



NATIONAL VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS ACTIVE IN DISASTER POINTS OF CONSENSUS

VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

The National Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD) recognizes that volunteers are inherently valuable and, when properly coordinated, make up an essential part of the human resources needed to respond to disasters of all magnitudes. In times of disaster, people are drawn to help their neighbors physically, spiritually, and emotionally. We believe volunteers' skills are best utilized and are most effective when they volunteer as part of an established organization trained in disaster response activities. However, we realize that not all volunteers will be affiliated with an organization and trained prior to a disaster. We acknowledge that they too are a valuable resource and should receive the same level of care brought forth in this document. In addition, we acknowledge that volunteer organizations have the right to select volunteers in agreement with their Mission, Code of Conduct, and/or Statement of Faith. Acknowledging that major disasters present significant challenges to those individuals and organizations responding, the National VOAD Volunteer Management Committee has developed this Points of Consensus document to provide best practices in the area of volunteers' rights and their responsibilities when serving in a non-paid capacity with any National VOAD member organization.

1. Right To Be Treated With Respect	
<i>Volunteer Rights</i>	<i>Volunteer Responsibilities</i>
Volunteers have a right to be respected regardless of ethnicity, socio-economic, culture, gender, age, sexual orientation, spiritual/religious practices and disabilities.	Volunteers should respect the organization, support its mission statement, and agree with its core values. They should respect all those with whom and for whom they serve regardless of ethnicity, socio-economic, culture, gender, age, sexual orientation, spiritual/religious practices and disabilities.

2. Right To Be Valued	
<i>Volunteer Rights</i>	<i>Volunteer Responsibilities</i>
Volunteers have the right to be treated as a valued team member, treated with fairness and equity; and have the right to understand how the assigned task is a valuable part of fulfilling the organization's mission. Volunteers should be recognized and thanked for their contribution to the organization.	Volunteers should serve and interact with their colleagues with respect, fairness and equity. Volunteers should maintain an enthusiastic and flexible attitude. In addition, volunteers should provide contact information so they can be properly thanked and recognized.

3. Right To Organized, Structured System That Matches Skills With Tasks	
<i>Volunteer Rights</i>	<i>Volunteer Responsibilities</i>
<p>Volunteers have a right to know about the organization in which they are serving including its mission, leadership, organization and financial structure, and its management liability practices. They have the right to know about available volunteer opportunities and the types of skills needed to perform tasks. They should expect their time and skills to be used wisely and effectively.</p>	<p>Volunteers should seek information about an organization, its mission, and structure to determine if it is a good fit with their own skills and values. Volunteers should be honest in communicating their skill level, experience, and availability. Volunteers should use their time and skills wisely and should cooperate in the organization's process and procedures.</p>

4. Right To Clear Expectations	
<i>Volunteer Rights</i>	<i>Volunteer Responsibilities</i>
<p>Volunteers have a right to know what assignments or tasks are needed and clear expectations of the task that they have agreed to perform including the estimated time and parameters of the task. Volunteers have the right to ask questions and clarify expectations at any time during their service.</p>	<p>Volunteers should make sure they understand how to do the assigned task and how to properly operate necessary equipment. They should ask questions to clarify expectations and bring attention to any impediments that would hinder them from performing a task.</p>

5. Right To Safe Work Environment	
<i>Volunteer Rights</i>	<i>Volunteer Responsibilities</i>
<p>Volunteers have the right to know that the organization has taken appropriate precautions to provide a safe work environment, to identify potential hazards, and to identify safety equipment needed to perform their assigned tasks safely and effectively.</p>	<p>Volunteers are responsible for following safety guidelines and wearing safety equipment as directed. Volunteers should not accept assignments which are beyond their ability. It is the volunteer's responsibility to let a supervisor know if they are uncomfortable in a situation or performing a task. Volunteers should make the organization aware of any potential safety issues. Volunteers should respect an organization's request to perform background checks.</p>

6. Right To Confidentiality	
<i>Volunteer Rights</i>	<i>Volunteer Responsibilities</i>
Volunteers should expect that the organization has taken proper precautions to safeguard confidential information and protect their privacy.	Volunteers should respect the confidentiality of any proprietary information of the organization. They should respect and protect the privacy of their colleagues and clients, and take prudent steps to minimize the potential for disclosure of their own confidential information.

7. Right To Supervision, Direction, And Training	
<i>Volunteer Rights</i>	<i>Volunteer Responsibilities</i>
Volunteers have the right to a general orientation and training. They should know their direct supervisor, the chain of command, and the appropriate way to address and resolve issues.	Volunteers should attend orientations or trainings as required. They should understand and respect the chain of command, and take direction from their direct supervisor. Volunteers should resolve conflicts in a mature, respectful manner within the chain of command.

8. Right To Clear, Two-way Communication	
<i>Volunteer Rights</i>	<i>Volunteer Responsibilities</i>
Volunteers have the right to be given clear direction and to give feedback to their supervisor (directly) as well as the organization.	Volunteers should actively participate in two-way communication. Volunteers are welcome to provide honest feedback in a respectful manner.

9. Right To Be Cared For And Have Access To Care Resources	
<i>Volunteer Rights</i>	<i>Volunteer Responsibilities</i>
Volunteers have the right to be cared for by the organization, which could include the provision of food, water, housing, medical care, spiritual and emotional care, etc.	Volunteers should take personal responsibility to ensure their needs are met. This could include requesting rest periods; requesting reassignments when needed; monitoring their own intake of food and water; and seeking medical, spiritual, or emotional care when needed.