or employment fall in this category.

T:\PARKS\Jeannette\Volunteer Program\Volunteer Policies & Procedures Manual.doc

Volunteer Manual Attachments

I. Volunteer Job Descriptions

- Volunteer Scope of Service Description

II. Injury/Accident Report Form

- This form needs to be completed and turned into your supervisor or the Volunteer Coordinator the day of the injury/accident.

III. Timesheets and Sign-in Forms

- Volunteer Sign-in Form – Volunteers need to sign in on this form when beginning work at the Community Center.
- King County Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) timesheet – This is to be completed by all volunteers 55 years of age and older.
- City of Mercer Island Volunteer Hours Form – This is to be completed by all volunteers under the age of 55.
- Volunteer Activity Assumption of Risk, Waiver, and Release for Adults – This form is to be completed by all volunteers working on projects in the parks or at special events.
- Volunteer Activity Assumption of Risk, Waiver, and Release for Minor Children – This form is to be completed by all parents of volunteer minor children working in the parks or at special events.

IV. Volunteer Enrollment Paperwork

- Minor under the age of 18 volunteer enrollment paperwork
- Adult under the age of 55 volunteer paperwork
- Adult age 55 and over volunteer paperwork