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# Volunteer Handbook

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For prospective and current volunteers of the BC SPCA



THE BRITISH COLUMBIA SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

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Authored by: Human Resources Department

## Message from the Chief Executive Officer

*Dear volunteers,*

*It is my privilege to express, on behalf of the BC SPCA, my deep appreciation and gratitude to the amazing individuals who volunteer their time and expertise to help us care for abused, injured, lost, homeless and neglected animals each year. It is through your compassion and commitment that we have been able to save thousands of animal lives and to create happy endings for B.C.'s most vulnerable animals.*

*I am always inspired and deeply moved to hear stories of the work being done by BC SPCA volunteers across the province - from dog walking and cat care, to fostering, fundraising, small animal care and special events. The BC SPCA simply could not function without the support and dedication of the incredible volunteers who open their hearts - and their homes - to the animals who urgently need, and deserve, our protection and help.*

*To each of the 4,000 volunteers who make B.C. a safer and more humane place for animals, I say a heartfelt thank you. Your contributions have truly made a difference and are deeply appreciated.*

*Sincerely,*



**Craig Daniell**  
Chief Executive Officer, BC SPCA



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# Volunteer Handbook

For prospective and current volunteers of the BC SPCA

*OUR MISSION: To protect and enhance the quality of life for domestic, farm and wild animals in British Columbia.*

## Section 1.0 - Introduction

### 1.1 Purpose of this Guide

This handbook is designed for individuals interested in and/or currently volunteering with The British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (BC SPCA). The purpose of this handbook is to provide an overview of the current BC SPCA volunteer programs, policies, and procedures in general terms. It is the responsibility of each volunteer to read the full policies available on the BC SPCA internal website. The BC SPCA reserves the right to modify, add, revoke, suspend, terminate or change any or all policies or procedures of the Society, in whole or in part, at any time with or without notice. If a discrepancy exists between any policies contained within this document and applicable legislation, the legislation will prevail. Questions about the interpretation or enforcement of policies should be directed to a manager/supervisor or a member of the human resources department.

### 1.2 About the BC SPCA

The BC SPCA is a non-profit charitable organization dedicated to protecting and enhancing the quality of life for domestic, farm and wild animals in British Columbia. Each year, the Society provides a wide range of animal welfare services for tens of thousands of homeless, abused, and abandoned animals around the province.

The BC SPCA is the only animal welfare organization in British Columbia which has the authority to enforce laws relating to animal cruelty and to prepare cases for Crown Counsel for the prosecution of individuals who inflict suffering on animals.

### 1.3 BC SPCA Vision Statement

To inspire and mobilize society to create a world in which all animals enjoy as a minimum, five essential freedoms:

1. Freedom from hunger and thirst.
2. Freedom from pain, injury, and disease.
3. Freedom from distress.
4. Freedom from discomfort.
5. Freedom to express behaviours that promote well-being.

### 1.4 BC SPCA Mission Statement

To protect and enhance the quality of life for domestic, farm and wild animals in British Columbia.

## 1.5 The History of the BC SPCA

Even though J.E. Knight of Ashcroft, BC, was not on the list of founding members of the BC SPCA he can be credited with initiating the formation of the BC SPCA by lobbying the government to pass an anti-cruelty bill in 1895. When the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act was passed, it set in motion the creation of a non-profit society called The British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals that was authorized to investigate reports of abuse towards animals and to propose new legislation.

A committee of individuals concerned with animal protection was formed to create bylaws and a constitution for the BC SPCA. In 1896 the first meeting was held in New Westminster and in 1898 the Society held an election for the Board and the BC SPCA Vancouver Branch was founded.

By 1901 there were SPCA branches in New Westminster, Victoria, Vancouver, Vernon, Kamloops, Ashcroft, Okanagan, Kaslo, Nelson, Revelstoke and Rossland. These branches enabled the Society to investigate cases of animal cruelty on a larger scale throughout the province. In 1955 the first shelter was built for the Vancouver Branch.

Throughout the years, the BC SPCA has been instrumental in improving welfare of animals, through advocacy campaigns on issues such as: the plucking of chickens while still alive; horse race monitoring; the contamination of waterfowl in oil spills; opposition to the seal hunt; dogs in the back of pickup trucks; the suffering of farm animals in industrial farming; lobbying to establish the Humane Slaughter Act; improvements to transportation of farm animals; increased access for pets in rental housing; and reforming the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act.

