

Ministry Policy Statements

#110 – Volunteer Policy

Policy Type: Ministry
Adoption Date: April 10, 2024
Amended:
Ratification Date:

Purposes of volunteerism

For the church:

- Volunteers enable the church to offer much more than could be accomplished through paid staff alone.
- Volunteerism increases the commitment of congregation members and increases social ties between members

For individuals, volunteering:

- provides a sense of purpose and way to use their talents in ways that support God's work in the world through the congregation,
- gives them opportunities to grow their own gifts and talents, often in ways that they have not had opportunities to explore otherwise
- widens and deepens social connections as members work together to serve and strengthen the congregation and its mission.

Definition of volunteer:

A volunteer is one who performs services on behalf of the church without recompense (including elected officers) but excludes staff except when they perform services unrelated to their job duties.

Involvement of staff in volunteer activities

1. Involvement in staff in volunteer activities can be confusing for the congregation and lead to diminution of volunteerism in that area as the activity becomes perceived as a staff responsibility.
2. Staff involvement in volunteer activities can also lead to confusion for purposes of compliance with labour laws and Worker Compensation Coverage.
3. Staff should not take leadership roles in teams at LVUC except as within their job description.
4. Staff can lead programs and teams as part of their role/job description.
5. Ministry and Personnel Committee, staff and the Lead Minister share a responsibility to have clarity about job descriptions and monitor their own volunteerism and those for whom they are responsible.
6. Team leads where a staff member participates as a volunteer are responsible for ensuring they know and respect the difference between the staff member volunteering and the staff member performing regular duties.

Screening

1. The Lead Minister or delegate is required to screen volunteers who are recruited or apply for the following responsibilities:
 - Handling cash and monetary transactions
 - Working one on one with children or vulnerable adults (may include visitation responsibilities)
 - Having access to church records that contain personal information
 - Ministry and Personnel responsibilities
 - Driving on behalf of the church or a church program. (This does not include informal arrangements made between the parties.)
2. Screening should be relevant to the responsibilities and may include but not be limited to
 - Personal interviews
 - Reference checks
 - Criminal record checks
 - Driving record checks

As deemed appropriate by the Lead Minister or delegate.

Criminal Record Checks

A Police Information Check-Vulnerable Sector (PIC-VS) is required for volunteers working in a position of trust or authority over children or vulnerable persons. A vulnerable sector check is a police information check with additional screening (see *BC Guidelines for Police Information Checks*, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General November 2016)

In particular, a Police Information Check-Vulnerable Sector will be required at LVUC for any volunteer who works alone with children. Therefore, supervision of children by volunteers requires at a minimum one person with a PIC-VS or two adults.

Criminal Records Checks are handled by the Ministry and Personnel Committee.

Consultation with the Lead Minister will take place where there are any checks containing any positive results. Such checks must be carefully considered before a volunteer is rejected to ensure that LVUC is respecting the requirement under the BC Human Rights Code not to discriminate because the person has been convicted of a criminal or summary conviction offence that is unrelated to the employment or intended employment (which may in some circumstances include a volunteer role) of that person.

Criminal record checks need to be maintained with a high degree of confidentiality and kept with Ministry and Personnel records.

Duties of Volunteers

Volunteers will be provided with necessary training.

Volunteers are not permitted to undertake risky activities. (These could put the church at risk of liability since WCB does not apply to volunteers.)

Accidents and Sexual Misconduct

1. Worksafe - Volunteers are generally not covered by WorkSafeBC. This includes:

- Volunteers who come into the workplace or work with LVUC to provide services
- Employees who volunteer beyond their normal duties (for example, employees who participate in an organized work party to build playground equipment are not covered)
- Employees who volunteer with an organization associated with LVUC.

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/careers-myhr/all-employees/health-safety-and-sick-leave-resources/workplace/worksafebc/coverage-claims>

2. Insurance

Accidents in which volunteers are injured need to be promptly reported to the Trustees and the Lead Minister to report to our insurer, including all information relating to how the accident happened.

Incidents that involve the possibility of a sexual abuse claim against the church must be promptly reported to the Trustees and the Lead Minister to report to our insurer, including all information relating to how the incident occurred.

Problems with and Removal of Unsuitable Volunteers

Problems with volunteers have pastoral considerations and should be referred to a minister.

A volunteer (other than an elected officer) may be removed for unsuitability at the discretion of the Lead Minister; the Lead Minister may choose to involve the Ministry and Personnel Committee. Volunteerism is not a gift to be spurned lightly.