



**Corporation of the Town of  
Hawkesbury**

<b>Policy N°:</b> DG-P-2016-01
<b>Subject:</b> Volunteer Management Policy
<b>Department:</b> Office of the CAO and affected Department Heads

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

The Town of Hawkesbury believes that the strength of a community can often be measured by the health and wellness of the members within it. It recognizes the importance of the role volunteers can play in the achievement of its mission and mandate and enhancing the work of paid staff in the creation of a safe and enjoyable place in which to live. This policy has been developed to facilitate the involvement and management of volunteers in the delivery of its services.

## **POLICY PURPOSE**

This Volunteer Management Policy outlines an overall framework for the recruitment and management of volunteers involved in the delivery of Towns of Hawkesbury's, programs, activities and events. This policy is designed to:

- Create volunteer management practices that will manage risk, enhance program delivery, and protect volunteers, staff and the general public from harm.
- Ensure volunteers are effectively recruited, coached and supported while performing their volunteer functions.
- Provide guidance to staff to encourage positive volunteer experiences.

## **SCOPE**

This policy relates to persons acting in a volunteer capacity that assist the Town of Hawkesbury to deliver programs and services. **It is understood that volunteers will enhance and support the work of the Town of Hawkesbury but never replace it.** This policy will be supported by a Volunteer Management Manual developed and/or revised in consultation with community groups and associations and key volunteers and managed through the Department Heads of each Town of Hawkesbury department.

## **VALUES**

- Volunteer involvement is vital to a just and democratic society: It fosters civic responsibility, participation and interaction.
- Volunteer involvement strengthens communities: It promotes change and development by identifying and responding to community needs.

<b>Prepared by:</b> Recreation and Culture Department	<b>By-Law/Résolution N°:</b> R-362-16
<b>Responsible:</b> Office of the CAO and affected Department Heads	
<b>Effective Date:</b> October 24, 2016	



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- Volunteer involvement mutually benefits both volunteer and organization: It increases capacity of organizations to accomplish goals and it provides volunteers with opportunities to develop and contribute. **PRINCIPLES**
- The Town of Hawkesbury recognizes that volunteers are a vital human resource and will commit to the appropriate infrastructure to support volunteers.
- The Town of Hawkesbury’s practices ensure effective volunteer involvement.
- The Town of Hawkesbury commits to providing a safe and supportive environment for volunteers. It will provide volunteers with a work environment that is free of any form of discrimination, including harassment, which affects the dignity, self-worth and human rights which includes: position; race; ancestry; place of origin; colour; ethnic origin; citizenship; creed; gender; sexual orientation; age; record of offenses; marital or family status or disability.
- Volunteers have responsibilities. Volunteers make a commitment and are accountable to the Town of Hawkesbury.
- Volunteers will act with respect for beneficiaries and the community.
- Volunteers will act responsibly and with integrity.

**PHILOSOPHY OF INVOLVEMENT:**

- Volunteers are valued and respected by everyone in the organization. The organization actively seeks the volunteers’ input on programs, policies and procedures and organizations concerns.
- As representatives of the community-at-large, volunteers actively participate at all levels of the organizations, ensuring that services and responsive to the needs of the clients and members.
- Volunteers enhance the services provided and do not assume duties of paid staff.
- Volunteers act as representatives of the organization. Training and supervision is provided to ensure volunteers understand their roles, responsibilities and limitations and are able to undertake them in an appropriate and safe manner.

**STANDARDS:**

- Volunteers must be a minimum of 14 years of age. Volunteers under the age of 19 must provide a signed letter of consent from a parent or legal guardian, before undergoing certain screening measures.

