

Policies and Procedures

The purpose of this quick guide is to outline what policies and procedures are, along with why they are important for your volunteer program. It provides a list of possible policies and procedures you may need and suggestions as to where to find more information.

What are policies and procedures?

Policies and procedures are the documents that govern your organisation. While 'policies and procedures' are often grouped together, they are different. They can be combined for efficiency or written separately. A policy is a guiding principle used to set direction. A policy is the 'what' and 'why' and usually remains the same over time. A procedure is a series of steps to be followed to deliver a consistent approach to achieve an outcome. Procedures are the 'how', 'when' and 'who', and can change over time.

Why does my organisation need policies and procedures?

Policies and procedures govern the 'why' and 'how' for activities in your organisation. They provide a standard for everyone to follow and give information on key areas. They are an important part of risk management.

What policies and procedures does my organisation need?

The policies and procedures required for your organisation depends on the types of programs and services you deliver. Each organisation will have their own approach to creating, implementing and reviewing policies and procedures based on relevant legislation, national standards and workplace responsibilities.

What policies and procedures does my organisation need? (continued)

Legislation

Specific information on legislation that may apply to your organisation can be found on the [Not-for-profit Law website](#). Legislation can be different depending on which state or territory you are based on. As a general guide, the following Commonwealth legislation may apply:

- Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Cth)

National Standards

The following National Standards may apply to your organisation:

- Aged Care Quality Standards (2018)
- Charities and Not-for-Profit Governance Standards – ACNC (2013)
- Community Legal Service Standards (2001)
- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (2019)
- National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards (2017)
- National Standards for Disability Services (2014)
- National Standards for Mental Health Services (2010)
- National Standards for Out of Home Care (2011)
- National Standards for Volunteer Involvement (2015)

The above list is not exhaustive and as with legislation, it is your responsibility to make your own investigations about any further standards that may apply to your organisation.

Workplace responsibilities

Your organisation could consider implementing policies on the following topics to guide work place interactions and behaviour:

- Governance
- Ethics and Code of Conduct
- Work Health and Safety
- Volunteer Conditions
- Communications and Marketing
- Grievance and Disputes
- Fraud and Financial Management
- Privacy and Confidentiality
- Diversity and Equality
- Alcohol and Other Drugs
- Child Protection
- Risk Management
- Feedback and Complaints
- Harassment and Bullying
- Honorarium and Reimbursement
- Acceptance of Gifts and Benefits
- Conflicts of Interest
- Working with Vulnerable People/Groups
- Incident Reporting
- Data Breaches
- Whistleblowers.

As above, this list is not exhaustive and does not replace the need for your organisation to seek specific legal, insurance or risk advice about the policies and procedures you need to have in place. There may be templates available that can be adapted by your organisation.

Procedures

Your organisation could consider implementing procedures on the following topics to guide operations. Some questions or prompts are provided as a starting point only:

- Rights and Responsibilities (Organisational and volunteer rights and responsibilities)
- Insurance (What is and is not covered under insurance?)
- Dress Code (What dress code is expected?)
- Intellectual Property (Do volunteers give over rights to their intellectual property?)
- Recruitment and Selection (Note if volunteers will be engaging with vulnerable people)
- Volunteer Agreement (Is there a standard volunteer agreement?)
- Induction (What induction is provided for new volunteers?)
- Training and Support (What training is provided to volunteers?)
- Supervision and Peer Support (Mechanisms to network and debrief with others?)
- Coaching and Mentoring (Is mentoring or coaching provided?)
- Wellbeing (Do volunteers have access to counselling?)
- Security (How are volunteers protected?)
- Incident and Injury Reporting (What incidents need to be reported? How are they reported?)
- Reimbursement (What out-of-pocket expenses are reimbursed?)
- Media and Communications (Media interviews and use of social media)
- Use of Private Motor Vehicle (Is comprehensive car insurance needed? Cover for any accidents?)
- Records Management (Are volunteers reporting or archiving? How are personal records stored?)

- Performance Appraisal (Do volunteers undergo a regular performance appraisal?)
- Continuous Improvement (Quality management and feedback mechanisms)
- References/Statements of Service (If references are provided, are there any qualifying factors required?)
- Ending the Volunteer Relationship (When the organisation or the volunteer ends the relationship).

How do I write policies and procedures?

Consider the depth and breadth of documents required to cover your volunteering program, how they relate to the overall organisation, along with who will review and approve the documents.

Once you have drafted a policy, the accompanying procedures should detail the steps needed to comply with the policy. Ensure procedures have enough information and are written in plain and clear language. You may provide a summary of information, list of instructions/tasks, or checklists, depending on the content of the procedure. Not every task in your organisation will require detailed procedures, so consider where you need to provide detail and where you can be more general.

Ensure your organisation has a scheduled review to update policies and procedures as needed. Timing should be dictated by the level of risk associated with the policy or procedure. You may need to bring a review forward if feedback or complaints occur relating to an existing policy or procedure.

Acknowledgement

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