

WORKING WITH VOLUNTEERS

Overview

Volunteers are the often-unacknowledged life-blood of the arts industry – many projects simply cannot get off the ground without the support of volunteers.

However, it's critical that arrangements are in place to protect both volunteers and the organization from liabilities that can arise through the engagement and actions of volunteer personnel.

You should have in place a volunteer agreement/contract, which outlines the reciprocal arrangement between the volunteer and the organization. This will often cover the volunteer under the organisation's WorkCover and public liability insurance – however, it will limit the organisation's indemnification of the volunteer to specific actions undertaken by the volunteer on the organisation's behalf.

Volunteers must receive the appropriate training and induction in the activities for which they have been engaged – it is best to assume that volunteers have minimal training and to induct them in all activities they are undertaking.

You must also have contingencies in place in the instance that volunteers are unable to discharge their duties – as they are not employees, there are not the same obligations in place as exist for employees (unless the volunteers are receiving some sort of financially-equitable benefit, such as tickets, in exchange for their volunteer labour).

SAMPLE CONTROLS

HAZARD	Working with Volunteers				
INHERENT RISKS	Potential for injury/illness due to inexperienced/unqualified volunteer staff and performers undertaking volunteer roles; potential for exposure to increased liability for the festival due to engagement of volunteers				
INHERENT RISK RATING	4D	TOLERATION LEVEL	MEDIUM	ACCEPTABLE RISK?	NO
CONTROLS TO BE IMPLEMENTED TO REDUCE RISKS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Volunteer staff to sign a waiver/agreement for their period of engagement Volunteer staff to be covered under the Event's Public Liability Cover Volunteer staff to be carefully assigned, so as to best find a role that suits their experience and capabilities Volunteer staff will not be used in roles for which legislation (local, state and federal) deems that a certain qualification is requisite Volunteer staff to be inducted by a group leader for all tasks they are required to undertake to discharge their volunteer duties Volunteer staff to be supervised throughout their engagement by a group leader or other suitable superior Contingencies to be put in place for the eventuality that some volunteers may not be able to discharge their duties 				
RESIDUAL RISK RATING	3D	TOLERATION LEVEL	MEDIUM	ACCEPTABLE RISK?	YES
RESPONSIBILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Event Team Volunteers 				

This document is current as at June 2019 and provides a summary of information from planning experts, along with relevant government and statutory bodies.

For further information and to ensure you are working to the most relevant and recent legislation and/or guidelines, visit:

- <https://volunteeringvictoria.org.au>
- [City of Maribyrnong](#)
- [Worksafe](#)
- [Victorian Department of Health](#)