## 1.6 The BC SPCA Today

The BC SPCA derives its authority from the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PCA) Act, which provides a number of rights and privileges to the Society, including the right to establish bylaws to govern its operations and structure and the right to establish animal shelters across the province. The Constitution and Bylaws of the Society can be found at <http://www.sPCA.bc.ca/about/governance-accountability/accountability.html>.

Today, the BC SPCA operates 42 locations throughout the province including 36 local branches, Wild ARC wildlife rehabilitation centre, the Vancouver Animal Hospital, spay/neuter clinics in Prince George and Kamloops, a Provincial Call Centre and its Provincial Office in Vancouver. There are approximately 450 paid BC SPCA staff members and more than 4000 volunteers who carry out the mission of the Society.

The BC SPCA's governing body is the Board of Directors. Directors are elected by various branch community councils and are responsible for determining the policies and direction of the BC SPCA. The Board is comprised of directors elected from the different regions of the province and directors at large. The Board is responsible for setting long-term policy; establishing the strategic direction of the BC SPCA through long-term planning; ensuring effective use of overall resources; and reviewing and approving an annual operating and capital budget. Ultimate responsibility for control and direction of the BC SPCA is vested in and taken by the Board of Directors.

## BC SPCA Programs & Services:

- Cruelty investigations
- Sheltering and adoptions
- Emergency rescue and treatment
- Reuniting lost pets with their owners
- Humane education/youth programs
- Volunteer programs
- Protection for farm animals
- Wildlife rehabilitation
- Reducing pet overpopulation
- Animal welfare research
- Advocacy on animal-related issues
- Education about the human-animal violence link
- Veterinary services
- Assessment and matching programs
- Fundraising programs

## Primary Duties and Responsibilities of Branches:

- Shelter and re-home unwanted and homeless animals
- Accept and treat injured and abandoned animals
- Provide the community with support in animal-related issues
- Provide humane education to the community
- Fundraise and support community fundraising initiatives

The Society is established under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act (PCA Act). In addition to regulating the administration of the Society, the PCA Act authorizes BC SPCA Special Provincial Constables (SPCs) to take any action they consider necessary to relieve an animal of its distress. Such action can include:

- Investigating reports of animal cruelty
- Providing the animals' guardian with the necessary education to help relieve the animals' distress
- Issuing an Order for the guardian to relieve the animals' distress
- Taking custody of the animal
- Providing immediate food, water and care for the animal
- Recommending charges under the PCA Act or Criminal Code of Canada

The BC SPCA is a registered not-for-profit organization and is dependent on charitable donations to sustain the day-to-day operations of the branches, hospital, clinics and the work of the cruelty officers. The Society currently has more than 100,000 supporters across the province.

### 1.7 Membership

Membership is necessary if a volunteer wishes to be elected to the Board of Directors or to the Community Council to play a governance role in the Society. Membership dues help to support the day-to-day operations of the Branch. For more information on becoming a member, visit the BC SPCA website - <http://www.spca.bc.ca/about/membership.html>.

## 1.8 Strategic Plan

2015 will mark the 120<sup>th</sup> year of the BC SPCA being the voice for animals in British Columbia. Although there have been dramatic improvements in the welfare of companion, farm and wild animals over this time, much remains to be done before we can claim to have created a humane society.

In 2013 the BC SPCA embarked upon an extensive stakeholder consultation process to solicit input for our future strategic direction. During that process, we asked several stakeholders, including staff, volunteers, donors, veterinarians, local governments, educators, industry groups, and the public if they shared our belief that the BC SPCA needs to re-focus its priorities to get to the root causes of animal cruelty, while also remaining the safety net for the province's most vulnerable animals. Stakeholders overwhelmingly agreed that now is the time for the BC SPCA to significantly increase its investment in proactive, preventative animal welfare such as pet overpopulation programs, youth and adult education, and advocacy initiatives.

Over the course of the next five years, the BC SPCA will further focus its energy and resources in the development and expansion of programs that seek to eliminate the root causes of animal cruelty and neglect, which in turn will move us towards the creation of more humane communities throughout British Columbia. Our new Strategic Plan covers the period from 2014 to 2018 and is available on the BC SPCA's website at <http://www.sPCA.bc.ca/about/governance-accountability/accountability.html>.

Each branch and department, as well as every staff member and volunteer will play a key role in implementing our new strategic plan. Each new staff member and volunteer is requested to meet with their manager to discuss how his or her branch or department is working towards achieving provincial and local strategic goals.

