



Skills acquired through  
Volunteering in Sport

# LEARNING RESOURCES

## /// PILLAR 3: VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT AND RETENTION

### SUB-PILLAR 3.2

**Keeping volunteers and  
participants safe  
(including legal obligations)**



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



## /// Sub-Pillar 3.2

# Keeping volunteers and participants safe (including legal obligations)

### a/ DESCRIPTION

The resources in this section will help you ensure you are meeting your legal obligations in terms of equity and diversity, health and safety, safeguarding and so on. Here you will find guidance to help you develop a suitable code of conduct that sets out the behaviours volunteers will be required to embody in order to ensure that all stakeholders in your sport organisation are safe and included. Additionally, you will find resources to support you in identifying hazards affecting volunteers, evaluate them and install processes and procedures to ensure volunteer safety is not compromised.

### b/ KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS – DID YOU KNOW THAT:

From our Global Survey of sport organisations:

- 71% of survey respondents stated that their organisation does not have written guidelines and procedures for managing sport volunteers
- 49% of survey respondents stated that their organisations do not have anybody responsible for volunteer management.

Your organisation might benefit from having clear guidelines for managing their volunteers which are compliant with good practices and national legislation.

Your organisation might also benefit from having at least one person with responsibility for managing your volunteers.





## >> CONTENT AREA 1 : HOW TO IDENTIFY YOUR COUNTRY'S LEGAL OBLIGATIONS FOR VOLUNTEERING IN SPORT

Most countries have regulations covering volunteer engagement in laws and regulations, which in most cases reflect the definition of volunteering, the circumstances under which volunteers can participate, provision of services provided to volunteers by a receiving organisation and regulation in regard to taxation responsibilities.

National strategies and policies play a crucial role in shaping a nation's practices in connection to volunteering, but also contribute to how volunteer engagement and volunteer contribution is valued in a society, how it is developed, assisted and acknowledged. Strategies and policies facilitate volunteering or address barriers to volunteering as well. The overall approaches defined in policies and strategies influencing volunteering across different sectors in a society may also be important and influential to the sport sector.

⌚ **There is no single definition of volunteerism that is accepted at the international level. However, certain key elements and values can be defined as activities which:**

- are performed with the free will of the individual
- are developed in the framework of non-profit, non-government organisations
- are non-paid and carried out for the benefit of the community or a third party.

⌚ **Volunteering in general: National laws or regulations**

A number of countries have in a place a legal framework to regulate volunteering, however the scope of regulation and the specific aspects of volunteering it regulates naturally vary and are influenced by the social, economic and political make-up of the country.

**The laws or regulations show that in general:**

- They provide the right to volunteering
- Most of the laws add a frame to volunteer administration and their activities
- Some regulations specify the content, location and duration of the activity
- Some of the laws determine the local and national development strategies for volunteering
- Working conditions/protection of volunteering shows that in general the GDPR protects volunteers.

Volunteerism laws and policies are motivated by different considerations in each context, including economic impact, removal of legal obstacles, increased numbers of volunteer initiatives, and responses to certain domestic circumstances. These factors determine the scope and impact of volunteerism regulations. While laws and policies are adopted by governments, they are often initiated by international organisations and domestic civil society organisations.

If your organisation has or is considering utilising young volunteers, there may be additional legal considerations that you need to be aware of. You will also need to consider what roles are suitable for young volunteers, and you will need to ensure that any roles do not interfere with the young person's education or training. You may also need to ensure that the organisation has parental consent for the young person to volunteer.

#### 🔗 **Volunteering in sport: Specific national laws or regulations**

National laws or regulations specific to sports volunteering are not as general. Some rights and benefits attributed to individual volunteers can be in some cases specific to volunteering in sport (e.g. requirements related to qualifications and background checks).

National laws or regulations in other sectors also may have an impact on volunteering in sport. These sectors may be, for example, education or income taxation reductions or exemptions.

#### 🔗 **Safeguarding / Background checks**

If your organisation involves working with children or vulnerable adults, you are likely to have a duty to ensure that there are safeguarding procedures in place. Safeguarding is simply what it suggests – keeping children, young people, and vulnerable adults safe from harm. Having a robust safeguarding policy and procedures also protects the volunteers working within the organisation. Seek guidance from the government or your governing body / Federation on the vetting procedures you are required to follow. You may also wish to consider appointing a designated safeguarding officer who has responsibility for ensuring that all volunteers have completed all necessary background checks but are also appropriately supported in their roles. This may be particularly important if you are utilising young volunteers.

If your sport organisation needs specialist legal advice on matters relating to volunteering, it is worth exploring whether you are able to access pro-bono legal advice available. Pro bono solicitors and barristers offer free legal advice, representation, and mediation to people and organisations who have no way of paying for it.



