



*We Build Community through People, Parks & Programs.*

# Volunteer Manual and Application

Questions Contact:  
574.299.4765

# Volunteer Handbook

## I. Introduction

### Welcome

Welcome to South Bend Parks and Recreation! We are excited about your interest in our Volunteer Program, and we hope you will become involved in our community!

This Volunteer Handbook provides information on the South Bend Parks and Recreation Department, its parks and services, volunteer opportunities and detailed information on policies and procedures.

### South Bend Parks and Recreation Facts and Figures

The South Bend Parks and Recreation Department is comprised of 56 parks, 16 recreation facilities, and 3 golf courses.

South Bend Parks and Recreation Vision Statement:

*“We build Community through People, Parks and Programs.”*

### The Program: Purpose, Benefits, and Recognition

The purpose of South Bend Parks and Recreation’s Volunteer Program is to provide opportunities for citizens to get involved in their community and to support our mission. Volunteers provide hours of invaluable assistance that contribute to the success of park and recreation programs.

There are many reasons to volunteer. You may want to develop knowledge about the community and special events. You might volunteer to meet new friends, discover new interests, or make a difference. During our interview we will explore your interests, talents, and the amount of time you wish to volunteer. Our goal is to create a rewarding experience for all involved.

The main reward of volunteer work is the sense of personal achievement of helping an organization succeed. There are also tangible benefits. Hours are accepted as service group requirements. Small rewards, such as t-shirts, key chains, or water bottles, may be given to volunteers after their service. In addition, each fall the South Bend Parks and Recreation Department holds a reception to honor volunteers.

## **II. Becoming a Volunteer**

### Recruitment

Volunteers can sign up for the Volunteer Program throughout the year. Volunteer opportunities will be listed periodically on the South Bend Parks and Recreation website, sbpark.org.

### Application

All interested volunteers will fill out an application form and liability waiver form. Once an application is reviewed and references are checked, the potential volunteer will be called in for an interview. The supervisor will discuss opportunities that meet the volunteer's interest and time commitment.

### Screening and Background Checking

As part of the application process, it is essential for the public entity to obtain the applicant's authorization to conduct appropriate screening and background checking activities. The extent of these activities will vary depending on the particular volunteer position.

Depending on the nature of the position, use of any or all of the following screening techniques may be used:

- Contacting personal and employment references.
- Criminal background checks.
- Motor vehicle records checks.
- Prior employment background check.
- Verification of education, training, certifications and licenses.
- Personal Interviews with the applicant.

### Orientation

Once applicants are approved to volunteer, they will be required to attend an orientation session. Each Supervisor will hold an orientation session for their volunteers. The orientation will cover the following:

- Pertinent policies, such as those addressing safety, customer service, accident reporting, sexual harassment, emergencies, etc.
- Information concerning supervisory and reporting responsibilities; and to whom, when and how problems, hazards, or suggestions should be reported.
- The specific hazards the volunteer may encounter, and procedures for performing volunteer activities safely.

### **III. Being a Volunteer**

#### Volunteer Responsibilities

Volunteers are expected to follow the same working practices as employees. Questions concerning safety problems or violations should be directed to a supervisor. It is the volunteer's responsibility to:

- Know and follow established safety policies and procedures for your volunteer placement
- Immediately report all on-the-job accidents to your supervisor
- Report all unsafe practices to your supervisor
- Cooperate and assist in the investigation of work accidents
- Follow personal hygiene and grooming habits
- Obtain and wear/use any specialized safety clothing or equipment required by the Department

#### Scheduling

It is the volunteer's responsibility to sign up for opportunities that are within the volunteer's training. All volunteers will receive a description of the duties and responsibilities of each assignment. It is important to the Parks and Recreation Department for volunteers to perform their duties as agreed.

The volunteer must sign up for opportunities at least two days in advance. Many opportunities will be listed on the South Bend Parks and Recreation website, and volunteers will simply fill out an online form if they are interested in volunteering. Interested groups may schedule different service opportunities by contacting the Department directly.

#### Record Keeping

So an individual or organization can receive recognition, it is essential that the South Bend Parks and Recreation Department maintain a record of the amount of time donated by volunteers. Immediately after a work session, volunteers are required to report the date and time they worked, the activity, and the number of hours completed each time they worked.

