



City of Elk River Volunteer Handbook



*Volunteers are a
Gift to Our Community*

Adopted March, 2012



Our Position, Values, and Vision

Abounding in natural beauty, Elk River is a vibrant, historic river town that promotes an active lifestyle in an innovative and involved community offering unlimited opportunities.

Our Goals in Support of our Position, Values, and Vision

Innovation- developing new programs and services to meet the needs of the community.

Community Development- enhancing community involvement and public participation.

Beautification- having attractive, welcoming streetscapes at City entrances and primary corridors and enforcing zoning ordinances.

Opportunities- fostering a pro-growth atmosphere that provides incentives and other opportunities for new and existing business.



WELCOME FROM THE MAYOR

Welcome to the City of Elk River Volunteer Program!

The city and its residents depend on and appreciate your service to the city. We hope to do all we can to make your volunteer participation mutually beneficial for both you and the city.

If you have questions or comments in connection with your volunteer program participation, I encourage you to bring them directly to the program supervisor with whom you are working, the city's volunteer coordinator or to the city administrator.

If you have ideas you wish to share that will enhance the city's volunteer program I would love to hear them. (or would "appreciate hearing them" sound better?)

Thank you for your service to the city of Elk River.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John J. Dietz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "J" and "D".

John J. Dietz
Mayor of Elk River

Introduction

This Volunteer Program Handbook contains policies and procedures for the information and guidance of volunteers in the city of Elk River.

This handbook serves as a general guide for informational purposes only. It is not a contract between the city and its volunteers. Although we have attempted to cover matters that generally apply to volunteers, this handbook does not cover every situation that may arise.

The city may add, modify, or revise this handbook as deemed appropriate. In the event of a conflict between this handbook and state, federal or municipal statute, ordinance or regulation, the applicable law will control to the extent necessary to resolve such conflict.

This handbook is not intended to guide the city's volunteer fire fighters, police reserves, other first responders or volunteers from other organized volunteer programs.

Contact Information

Dave Anderson
Volunteer Coordinator
(612)979-5660
danderson@cretex.com

Steve Benoit
Recreation Manager
763-635-1151
sbenoit@ElkRiverMN.gov

The Volunteer Coordinator and the Recreation Manager are responsible for recruiting, screening, and referring volunteers to city departments. They act as a liaison between the volunteers and staff, and are available to you should any problems, questions, or concerns arise regarding volunteer positions or volunteer assignments. Please feel free to see them at any time.

Volunteer Status and Guidelines

Your participation in this program is voluntary. You may elect to end or modify your participation at any time. As a participant in the volunteer program, you are not in any sense an employee of the city, and you will not be compensated for your service.

Participation in the program is a privilege, not a right. Similarly, your service as a volunteer is subject to the direction and supervision of the city and its staff.

In performing volunteer services for the city of Elk River, you are responsible for assisting and serving the residents, program participants, and others with whom you come into contact. You should exhibit conduct that is ethical, professional, and responsive.

You are expected to follow all city guidelines, policies, and procedures. This handbook outlines most of the pertinent areas that govern your volunteer work. Your program supervisor or the human resource representative may provide further direction and answer any questions you may have.

Failure to follow the city's guidelines and directives may result in the revocation or restriction of your privilege to participate in the volunteer program. The city also reserves the right to modify or terminate this program or any part of it at its sole discretion.

The following are general requirements for every volunteer position of the city of Elk River. As a volunteer, you are expected to:

- Perform assigned duties to the best of their abilities at all times.
- Render prompt and courteous service to the public at all times.
- Read, understand, and comply with the policies, procedures, and guidelines set forth in in this handbook as well as those that are communicated to you in other ways through your program participation.
- Conduct yourself with decorum toward residents, the public, city staff and elected officials, and respond to inquiries and information requests with patience and courtesy.
- Report any and all unsafe conditions to your immediate supervisor, the volunteer coordinator or the city administrator.
- Keep the commitments you make to the volunteer program.

Accident, Injury, and Protection

Volunteers are generally protected against incurring personal liability in connection with their volunteer program participation for the city. State law sets the maximum level of liability that a volunteer could incur in such circumstances, and the city will indemnify and hold harmless its volunteers in accordance with the law.