## >> CONTENT AREA 2 : DEVELOPING A VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT

Sporting excellence and enjoyment are only achieved by participants, volunteers and spectators alike through the adherence to moral, ethical and sporting standards. A volunteer code of conduct sets out the standards and expectations that are applicable to all volunteers involved with a sporting organisation or club. The codes are therefore a guide for individuals and clubs to think about, and monitor, how they, and others, conduct themselves in their roles.

It therefore provides a very clear understanding, between volunteers and the organisation they are working with, of what is expected when it comes to behaviour. It outlines how organisations are to conduct themselves when working with other volunteers and how volunteers conduct themselves in their roles. It can take the form of a signed agreement.

### ⌚ Behaviours and expectations of volunteers you can expect to find in a code of conduct include:

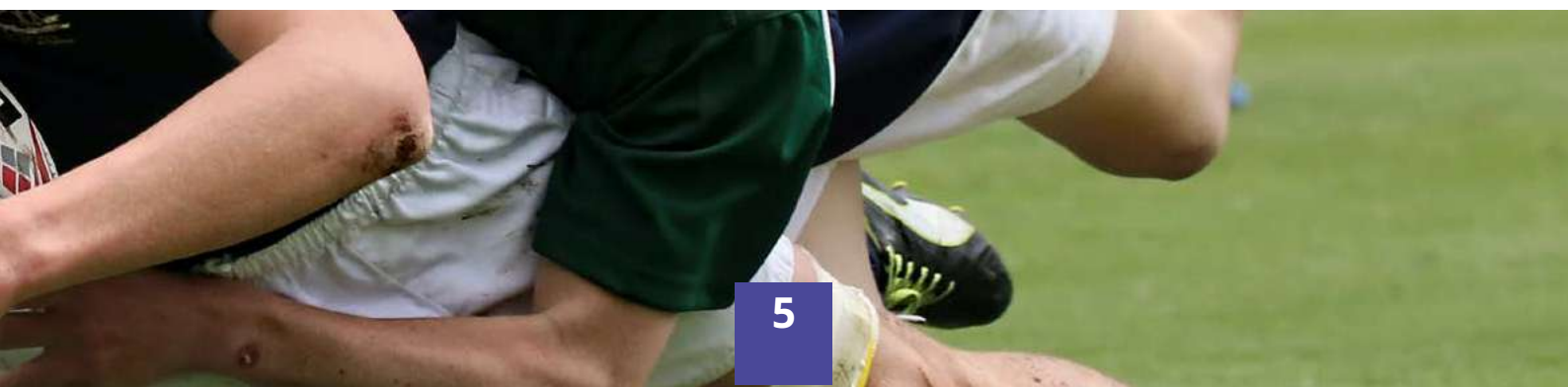
- Abide by safeguarding policies and (if appropriate and where the role requires) obtain an acceptable background check
- Follow other relevant policies and procedures within the sport organisation, for example risk assessments, health and safety guidelines
- Co-operate fully with others involved in the sport organisation such as coaches, technical officials and team managers
- Avoid swearing, abusive language and irresponsible or illegal behaviour, including behaviour that is dangerous to yourself or others, acts of violence, bullying, harassment and physical and sexual abuse
- Not carry or consume alcohol or illegal substances while volunteering
- Volunteer your time without discrimination on grounds of age, gender, sexual, cultural, ethnic, disability or religious preference
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person and treat everyone equally, regardless of background or ability
- Be a good role model to other volunteers and members within the sport organisation

### ⌚ Young Volunteers (under 18 years old):

Children and young people may have their own volunteer codes of conduct and should be clear about their sport organisation or club's expectations in terms of acceptable behaviour and conduct. It can be beneficial to ask children in their group/team to discuss and agree what the consequences of breaking these codes should be for them.

### ⌚ Disciplinary procedures

When a volunteer does not meet the expectations set out in the codes, disciplinary or performance management action may be taken by the sporting organisation or club. Disciplinary action may include a formal warning or dismissal.



## >> CONTENT AREA 3: RISK ASSESSMENT COVERING ALL ASPECTS OF VOLUNTEERING

Sports organisations and clubs have a duty of care to volunteers to ensure that, as far as reasonably practicable, they are not exposed to risks to their health and safety. Sports organisations and clubs should assess the risks around volunteering roles and activities and take steps to keep volunteers safe.

### 🕒 What is a risk assessment?

A risk assessment is a simple and effective tool that sports organisations and clubs can use to ensure that all of their activities, equipment and facilities are as safe as possible. Having a risk assessment in place is a good way of controlling the risk of accidents or injuries to everyone involved in your activities, from participants and volunteers to visitors. The risk assessment process can be used to record, identify, and assess risks in order to help develop safe practices or flag further actions needed to help control and manage them.

