



# VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

CITY OF MARKHAM

TRAINING & ORIENTATION

FOR NEW & RETURNING VOLUNTEERS

[www.markham.ca/volunteering](http://www.markham.ca/volunteering)



WELCOME TO THE CITY OF MARKHAM

# VOLUNTEERING



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## WELCOME

On behalf of the City of Markham, thank you for showing an interest in joining our Volunteer Team.

Volunteers are the heart and soul of municipal programming. Markham Volunteers are recognized as frontline ambassadors of the City and without their commitment many of the amazing events that have come to represent Markham would not be possible. Our Volunteer Team's passion, dedication, and generosity make it possible to continuously produce memorable experiences for both participants and members of our community.

This manual is intended to assist you in developing a thorough understanding of corporate policies and to provide you with accurate information about activities taking place in Markham.

Please take the time to familiarize yourself with the information in this manual prior to your volunteer experience. We would like all volunteers to become knowledgeable about their role in order to better serve participants.

Thank you for volunteering your time and energy to help improve our community. We look forward to having you as part of our team.

# VOLUNTEERING WITH THE CITY OF MARKHAM

## ***PART I: VOLUNTEERING BASICS***

As part of our commitment to community engagement, the City of Markham is continually working to offer a wide variety of volunteer opportunities. We want you to be proud of your contribution and encourage you to find a position you will enjoy.

Volunteers have active roles supporting: our cultural venues, recreational services, environmental development, children's camps, youth, adult and seniors programs, and helping to host large scale public events. Volunteers help to shape our community and provide the City of Markham with the resources required to offer safe and efficient programming to the community.

### ***Vision Statement***

The City of Markham's Volunteer Program strives to build a healthy and vibrant community enriched by volunteers.

### ***Mission Statement***

Markham's Volunteer Program supports the corporate mission to work with the community to provide high quality municipal services that meet, if not exceed, the expectations of City of Markham residents and businesses.

### ***Values***

Passion, dedication, and teamwork are our core values and the cornerstones of our Volunteer Program.

## VOLUNTEER RIGHTS

As a volunteer you have rights. Part of our commitment to providing a safe and supportive environment for volunteers is making sure you understand your rights:

### ***PART I: VOLUNTEERING BASICS***

1. Receive accurate information.
2. Be assigned to a position that reflects your interests.
3. Receive training so you can complete your role effectively.
4. Feel valued and assist with meaningful activities.
5. Receive support and guidance from your supervisor
6. To say NO if a situation makes you feel unsafe.
7. Receive feedback and recognition for your contributions.
8. Report a complaint without threat of reprimand.
9. Have your personal information kept confidential.



# VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT

## ***PART I: VOLUNTEERING BASICS***

1. Display respect and professionalism and treat all individuals with dignity.
2. Conduct yourself as a representative of City of Markham
3. Model positive behaviors and attitudes for others.
4. Refrain from public criticism of other volunteers, staff, participants, and services. This includes online comments through social media and any other form of communication.
5. Uphold the mission and values of the City of Markham's Volunteer Program.
6. Abide by all policies and procedures that pertain to a volunteer.
7. Refrain from use of profane, insulting, or otherwise offensive language.
8. At no point be under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or banned substances.
9. Dress appropriately and adhere to the dress code of your role.
10. Contribute to a positive environment.
11. Maintain confidentiality and respect the privacy of others.

**Failure to uphold the Code of Conduct could result in a change to your volunteer status**

## EXPECTATIONS FOR VOLUNTEERS

- Fulfill your tasks in a timely fashion.
- Understand and execute all your duties to the best of your ability.
- Meet all the requirements for a position.
- Report all absences to your supervisor in advance.
- Operate as a team with City of Markham staff and fellow volunteers.
- Request assistance from your Supervisor when handling difficult situations.
- Use and/or wear protective clothing based on weather conditions (example: sunscreen, hats, rain gear, gloves, etc.)
- Adhere to scent-free environment policy by not wearing perfume or cologne when on duty.
- Dress appropriately, adhering to dress code for your position and maintain good personal hygiene.
- Travel light as many of our venues do not offer a place to store personal belongings and valuables.
- Report immediately any injuries or complaints to your supervisor.

