



Volunteer Policies and Procedures

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VOLUNTEERS

Criteria for being a Volunteer

People wishing to become volunteers for Guide Dogs NSW/ACT (GD NSW/ACT) need to meet the following criteria:

- Experience and competent skills relevant to their chosen task
- Availability suited to chosen tasks
- Ability to conduct themselves in a professional manner
- Reliable and consistent in their approach
- Pleasant and approachable
- Good communication skills
- Ability to work well with others / good team player
- Maintain a satisfactory Police Record (if applicable to the task)
- Be in a fit and healthy state to work
- Ability to drive safely if required for duties involving driving
- Shall not work (paid or unpaid) with a “like organisation” where there may be a potential conflict of interest, which may harm GD NSW/ACT business activities.

Volunteer Roles & Responsibilities

As a volunteer you may be involved in the following activities:

- Clerical/administrative work
- Assisting with the set up/pack up of events
- Manning merchandise or other stalls
- Collection of model guide dog collection boxes

As a volunteer you will:

- Always satisfy the relevant criteria as stated above, and notify the Volunteer Coordinator of any change in circumstance that may mean you can no longer satisfy the criteria
- Be competent in performing the tasks required
- Be reliable and consistent in your approach to tasks
- Respect confidentiality
- Be sufficiently aware of client needs to be able to manage the interaction with clients appropriately
- Undertake training as requested
- Be familiar with and committed to the services provided by GD NSW/ACT
- Be familiar with and adhere to relevant GD NSW/ACT policies, procedures, and codes of conduct as documented in this handbook (these may be altered or added to from time to time)
- Not use your position with GD NSW/ACT for personal profit or gain
- Be non-judgemental and non-discriminatory in your contact with other people
- Need to give feedback and information to staff, supervisors and managers as appropriate, and ask for support when you need it
- Value and support other team members
- Carry out the work you have agreed to do responsibly and ethically, and be accountable
- Give notice before you leave GD NSW/ACT

Volunteer Rights

As a volunteer you have the right to:

- Information about the organisation for which you are volunteering

- Know to whom you are accountable
- Be recognised as a valued team member
- Be supported and supervised in your role
- A healthy and safe working environment
- Be covered by insurance
- Say “no” if you feel you are being exploited
- Be informed and consulted on matters which directly and indirectly affect you and your work
- Orientation and training
- To regularly receive constructive feedback
- To know who to turn to with problems or difficulties
- Be made aware of relevant GD NSW/ACT Policies and Procedures. Give written consent for any information, photos, or videos material to be released to any parties

Administrative Support for Volunteer Program

To assist the administration of the Volunteer Program, all volunteers are requested to:

1. Complete an application form prior to commencing any volunteer work, and
2. Upon each attendance for volunteer duty, all volunteers must:
 - Record signature, time of arrival and departure at reception desk
 - Advise the Volunteer Coordinator of any changes in request for work to be carried out ie. from another department

Contact Telephone Numbers

Main contact Volunteer Coordinator
Business Hours: 9412 9300

After Hours and at Guide Dogs Events TBC

PERSONAL CONDUCT AND PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Personal Conduct

- Volunteers must always be in a fit state to work
- Clients must not be solicited by volunteers for any private practice
- Exploitation of clients for personal or financial benefits is not acceptable; if in doubt, volunteers should discuss the matter with the Volunteer Coordinator.
- Volunteers of GD NSW/ACT must not make public statements unless authorised by the Public Relations Co-ordinator.

Confidentiality

As a volunteer, you may hear or come across confidential information regarding business activities and/or clients and staff members, and it is important that confidential information remains so. Confidential business information is generally information that relates to strategic and financial business activities, and legal matters. Confidential personal information may also relate to finance and legal matters, as well as health, sexuality, family and personal issues, etc.

Be conscious of sensitive information and personal conversations, and respect confidentiality.

Insurance for Volunteers

Guide Dogs NSW/ACT has Voluntary Workers Personal Accident Insurance with CGU Insurance Ltd. Benefits are capped.

Etiquette in the Company of a Guide Dog

Guide Dogs are as easily distracted as the rest of us, distract a Guide Dog and you may put the owners life at risk. Therefore, when you see a Guide Dog in harness we ask that you please:

- Do not pat the Guide Dog
- Do not feed the Guide Dog
- Do not distract the Guide Dog
- Do not make the Guide Dog the centre of attention

These may all cause the Guide Dog to lose concentration and put the handler's safety at risk.