Key areas of concern to consider in a risk assessment:

#### **Physical hazards or risks -**

You should identify and consider any unsafe or hazardous conditions, activity or equipment that may pose a threat.

#### **Safeguarding -**

risks related to keeping children and adults safe. This should be considered throughout your safeguarding policies.

#### **Data protection and GDPR -**

risks associated with data protection and security including data breaches or GDPR issues as you may find you need to store a range of information about volunteers.

#### **Inclusion and equality -**

risks that would prevent your organisation being open and accessible to volunteers.

#### **Insurance -**

You should carefully consider which type of insurance cover you need to protect your volunteers during their activities (e.g., a volunteer driver may need to inform their insurance company).

#### **Travelling to volunteer or volunteering abroad -**

Those wishing to travel internationally to volunteer should check the travel restrictions of that nation before doing so.

Once you have identified your risks, outline an action plan to resolve the concerns.

### 🕒 Who should carry out the risk assessment?

This should be carried out by a competent person. Additional health and safety training is not required, although would be recommended for a sport organisation or club with its own facility. Carrying out risk assessments is part of your sport organisation or club's health and safety responsibility to your volunteers.

How regularly should a club carry out a risk assessment?

Recorded risk assessments should be regular activity for all sporting organisations or clubs. The frequency of assessments will often depend on a number of factors:



- Venue / location
- Type of groups involved (e.g., activity with underage or vulnerable people)
- Scale of activity (e.g., a major event)
- Type of sport and equipment involved.

Any risks highlighted should be recorded and addressed. We advise you reassess to ensure corrective action was successful.

If the risk cannot be mitigated in time for the activity to begin then this may require the activity to be cancelled.

### 🕒 Risk management measures

Once you have carried out a risk assessment, it is important to ensure that volunteers are managed appropriately to reduce risks. The following actions can form part of your organisations risk management plan:

- Being clear about the volunteer role
- Ensuring the volunteer has the necessary skills and support to fulfil the role
- Sourcing references
- Undertaking a safeguarding / background check for eligible roles
- Providing a volunteer induction
- Delivering training on equality issues and relevant aspects of health and safety
- Providing further training appropriate to the role
- Ensuring volunteers understand how to implement any risk assessments relevant to their role
- Ensuring your sport organisation has adequate insurance to cover volunteer activities



## >> CONTENT AREA 4: CREATING AND IMPLEMENTING HEALTH AND SAFETY PROCEDURES

One of the most important parts of managing and supervising volunteers is awareness of the requirements around health and safety. Your organisation will have a legal responsibility towards volunteers in this respect and so it's important to be fully aware of health and safety requirements and to research any new ones that might come about from the activities that volunteers undertake. Appropriate insurance policies will also need to be in place.

Sport organisations or clubs are therefore required to ensure safe systems of work and a safe working environment for those involved in volunteering. It is good practice for sport organisations to have a health and safety policy which outlines the health and safety procedures that volunteers, staff and members are expected to follow and adhere to.

### ⌚ A policy is a written statement, usually comprises three elements:

#### **A statement section:**

To detail how safety will be managed and that demonstrates the organisation or club's commitment to health and safety.

#### **A club or organisation section:**

this should detail where responsibilities are allocated and how volunteers fit into the overall safety management system.

#### **An arrangements section:**

To provide details of specific volunteer activities and how functions are managed. This could include such matters as risk assessments, fire safety, first aid and accident reporting.

### ⌚ Good practice when setting out a policy:

- Your policy should be set out in such a way that makes it clear to everyone what is expected of them to comply
- A good policy will show how the organisation protects those who could be affected by its activities
- The policy should be of an appropriate length and relevance to the activities and size of the organisation.

### ⌚ Insurance for volunteers

Check with your insurance company that your policy covers the range of volunteer activities you plan to undertake and if necessary, adjust the policy if needed. As volunteers are not employees, they may not automatically be considered as 'Third Party' under your Public Liability Insurance. Volunteers need to be specifically referred to in your policy. Insurance policies should cover all actions volunteers may carry out as well as the venues they will be operating in. If volunteers take part in strenuous activities, such as sports coaching, or use specialised equipment, then these will need to be covered in your policy. In addition, check that your policy also includes coverage for volunteer involvement at events.

It is also useful for the volunteer to know what activities are covered by the policy, so you may wish to include this information as part of the induction programme. Your insurance policy may need to cover using their car for volunteering purposes, theft of, or damage to, personal items whilst volunteering, and injury whilst volunteering.







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## V4V PARTNERSHIP:



Coordinator



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Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission.  
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