SOUTH SOUND 911

Volunteer Handbook

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INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

South Sound 911 welcomes you as a volunteer and hopes your association with the agency will be a satisfying experience. Regardless of your contribution, you are making a difference in the lives of others by volunteering your time. By taking the time to assist staff, volunteers enhance the levels of quality services the agency provides. We thank you for the time, devotion, and care you are willing to share.

The policies outlined in the handbook are intended for guidance only, and do not constitute, either implicitly or explicitly, a binding contractual or personnel agreement. South Sound 911 reserves the right, at any time, to change/revise terms and conditions of voluntary service. As such, the contents of this handbook are subject to change. Policies not specifically covered in the Volunteer Handbook may be addressed in the South Sound 911 Employee Manual.

South Sound 911 also reserves the right to utilize, or not utilize, services of volunteers. Volunteers are not considered South Sound 911 employees and being a volunteer is not a guarantee of future employment with the agency.

BECOMING A SOUTH SOUND 911 VOLUNTEER

Individuals interested in becoming a South Sound 911 volunteer must submit a Volunteer Application & Service Agreement form, which is found online at southsound911.org/volunteer. Completed and signed Volunteer Application & Service Agreements may be emailed to Jessica.Kulaas@SouthSound911.org.

If a volunteer opportunity exists, applicants will be invited for an interview to determine whether the opportunity is a good match for the applicant. If there is a potential match, applicants must undergo a fingerprint-based background check and successful completion of Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) training before being appointed to the Volunteer Program.

VOLUNTEER EXPECTATIONS

Volunteers represent South Sound 911 to the community. As a volunteer affiliated with the agency, you will be seen as a visible extension of our paid staff to both the public and the partner agencies we serve. While most agency business is considered public information, certain information is confidential. It is vital that volunteers uphold the public trust in order to maintain South Sound 911's reputation of integrity and professionalism.

The following rules must be followed while volunteering for South Sound 911:

1. Volunteers shall obey all applicable city, county, state and federal laws.
2. Volunteers shall not commit any acts nor fail to perform any acts which constitute a violation of any of the policies, procedures, guidelines or directives of the agency, whether stated in this Volunteer Handbook and/or in the South Sound 911 Employee Manual.
3. Volunteers shall not engage in any conduct which is unbecoming of persons associated with the agency.
4. While on duty, the volunteer will not use his or her volunteer status to obtain any goods, products, or services.

5. Volunteers shall not solicit or accept any gift or gratuity from any person, business, or organization for the benefit of the volunteer, South Sound 911, or others if it may reasonably be inferred that the person, business or organization: (a) seeks to influence action of an official nature, (b) seeks to affect the performance or non-performance of an official duty, (c) has an interest which may be affected directly or indirectly by the performance of the volunteer's duty, or (d) creates an appearance of fairness issue.
6. Volunteers shall not use their official position or official identification for personal or financial gain to obtain privileges not otherwise available to them, or to avoid consequences of illegal acts. Volunteer identification should only be used in the performance of volunteer duties with South Sound 911.
7. Volunteers acting in an official capacity shall not recommend or suggest in any manner the employment or procurement of any particular product, or private, professional, or commercial service.
8. Volunteers will provide high quality customer service, always remaining courteous, calm, and professional. “Customer” includes everyone the volunteer comes in contact with while representing the agency, including members of the public, patrons, South Sound 911 employees, and representatives from other agencies and organizations.
9. Volunteers will not discuss or disseminate any confidential or criminal justice information.
10. Volunteers shall sign a Volunteer Application & Service Agreement.

VOLUNTEER HOURS

Any questions related to policies, procedures, or volunteer assignments should be discussed with the Volunteer Coordinator. Specific volunteer work assignment information will be covered with the supervisor assigning the work.

IDENTIFICATION

The South Sound 911 Volunteer Coordinator will issue each volunteer a photo identification (ID) badge. While performing duties for South Sound 911 volunteers must wear the volunteer identification badge. The identification badge must be worn on the outermost garment, in an easily visible manner. Volunteers shall protect their badge and not reproduce or give it to anyone for any purpose. If the identification badge is lost, immediately report the loss to the Volunteer Coordinator.