## ***PART II: POLICIES & PROCEDURES***

## **CUSTOMER SERVICE**

The City of Markham is committed to providing excellent customer service. As a volunteer with Markham, you create a positive customer experience by providing prompt, welcoming, and courteous service. Some behaviours that contribute to an excellent service experience include:

### ***Welcoming, patience and consistency***

Make customers feel welcomed and appreciated. The easiest way to do this is to smile and offer a warm greeting. Treat each customer with respect and consideration. Your goal is to provide the same quality of service to all customers while treating each customer as a unique individual.

### ***Customer first!***

The customer's always right... right? The ability to accept responsibility or negative feedback is crucial. We have to always keep the customer's happiness in mind.

## ***PART II: POLICIES & PROCEDURES***

### ***Adaptability***

Every customer is different! You should be able to handle surprises, sense the customer's mood and adapt accordingly. This also includes a willingness to learn—providing good customer service is a continuous learning process.

### ***Clear communication***

Ensure you convey to customers exactly what you mean. Use positive language, stay courteous and polite and never end a conversation without confirming the visitor is satisfied. Listen thoroughly to be sure you understand the customer's need.

### ***Knowledge***

Stay informed to respond to most inquiries and know where to turn if the questions become too detailed for you to answer. But don't be afraid to say "I don't know but I'm happy to find that out for you". Customers will appreciate the honesty and your efforts to find the right answer. Never be afraid to ask for help from your supervisor or another staff member.



## HOW TO BECOME A VOLUNTEER

### *Age Requirements*

The minimum age to volunteer with the City of Markham volunteer is 14.

You must be 14 years old as of the start date of your volunteer placement.

Some positions may have a different age requirement depending on the volunteer position. The minimum age requirement will be clearly listed on the position description.

Individuals that would like to volunteer for the City of Markham that are under the age of 18 require parental/guardian approval in order to complete the volunteer application.

## ***PART II: POLICIES & PROCEDURES***



### *Selection Process*

The City of Markham supports placement of volunteers based on suitability; taking into account factors such as the applicant's qualifications and experience appropriate to the position. Such requirements are presented in each volunteer position description.

The City follows a fair, equitable, and transparent selection process for volunteer positions. Qualified applicants that most closely match the requirements of the position will be selected.

## **VOLUNTEER POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

### ***Attendance***

Volunteers must provide 48 hours notice if not attending a scheduled shift. Volunteers are expected to attend the full duration of a volunteer placement. As a general rule please arrive at your volunteer shift 10 minutes early.

### ***Hours***

Volunteers are required to track their volunteer hours. Use attendance sheet or alternative tracking process as directed by your supervisor.

Volunteers tracking hours for the completion of a program should contact their Volunteer Supervisor and arrange to have their forms signed if required.

### ***Breaks***

Depending on the length of your shift, you may be scheduled for a break. Please ensure you take your breaks. As a general rule, a 30 minute break is provided for every 5 hours of continuous volunteering. Note that some locations have designated areas for breaks.

## ***PART II: POLICIES & PROCEDURES***



# **VOLUNTEER POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

## ***Dress Code***

Please dress appropriately based on your position, weather, and any activities you may be participating in. The dress code for volunteers is casual wear, however, we ask you to remember that you are volunteering in a professional work environment. Some volunteer positions might require a specific dress code.

If you have been issued a uniform (shirt, hat, badge, jacket, etc...) it is mandatory to wear it during your assigned shift(s). During inclement weather we understand that it is not always possible to present your volunteer uniform. Do not wear the uniform provided outside of your volunteering hours.

Wear comfortable shoes such as running shoes for long hours of standing and walking. Clothing (hats, shirts, etc.) with inappropriate or offensive logos, writing, and designs should not be worn when on duty.