## Section 2.0 - Foundational Principles

### 2.1 Code of Ethics

The Code is based on the vision of the BC SPCA and the values outlined in the Guiding Beliefs and Principles. The Code is an ethical guide for day-to-day work, interactions and decision-making for those who conduct the business and affairs of the Society. The Code is a living document that is subject to review and amendment to ensure and maintain high standards of integrity and accountability for all members, volunteers and employees.

### 2.2 Vision & Charter

#### **Whereas:**

The world is inhabited by many species sharing a common ecosystem of air, earth, and water. We recognize and value our interconnectedness with all animals.

#### **Therefore:**

The BC SPCA is dedicated to protecting and enhancing the quality of life for the animals of the world we share.

We pledge our energies to inspire and mobilize Society to create a world in which animals, who depend on humans for their well-being, experience, as a minimum, five essential freedoms:



1. Freedom from hunger and thirst
2. Freedom from pain, injury, and disease
3. Freedom from distress
4. Freedom from discomfort
5. Freedom to express behaviours that promote well-being

### 2.3 Ethics

Ethics is defined as the sum of the morals, principles and rules of conduct for all employees, members and volunteers of the BC SPCA for the purposes of:

- the care and treatment of animals as specified in the BC SPCA Charter;
- effective and respectful interpersonal relationships; and
- the consistency with which Society-owned and operated equipment, processes and systems are used to achieve the Society's Guiding Principles and Charter as well as generally accepted community norms.

### 2.4 Guiding Principles

As a volunteer-based organization the following beliefs and principles guide our attitudes and actions:

#### **Principled Behaviour**

We are open, honest, and transparent in our relationships with our staff, volunteers, members, donors and the public. We strive to treat each other and those we serve, including the animals, with integrity, respect, and compassionate caring.

#### **Partnerships**

By forming partnerships and strategic alliances with those who share our vision, guiding principles and respect for animals, we can do more than any of us can do on our own.

#### **Leadership**

We exercise leadership in the protection and promotion of animal welfare by demonstrating courage, compassion, knowledge, wisdom and advocacy.

#### **Learning**

We honour the need to grow and learn, using an evidence-based approach to guide improvements and constantly evaluate the impact of our work.

#### **Responsibility**

Animal welfare is not solely the responsibility of the BC SPCA. It is also a matter of individual and community responsibility. We are committed to working with individuals and communities, through educational and other initiatives, to promote greater responsibility for animal welfare.

#### **Accountability**

We will be accountable in order to deserve the trust of those we serve. We measure, track and report regularly on what we have achieved as well as on what we have not.

### **Ethical Behaviour Towards Animals**

We will act at all times in accordance with the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, the Five Freedoms, and BC SPCA Animal Welfare/Management Program policies and procedures. Please also refer to the National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association Code of Ethics.

### **Internal Relations**

We will treat each other with respect and consideration so that each of us can fulfill our duties and responsibilities to the highest standards. We believe that volunteers and employees play equally important and complementary roles in implementing the mission and programs of the BC SPCA. Therefore, we will recognize each other's contributions and strive to understand and respect each other's needs and abilities when working together for the benefit of the Society. We will endeavour to consult before making decisions that impact upon others.

### **Conflict of Interest**

We will avoid creating or becoming involved in situations that give rise or could give rise to a conflict of interest or which may reasonably be perceived as a conflict of interest. We will disclose any conflict between our personal interests and the interests of the BC SPCA and resolve such conflicts in a transparent manner. We will not engage in any activity or transaction, hold any position or perform any function, whether paid or unpaid, that is incompatible with or detracts from the proper performance of our duties or that may bring the Society into disrepute.

### **Accountability**

We will be accountable for the decisions we make and the actions we take. We will be responsible stewards of the BC SPCA's assets, including ensuring the appropriate use of funds and accountability to donors. Please also refer to the Ethical Fundraising and Financial Accountability Code on the BC SPCA website.

### **Communication and Confidentiality**

We will be effective representatives in all of our communications to ensure that the BC SPCA presents and maintains a positive public image at all times. We will speak on behalf of the BC SPCA only if we have the authority to do so. Consistent with our Guiding Principles and Charter, we will respect the principle of confidentiality. Please also refer to the BC SPCA Privacy & Confidentiality Policy & Agreement on the internal website.