Volunteers shall furnish their name and show their identification badge to any person requesting this information when on duty or while representing South Sound 911 in any capacity.

Volunteers are responsible for returning ID/access cards to the Volunteer Coordinator when ending volunteer status with South Sound 911.

POLICIES

Volunteers are governed by the same rules of behavior that govern paid South Sound 911 employees. Inappropriate behavior or willful violation of South Sound 911 policies may be cause for dismissal from the Volunteer Program.

The policies outlined below were selected as being those most relevant to Volunteer Program participants. The information may be condensed or adjusted for the Volunteer Program or policy language may have been updated since the publication of the Volunteer Handbook. For the most current published policies, please refer to the South Sound 911 Employee Manual.

Official Agency Publications and Communication Methods

All communications whether oral or written, formal or informal, shall be consistent with South Sound 911's expectations of professionalism using respectful communications.

Agency Logo

South Sound 911 has an official logo that represents the agency brand. For consistency, quality control, and integrity, the logo may only be used according to brand standards. Personal use or reproduction of the agency logo(s), in whole or part, is prohibited.

Electronic Communication

Directives and correspondence may be delivered via electronic mail. Recipients of such directives shall treat those orders the same as if personally delivered.

In general, electronic mail is the property of South Sound 911, and is subject to monitoring or audit. It is also subject to public disclosure with some possible limited exceptions. Volunteers should have no expectation of privacy with respect to electronic communications.

Agency Correspondence

The agency utilizes official letterhead stationery. Volunteers shall not use official stationery for any purpose without express permission of their supervisor for assigned work.

Media Policy

Any volunteer contacted by a member of the media regarding South Sound 911 must immediately inform his/her/their assigned supervisor or the Volunteer Coordinator. The Executive Director, Deputy Director, Assistant Director, Department Manager and the Community Relations Manager are the only staff members authorized to respond to inquiries from the news media or to initiate contact with the news media with the intent of disseminating information.

The Executive Director, Deputy Director, or Community Relations Manager – in consultation with the appropriate Assistant Director and/or manager – may designate specific employees or volunteers to provide information on particular subjects, though no volunteer shall be required to speak to the media.

Equal Employment Opportunity Statement

South Sound 911 is an equal opportunity employer. All volunteers and potential volunteers will be recruited, selected, trained or terminated without regard to sex, gender, race, national origin, religion, creed, marital status, military or veteran status, age, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, genetic information or any other basis prohibited by law.

Any volunteer who believes that he or she has been discriminated against or who has suffered from unlawful harassment or retaliation should report it to the Volunteer Coordinator, assigned supervisor, manager, or Human Resources. Please refer also to the Anti-Harassment policy. Upon receipt of a complaint, the agency will investigate and take appropriate corrective action as may be warranted.

Anti-Harassment Policy and Complaint Procedure

South Sound 911 is committed to a work environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Each individual has the right to work in a professional atmosphere that promotes equal employment opportunities and prohibits unlawful discriminatory practices, including harassment. Therefore, South Sound 911 expects that all relationships among persons in the workplace will be business-like and free of bias, prejudice and harassment.

It is the policy of South Sound 911 to ensure equal employment opportunity without discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy) sexual orientation (including gender identity), national origin, age, disability, genetic information, marital status, citizenship, amnesty or status as a covered veteran or any other characteristic protected by law. South Sound 911 prohibits any such discrimination or harassment.

South Sound 911 encourages reporting of all perceived incidents of discrimination or harassment. South Sound 911's policy is to investigate such reports promptly and thoroughly. South Sound 911 prohibits retaliation against any individual who reports discrimination or harassment or who participates in an investigation of such reports.

Harassment Complaint Process

Individuals who believe they have been the victims of conduct prohibited by this policy statement or who believe they have witnessed such conduct should discuss their concerns with the Volunteer Coordinator, assigned supervisor, Human Resources, or any member of management.

When possible, South Sound 911 encourages individuals who believe they are being subjected to such conduct to promptly advise the offender that their behavior is unwelcome and request that it be discontinued. Often this action alone will resolve the problem. South Sound 911 recognizes, however, that an individual may prefer to pursue the matter through complaint procedures.