## ***PART II: POLICIES & PROCEDURES***

## ***Transportation***

Volunteers are not permitted to transport participants. City Staff are not permitted to transport volunteers. Should a volunteer use their personal vehicle there will be no reimbursements for gas and/or mileage.

## ***Photography***

Professional and volunteer photographers, videographers, and other media outlets may be present at City events and programs. Please be aware that you may be photographed.

## ***Media***

If you are approached by a representative of the media, please refer him/her to your Supervisor or another City of Markham staff member. Do not make statements to the media.

## **VOLUNTEER POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

### ***Ending your Involvement***

If you decide to discontinue volunteering for City of Markham, we ask that you provide your Supervisor with a minimum two weeks notice. If your departure is within 48 hours of a volunteer shift please call immediately and ensure you speak directly with your Supervisor. Your account will be archived should you wish to return as a volunteer at a later date.

### ***Volunteer Dismissal***

Dismissal of a volunteer includes but is not limited to a situation wherein the volunteer is unable to:

- uphold the conditions of the position;
- is consistently late;
- is unable to attend scheduled shifts; or
- is in violation of the Volunteer Code of Conduct.

## ***PART II: POLICIES & PROCEDURES***

Volunteers may be removed from the Volunteer Program in its' entirety as determined by the City.

### ***Confidentiality***

All City of Markham information concerning participants, staff, volunteers, and corporation business is confidential. As a volunteer you are expected to comply with the confidentiality agreement which is included in the *Volunteer Terms of Agreement*. Confidentiality extends to all forms of information. All personal information obtained or available because of your involvement with the City of Markham must be treated as confidential. Failure to maintain confidentiality may result in an early departure from the volunteer position or other corrective action.

Likewise, all personal information pertaining to volunteers that is collected by the City of Markham will be kept as confidential under the authority of the Municipal Act, 2001



## VOLUNTEER POLICIES & PROCEDURES

## ***PART II: POLICIES & PROCEDURES***

### *Emergency Procedures*

Each Municipal building has a Fire Safety Plan, which is a document that outlines specific emergency procedures. Please familiarize yourself with the location of this document at your placement(s). If at any point during your volunteer experience you are concerned about emergency procedures, please speak with your supervisor.

Here are several tips that can be applied in any emergency situation:

- Stop what you are doing and ensure your safety.
- Do not attempt to handle emergency situations alone.
- Alert your supervisor/City Staff that an incident/accident has occurred.
- Prepare to provide assistance as directed by the City of Markham staff.
- Ensure the proper authorities are contacted – call 911 if the situation requires it.
- Be calm and lead by example.
- Refer any questions from patrons, public, and the media to your supervisor.

## ACCIDENTS & INCIDENTS: REPORTING PROCEDURES

As a volunteer you are expected to report all accidents/incidents to your Supervisor. Volunteer Supervisors will complete the accident/incident report form. As a volunteer your role is to assist your supervisor throughout the situation. Volunteers can sign the accident/incident report form as a witness but a member of staff should complete the form.



### ***PART II: POLICIES & PROCEDURES***

**Any personal injury must be reported to your supervisor. Your health & safety is our primary concern.**

Incidents that should be reported include but are not limited to:

- Personal injury to a participant, volunteer, or staff.
- Damages to property or equipment.
- Lost or stolen items.
- Threat of violence or disruptive/abusive behaviour.

## RESPECTFUL BEHAVIOUR

Volunteers are expected to share in preserving and enhancing the City's image and reputation of integrity and credibility and to contribute toward the creation and maintenance of a positive and inclusive environment.

### *Volunteer Rights*

Every volunteer has the right to volunteer in an environment free from discrimination, harassment or violence.

### *Volunteer Responsibilities*

Volunteers are responsible for preventing and reporting incidents of discrimination, harassment, and violence including offensive remarks or other actions that create intimidating, hostile or humiliating conditions.

Volunteers will report all allegations to their City of Markham Supervisor (staff) immediately following the incident.