## **2.6 Whistle-blowing**

The BC SPCA is committed to achieving the highest possible standards of service to animals, staff, volunteers, the public and its Directors. In order to achieve this, the BC SPCA encourages employees, volunteers and members to raise serious concerns internally so that the Society can address and correct inappropriate conduct and actions. It is the responsibility of all board members, officers, employees and volunteers to report concerns about violations of the Society's Code of Ethics or suspected violations of law or regulations that govern BC SPCA's operations.

Employees, volunteers and members are required to report suspected ethical and legal violations in writing to the Board of Directors at [board@spca.bc.ca](mailto:board@spca.bc.ca); the Board has the

responsibility to investigate all reported complaints. Concerns should include sufficient information to permit a full investigation of the allegations.

Complaints, concerns and/or suggestions of a more general nature should be directed to the employee, volunteer or members immediate supervisor. If the individual in question is not satisfied with the response or is uncomfortable speaking to the supervisor, they should contact any member of the senior management team. Please also refer to the BC Complaints Policy & Procedure & the BC SPCA Whistleblower Protection Policy on the internal website.

## 2.7 Service Excellence

The BC SPCA is committed to providing the highest levels of internal and external customer service. Every individual staff member and volunteer can contribute to achieving and maintaining high levels of customer satisfaction through modeling the BC SPCA Guiding Principles in all interactions and acting at all times in accordance with the BC SPCA Respectful Workplace Policy. In addition BC SPCA staff and volunteers commit to:

- Greeting all customers and co-workers with a smile.
- Using the “10/4 rule” - when an individual comes within 10 feet, make eye contact and smile, within 4 feet greet the individual verbally.
- Actively listening to the customer and seeking assistance when needed to respond to the customer’s questions or concerns.
- Thanking the customer genuinely and when possible following up with an email or phone-call to ensure the customer is satisfied.

## Section 3.0 - BC SPCA General Volunteer Guidelines

### 3.1 Definition of “Volunteer”

A volunteer is anyone who, without compensation or expectation of compensation beyond reimbursement, performs a task at the direction of and on behalf of the Society. A volunteer must be officially accepted and enrolled by the Society prior to performance of the task.

### 3.2 Role of Volunteers

The BC SPCA could not exist without volunteers. Volunteers are an integral part of our team and are essential in providing the best possible care for the animals taken in by the BC SPCA. Volunteers work directly to improve the welfare and adoptability of shelter animals, help us inform the public of the aims and the objectives of the Society, assist in fundraising initiatives, and promote responsible pet care in our community. The BC SPCA is very fortunate to have a committed core of volunteers.

### 3.3 Relationships with Staff

Volunteers and staff are considered partners in implementing the mission and programs of the BC SPCA, with each having a complementary role to play. Volunteers enhance the work of staff. It is essential to the proper operation of this relationship that each partner understands and respects the needs and abilities of the other. The day-to-day management of the branches/adoption centres is the responsibility of the manager, who directs all staff and program volunteers. Volunteers shall follow all protocols and direction as established by the manager or designate.

### 3.4 Rights of Volunteers

- To be treated as a co-worker
- To be given a suitable assignment
- To know as much about the organization as possible
- To receive training for the position
- To have regular evaluations of their performance
- To be given sound guidance and direction
- To be given opportunities for promotion and a variety of experience
- To be heard and be recognized
- To work in a healthy, safe and respectful environment

### 3.5 Responsibilities of Volunteers

- To be on time and carry out duties promptly and reliably
- To give as much notice as possible if they are unable to attend their shift as scheduled
- To be willing to learn and participate in an in-depth orientation and on-going training
- To ask questions if they are unsure of anything
- To regularly self-evaluate their performance
- To have a clear understanding of the needs of the animals they are assisting
- To use only humane handling and training techniques as directed by the BC SPCA
- To respect confidentiality and be loyal to the organization
- To maintain the organizations' dignity and integrity with the public
- To accept the guidance and decisions of the manager or designate
- To develop strong working relationships with the staff and other volunteers
- To not engage in behaviour that is disrespectful, inappropriate, discriminatory or harassing
- To use conflict resolution skills, together with respectful and courteous verbal communication, to effectively manage disagreements
- To abide by applicable rules, regulations, legislation, policies and collective agreement provisions, and address any dissatisfactions through appropriate channels

## Section 4.0 - Recruitment and Selection of Volunteers

### 4.1 Volunteer Application Form

All volunteers must complete the volunteer application, sign the release form, and agree to abide by the Code of Ethics and applicable BC SPCA policies and procedures. This process can be completed on-line or through a paper application where available. The purpose of completing the volunteer application is to enable the Society to determine the qualifications, ability and suitability of the candidate to perform work on behalf of the location. Volunteers, who have not reached the age of 19 years, but are 16 to 18 years, must submit a written release and consent form signed by their parent or guardian prior to volunteering. Volunteers under the age of 16 are not permitted to volunteer without a guardian present at all times - the guardian is responsible for completing the application for both parties.