#### Attire and Personal Protective Equipment

Volunteers may receive a South Bend Parks and Recreation volunteer shirt. Volunteers should wear this shirt while serving unless told otherwise. In addition, all volunteers must wear close-toed shoes. Depending on the jobs performed, volunteers should use proper safety equipment such as gloves, sturdy shoes, earplugs, hats, or sunscreen.

## Absences

Volunteers who cannot report for their job assignments should notify the Supervisor as soon as possible. If a volunteer is ill, they should call their supervisor at the beginning of the work day, or as soon as possible.

## **IV. Youthful Volunteers**

### Program

During summer vacation months, the use of minors in volunteer positions increases, particularly in park and recreation related activities. Minors benefit by gaining useful experience in the work arena, and public entities benefit from channeling of youthful energy into productive endeavors. To reduce risks, however, public entities should be mindful of the laws governing work by minors.

### Fair Labor Standards Act

State Fair Labor Standards Laws will be used in this program.

### Persons 16 and Older

No minor should be permitted to perform activities in any occupation determined to be “particularly hazardous” under the FLSA. Outside of the hazardous occupations, the FLSA permits minors 16-18 years of age to perform any type of work.

Driving or helping on a motor vehicle is considered a “particularly hazardous” activity, although the occasional and incidental daytime use of a small vehicle (less than 6,000 pounds gross vehicle weight) is permitted. Other “particularly hazardous” activities include those which involve the risk of falling more than ten feet; and operating power-driven hoists, wood working machines, and boilers. Wrecking, roofing, and excavating are also considered “particularly hazardous.” The FLSA and accompanying regulations should be reviewed for a complete list of hazardous activities.

### Persons 14 and Older

A minor 14 years of age or older may work in gas stations, retail stores, offices, and retail food service establishments; however they may not operate slicers and grinders. They may make deliveries by foot, bike, or bus, and perform janitorial and grounds work; however, they may not operate power mowers.

## Hours of Work

Minors 16 or age and older may generally work up to eight hours a day and forty hours a week. Minors under 16 have additional restrictions on their hours or work when school is in session, and may generally work only between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. (except that summer work may extend to 9 p.m.)

A complete discussion of state and federal child labor laws is beyond the scope of this Handbook.

## **V. South Bend Parks and Recreation Policies**

### Volunteer Conduct Policy

**Policy:** The purpose of this policy is to recognize the Parks and Recreation Department's responsibility to conduct all business affairs, including volunteer affairs, within the spirit and intent of high ethics, honesty and integrity. Because of this responsibility, all volunteers will adhere to the same high code and conduct as full time and part time staff.

**Procedure:** Whenever a Park Staff Supervisor determines that a volunteer within their supervision should be discharged from service for poor performance or conduct, issues should be brought to the attention of the Supervisor and the relevant Department Head, and the final decision will come from them.

### Harassment and Discrimination Policy

It is the policy of the City of South Bend to provide all employees/volunteers with a work environment free of any form of discrimination, including harassment. The City is opposed to, and prohibits, an employee from engaging in unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, or any other verbal conduct that might be construed as racial, sexual, ethnic, disability, religious, or age-related slur. Such behavior will result in termination.

### Software Policy

The South Bend Parks and Recreation Department complies with all copyright laws for software programs installed and used on department owned computers. Volunteers are expected to adhere to these laws.

## **VI. Volunteer Liability**

### Laws and Legislation

Various laws limit the liability of volunteers. Most pertinent to volunteers nationwide is the Volunteer Protection Act of 1997. This federal law applies to various categories of volunteers, including individuals performing volunteer services for public entities; although it preempts inconsistent state laws, it does not preempt any state law which provides additional liability protections for volunteers.

### Volunteer Protection Act of 1997

The Volunteer Protection Act of 1997 provides that no volunteer of a public entity is liable for harm caused by an act of omission of the volunteer on behalf of the entity; however, in order to be protected, the following requirements must be met:

- The volunteer must have been acting within the scope of his or her responsibilities for the entity;
- Where appropriate or required, the volunteer must have been properly licensed, certified, are authorized to perform the activity by appropriate state authorities;
- The harm must not have been caused by willful or criminal misconduct, gross negligence, reckless misconduct, or a conscious, flagrant indifference to the rights or safety of the individual who suffered the harm; and
- The harm must not have been caused by the volunteer's operation of a vehicle for which the state requires the vehicle's owner or operator to possess an operator's license or to maintain insurance.

