



## Sport Volunteers: Encourage

**Once you have recruited volunteers, your next objective is to keep them coming back. You can do this through effective management of your volunteer program.**

### **National Standards for Volunteer Involvement and Retention**

To support the retention of sport volunteers, follow the best practice framework developed in the [National Standards for Volunteer Involvement](#). Key points in the standards include:

- Provide volunteers with orientation relevant to their role and responsibility
- Review volunteer knowledge and skills to identify support and development needs
- Provide training and development opportunities – where relevant – for knowledge and skills relating to the volunteer's role
- Provide supervision and support that enables volunteers to undertake their roles and responsibilities
- Changes in the involvement of a volunteer are undertaken fairly and consistently

### **Support and supervision**

Be clear and specific about a volunteer's supervision and lines of reporting. This helps you identify whether the needs of both the organisation and the volunteer are being met. Ensure volunteer supervisors understand their responsibilities, the expected responsibilities of the volunteer roles as well as the culture the organisation wants to use when interacting with volunteers.

With supervision clear, providing support to volunteers is critical. Your organisation must devote appropriate time and resources to do so, including existing volunteers being able to provide one-on-one support when requested.

The kind of support volunteers need will depend on:

- The nature of the role
- The conditions of the role
- Their motivation for volunteering
- Their personality and circumstances

### **Training**

As well as orientation and training before they commence, you should plan for a volunteer's ongoing training and development needs. Changes to programs or new systems or equipment may require volunteers to update their knowledge, either through formal training or via newsletters, online training or briefings.

Investing in training is an investment in personal growth and progression for volunteers, which may make or break their commitment to your program.

### **Performance**

Monitor how volunteers are performing in their role and provide them with regular feedback, both positive reinforcement and where improvements can be made.

Performance management is also about volunteers having their say. Do they feel adequately supported and supervised? Do they have any feedback on organisational issues? Are they happy?

Ask volunteers what is working well and what is not. Ask how you can better assist them to do their role. And ask what might help them and others both now and in the future.

Gaining this feedback is an easy way of gathering critical information which you can apply to improve your volunteer program. Taking feedback seriously also recognises a volunteer's efforts.

## Sport Volunteers: Encourage

### Involve

Involving volunteers in decisions that affect them can allay discontent and head off conflict – it may also bring useful ideas to your table.

Think about how you can ensure volunteer involvement is effective, recognising that volunteering involvement is typically part-time. Be careful that volunteers are not excluded from decision-making simply because they don't volunteer on days when decision-making meetings occur.

### Parting ways

A volunteer's departure is a good opportunity to continue the evaluation of your program. Exit interviews or questionnaires allow you to capture a volunteer's experiences at the organisation – perhaps with greater honesty than while they are still employed.

### Improve

Create, and keep creating, a great environment for volunteers by using their feedback and your experience to integrate changes that make your volunteer program better.

### Conflict Management and Dismissal

A carefully planned approach to conflict management is essential in case performance issues do arise. Occasionally volunteers are asked to leave an organisation, so a dismissal policy is essential to ensure that the process is fair and clear to all.

Conflict can be prevented by setting clear expectations of the behaviour and interactions expected of all – whether volunteer supervisors or volunteers. Despite this, conflict and concerns may still arise. In these cases all parties will need support as well as access to information about your dispute resolution processes.

Remember, while these experiences can be painful for all parties, it is also an opportunity to critically assess what works and what doesn't in your program.

## Resources to support volunteers

In addition to the support of Volunteering Victoria, find below a range of resources to help your club support volunteers.

**Play By the Rules** – making sport inclusive, safe and fair

**Club Help** – help specific for regionally-based clubs

**AAA Play** – connecting and including people with disabilities

**Guidelines for preventing violence against women**

### Making information accessible and available in multiple languages

Our community is diverse, encompassing multiple language and accessibility needs. We encourage ensuring your information can be available to people with visual disabilities as well as produced in languages relevant to your community, Club or Association.

The Victorian Government provides online resources to assist you with:

- **Language interpretation or translation**
- **Visual accessibility**

### More sport-specific tools about volunteering

Sport & Recreation Volunteering is a big topic with many areas where expertise is required. A range of sport-specific resources have been created to assist you in your strategies and practices around volunteers.

This tool is one of many tools and factsheets available here at Volunteering Victoria's **sport-specific resource section**

We encourage you to check out the full range of tools and use those which may support and apply to your club.

[www.volunteeringvictoria.org.au/sport-volunteering](http://www.volunteeringvictoria.org.au/sport-volunteering)