- If the dog is not working, and you wish to pat the dog, always ask the handler first.
- If you see the Guide Dog doing something it shouldn't, please let the handler know. Only provide assistance if requested by the handler.
- If offering to be a sighted guide, always be on the Guide Dog handler's right hand side, as the Guide Dog is always walked on the left.
- If the Guide Dog handler asks to follow you, position yourself approximately half a metre in front of the Guide Dog and give the handler verbal information as to your direction of travel and approaching obstacles etc, if stopping or slowing speed.

On an average three hour shopping trip, a Guide Dog encounters no less than six separate distractions. Most of them well-meaning, but all of them potentially dangerous. If you can remember these guidelines whenever you meet a working Guide Dog and their handler, you will be helping them both.

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact the duty desk at GD NSW/ACT on 9412 9300.

Good Communication with a Person who is Vision Impaired

- Let the person know you have entered the room or group
- Identify yourself
- Always make it clear with whom you are talking to (use names)
- Let the person know who else is in the room and if appropriate introduce them, including children
- Do not shout
- Use language normally, including words such as look and see
- If you need information from the person who is vision impaired, ask the person who is vision impaired, not the person standing next to them
- Do not make signs and gestures to someone else as a sort of confidential language
- Let the person know when you are leaving the room
- The person may use a white cane or a Guide Dog to walk independently. They may ask to take your arm, don't grab their arm, let them decide and they will take a half step behind to anticipate curbs and steps
- Treat the person with a vision impairment as a person first, then consider the vision impairment

GUIDE DOGS NSW/ACT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

As a volunteer you are bound by the same policies and procedures as GD NSW/ACT staff. Please read a summary of the relevant guidelines below. If you have questions about any of the policies or procedures please contact the Volunteer Coordinator or Human Resources.

Non Discriminatory

GD NSW/ACT is committed to ensuring its practices and services are non-discriminatory and adhere to the necessary requirements of relevant external legislation such as anti-discrimination and equal opportunities. If any volunteer feels discrimination is or has taken place, they should discuss their concerns with the Volunteer Coordinator and/or the Human Resources Manager.

Harassment / Bullying

GD NSW/ACT adheres to all necessary requirements of relevant external harassment / bullying legislation. Any form of harassment of any person is unacceptable behaviour within the organisation. Any volunteer who feels they are being harassed or bullied should discuss their concerns with their Manager and/or the Human Resources Manager.

Any allegations of harassment will be promptly and thoroughly investigated with appropriate action taken.

Privacy Principles and Access to Personal Information

GD NSW/ACT:

- Recognises and respects each person's right to privacy, dignity and confidentiality
- Adheres to all necessary requirements of relevant external privacy legislation
- Only collects information that is directly relevant to effective service delivery
- Ensures individuals are fully informed about the reason for the information collection
- Ensures written and spoken information is protected from unauthorised access and use
- Acknowledges that clients and volunteers may request access to their file information
- Volunteers are to refer all enquiries to the Volunteer Coordinator

Grievance Procedure / Formal / Informal Complaints

Where a grievance exists, the person is encouraged to firstly address and resolve this directly with the other people concerned. If this is not successful or appropriate, the person is encouraged to discuss the grievance with the relevant manager / supervisor who will then attempt to resolve it. At any point in the process, the person involved can complete a Grievance Form (located on the Intranet), may involve the Human Resources Manager, and/or may have an advocate of their choice at any negotiation meetings. All completed Grievance Forms are forwarded to the Human Resources Manager (or designate) who maintains a grievance register.

Continuous Improvement

If you feel there is an issue or area within GD NSW/ACT that may be improved or reviewed, you should discuss this with your supervisor or manager or the Volunteer Coordinator. The suggestion will then be discussed with the relevant people, and an approved action noted.

Fit for Work / Drugs / Alcohol Policy

Volunteers must be fit for work at all times (ie. relating to their personal state) that ensures work tasks can be performed at the required level of expertise. A person's personal state also refers to illness, tiredness, emotional state and/or the effects of medication, alcohol, drugs, and/or other substances.

Collection Boxes

- Collection Boxes are available for the purpose of collecting money from the public in business environments – shops, hotels, banks etc
- Exclusively designed for GD NSW/ACT they provide a unique and attractive point of interest for business and a fabulous opportunity for the public to donate easily and directly to GD NSW/ACT
- Collection boxes come in two sizes. The mini model dog is 30 centimetres high and easily sits at point of sale collecting spare change. The model dog sits 120 centimetres high and tends to be placed near entrances or exits or areas where customers may be waiting for service. Both collection boxes are safe, lockable and easily secured to counters or stands. Chains are provided for securing model dogs
- All collection boxes are individually numbered and keyed and very easily identified as belonging to GD NSW/ACT
- As a collection box host, a business enters into a relationship with GD NSW/ACT. Businesses become volunteers and as such receive paperwork proving their authority to host a collection box and their responsibilities as part of the program
- As a collection box host, a business has the responsibility of ensuring the box is in a secure position and will not present a potential hazard to customers or employees
- Our collection boxes require emptying on a regular basis or when full. Collection boxes should be opened and money counted by two individuals. GD NSW/ACT provide all deposit books and training required and businesses enjoy the satisfaction of seeing how much money they raise
- All monies raised will be recorded and businesses are kept up to date on their total monies raised
- A business must inform GD NSW/ACT as soon as possible if the business is to change hands, close or relocate and/or if the model dog is damaged, stolen or relocated