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- Members of Town Council, leadership and paid staff acknowledge and support the vital role of volunteers in achieving the Town of Hawkesbury’s mandate.
- The Town of Hawkesbury has a planned approach for volunteer involvement that includes linking volunteers to the achievement of the mandate, providing the appropriate human and financial resources to support volunteer involvement and establishing policies for effective management, when possible and when budget permits.
- Policies and procedures are adopted by the Town of Hawkesbury to provide a framework that defines and supports involvement of volunteers.
- The Town of Hawkesbury has a clearly designated individual with appropriate qualifications responsible for Volunteer Management.
- Volunteer assignments will address the mandate of the Town of Hawkesbury and involve volunteers in meaningful ways that reflect their abilities, needs and backgrounds.
- Volunteer recruitment incorporates internal and external strategies to reach out to and involve a diverse volunteer base.
- The Town of Hawkesbury has adopted a clearly communicated screening process that is consistently applied.
- Each volunteer will be provided with an orientation to the organization, its policies and procedures, including the rights and responsibilities of volunteers. Each volunteer will receive training customized to the volunteer assignment.
- Volunteers will receive a level of supervision appropriate to the task and will be provided with regular opportunities to receive and give feedback.
- The contributions of volunteers will be regularly acknowledged with formal and informal recognition methods (i.e. annual awards).
- Standardized documentation and records management practices will be followed in line with relevant legislation.
- The impact and contribution of involving volunteers and of the volunteer program will be continually evaluated to ensure the needs of the Town of Hawkesbury are being met in fulfilling its mandate.

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## **DEFINITIONS**

**Activity:** a program, event, project or other undertaking which contributes to the mandate and objectives of the Town of Hawkesbury.

**Volunteer:** an individual or member of a group who freely and willingly contributes time, energy and support to performing a defined task directly on behalf of the Town of Hawkesbury without compensation, or expectation of compensation, other than for approved expenses incurred through the volunteer activity.

**Affiliated Volunteer:** an individual who is a member of a Town affiliated organization (e.g. service club) and provides assistance to the Town of Hawkesbury. An Affiliate Volunteer will be covered under the Town of Hawkesbury's liability insurance policy on the conditions that: the program and/or service has been pre-approved by Town Council and/or designated paid staff; and that the affiliated organization ensures that the Affiliated Volunteer is properly screened, trained and supervised and that all health and safety requirements are met as per Town of Hawkesbury policy. Affiliated organizations must carry sufficient levels of Director Liability insurance.

## **LIMITED EXCLUSIONS**

The Town of Hawkesbury recognizes that volunteer firefighters and employees of the Town of Hawkesbury may perform duties on a volunteer basis from time to time. The exception to this is only as it relates to the provision of liability insurance when firefighters and Town employees are performing volunteer duties on behalf of the municipality.

The Town of Hawkesbury recognizes that, in extraordinary circumstances, the services of an unregistered volunteer(s) may be offered on an "as needed" or "one time only" basis (e.g. a participant in a program offers to assist in table/chair setup). This is acceptable on a case-by-case basis and the decision as to whether the offer of assistance is accepted will be the responsibility of the paid staff and/or registered volunteer who is in charge of the activity. The decision to accept the offer will be based on the level of risk to the volunteer as well as the level of risk to the participants in the program or service.

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## PROCEDURE PARAMETERS

Volunteer screening is an ongoing process designed to protect both participants and volunteers and will include the following elements:

- Risk assessment
- Application form
- Interview process based on the risk assessment
- Reference checks
- Police record checks
- Each volunteer will be required to sign an acknowledgement of the conditions of involvement with the Town of Hawkesbury.
- Volunteers are not permitted to use vehicles or equipment owned by the Town of Hawkesbury.
- Vehicles and equipment not owned by the Town of Hawkesbury will not be covered under the municipal insurance policy and no compensation will be paid for loss or damage to same.
- The Town of Hawkesbury will adhere to the Human Rights Code in all instances of involvement of volunteers.
- Personal information collected by the Town of Hawkesbury with respect to volunteer involvement will be used only for the administration and management of the volunteer program.
- Volunteers will be provided with an orientation and training opportunity for each task to which they have been assigned before commencing work.
- Volunteers will receive supervision and will be consulted regularly regarding performance of the task assigned. A volunteer file will include but not be limited to things like: volunteer application form; conditions of involvement; reference and police check results; position description; term of engagement; training and orientation documentation; and evaluation and feedback records if applicable.
- When issues arise from time to time that require disciplinary action, the following disciplinary actions will be taken by supervisory paid staff: 1st - a verbal warning by supervisor (written record of the verbal warning will be kept in the volunteer personnel file); 2nd written warning by supervisor outlining the infraction and corrective action agreed to by the volunteer; 3rd written notification of suspension (time period to be

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assessed on a case-by-case basis) or written notification of dismissal (containing a chronological listing of action taken and reason for the dismissal).