There are exceptions to this general principle that apply when an individual has engaged, for example, in malfeasance, bad faith, wilful neglect of duty, or gross misconduct in the course of performing services for the city, and when the liability at issue does not arise out of the performance of such services.

City volunteers are covered by the Group Self-Insurance Accident Plan for Volunteers provided through the League of Minnesota Cities. Contact your immediate supervisor, the volunteer coordinator or the Human Resource Representative for the proper paperwork if you need to complete a report of injury.

Safety Rules and Equipment Usage for Volunteers

Volunteers must follow all City of Elk River safety procedures and guidelines. Safety training for volunteers will be provided by City department supervisors or his/her designee. Designees may include volunteer City Park Trail Stewards.

For reasons of safety, security or legal considerations, some facilities and/or equipment are off limits to volunteers. For this reason, City Department Supervisors or his/her designee may approve or deny access for individual volunteers to enter specific City facilities.

Adult volunteers (at least 18 years of age) may operate (drive) non-licensed, motorized, self-propelled maintenance equipment with permission of a Department Supervisor or his/her designee. The City Department Supervisor or designee shall first perform an assessment that the volunteer is responsible and qualified to operate the equipment. No one shall operate (drive) any equipment without using appropriate personal safety equipment, and without first receiving instruction as to its proper and safe operation. Volunteers shall inquire of the Department Supervisor or his/her designee about the safety equipment appropriate for operation of any equipment on which the volunteer has not had previous experience.

Volunteers under the age of 18 are not permitted to operate: motorized equipment; non-licensed motorized, self-propelled maintenance equipment; chain saws; or anything else as to which minors' operation is prohibited by law.

Some volunteers may occasionally be assigned and authorized to drive City of Elk River licensed motor vehicles. If so, they shall first undergo a vehicle familiarization training session and successfully complete a driver's license record check similar to that required of employees who are authorized to drive licensed motor vehicles. All operators shall be familiar with and obey the safety and operating instructions provided by City of Elk River staff and all traffic laws.

Appearance and Dress Guidelines

Your appearance is a direct reflection on the professionalism of city services. A neat, well-groomed volunteer will present a positive image of the city and demonstrate the pride our city volunteers have. Please check with your volunteer supervisor for the appropriate attire for your position. Also, please refrain from or minimize the use of personal fragrances during volunteer hours in consideration of those with sensitivity

to fragrances.

Confidentiality

As a volunteer working in a public office, you may have access to information or participate in conversations that are sensitive and confidential. Do not share this information with anyone who does not have a professional right or need to know. No one is permitted to remove or make copies of any city of Elk River records, reports, or documents without prior approval.

Conflict of Interest

The credibility of local government rests heavily upon the confidence that citizens have in public officials, employees, and volunteers to render fair and impartial services to all citizens without regard to personal interest and/or political influence. Thus, volunteers must scrupulously avoid any activities that suggest a conflict of interest between their private interests and city responsibilities. The city has adopted a Conflict of Interest ordinance that addresses these issues with respect to city officials, employees, and volunteers. Volunteers are required to follow all applicable laws related to conflicts of interest, including the City's Conflict of Interest Ordinance, Section 220 of the City Code of Ordinances.

Examples of activities which do not comply with this policy include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Acceptance of any gift from an interested person in violation of Minnesota Statutes, Section §471.895;
2. Using your authority, influence, or city position for the purpose of private or personal financial gain;
3. The use of city time, facilities, equipment, or supplies for the purpose of private or personal financial gain;
4. Entering into a business transaction when it involves using confidential information gained in the course of volunteering; and
5. Conducting personal business while volunteering.

A copy of this ordinance in full is available from the human resource representative.

Emergency Closing Procedure

It is the city's policy to continue to provide appropriate service levels during periods of inclement weather or other emergencies. If a State of Emergency is declared, you may use your own discretion whether you wish to remain engaged in the volunteer program during the State of Emergency.

Government Data Practices Act

The city is subject to the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act. Under the law, all data is public unless classified as non-public.

If you receive a request for public data, immediately forward the request to your program supervisor or the city administrator.