South Sound 911 encourages the prompt reporting of complaints or concerns so that rapid and constructive action can be taken before relationships become irreparably strained. Early reporting and intervention have proven to be the most effective method of resolving actual or perceived incidents of harassment.

Any reported allegations of harassment, discrimination or retaliation will be investigated promptly. The investigation may include individual interviews with the parties involved and, where necessary, with individuals who may have observed the alleged conduct or may have other relevant knowledge.

Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the investigatory process to the extent consistent with adequate investigation and appropriate corrective action.

Retaliation

The agency will not tolerate retaliation against any volunteer for reporting, in good faith, instances of harassment, or for making a good faith report of discrimination. Likewise, the agency will not tolerate retaliation against a volunteer or witness for bringing forward, in good faith, a complaint of harassment or discrimination or for participating in a workplace investigation regarding these complaints.

Acts of retaliation should be reported immediately and will be promptly investigated and addressed. Misconduct constituting harassment, discrimination or retaliation will be dealt with appropriately.

False and malicious complaints of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation will be cause for dismissal from the Volunteer Program.

Reasonable Accommodation of Disabilities

South Sound 911 complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and all applicable state and local fair employment practices, laws and is committed to providing equal employment opportunities to qualified individuals with disabilities. Consistent with this commitment, the agency will provide a reasonable accommodation to qualified volunteers with a disability if the reasonable accommodation would allow the individual to perform the essential functions of the job, unless doing so would create an undue hardship or a direct threat to the health or safety of others.

To request a reasonable accommodation, please contact the Volunteer Coordiantor or Human Resources. Human Resources will work with each volunteer (and the volunteer's health care providers, as needed) to evaluate the need for reasonable accommodation and options for providing reasonable accommodation.

Reasonable Accommodation of Religious Beliefs

South Sound 911 respects the religious beliefs and practices of all volunteers and will make, upon request, an accommodation for such observances when a reasonable accommodation is available that does not create an undue hardship on the agency's business or operations.

Volunteers who believe they need accommodation for religious reasons should notify the Volunteer Coordinator or Human Resources.

Standards of Conduct

South Sound 911 strives to provide outstanding service to our community and each volunteer was selected based on the belief that he or she would be able to fulfill that expectation.

It is expected that volunteers will conduct themselves professionally at all times in the workplace and must conform to and abide by all laws, ordinances, rules, and regulations and that they will uphold the Constitution and laws of the United States and of the State of Washington, Tacoma, Pierce County and South Sound 911 and will faithfully and impartially discharge the duties of their position.

While much of volunteer conduct and behavior can be related directly to professionalism, it is worthwhile to provide examples of what that means to South Sound 911:

A. Privacy and Dissemination of Information - Criminal justice and medical information obtained in the course of South Sound 911 work is not to be used, photographed, copied, or disseminated outside prescribed channels for any purpose, e.g., to other agencies, the public, over communications networks, etc.

B. Disposal of Sensitive Information - Volunteers are to take special care when disposing work-sensitive documents. Shredding machines and/or shredder barrels are available in all departments and will be utilized to ensure security of data consistent with state-mandated records retention

schedules.

C. Accessibility - Due to the nature of our business, it is the responsibility of each volunteer to maintain a current address, telephone number, email address, and emergency contact, in which they can reasonably be expected to be reached. Further, is the personal responsibility of volunteers to be knowledgeable of their work schedule and to advise their assigned supervisor at the earliest practicable time when circumstances prevent the fulfillment of the schedule.

D. Cleanliness - Workstations, conference rooms, fitness rooms, kitchens and break rooms are shared with others. It is expected that each person will leave their areas in a clean and orderly state after each usage.

E. Meals and Beverages - Beverages are permissible at workstations only if in a "spill proof" container appropriate to the contents. Food is acceptable at the workstation provided that it does not have a strong odor or create residue that would become a maintenance and/or housekeeping problem. It is expected that under regular operating conditions that the Break Room be used to consume food or beverages.