### 4.2 Volunteer Commitment

The Society expects volunteers to commit to a minimum of two hours per week for a six-month period for their volunteer service. This will ensure that the volunteer has received the adequate training and is familiar with all policies and procedures. In cases where a volunteer cannot commit to a six-month volunteer term, the manager and/or volunteer coordinator

may approve a short-term placement in accordance with operational needs.

#### 4.3 Information Session

All prospective volunteers are required to attend a general information session covering the Society's structure and its' mission, all pertinent safety procedures and policies, and the work to which the volunteer may be assigned.

#### 4.4 Interviewing Volunteers

Following attendance at an orientation session, and prior to placement, the volunteer coordinator, manager and/or designate may interview the volunteer candidate by telephone or in person.

#### 4.5 Background Checks

Applications/resumes, interviews and reference checks are the fundamental forms of background screening used for the vast majority of volunteer positions within the BC SPCA.

For individuals in designated positions the screening process also requires that the candidate, as a condition of volunteer engagement, consent to a criminal record check acceptable to the Society. Please refer to the BC SPCA Criminal Record Check Policy on the internal website for more information.

Volunteers who may be required to operate a vehicle during the course of their volunteer duties will be required to submit proof of a valid BC Driver's License and a satisfactory driver's abstract. Please refer to the BC SPCA Vehicle Use Policy on the internal website for more information.

#### 4.6 Non-discrimination

The BC SPCA accepts, supports, and practices the concept of non-discrimination. This means that the BC SPCA will not refuse to allow a person to volunteer or discriminate against a person with respect to any term or condition of his/her volunteer engagement, because of race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, political belief, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation or age of that person, or because that person has been convicted of a criminal or summary conviction offence unrelated to the volunteer engagement or intended volunteer engagement of that person.

#### 4.7 Placement of Volunteers

In determining suitable placements for volunteers, attention will be given to the interests, qualifications, and goals of the volunteer, the requirements of the Society and the position(s) available. Volunteer opportunities vary by location, and can range from positions involving high contact with animals (i.e. canine companion) to positions involving no direct contact with animals (i.e. fundraising committee member). Volunteers can view the common job descriptions and volunteer opportunities available at each location by visiting our website at <http://www.sPCA.bc.ca/about/volunteer/>.

We strive to provide meaningful advancement opportunities for volunteers. Upon the completion of the probationary period, volunteers are encouraged to express interest in the areas they wish to develop their experience.

#### 4.8 Volunteer Registration Fee

Upon hire volunteers are required to pay a one-time non-refundable registration fee. This fee assists the Society in covering the cost of the volunteer t-shirt, name-tag and training courses/materials as needed.

#### 4.9 Transfers

The BC SPCA is a provincial organization. Although volunteers generally work at individual branches or the provincial office, all shall have the right to apply for transfers to other locations within British Columbia. A posted vacancy must exist at another location in order for a volunteer to apply for a transfer. The terms and conditions of the volunteer engagement may vary by location.

#### 4.10 Employment of Relatives

The employment of relatives of current staff and volunteers is welcome under the following conditions:

- Relatives may not be employed where a direct supervisory relationship will result.
- The supervisory relationship will conclude where a staff member supervised another and they subsequently enter into a relationship.
- Promotions will not be available where the end result will be the direct supervision of a relative.

A relative is defined for the purposes of this policy as grandparent, grandchild, parent, step-parent, brother, sister, spouse (including conjugal relationships whether married to each other or not), in-law, aunt, uncle, nephew, niece and any child with whom the staff member/volunteer has a parent/child relationship.

### Section 5.0 - Working as a Volunteer

#### 5.1 Starting Out

On the first day the new volunteer will be introduced to the staff and volunteers he/she will be working with at the location. The volunteer will be given a nametag/t-shirt, shown where to sign in and out, and shown where the tools of the job are located and how to use them. Volunteers are required to wear nametags so that they are identifiable to the public and can be permitted to be in otherwise restricted areas. It is essential that volunteers sign in and out for every shift so that this information can be gathered for reporting and planning purposes.