- In instances where continuing involvement of the volunteer in a program or service would put the volunteer and/or the Town of Hawkesbury or the public at risk, immediate dismissal of the volunteer is permitted. The following will result in an immediate dismissal of the volunteer:
  - Stealing money or goods from the Town of Hawkesbury, another volunteer or the public.
  - A dishonest or a reckless act of diligence or serious negligence.
  - Insubordination or any non-compliance of any directive or instruction from the Employer
  - Any criminal conviction and prosecuted by indictment and involving moral turpitude, that could damage the reputation to the clients or the general public of the Town of Hawkesbury.
  - Physically assaulting participants/public, family members, staff and/or another volunteer; and/or possession and/or use of alcohol or illegal drugs while working at their assigned task.
  - Engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct against workers/participants/public/family members/staff/another volunteer that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome.
  - Making a sexual solicitation or advance where the person making the solicitation or advance is in a position to confer, grant or deny a benefit or advancement to the worker/participants/public/family members/staff/another volunteer and the person knows or ought reasonably to know that the solicitation or advance is unwelcome.
  - Possession and/or use of alcohol or illegal drugs while working in their assigned position.
  - Contravention of the Town of Hawkesbury’s Health and Safety Policy.
- Volunteers will be recognized both formally and informally for their contributions to the Town of Hawkesbury programs and services through methods that include: recognition events; certificates of appreciation and recognition; public acknowledgement in newspapers and on electronic media; postings on the Town web site; and letter of thanks from Town Council.
- The Town of Hawkesbury will make every effort to equip volunteers with the knowledge, equipment and supplies to perform the duties of the assigned task in the context of the Health and Safety Act.

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- The Town of Hawkesbury will ensure that volunteers are never placed at risk at assigned tasks.
- The level of risk associated with activities will be assigned a risk factor rating based on the following criteria:
  1. The participant –elderly, young children, persons with special needs.
  2. The environment –where the activity/involvement is taking place.
  3. The nature of the activity –handling money, selling tickets, direct program volunteer.
  4. The level of supervision –indirect, off-site, on-site.
  5. The nature of the relationship between the volunteer and the participant.

If it is determined that the risk of involvement is too great and the consequences too serious the Town of Hawkesbury may eliminate the opportunity for involvement, and/or modify the involvement to reduce the risk. Involvement will be grouped according to the following risk criteria:

1. Low risk: minimal or no contact with children, the elderly or those with special needs.
2. Medium risk: personnel who work with children, the elderly or those with special needs, but are never alone with them.
3. High risk: personnel who have the opportunity to be alone with children, those with special needs or the elderly; personnel who are in a position to exert influence over participants in a program or service; personnel who participate in activities requiring more than minimum Occupational Health and Safety training.

Volunteer screening standards will be based on the above risk criteria. To reduce risk at specific tasks the following safeguards will be used: in medium and high risk assignments volunteers will work in pairs; an experienced volunteer or paid staff will work with a new volunteer. Students fulfilling the requirements of 40 community service hours will be required to work under the direct supervision of Town of Hawkesbury paid staff.

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## **GUIDELINES FOR ETHICAL STANDARDS OF CONDUCT**

- Volunteers will act in a way that promotes the welfare, image and reputation of the Town of Hawkesbury.
- Volunteers will treat everyone with dignity and respect.
- Volunteers will avoid perceived and actual conflicts of interest.
- Volunteers who find themselves in a conflict of interest will self-declare.
- Volunteers will refrain from public criticism of other volunteers, staff, participants and services. This includes online comments through social media and any other form of communication.
- Volunteers who receive confidential Town of Hawkesbury information will keep that information confidential.
- The Town of Hawkesbury's intellectual and material property remains the property of the Town of Hawkesbury and will not be used for the personal benefit of a volunteer.
- Volunteers should avoid involvement in any form of self-employment or private business which competes with programs or services delivered directly by the Town of Hawkesbury which could be considered a conflict of interest.
- Volunteers will not use their volunteer position to influence other volunteers, staff or organizations having dealings with the Town of Hawkesbury in order to gain personally or to advance others through the results of that influence.
- Volunteers will not accept personal gifts, favours or hospitality except as in the ordinary course of business where gifts of nominal value for purposes of promotion or courtesy may be offered.
- Volunteers are prohibited from being under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs, which impair performance and judgment while carrying out their duties.
- Volunteers follow any anti-smoking laws and organization regulations.
- Volunteers will be aware of, and follow other Codes and Policies of the Town of Hawkesbury.

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