F. Personal Audio - The discreet use of streaming devices in cubicles and offices is permitted providing it is kept at a low volume and does not distract or offend others.

G. Work Attire – South Sound 911 volunteers are expected to arrive at work physically clean, neat, and with a well-groomed appearance with modest clothing that is clean and free of rips, holes, tears, stains, or other signs of wear. Strong odors caused by perfume, scented hairsprays, and aftershave lotions can be offensive and are to be used in moderation out of concern for the comfort of others.

H. Notification Requirement for Arrest or Initiation of Legal Process - It is expected that volunteers will notify the agency as soon as possible in the case of an arrest or other legal or criminal justice action, such as being served with a protection order or the initiation of law enforcement action against the volunteer, etc.

Drug and Alcohol Use

Use of alcohol or any drug that is illegal under federal or state law (including marijuana) is a serious threat to personal health, workplace safety and job performance. Volunteers are strictly prohibited from possessing, selling, consuming or being under any influence (defined as having any detectable amount in their body) of alcohol or illegal drugs while on the job or in any other manner that may affect the volunteer's work performance or the agency's interests or reputation. This prohibition also extends to legal drugs for which a volunteer may not have a valid prescription, or that are not used in a manner consistent with accepted frequency or dosage requirements.

Any volunteer who is taking medication that may be legally prescribed under both federal and state law should determine from their physician or pharmacist whether the prescription drug could impair their ability to perform the job safely and effectively. If the volunteer's performance of essential job functions may be functionally limited at work by use of legal drug, he or she must promptly advise the Volunteer Coordinator and/or Human Resources so that reasonable accommodations may be considered.

Workplace Violence Prevention Policy

Conduct that threatens, intimidates, or coerces another volunteer or employee, customer, vendor, or business associate will not be tolerated.

South Sound 911 resources may not be used to threaten, stalk, or harass anyone at the workplace or outside the workplace. South Sound 911 treats threats coming from an abusive personal relationship as it does other forms of violence. Indirect or direct threats of violence, incidents of actual violence and suspicious individuals or activities should be reported as soon as possible to a supervisor, the Volunteer Coordinator, Human Resources, or any member of senior management. When reporting a threat or incident of violence, the volunteer should be as specific and detailed as possible. Volunteers should not place themselves in peril, nor should they attempt to intercede during an incident.

South Sound 911 will promptly and thoroughly investigate all reports of threats of violence or incidents of actual violence and of suspicious individuals or activities occurring in the workplace. The identity of the individual making a report will be protected as much as possible. South Sound 911 will not retaliate against volunteers making good-faith reports of violence, threats or suspicious individuals or activities. In order to maintain workplace safety and the integrity of its investigation, South Sound 911 may suspend volunteers suspected of workplace violence or threats of violence, pending investigation.

South Sound 911 encourages volunteers to bring their disputes to the attention of their supervisor or Human Resources before the situation escalates.

Whistle Blower Policy

Reporting Improper Governmental Action

South Sound 911, in compliance with the Local Government Employee Whistleblower Protection Act, RCW 42.41, encourages volunteers to disclose any improper governmental action taken by agency employees without fear of retaliation. This policy also safeguards legitimate employer interests by encouraging complaints to be made first to the agency, with a process provided for speedy dispute resolution.

Definitions:

“Improper Governmental Action” is any action by an agency employee that is undertaken in the performance of the employee’s official duties, whether or not the action is within the scope of the employee’s employment, and is:

- in violation of any federal, state or local law or rule.
- an abuse of authority.
- of substantial and specific danger to the public health or safety.
- a gross waste of public funds.

“Improper Governmental Action” does not include employee actions including employee grievances, complaints, appointments, promotions, transfers, assignments, reassignments, reinstatements, restorations, re-employment, performance evaluations, reductions in pay, dismissals, suspensions, demotions, violations of collective bargaining laws, alleged violations of labor agreements, or reprimands.

"Retaliatory action" means any adverse change in the terms and conditions of an agency employee's or volunteer's employment, or hostile actions by another employee or volunteer towards an agency employee or volunteer that are encouraged by a supervisor or manager.

"Emergency" means a circumstance that if not immediately changed may cause damage to a person's property.

