



Volunteer Manual

Sailability NSW

2014

The purpose of this Manual is to provide information, support and guidance to people who have decided to volunteer their time and energies to Sailability Branches around NSW. As different Sailability Branches have a different membership composition and attitudes towards the roles of volunteers in their branches, the following information should be adapted to suit individual branches.

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1. Sailability and its Volunteers

Sailability in NSW is totally run by volunteers. From the topmost Administration, to the people who work in the branches, all work is carried out in a voluntary capacity. This is important for all volunteers to remember, as every volunteer is doing as much as they can to make Sailability work well, some people filling two or more roles. If you think you can do something better, or have more time to spend in the role, please consider nominating for a bigger role.

The concept of people with disabilities taking on active administration and sailing roles has done much to promote our ideal of "sailing for everyone" and develop the Sailability policy of full community bi-directional integration in both participation and club administration.

ALL members, regardless of ability, are encouraged and supported to become actively involved in the administration of their branch. This is an important philosophy of Sailability and should be presented at every opportunity.

2. Who is a Volunteer?

A definition provided by Volunteering NSW states that: "A Volunteer is a person who chooses to contribute their time, skills and experience for no payment to benefit their community".

The volunteering activity can produce a feeling of self-worth and respect. Volunteering is also renowned for skill development, socialization, and fun. Volunteering may have positive benefits for the volunteer as well as for the person or community served.

Volunteering is more frequent among those living outside of Sydney. In Sydney 34% of people volunteer, compared to 42% in the rest of NSW. (Feb, 2015)

More than 6 million people volunteer throughout Australia, with some people volunteering for more than one organisation.

Volunteers have been found to live longer than people who do not volunteer, and live a more active, happier life.

Sailability Volunteers are recruited, trained, appreciated, supervised, but not paid. The volunteer contracts to perform a specific role with certain responsibilities and in return is entitled to certain rights. Both the Volunteer and Sailability have obligations to each other.

3. Volunteer Rights.

To job satisfaction

Volunteers have the right to gain from their working experiences and to feel that they are using the skills they already have as well as developing new skills. Volunteers should not feel that they are being exploited.

To support

Volunteers have the right to receive support and respect from each other, the other sailors, and everyone else who participates at that branch.

To a suitable placement

Volunteers have the right to be assigned a job which is worthwhile, appropriate and which takes their personal preferences, abilities, life experience, education,

employment background and temperament into account. Volunteers also have the right to know the reasons why they are seen to be unsuitable for a task if this is the case.

To a clear job-description

Volunteers have the right to be provided with a clear job-description which outlines what tasks they will be expected to perform. They also need to know who they are accountable to.

To sound guidance

Volunteers have the right to receive sound guidance and direction from experienced and well-informed Sailability personnel.

To be heard

Volunteers have the right to be involved in planning and decision making processes. They also have the right to make suggestions, and be shown respect for expressing an honest opinion. Volunteers should also feel comfortable asking questions if unsure in regard to any task.

To say no

Volunteers have the right to say no to a particular placement, or to certain tasks which are felt to be inappropriate or unacceptable.

To express grievances

Volunteers have the right to express grievances about their volunteering work or about aspects related to their work. However, in the first place all grievances should be directed to the Volunteer Coordinator, who will deal with them accordingly.

To know about the organisation

Volunteers will be well briefed on the policies, programs, and people in their Sailability Branch. They will be informed of any policy decisions which effect their volunteering work.

To appropriate training for their work

Volunteers will receive appropriate orientation and training for the roles they will be undertaking. Training will be thoughtfully planned and effectively presented by experienced, well-informed, patient and insightful personnel.

To promotion and a variety of experiences

Volunteers have the right to advance to greater responsibilities if wished, and to transfer from one activity to another.

To recognition

Volunteers will be recognised for their volunteering work. This recognition takes many forms, from an expression of appreciation, to certificates, to promotion, and through recognition at a higher level.

To adequate insurance

All volunteers are insured while on the job.

To reimbursement of costs

Volunteers at Sailability will be reimbursed for any reasonable expenses incurred on behalf of Sailability.

To become members of Sailability if they wish

Volunteers at Sailability are encouraged to join Sailability.

Volunteer Responsibilities

While volunteers are entitled to certain rights, they also have certain responsibilities to fulfil.

To be honest

Not only with themselves, but with participants and their families. It is difficult to be totally honest, but honesty, ethics, and trust go hand in hand. Everyone makes mistakes, this is how we learn. Our own and other's mistakes must be accepted. If people can accept their own honest or careless mistakes and openly tell others, then feelings of anger, disappointment and lack of trust may be reduced.