## **PART III: RESPECTFUL BEHAVIOUR**



## HEALTH & SAFETY

The City of Markham is committed to ensure a safe and healthy environment for everyone. Both staff and volunteers are responsible for safety.

### ***Volunteer responsibilities include:***

- Following the law and the City's volunteer policies, procedures and instructions;
- Using and wearing protective equipment required by the City;
- Acting in a way that won't hurt themselves or anyone else present;
- Reporting any hazard they find in a City facility or site to a City supervisory representative
- Reporting any unsafe behaviour they observe.

### ***Volunteers must not:***

- Use any ladders, equipment, machines, or vehicles
- Tamper with any machinery, equipment, or protective devices
- Behave in a way that may endanger any person including engaging in any prank, feat of strength, unnecessary running or rough and boisterous conduct

### ***Volunteers have three health and safety rights:***

1. The right to know about potential hazards they may be exposed to at City facilities or sites and how to stay safe.
2. The right to participate in keeping City facilities and sites safe.
3. The right to refuse to do anything they believe is unsafe.

## ***PART IV: HEALTH & SAFETY***

**Volunteers will not be punished and there shall be no threat or reprisal for exercising their rights as a volunteer or for fulfilling their volunteer responsibilities as described.**



## HEALTH & SAFETY



### *To keep volunteers safe, the City will:*

- Develop a system (including policies, programs and procedures) to protect health and safety.
- Do everything reasonable in the circumstances to protect those present from being hurt. This is called “due diligence”.

### *Supervisors and Managers will:*

- Tell volunteers about hazards and respond to their concerns about hazards.
- Ensure volunteers follow the law and the City’s volunteer health and safety policies and procedures.
- Do everything reasonable in the circumstances to protect volunteers from being injured.

## **PART IV: HEALTH & SAFETY**

# WHMIS: WORKPLACE HAZARDOUS MATERIALS INFORMATION SYSTEM

WHMIS provides information about the hazards associated with potentially harmful materials and chemicals through:

1. Warning Labels ( “first alert” located on containers of potentially harmful materials.
2. MSDS or SDS (Material Safety Data Sheet - provides more detailed information about the hazards and safety precautions and are available in the MSDS binder in each facility).
3. Instruction (how to use this information).

## Hazards

In order to support Volunteers’ safety, the City provides information relating to potential hazards that volunteers may face including:

- Weather – how to stay safe in extreme summer or winter conditions, slippery conditions, electrical storms and more.
- Ergonomics – an understanding of basic ergonomic principles can reduce the risk of injury when lifting or doing repetitive motions.
- Slips, Trips and Falls – something as simple as spilled coffee on the floor, or an icy parking lot can lead to a fall and very serious injury, but these injuries can be prevented with some simple tips.
- Safety Around Moving Vehicles and Machinery – places where vehicles or machinery are being operated present hazards but you can stay safe if you follow the “Pedestrian Safety Tips” information.

**PART IV:  
HEALTH &  
SAFETY**

## ACCESSIBILITY & INCLUSION

Markham is committed to ensuring that all residents have full and equal access to its facilities, services and information. Accessibility makes it possible for people with all levels of ability to take advantage of everything Markham has to offer. As a general rule, use the *TALK* principle when interacting with the public.

### *TALK Principle*

T –Take the time to ask “May I help you?”.

A –Ask – don’t assume. Never assist unless asked.

L –Listen attentively and speak directly to the customer.

K –Know the accommodations and special services that are available.



Being able to interact and communicate with people with disabilities is a big part of providing accessible customer service. Sometimes the best approach is to ask a person with a disability how you can best communicate with them. The customer with a disability might have an intervener, a service animal like a guide dog or assistive equipment. Your priority should always be to focus on the customer directly avoiding touching their equipment or petting the service animals without the customer's consent.

Your volunteer training covers in detail how to best approach various situations, in addition, you can learn more about the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act at [www.aoda.ca](http://www.aoda.ca)

**PART V:  
ACCESSIBILITY &  
INCLUSION**

**THANK  
-YOU**  
*for volunteering*