## **VII. Risk Management and Safety Hazards**

### Risk Management

Risk management explores safety risks involved in work and volunteer tasks. The Volunteer Coordinator works hard to minimize any potential risks to the volunteer. Report any hazards immediately to your supervisor.

### Safety Program Management and Supervision

It is likely that volunteers will report to duty without a thorough understanding of the hazards associated with the tasks they will be performing. Therefore, they need to be provided with the knowledge and skills necessary to perform their tasks in a safe manner.

The extent of a volunteer's involvement in safety training depends upon the types of activities that are assigned. The more hazardous the activities, the more training and supervision the volunteer will need.

Supervisors should determine whether the volunteer has the skills and ability to perform the activity safely.

Supervisors need to make sure that volunteers are properly trained to perform their activities safely. Whether the supervisor actually conducts the training or arranges it through somebody else, the training needs to be done before assigning the volunteer to a hazardous activity.

In addition, a supervisor should not hesitate to stop a volunteer who is observed to be engaging in unsafe conduct. Volunteers who refuse to follow safety rules and procedures should be relieved of their volunteer duties.

### Safety Hazards

Depending on the type of activity, there may be numerous hazards that a volunteer may encounter. Where these hazards exist, safety procedures should be developed, and volunteers should be properly trained to reduce the possibility of injury. Safety hazards include lifting injuries, machinery and equipment injuries, fall hazards, infectious diseases, fire injuries, and security threats. Where feasible, hazards should be eliminated. If hazards cannot be eliminated, appropriate safeguards should be developed and implemented.

## **VIII. Compensation and Benefits Issues**

A public entity may desire to “thank” its volunteers by providing them with some amount of compensation, reward, or benefit. However, various laws restrict the type of payment that may be bestowed consistently with an individual’s volunteer status.





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## COMPANY/ ORGANIZATION/ INDIVIDUAL VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

**1. Specific Project that interests you** \_\_\_\_\_  
 What volunteer positions interest you? (Please check all areas you are interested in)  
 Administration/Customer Service     Community Outreach/Marketing     Special Events  
 Park Improvement Projects                       Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Home Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Work Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Cell Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Organization:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Contact Person:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Number of Individuals:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Age Ranges:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Contact Telephone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Contact Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**For Groups Only, Fill Out Section Numbers: 1, 3, 4, 7, 9, 10**

Check Days and Times Available:

Time/Day	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Morning							
Afternoon							

**5. Emergency Contact Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Emergency Contact Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Educational Background: (Please Circle One)**

High School/ GED    Some College                      College Degree                      Advanced College Degree

**7. Work Experience: (Beginning with most recent)**

1. Organization: \_\_\_\_\_ Title/Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Duties: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Organization: \_\_\_\_\_ Title/Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Duties: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**8. Volunteer Experience: (Beginning with most recent)**

1. Organization: \_\_\_\_\_ Title/Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Duties: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Organization: \_\_\_\_\_ Title/Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Duties: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**9. Skills, Hobbies, Interests, and/or Career Goals:**

**10. Why do you want to volunteer for the South Bend Parks and Recreation Department?**

**11. What would you like to learn or gain as a park volunteer?**

**12. A Background Check will be required for each Individual.**

Please Note: Organizations, Groups, or Companies are responsible for the background checks and behavior of their volunteers.



**VOLUNTEER SUMMARY/ EVALUATION**

**Project :** \_\_\_\_\_

**Location :** \_\_\_\_\_

**Supervisor :** \_\_\_\_\_

**Names of Volunteers**

**Hours Worked:**

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**Descriptions of Accomplishments:**

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**Evaluation/ Review Comments: (e.g. great supplies, could have used more tools...)**

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**Sponsor Signature :** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date :** \_\_\_\_\_

Check us out anytime at [www.sbpark.org](http://www.sbpark.org), or call (574) 299-4765 with comments or suggestions