To be reliable and dependable

Volunteers need to be reliable and committed. Arrive on time, do the job they are allocated, and notify the coordinator if unavailable. Volunteers should not make promises they cannot keep, or do not intend to keep. Do not volunteer for roles if you do not intend to carry them out. Volunteers make sure that the work undertaken is what they really want to do. Learn to say 'No, not at this time' and remember to cater for personal and family needs. ***State your physical limitations, time limitations and other commitments.***

To be willing to learn

It is the responsibility of Sailability to provide relevant information, but it is the responsibility of the volunteer to assimilate this information. Volunteers should find out all they can about their role, and attend training programs, conferences etc when they are offered. They should be willing to 'have a go' enabling learning of new, challenging things.

To be patient

Many volunteer jobs involve people with special needs. Even though the job could be done faster, it is important to remain patient and empower the participants to do things for themselves.

To keep information confidential

People are vulnerable when receiving help. Information learnt about others, both the people with disabilities or the other volunteers must remain confidential. Please respect everyone's privacy, and be cautious about giving out information that may effect, or be related to others.

To speak up

Feel free to make suggestions to others and always ask about the things you do not know or understand. If there is a problem or an unhappy situation, it should not be kept private.

To work as part of a team

Every volunteer is be working towards the development of the organisation. When working with others, co-operation is vital. Everyone is part of the same team, and everyone in the team is important. Personal skills should be shared. Maintain good working relationships by showing respect, and keeping to the job description.

To be open minded

Be accepting and non-judgemental of other participants. Try not to let personal values prevent acceptance of another person. Even though two people may not agree, respect and acceptance of each other's opinions will lead to harmonious running of the Branch.

To be accountable and accept evaluation

The volunteer is responsible for his actions and decisions while on the job. They should accept friendly evaluation of their work.

4. Sailability's Rights

Sailability also has rights. They are as follows:

To refuse volunteers

When they do not have an appropriate job offer.
When a volunteer is deemed unsuitable for health or attitudinal reasons.

To terminate a placement

Sailability has the right to dismiss a volunteer if their behaviour is unacceptable, or if they damage the reputation of Sailability.

To be represented positively by the volunteer

Volunteers should represent the interests of Sailability, not their personal interests.

To have a firm commitment from the volunteer

The volunteer must be committed to the organisation. This includes its philosophy, goals and objectives, its policies and its programs.

Sailability's Responsibilities

Sailability has the following responsibilities to its volunteers.

To demonstrate a positive attitude towards volunteers and their work.

Policies and procedures regarding the use of volunteers must be formulated and documented for each Branch, and made available to all concerned. A strong belief in the value of all volunteers is essential.

To provide a clear description of the role

This enables the volunteer to know exactly what is expected of them, and what is not expected of them. This should be in writing, and may be made available on video.

A job description should include:

- What the volunteer is expected to do...tasks, roles, responsibilities
- Where the work is to be done
- What time the volunteer needs to be available
- What dates are the relevant ones
- Who the volunteer reports to, including that person's email address or phone number
- What training is needed
- Whether a Working With Children Check is required for the role

To provide Orientation and Training as needed

The training that volunteers require will vary depending on the needs of the participants at each Branch. Training may be formal or informal, and needs to be flexible, relevant, and further enhance the skills of the volunteer. It must provide opportunities for growth, be accessible and develop competence for the roles to be undertaken.

To inform volunteers of any changes in plans, or circumstances which may affect them

The volunteer is to be consulted on matters that affect their work and be able to take part in the decision making process.

It is a good idea to inform all volunteers of programs and regattas coming up, as they may decide to join in unexpected ways, and show previously unexpected skills.

To continuous evaluation and feedback

Feedback and evaluation are constructive ways of ensuring that the volunteer is happy with his tasks.

To privacy and confidentiality

Volunteers intimate details and past history are confidential.

To support

Sailability will provide ongoing support to all volunteers who need it.

To Insurance Cover

Each volunteer involved in Sailability events is provided with Insurance Cover for the time they are at events. It is imperative that attendance sheets indicating times of attendance are filled in and signed at each event.

5. Disability Etiquette

Attitude

A person who lives with a disability is overall a **person**, not a condition.

People with a disability have special needs and may need extra assistance, or be unable to do some tasks. However, the majority of people with a disability are capable, contributing members of the community. The vast majority of all people

with a disability are engaged in full-time or part time employment, paid or voluntary.