Handling Monies

- Monies should be kept in a secure lockable place at all times
- Should individual receipts be required for individual donors, provide a donation envelope ensuring the donor marks who gave them the envelope in the appropriate section, and request that the donor mails their donation to Head Office at Chatswood. If they have cash and want to make a donation, record their contact details and incorporate their cash donation with your cheque.,. . Please note that we cannot provide tax deductible receipts if a member of the public has received something for their money e.g. merchandise or raffle ticket
- Payment should then be made either by way of depositing proceeds into GD NSW/ACT's bank account or by the way of a bank cheque or personal cheque made out to Guide Dogs NSW/ACT and should cover the entire amount raised (minus expenses). Bank cheques can be obtained at any bank
- Cheques should be sent with details of who raised the money, the authority number if applicable and how the money was raised. Please forward to the Volunteer Co-ordinator, Guide Dogs NSW/ACT, PO Box 1965, North Sydney NSW 2059

Official Statements and Crisis Management

Effective and appropriate communication with the media plays a vital role in ensuring GD NSW/ACT continues to enjoy its positive reputation as a credible and respected service organisation, worthy of public support.

Any media statement and/or communication concerning an operational, promotional or public relations matter shall only be made with the approval of the relevant manager, the Marketing Manager and the Public Relations Coordinator. Any issue that is potentially damaging to GD NSW/ACT's public image or safe operation shall be referred in the same manner. The Public Relations Coordinator must be advised of all media coverage in all circumstances.

Dress Code

All volunteers are encouraged to dress appropriately. This relates to safety standards for Work Health and Safety (eg. stable footwear), and professional presentation.

ID Badges

Volunteers ID badges must be worn and visible at all times whilst performing GD NSW/ACT volunteer duties.

Working with Children

GD NSW/ACT enjoys the privilege of public trust in our work providing services to our clients and within the wider community raising funds and awareness of our work. Whilst volunteering for GD NSW/ACT you may find yourself being asked to mind children by busy parents. Volunteers must not mind children or do any work with children unless authorised to do so by their supervisor. For those volunteers such as public speakers at schools you will be required to complete a Volunteer/Student Declaration form.

Work Health and Safety

All volunteers shall report any Work Health and Safety concerns or issues to the relevant manager / supervisor, or Volunteer Coordinator.

GD NSW/ACT is committed to:

- Recognising its responsibilities under the Work Health & Safety Act 2011, and other relevant regulations and codes of practice.
- Providing a safe and healthy environment and systems of work
- Providing written procedures and instructions to ensure safe systems of work and pro-active hazard management
- Providing information, training and supervision to clients, volunteers, contractors, customers and volunteers so that they can play an active role in Work Health and Safety
- Effectively monitoring and supervising all staff and volunteers to ensure they follow all Work Health and Safety policies, procedures and work instructions

Volunteer Medical Information

For volunteers that have a medical condition that may potentially require assistance to manage while at GD NSW/ACT; their information will be passed onto the relevant supervisor / manager and will be kept confidential.

Incident and Injury Reporting

Any person on GD NSW/ACT sites or while performing GD NSW/ACT duties off site involved in an incident, significant near miss, or suffers an injury, they must complete an Incident / Injury Report.

Forms are to be forwarded to your supervisor / manager for processing. Relevant risk assessments and hazard controls will take place as deemed necessary and as required by Work Health & Safety Legislation.

First Aid

Each GD NSW/ACT building has a designated First Aid person and a first aid kit. This is located centrally, often near the notice board situated in the kitchen. All volunteers must complete an Incident / Injury Form if first aid is required. (See above).

Emergency Systems

GD NSW/ACT has an Emergency Control Group and GD NSW/ACT will conduct regular evacuation drills, and relevant training for fire wardens.

Fire extinguishers, evacuation packs, notices of fire and deputy fire wardens, notices of exit points and assembly points, evacuation instructions, etc are located in every building and updated as necessary. All volunteers must familiarise themselves with these details, whether at GD NSW/ACT or at other locations of voluntary work.