



# NATIONAL VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS ACTIVE IN DISASTER POINTS OF CONSENSUS

## VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

The National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD) movement 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. We acknowledge that volunteers may also be disaster survivors; volunteering can help survivors have agency in their own recovery journey. 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. The National VOAD Volunteer Management Committee has created a Points of Consensus document to guide best practices for volunteer rights and responsibilities in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery for volunteers serving in any capacity with a National VOAD member organization.

<b>1. Right To Be Treated With Respect</b>	
<i>Volunteer Rights</i>	<i>Volunteer Responsibilities</i>
Volunteers have a right to be respected regardless of ethnicity, socio-economic status, culture, race, color, gender, age, sexual orientation, spiritual/religious practices and disabilities.	Volunteers should respect the organization, including delivering services in support of the organization's mission and its core values. They should respect all those with whom and for whom they serve regardless of ethnicity, socio-economic, culture, race, color, gender, age, sexual orientation, spiritual/religious practices and disabilities. Volunteers should show respect and gain knowledge of the local communities they work in and with.

<b>2. Right To Be Valued</b>	
<i>Volunteer Rights</i>	<i>Volunteer Responsibilities</i>
Volunteers have the right to be treated as a valued team member, with fairness and with 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 and the community affected by the disaster 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.

<b>3. Right to an Organized, Structured System That Matches Skills With Tasks</b>	
<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 processes. Organizations should clearly communicate volunteer opportunities and required skill sets to volunteers. Organizations should have effective systems and processes in place to match and utilize volunteer time and skills with organizational opportunities.</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>

<b>4. Right To Clear Expectations</b>	
<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>

<b>5. Right To a Safe and Accessible Work Environment</b>	
<i>Volunteer Rights</i>	<i>Volunteer Responsibilities</i>
<p>Member organizations should model best practices for the health and safety of their volunteers and take appropriate steps and precautions to provide a safe and accessible work environment, to identify potential hazards, and to identify safety and adaptive equipment needed to perform their assigned tasks safely and effectively. Volunteers should know what equipment will be made available and what is their responsibility ahead of their scheduled time. Special safety guidelines and considerations should be established to ensure the safety of minors who volunteer. Organizations should accommodate volunteers with disabilities, adapting roles and functions as needed, in accordance with local, state, and federal laws, as well as in the spirit of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.</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, accessibility needs, or other disabilities. Volunteers should respect an organization's request to perform background checks.</p>

<b>6. Right To Confidentiality</b>	
<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 including prudent social media sharing, and take reasonable steps to minimize the potential for disclosure of their own confidential information.

<b>7. Right To Supervision, Direction, And Training</b>	
<i>Volunteer Rights</i>	<i>Volunteer Responsibilities</i>
Volunteers have the right to a general orientation and training. Volunteers have the right to request to be trained in additional skills beyond their current capabilities. They should know their direct supervisor, the chain of command, and the appropriate way to address and resolve issues. When possible, volunteers can expect empowerment, resourcing, and development of leadership skills.	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.

<b>8. Right To Clear, Two-way Communication</b>	
<i>Volunteer Rights</i>	<i>Volunteer Responsibilities</i>
Volunteers have the right to be given clear direction and guidance and to give feedback to their supervisor (directly) as well as the organization without fear of retribution. Volunteers have the right to be given clear direction and guidance on how and where to access organizational resources.	Volunteers should actively participate in two-way communication. Volunteers are welcome to provide honest feedback in a respectful manner. Volunteers are expected to accept feedback to expand their understanding of their role as volunteers.

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