Some volunteers may be uneasy when meeting a person with a disability for the first time, Treat the person with a disability exactly the same as you would any other person you are meeting for the first time. If the person is in a wheelchair, look at the person who is in the wheelchair, not at the person pushing them. Try to keep the patronising tone out of your voice. This may be difficult to do the first time, but with familiarity it becomes easier.

If you feel that the person requires assistance, ask if you can help, and in what way. It is important for the person with a disability to maintain as much independence as possible. However, it is also important for them to be given achievable tasks, and to be encouraged to progress at the rate they are comfortable with. Don't leave a person struggling with a task that is beyond their capabilities, otherwise they may become frustrated and miserable.

Sailability encourages all members to take an active role in administration of our organisation. Members should be provided training and support to acquire new skills.

Sailability always refers to abilities, rather than disabilities. One's disability is not focussed upon, abilities are acknowledged and nurtured.

Be observant, be respectful, be pleasant....**but most important, be relaxed and enjoy the interaction.**

Communication

Communication refers to the sending and receiving of messages. The main components of verbal communication are:

- WORDS -verbal or written 7%
- TONE -pitch, volume variety (expression) 38%
- BODY LANGUAGE – non-verbal
Eye-contact, facial expression, posture,
gestures, touch. 55%

People communicate by using a combination of spoken and non-verbal messages. Some people with a disability may have difficulties with some aspects of communication.

It is important to establish how a non-verbal person communicates YES and NO. Ask them to show you their YES and NO. Having established this, communication then becomes easy when you phrase questions with a YES/NO answer.

Sometimes it may be necessary to be patient when a person has difficulty with verbal communication. If you can't work out what the person is trying to tell you, then try to get some help. Don't be embarrassed to say that you can't understand. It is not going to be news to them. Often it becomes easier to understand a person as you get to know them better.

Remember, communication is a two way process. Relaying a message through a communication device must be combined with listening closely for there to be effective communication.

Personal space/Touching

The use of personal space can be a type of non-verbal communication. Personal space is defined as the area around an individual. Personal space requirements differ from person to person, and unwanted intrusion into personal space can lead to the person withdrawing.

Touching is one of the most important non-verbal signals. Touching depends on the interaction between two people. Touching can be a very positive thing, or it can be negative. Touching is one way in which adults can demonstrate protection, support and caring for each other. In its negative context, touching may signal superiority and dominance. A person with a disability may not necessarily want to be touched, but may be unable to let people know. Be guided by the carer or support person of the person who has a disability.

Wheelchair Information

- When pushing a person in a wheelchair, do not regard yourself as simply the pusher. You are also a companion. Be aware of their needs regarding speed of pushing, evenness of ground you are pushing them over, and going too fast downhill.
- A person's wheelchair is part of their personal space, so avoid draping your self over the wheelchair unless the person in the wheelchair is comfortable with you doing so.
- Make sure the person in the wheelchair can hear you. It may be necessary to go the front of the chair and to sit down to talk to the person at the same level.
- Ensure that the person in the wheelchair feels safe at all times.
- Never leave the chair alone without putting on the brakes. After transferring the sailor into the boat, make sure the wheelchair is placed in a safe position with the brake on.

Types of wheelchairs

There are two types of wheelchairs, manual or electric. Within each group there are several different types:

Manual (self propelling) wheelchairs.

Some are pushed by the person with a disability, using an inner rim of the wheel to propel the chair.

Some are pushed by a pusher:

- The person in the wheelchair may need to be strapped securely into it. May need some posture or head support.
- If the chair is difficult to push, the tyres may be flat.
- Try to avoid uneven ground, sand and large stones.
- Remember to apply the brake when the chair is stationary.
- Some brakes may be difficult to find. Ask the carer.

Battery operated wheelchairs (electric)

These include electric scooters.

- This equipment is very heavy. If unlocked into the manual mode, they are difficult to push. Be guided by the person using the equipment, or the carer, regarding how to change to manual use from battery, and how to lock the device.
- Electric wheelchairs need to be turned off when stationary to avoid the battery going flat.

Transferring the person with a disability into the boat

The large majority of people with a disability who come sailing require only minimal assistance into the boat. Make sure the boat is secured front and back, and talk the person through the process. Minimal assistance may be required to have the person seated comfortably in the boat. Different branches will have different routines to establish these and other transfers.

It is important that all safety guidelines are followed to protect both the person with a disability, and the volunteer.

Some people with a disability need to be hoisted from the wheelchair into the boat.

Some people need to sit on a chair and the harness fitted there for safe transfer into and out of the boat.

Follow the instructions written in the branch guidelines, and if in doubt, follow the lead of more experienced volunteers.