Procedure for Reporting Improper Government Action

Agency volunteers who become aware of improper governmental actions should raise the issue first with the Volunteer Coordinator or assigned supervisor. If requested, the volunteer shall submit a written report stating in detail the basis for the volunteer's belief that an improper governmental action has occurred. Where the volunteer reasonably believes the improper governmental action involves the volunteer's supervisor or the Volunteer Coordinator, the volunteer may raise the issue directly with Human Resources or with the relevant Department Director, Deputy Director or the Executive Director. This should be done as soon as the volunteer becomes aware of the improper action.

In the event a particular complaint involves allegations of criminal behavior, the agency may refer the matter to the appropriate law enforcement authorities. If the complaint involves allegations of criminal behavior that may cause immediate harm to an individual or to property, the complaining volunteer may first report the matter to the local police department before initiating the procedures described in this policy.

The Deputy Director or Executive Director (or a designee) shall take prompt action to assist the agency in properly investigating the report of improper governmental action. Employees involved in the investigation shall keep the identity of reporting volunteers confidential to the extent possible under the law, unless the volunteer authorizes in writing the disclosure of the volunteer's identity. After an investigation has been completed, the volunteer reporting the improper governmental action shall be advised of a summary of the results of the investigation, except the volunteer actions taken as a result of the investigation may be kept confidential (to the extent permitted by law).

In the case of an "emergency," where the volunteer believes that personal injury or damage may result if action is not taken immediately, the volunteer may report the improper governmental action directly to the appropriate government agency with responsibility for investigating the improper actions, such as:

Pierce County Prosecuting Attorney Attorney General, State of Washington
U.S. Attorney (Western District of Washington)

As noted above, the volunteer may also report an emergency criminal matter to the local police department or another law enforcement agency.

Volunteers may report information about improper governmental action directly to the appropriate government agency with responsibility for investigating the improper action if the volunteer reasonably believes that an adequate investigation was not undertaken by the agency to determine whether an improper governmental action occurred; or that insufficient action was taken by the agency to address the improper action, or that for other reasons the improper action is likely to recur.

Volunteers or employees who fail to make a good faith attempt to follow the agency's procedures in reporting improper governmental action shall not be entitled to the protection of this policy against retaliation, pursuant to RCW 42.41.030.

Protection Against Retaliatory Actions
Volunteers who have, in good faith, reported an improper governmental action in accordance with these policies and procedures are protected from retaliatory actions.

A volunteer who believes he or she has been retaliated against for reporting an improper governmental action must provide written notice to the Volunteer Coordinator or assigned supervisor within 30 days of the alleged retaliatory action. If the Volunteer Coordinator or supervisor is allegedly involved in the retaliation, the written notice should be provided to the Human Resources Director, Deputy Director, or Executive Director. The written notice must specify the alleged retaliatory action and the relief requested. Officials and managers shall take appropriate action to investigate and assess complaints of retaliation.

Social Media

Volunteer Personal Use
South Sound 911 volunteers who choose to engage in social media for personal purposes assume any and all risk associated with such use. When a volunteer identifies their association with South Sound 911 and/or discusses their work, the volunteer is expected to behave appropriately and professionally, and in ways consistent with agency values and policies.

Volunteers should be clear that they are speaking for themselves, not on behalf of the agency. Further, volunteers should not engage in any actions that may harm or tarnish the image or reputation of South Sound 911 or its volunteers or partner agencies, or reveal confidential information or share data of which the public is not an intended recipient.

"Social media" refers to the use of third-party or internally hosted online technologies that facilitate social interaction and dialogue. Social media may include, but is not limited to, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Flickr, wikis, RSS feeds, and blogs.

Safety Guidelines

Each volunteer shall be responsible for following established safety rules and procedures. Volunteers are expected to report any potential hazards or unsafe conditions, or make recommendations to their supervisor immediately so that potential accidents can be prevented.

South Sound 911 purchases coverage through the Department of Labor and Industries (LnI) workers' compensation program.

