

Division of Parks and Recreation Volunteer Code

The Division of Parks and Recreation recognizes the contributions, skills and experience volunteers bring to our organization and actively seek ways to engage volunteers in caring for our parks. These codes help to govern the involvement of volunteers. Please review these carefully and contact the Division Office of Volunteer and Community Involvement with any questions.

I. ELIGIBILITY

A. Definition:

Volunteers are uncompensated individuals who perform services directly related to Division business, support the activities of the Division, or gain experience in specific endeavors. By definition, volunteers perform services without promise, expectation, or receipt of any compensation, future employment, or any other tangible benefit.

B. Volunteers are accepted without regard to race, creed, color, sex, age, national origin, political affiliation, religion, disability, gender identification or any other non-merit factor.

C. The Division of Parks and Recreation does not guarantee volunteer placement. The Division will make every effort to match volunteer applicants to volunteer opportunities based on the interests and abilities of the volunteer and the needs of the Division.

D. No minimum age or maximum age limits exist for volunteers.

- 1) Participation appropriate for youth volunteers under the age of 18 years is determined by the site supervisor and may require youth volunteers to be accompanied by an adult.
- 2) Volunteers under the age of 18 years are required to provide parental/ guardian permission and consent prior to beginning volunteer service.
- 3) Site managers must comply with appropriate Federal and State laws and standards when using the services of minors. Unit managers may set minimum age limits in the interest of safety.

E. Volunteers must be able to carry out work for which they are assigned.

F. Placement as a volunteer is contingent upon successful completion at all levels of screening. The Division employs a multiple step screening process for all volunteers based on the nature of the volunteer work and involvement level of the participant.

- 1) Volunteers aged 18 years and older are required to undergo and successfully complete a criminal history background investigation prior to any offer of placement or volunteer service being performed which involves any of the following activities:
 - a) Interaction with visitors or other volunteers within vulnerable populations, including youth, senior citizens and volunteers or visitors with disabilities,
 - b) Service which requires access and use Division equipment, vehicles, computers or that allows access to information and records,
 - c) Handling or service around money,
 - d) Handling weapons of any kind or discharge of black powder,
- 2) The Division of Parks and Recreation will perform a criminal history background investigation at no charge to volunteers.
- 3) Volunteers have the option of submitting a copy, at their expense, of a current background check obtainable from the State Bureau of Identification or the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) conducted within the last 12 months or proof of having met background check requirements.
- 4) Volunteers who are members of the U.S. Military, Department of Defense employees, Law Enforcement, and authorized Closed Carry Permit holders may present current credentials as proof of background verification (Common Access Card, current LEO identification, or current Closed Carry Permit).

II. ENGAGEMENT

- A. All volunteers enter voluntary service with the understanding that such service is at the sole discretion of the Division.
- B. Volunteers may not engage in activities for which they are not trained, assigned or otherwise authorized to perform by the Division.
- C. Volunteers perform service without compensation and are not considered employees of the State of Delaware and do not have an employment relationship:
 - 1) Volunteers engage in volunteer activities at their own risk and are responsible for their own actions.
 - 2) The Division of Parks and Recreation does not provide Worker's Compensation or any other insurance coverage for volunteers.
 - 3) The Division will not represent volunteers in legal suits.

- 4) Volunteers are not covered for loss of employment time due to an injury or illness resulting for their service, nor for a lasting disability or death.
 - 5) Volunteers may be covered under supplemental volunteer insurance provided by an outside agency or organization not within the Division, Department, or State of Delaware, and volunteers should inquire whether such insurance is available at the time of their volunteer service.
- D. The Division reserves the right to decline a candidate for any reason which the Division determines may create an unfavorable match for the volunteer or the Division, or which may affect the best interests of the Division.
- E. Volunteers may at any time, for any reason, decide to discontinue volunteer service with the Division. Volunteers agree that, likewise, the Division may at any time, for any reason, decide to terminate the volunteer's relationship with the Division. Notice of such a decision should be communicated as soon as possible to the volunteer's supervisor.
- F. Volunteers understand that photographs may be taken at park events and give permission to the Division of Parks and Recreation and Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control to utilize any photographs in future publications, promotional materials and exhibits.
- G. Volunteers accepted into service agree to the risks involved with being a volunteer for Delaware State Parks and acknowledge that neither the State of Delaware, nor the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, nor the Division of Parks & Recreation, nor any state employee or volunteer leader, will assume financial liability for any injury or illness that the volunteer, or any participants in attendance with the volunteer, might incur while performing voluntary service for the Division of Parks and Recreation.

III. USE OF EQUIPMENT, TOOLS, SUPPLIES AND RESOURCES

1. The Division may provide equipment, tools, supplies and resources as requested and necessary to complete approved projects.
2. Volunteers may use their personal equipment, tools, supplies and resources with the understanding that neither the State of Delaware, nor the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, nor the Division of Parks and Recreation, nor any state employee or contractor, will assume any financial responsibility nor liability for damages or replacement to personal equipment, tools, supplies and resources used by the volunteer.
3. Use of equipment, tools, supplies and resources may only be used in areas and for projects authorized and designated by park staff.

4. Volunteers shall not borrow state equipment, tools, supplies and resources for personal use.

IV. SAFETY

1. The single overriding principle for all volunteer activities with Delaware State Parks is **SAFETY**. Safety for employees, Safety for Volunteers, Safety for our visitors. Safety is everyone's responsibility.
2. Volunteers should conduct all activities in a safe manner, including but not limited to the following:
 - a) Do not attempt to perform any duties for which you have not been trained or authorized or which you cannot safely or legally perform.
 - b) Know your physical limitations. Discuss with site supervisor any physical limitations or any health conditions that could influence your activity and in case of an emergency prior to starting your duties.
 - c) Attend project safety meetings and trainings.
 - d) Do not operate tools or machinery without training.
 - e) Use equipment, tools, supplies and resources in proper prescribed and safe manner.
 - f) Only use equipment, tools, supplies and resources in safe working order.
 - g) Perform your duties carefully and safely. Remain focused on the task at hand.
 - h) Use legs, not back, when lifting objects.
 - i) Dress properly for assignment. Always use the appropriate protective equipment, including personal protective equipment
 - j) Report any unsafe conditions you encounter.
 - k) Adhere to protocols as required under any declared emergency order.

V. RECOGNITION OF SERVICE

1. The Division gratefully recognizes the contribution of volunteers.
2. Volunteers may be recognized at individual park level or through Division Volunteer recognition programs or activities.

3. The Division Volunteer recognition program may provide recognition items for different levels of volunteer service.
4. The Division will provide letters and documentation verifying volunteer service within the Division.
5. Volunteers may be nominated to receive Division, State, and national level volunteer awards.
6. Divisions volunteers providing 100 hours for service to the Division within a 12-month period are eligible to receive a complimentary Annual Pass, for admission to all Delaware State Parks.
7. Volunteers may also discuss with their Park Manager of Volunteers or service site staff opportunities to participate in park level or Division programs and activities.