

Risk Management Guideline for Volunteers

Following are suggested Risk Management Guidelines that should be considered and implemented when volunteers are used within the local government setting.

- A policy and procedure should clearly document and define the scope of duties in which the volunteer is required to perform.
- When permissive use is granted for driving vehicles, a local government should check for a valid drivers license. You may also want to review the Motor Vehicle Record of the volunteers. In addition, ensure that volunteers have a commercial drivers license and the proper endorsement including a medical card when required.
- A local government should provide and mandate the use of personal protection equipment for volunteers who are working with special machinery, tools, or encountering specific hazards.
- On a regular basis review the job performance of all volunteers.
- Inform the volunteer as to whom, where, and how problems, hazards or suggestions should be reported.
- Be consistent, fair and non-discriminatory in your treatment of volunteers.
- Proper training and supervision are critical to the safe and effective use of volunteers. Specific training needs depend on the type of work a volunteer will be performing.
- Properly address the specific hazards a volunteer may encounter and procedures to follow for performing activities in a safe manner.
- Supervision is paramount to proper training.
- Consider a written safety checklist for volunteers to follow and complete.
- When mandated by law or the standard policies within your organization, volunteers must meet the required screening and placement in positions where they are serving vulnerable populations.
- A volunteer's application should request skills and experience, current and past employment, education and knowledge, and references. This application should become a part of the volunteer's permanent file.
- Accident and incident reporting should be an essential requirement for volunteers to follow in case of bodily injury or property damage.

- Where appropriate, consider background and reference checks.
- Request volunteers to sign an authorization for release of confidential or privileged information.
- Consider and indemnification and release agreement, where appropriate. Have your attorney approve prior to use.
- Consider a volunteer coordinator to take overall responsibility of your volunteer program. This is especially beneficial to local governments with large volunteer programs.
- The consistent use of appropriate recruiting, screening and background checking techniques help assure that properly qualified individuals are selected.

You may have volunteers serving your local government for many different personal reasons. They may want to learn new skills, meet new people, make a difference in the community where they live or work, or gain expertise in certain areas of volunteerism. Whatever their reasons are, managed properly, the liability risks associated with volunteerism can be reduced or minimized. Use your volunteers wisely considering their level of knowledge, skills and abilities.

VLCT Loss Control can be of assistance with any questions related to volunteers. We can also assist with training and providing sample policies.