



## Sport Volunteers: **Guide**

**Adequate, well-planned orientation (guidance) practices for volunteers enables them to perform their role as required, feel supported and ensures they understand their responsibilities and their rights within the organisation. It is a crucial part of risk management for volunteer programs.**

### **Make a plan**

Carefully planned volunteer orientation will save your program time and resources. It defines the expectations of the volunteer relationship – on both sides – and equips the volunteer to do their job. It is the organisation's responsibility to make sure volunteers have the necessary knowledge to perform their role and to navigate your organisation's policies, codes of conduct and culture. If a volunteer acts against policies or codes of conduct, the organisation may be responsible because of a failure to properly induct, train or supervise. Potential performance issues can be avoided or significantly reduced through a thorough orientation.

Planning for sport volunteer orientation may include:

- Whether formal or informal training is required, and its preferred format.
- Deciding the basic organisational and role specific information required.
- Having a clear plan for what you want volunteers to learn through orientation and a process to check information has been understood.
- Identify a volunteer go-to person – such as a Volunteer Co-ordinator – who can assist volunteers when they start or if issues arise.

### **Role orientation**

Orienting a person to the role they are volunteering for may include:

- Giving an overview of your organisation including its purpose, culture and who does what, as well as an overview of your organisation's services that relate to the volunteer role.
- Making it clear what role volunteers play, what role any other volunteers and staff play and the relationship between those roles.
- Giving clear information about any training or orientation activities the volunteer will be involved in and why.
- Describing relevant procedures for that volunteer and their role.
- Introducing relevant staff, volunteers, the physical environment, equipment, and facilities.
- Providing a contact person or place for queries.

### **Inform your Volunteers**

Ensure that volunteers are conscious of their rights and responsibilities related to their role and the organisation as a whole. This can reduce uncertainty and provide a more supportive environment for the volunteer.

Provide volunteers with all relevant policies such as Code of Conduct, OH&S, Child Safety and explain these to them to ensure that they understand them in relation to their role.

### **General orientation package**

An orientation kit can make new volunteers feel welcome, as well as providing them with information and documents they need to perform their role.

Consider a simplified game day / event induction package, as well as a more detailed package for administrative roles.

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The simplified orientation package will relate to the game day or event activities specific to your sport and may include simple but consistent documents that communicate key instructions clearly. Once created they can become a template or set of key documents to be re-used and enhanced, but more importantly do not need to be re-created for each subsequent event.

A detailed orientation package may include:  
A copy of the volunteer's position description

- A statement of volunteer rights and responsibilities
- Reference to relevant policies, procedures, and codes and where to find them
- Relevant forms (e.g. for reimbursement of expenses)
- Emergency procedures
- Details of the organisation's operations

Clearly detail regulatory or legislative requirements, such as child safety, privacy or health and safety. Failure to ensure volunteers receive and understand such information could expose your organisation or the volunteer to liability. Outline grievance procedures, with information on how and to whom the volunteer may raise concerns.

When providing orientation to a volunteer it helps to describe the general and service culture of your organisation so that expectations are clear.

### 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)