If a volunteer is injured, no matter how minor the injury seems please do the following:

- Report the injury to your assigned supervisor or the Volunteer Coordinator.
- Get medical care – volunteer may choose any health-care provider who is qualified to treat the injury.
- Tell the health-care provider that the injury is work related – the health care provider will complete a Report of Industrial Injury or Occupational Disease form and send it in to

Washington State Department of Labor & Industries. This is the first step in filing the workers' compensation (industrial insurance) claim.

Volunteers file their claim by going to: https://lni.wa.gov/for-workers (then click on file a claim).

The supervisor and/or Volunteer Coordinator and volunteer are required to complete the South Sound 911 Supervisor's Report of Incident or Injury. This report must be completed after any incident which involves or may involve a workplace hazardous condition, exposure, illness, or injury believed to be caused by a workplace condition.

Security

Security within the South Sound 911 work areas is of utmost concern. It is each volunteer's responsibility to ensure the secured areas stay secured. Doors should not be left propped open and the volunteer is not allowed to provide entry for persons, known or unknown, while at South Sound 911.

Issued access cards, access codes or keys are to be used by the volunteer only and kept in a secure place. Immediately report any lost or stolen cards or keys.

The volunteer's South Sound 911 identification badge will be worn and visibly displayed while on duty. Full identification must be shown when necessary to show proof of South Sound 911 affiliation or to gain access at security checkpoints as required.

All doors leading into the Communication Center floor shall be securely locked at all times. Unless a special provision is made by the Executive Director or Deputy Director, volunteers will not be allowed unescorted access onto the Communications Center floor.

Weapons in the Workplace

Employees or volunteers may not at any time while within facilities owned, leased or controlled by South Sound 911, or while on shift or conducting agency business, possess or use any firearm or weapon as defined by RCW 9.41.300.

Definitions:

Firearm: A weapon, a pistol or rifle, whether loaded or unloaded, capable of firing a projectile and using an explosive as a propellant.

Weapons: An instrument of attack or defense. Weapons include, but are not limited to, guns, knives or swords with blades over four inches in length, and explosives, as defined by RCW 9.41.300 and associated sub sections.

Violations of this policy may constitute a criminal offense and qualify as volunteer misconduct subject to dismissal from the Volunteer Program.

Exceptions:
Employees or volunteers are allowed to keep their firearm or weapon secured in their personal vehicle at all facility locations, in the designated parking areas that are considered available for use to South Sound 911. The weapon must be secured in a safe manner and as directed by Washington law. The

weapon must stay within the confines of the vehicle at all times and is not allowed into any South Sound 911 facility or associated facilities.

Driver License

All employees and volunteers who are required to utilize a personal vehicle for official business and/or drive a South Sound 911 vehicle shall maintain a current and valid driver license.

Upon request of the Human Resources Director, or designee, volunteers shall provide a copy of their current and valid driver's license. In addition, South Sound 911 retains the right to verify the status of a volunteer's driver's license through the issuing state's Department of Licensing.

It is each volunteer's responsibility to immediately report any changes to the validity of their driver's license; including, but not limited to expiration, cancellation, revocation, suspension or restrictions imposed. Failure to notify and/or attempt to conceal the loss of a valid license may result in termination from the Volunteer Program.

RESIGNATION/TERMINATION

Volunteer placements are made on a conditional basis. Either the agency or the volunteer may terminate the arrangement at any time if it is not agreeable or acceptable to either party and/or when the assignment has been completed.

RECEIPT OF VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

I have received a copy of the Volunteer Handbook, which outlines the policies and procedures of South Sound 911. I have read and understand the information in it and agree to abide by the policies while volunteering.

The handbook does not constitute a contractual arrangement or agreement between South Sound 911 and its volunteers of any kind including, but not limited to, the terms and conditions of volunteering. South Sound 911 reserves the right to utilize, or not utilize, the services of volunteers.

I understand that it is my responsibility to secure information from the Volunteer Coordinator if I have questions or concerns about any of the information outlined in this Volunteer Handbook. I understand that these policies and procedures are continually evaluated and may be amended, modified or terminated at any time and at the sole discretion of South Sound 911 with or without notice.

_____

Print Name

_____ _____

Signature of Volunteer Date