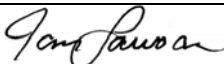


STATE OF ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE		NO III-524	PAGE 524-1
		ISSUED June 5, 2009	EFFECTIVE June 5, 2009
SUBJECT	VOLUNTEER WORKERS	APPROVED BY: Tom Lawson Director	
CHAPTER	ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES		

PURPOSE:

To clearly indicate the procedures, limitations, benefits and liabilities involved in utilizing volunteers.

DISTRIBUTION:

Posted on the Administrative Information Center at the following web address:
<http://csadmin.adfg.state.ak.us/>

DEFINITION:

Volunteers are non-employees who participate in a fish or wildlife research, restoration, or management project in an office, laboratory or remote field site to gain training and experience, or express their interest in departmental activities, without monetary compensation.

PROCEDURES:

SELECTION OF VOLUNTEERS

- A. For volunteer activities, preference should be given to Alaskan residents who wish to volunteer their time to the ADF&G in keeping with State policies.
- B. The use of volunteers to work in the place of employees in any State bargaining unit is not permitted. Please note that federal agency announcements are not a good model because their employees are not governed by State collective bargaining laws and agreements.
- C. The regulations for the federal Fair Labor Standards Act state:

An individual shall not be considered a volunteer if the individual is otherwise employed by the same public agency to perform the same type of services as those for which the individual proposes to volunteer.

The term "the same type of services" has been interpreted very broadly by the Courts, and consequently, seasonal State employees should not volunteer on other projects during their "off" season. Additionally, overtime eligible State employees may not volunteer their "free time" if the volunteer project can be considered a normal work related type project. For questions or clarification, Division of Personnel staff should be consulted.

- A. Minors (children under the age of 18) cannot contractually bind themselves by signing a Volunteer Agreement and, therefore, a parent must sign a Volunteer Agreement for his or her minor child. The use of minors as volunteers is not encouraged. However, in limited instances minors wishing to participate in activities such as field studies or expeditions may be permitted through one of two avenues.

School Sanctioned Field Project/Outing

If it is deemed advantageous to the mission of ADF&G, field activities using the assistance of minors may be organized if sanctioned by a local school. A teacher or school sanctioned adult

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must be present with the minors at all times to assume the burden of responsibility for the minors' supervision and safety, and thereby remove that responsibility from the State of Alaska.

Parent or Guardian Present

If it is deemed advantageous to the mission of ADF&G, minors (including employee's minor children) may be permitted to assist with or participate in field activities outside the school curriculum. In such instances, each and every minor must have at least one of his or her parents or guardians present at all times to assume the responsibility for the minors' supervision and safety, and thereby remove that responsibility from the State of Alaska.

Regardless of any other regulations or forms that may be applicable regarding minors in the workplace, employees should exercise extreme care to insure the safety of any such minors and minimize any exposure to unsafe conditions.

AGREEMENT PROCESSING INSTRUCTIONS

Prior to commencing any activities associated with being a Volunteer, the [ADF&G Volunteer Agreement \(VA\)](#) form, found on the Administrative Information Center, must be completely and properly filled out.

- A. The project supervisor and the volunteer must review the conditions of service as a volunteer recorded on the VA form and then print or type the volunteer's name and the appropriate information about the project and the volunteer.
- B. The project supervisor must verify whether or not the volunteer is a State of Alaska employee. If so, they need to determine whether or not the potential volunteer is doing the same types of duties as when they are working for the State. If they are doing similar duties then the supervisor must bring them on as an employee of the State or not have them volunteer. Basically, a State employee cannot volunteer for a state position for which they normally get paid for as a State employee. Exceptions to this general rule need higher level divisional pre-approval on a case by case basis.
- C. Both the project supervisor and volunteer must sign the bottom of the VA form and then forward it to the division's Regional Supervisor for signature. Note: All VA forms must be fully completed before the volunteer activity may begin and/or before the volunteer travels in any State vehicle, airplane, or boat. Once approvals have been obtained by the volunteer's supervisor and Regional Supervisor, the volunteer can begin working.
- D. Send completed original VA form to your appropriate division regional staff. The form will then be forwarded to the appropriate HQ divisional staff.
- E. The divisional HQ office will date stamp, log, and make all necessary copies, keeping a copy for their file. The original VA form will be sent to Division of Risk Management with copies provided to ADF&G's Administrative Services Director's office and Dept. of Administration, Division of Personnel, and other copies as needed.

VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the potential supervisor the volunteer's level of training and familiarity with all standard safety procedures needed for each specific project.

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- B. Should the volunteer's presence become a disruption to the project, the volunteer's opportunity to participate in the project for experience or personal enrichment will cease.

SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. It is the responsibility of the project supervisor to have each volunteer demonstrate his/her level of familiarity with all standard safety procedures. A volunteer who is unable to demonstrate sufficient training and familiarity with safety standards applicable to the project should not be accepted.
- B. The volunteer generally should NOT be driving State vehicles, or operating small boats. Under certain circumstances and with pre-approval, limited vehicle usage and operation of State equipment when necessary to further the volunteer's project/assignment may be allowable. Such use should be kept to a minimum and is only allowable if specified on the Volunteer Agreement form; approved by the project leader/ immediate supervisor and the Regional Supervisor and only if the volunteer is properly licensed and trained to operate such vehicle/equipment. Examples of such limited instances include: ferrying a vehicle or transporting staff to or from the office and airport/harbor/worksites, etc; running project-related errands (pickup and purchasing of grocery/hardware, etc), limited skiff or ATV operation, and other limited project related equipment use. It is the supervisor's responsibility to limit accident and risk exposure to both the volunteer and the Department. Also see SOP II-091 on State Owned vehicles, vessels and equipment.
- C. If requested by the volunteer, the project supervisor is to provide the volunteer with a written performance appraisal which documents duties and time spent as a volunteer and should be signed by the volunteer's immediate supervisor. The performance appraisal should then be forwarded to the division's headquarters office, which will submit it for divisional signature and send a copy both to the volunteer and to the Division of Personnel for filing with the volunteer records.
- D. In the event of an accident, incident or serious illness in which a volunteer is injured while performing duties for the State, the project supervisor must report the injury immediately to the Division of Risk Management and their division's Headquarters staff. The project supervisor must also fill out the Volunteer Accident Report found at the Division of Risk Management's website:

<https://intranet.state.ak.us/admin/drm/pdf/volunteeraccrpt.pdf>

See additional insurance information under the Liability Insurance section of this SOP and the Division of Risk Management's website.

- E. It is the supervisor's responsibility to limit accident and risk exposure to both the volunteer and the Department. Volunteers are traditionally assigned to limited exposure or non-hazardous types of assignments. However, if the supervisor and/or Regional Supervisor have a situation where a volunteer is needed for non-traditional or hazardous types of duties to facilitate/support the mission of the Department, they should consult with the Department's Procurement Officer in advance of the activity. Non-traditional and hazardous types of duties are not defined here, but if in doubt about a particular situation then consult with the Department's Procurement Officer. Requests for non-traditional or hazardous types of duties must be in writing and contain a fully detailed and supported description of the request complete with a justification outlining the reasoning and rationale of such a need; what the benefits to the Department are in allowing such an exception; what steps will be taken to limit exposure to both the passenger and the Department; the duration of the exception; and any other supporting evidence to substantiate the need.

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These requests must be routed through each divisional director's office to the Department Procurement Officer. The Procurement Officer will then coordinate the request with the Division of Risk Management for approval or denial of such exceptions.

BENEFITS

- A. Often the volunteer is an undergraduate or graduate student who needs a record of this experience and performance to fulfill specific educational program requirements. The educational institution may have a form for the supervisor to complete or the volunteer may use the performance evaluation as documentation.
- B. Volunteer time that is documented on State applications will be credited toward qualifying for employment in appropriate State job classes. A copy of the performance appraisal from the supervisor should be attached to the State application and include a description of the exact duties and the actual dates of volunteer service. How much credit the volunteer receives depends upon the specific job class for which s/he is applying.

REIMBURSEMENTS

- A. The State cannot pay a volunteer any monetary compensation, i.e. salary. Volunteers do not receive any other benefits, such as health or life insurance, retirement credit or leave. Reimbursement of legitimate actual expenses incurred is not considered monetary compensation. Giving gratuities to volunteers (such as hats, t-shirts, cups, coats, etc) after service has been rendered is considered monetary compensation and is not allowed. However, if it is determined that these items are necessary in the field, they may be given to volunteers before beginning service. The volunteers do not have to return them.
- B. To reimburse volunteers for actual expenses including lodging, food and other expenses, a Travel Authorization (TA) needs to be submitted. The TA is accompanied by all original receipts, and routed through division administrative channels to the Division of Administrative Services for processing. See the Department's Travel SOP III-250 for additional information on travel reimbursements.
 1. **LODGING:** When it is in the Department's best interest, housing may be provided to volunteers. Generally this would be in field facility accommodations. In the situation where commercial accommodations are deemed necessary, the lodging must be approved by the responsible ADF&G employee. Payment must be made directly to the provider rather than the volunteer.
 2. **MEALS:** Per Diem (Meals and Incidental Expenses, M&IE) is not paid to volunteers. In most cases, volunteers are provided field camp provisions. However, when it is in the Department's best interest, actual food costs may be reimbursed up to the M&IE State amounts. Volunteers need to submit their original receipts. The maximum amount permitted to be reimbursed for each meal is the State M&IE per meal rate, and the maximum permitted to be reimbursed per day is the daily State M&IE rate. Under no circumstances will volunteers be reimbursed for any alcohol purchased with meals or otherwise.
 3. **OTHER EXPENSES:** If it is in the Department's best interest, other reasonable expenses incurred by volunteers during their service may be reimbursed upon presentation of original receipts. Examples of expenses might be parking, taxi fares, or fuel costs related to travel.

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LIABILITY INSURANCE:

- A. If a volunteer is injured while performing duties for the State, s/he may be provided benefits comparable to Worker's Compensation. In the event of an accident, incident or serious illness in which a volunteer is injured while performing duties for the State, the project supervisor must report the injury immediately to the Division of Risk Management and their division's Headquarters staff. The project supervisor must also fill out the Volunteer Accident Report found at the Division of Risk Management's website:

<https://intranet.state.ak.us/admin/drm/pdf/volunteeraccrpt.pdf>

- B. Compensation or medical coverage will not be provided when the volunteer may be eligible for workers' compensation coverage from any other employer or from any other health insurance or disability policy. However, the Division of Risk Management may pay for legitimate medical expenses if the volunteer is hurt while performing his/her State duties and has no other primary or secondary insurance coverage. In rare instances, a volunteer may qualify for weekly compensation. This weekly amount will not exceed the minimum rate of compensation under AS 23.30.175.

More information regarding the claims process can be found on the Division of Risk Management's webpage.