Handling Residents' Feedback

Resident feedback provides an opportunity to identify and respond to local concerns. How complaints are handled determines the level of confidence and respect the public holds for its municipal government.

Always be polite, listen and document the resident's concerns. Allow the resident to fully explain his/her concerns before asking for clarification or providing an explanation. Do not argue with the complainant even if s/he is angry, unreasonable, or insulting toward you and/or the city. Politely transfer the call to your program supervisor if the conversation becomes argumentative or foul language is used.

When you receive a complaint, it is very important to follow through properly. This can be accomplished by doing the following:

- Receive and record information pertinent to the complaint.
- Report the complaint to your program supervisor.
- Follow up to see what action has been taken to correct the problem.

Keeping Commitments and Attendance

It is essential that you report for service when you have made a commitment to do so. A successful volunteer program requires both the city and the volunteer to meet their agreed upon obligations. Failure to attend may result in the revocation of your participation in volunteer activities. You may be required to record and report your volunteer service hours.

You serve as a volunteer at your pleasure; however, you are subject to the direction and control of the city and the city reserves the right to end this relationship at any time.

Personal Use and Disposal of City Property

All city property and equipment is publicly owned. City-owned equipment and facilities are not generally available for personal use by staff or volunteers.

City property that becomes obsolete, damaged, or is no longer needed shall be disposed by salvage, trade, public auction, bid, or other means. Employees and volunteers may only acquire public property through the above means.

Political Activity

Volunteers may seek election or appointment to public office, except to the extent prohibited by the provisions of state or federal law. Political activity must not interfere with a volunteer's duties or performance. As a volunteer, you may not perform political activities during service hours.

Telephone Use, Internet, E-Mail, and Social Media

The city's Electronic Communications Systems (ECS) are in place for conducting official business. While occasional use of these systems for personal use is acceptable, volunteers must demonstrate a sense of responsibility and may not abuse such privileges. Communications of any kind by a city volunteer over the city's ECS, whether work-related or personal, is subject to monitoring and review by the city at any time, with or without notice or permission.

All communications sent must be respectful in tone and professional. The city's ECS may not be used for forwarding "chain letters" or for any purpose which is illegal or against city policy.

To conserve bandwidth, city computers may not be used for listening to Internet radio stations or downloading music from the Internet.

City telephones are for conducting official city business. Personal use is permitted on occasion or in an emergency. Any personal long distance phone calls that incur a charge must be recorded on a long distance telephone log form and reimbursed promptly.

Work Environment

The city is committed to providing a safe work environment as well as an environment in which everyone is treated with dignity, decency, and respect.

The city pledges its best efforts to avoid discrimination against or harassment of any volunteer or volunteer applicant because of race, colour, creed, religion, sex, age, national origin, sexual orientation, marital status, veteran status, status with regard to public assistance, physical or mental disability, or any other status protected by state or federal law.

The city prohibits discrimination against or harassment of any volunteer or volunteer applicant on the basis of protected class status. Volunteers who participate in discrimination are in violation of city policy and are subject to revocation of their volunteer status. For additional information, the non-discrimination and harassment policies are available for review from human resources.

Retaliation against anyone for making a complaint under this policy or assisting with investigations of complaints made under this policy is also strictly prohibited.

Any person who feels that they have been discriminated against shall immediately contact the city administrator or the human resource representative.

The city of Elk River prohibits all employees and volunteers, except sworn peace officers, from carrying or possessing firearms while acting in the course and scope of employment of the city. Volunteers must agree not to carry or possess firearms while in the course and scope of city-related activities.

The city of Elk River provides a non-smoking environment. All city facilities are smoke and tobacco free. All city vehicles are also smoke and tobacco free.

The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of any controlled substance, including alcohol, is prohibited on city property.

The personal safety of each volunteer is of primary importance. To the greatest degree possible, the city seeks to maintain a safe and hazard-free environment. You are expected to develop safe work habits and to contribute to the safety of others.

You should follow all directives of city staff regarding safety. If you observe or become concerned about any potentially unsafe condition, immediately notify your program supervisor, the volunteer coordinator or city administrator. You are also required to immediately report accidents resulting in personal injuries and/or vehicle, equipment, or property damage to your program supervisor, the Volunteer Coordinator or Recreation Manager