The new volunteer will be given a buddy to work with who will be there to train and answer any questions. Parking may be limited at the location so the volunteer should ask the manager or volunteer coordinator where they can park. It often can take a few visits for the volunteer to feel comfortable. New volunteers should give themselves time and ask a lot of questions. New volunteers should direct questions to the trainer they are working with and if he or she does not have the answer, then a staff member or the manager would be the next choice. No question is too small or too trivial.

Volunteers should report and/or record information of a pertinent nature regarding the animals, supplies, general observations or suggestions at the end of their shift. If there

should be an incident a volunteer is not comfortable with during his/her shift this must be reported up. It is essential for everyone that open communication is maintained at all times and, that everyone feels part of the BC SPCA team and is free to express any suggestions, concerns, and praise. Everyone is here for the same purpose - to support and care for the animals in our charge.

## 5.2 Orientation & Training

The BC SPCA strives to develop and provide meaningful training and advancement opportunities for every volunteer. Regardless of position, each new volunteer receives a comprehensive orientation encompassing important topics such as organizational structure and governance, workplace health and safety, human resource policies and procedures as well as an in-depth analysis of the Mission, Charter, Code of Ethics and Strategic Plan that define the BC SPCA.

Each position also requires specific training which may consist of e-learning modules, group training sessions, and job-shadowing. Specialized training opportunities are offered during the year with an attempt to deliver sessions in geographically diverse areas throughout the province. Reference guides should be read in conjunction with the practical training sessions and be referred to often. Volunteers must successfully learn the procedures and master the skills required within their selected program area in order to participate.

## 5.3 Shift Responsibility (Absenteeism)

Volunteers are expected to perform their duties on a regular schedule and timely basis. If a volunteer is expecting in advance to be absent from a scheduled shift, he/she should inform the manager or volunteer coordinator with as much notice as possible so that alternative arrangements can be made. If for any reason, at the last minute, a volunteer is unable to attend his/her scheduled shift, the volunteer must contact the location as soon as possible to inform the staff. Where applicable, the volunteer must ensure this change is reflected in the on-line volunteer management system (V2).

Dependable volunteers are vital to our success. As a result, if the volunteer's notice of absence is less than 24 hours, or the volunteer does not attend three or more shifts in a 12 week period for reasons not previously approved, the volunteer will be removed from the regular volunteer schedule. If the volunteer's schedule becomes unpredictable during a certain period of time, it is recommended that the volunteer contact the manager or volunteer coordinator to discuss options of on-call service. *Note: volunteers are eligible to become an on-call volunteer following a minimum of 6 months of regular shifts.*

## 5.4 Shift Substitution

Volunteers are encouraged to find a substitute volunteer for any upcoming absences. Substitutes may be recruited only from those who are currently enrolled as volunteers with BC SPCA, and in the relevant program. Volunteers are asked to see the volunteer coordinator, manager, or designate at their location for details on how they may contact the other volunteers as needed for shift substitution.

## 5.5 Volunteer Performance Probationary Period

The first six (6) consecutive months of the volunteer's active engagement constitutes a period probation during which the employer shall have the opportunity to assess the suitability of the individual's performance and conduct.



Performance and conduct during the performance probationary period shall be assessed, primarily (but not necessarily exclusively) on: quality, completeness, accuracy, productivity, efficiency, and timeliness of work; timely and regular attendance at work; overall character, judgment, loyalty, dedication, conduct, attitude and professionalism in the workplace; and potential for future growth and development. At the end of the probationary period, a meeting may be scheduled with the volunteer to evaluate the extent to which the objectives of both the Society and the volunteer are being met.

## 5.6 Volunteer Performance Management

At regular intervals, the volunteer's performance in the volunteer placement will be evaluated and the volunteer in turn, will be given the opportunity to evaluate the volunteer program. The purpose for evaluating is threefold:

1. It lets the volunteer know how he or she is doing;
2. It allows the supervisor to gather feedback;
3. Evaluations can be used to give job-skills recommendations for a volunteer.

Evaluations benefit both the volunteer and the organization and are a chance for volunteers to make suggestions and be acknowledged for their efforts.

At anytime during the volunteer placement, the identification of a shortfall in a volunteer's performance will result in the manager or volunteer coordinator having a confidential conversation with the volunteer to jointly review the issue(s) of concern and determine the reason(s) behind the performance shortfall(s) before corrective action is taken whenever possible. Coaching conversations are considered to be "non-disciplinary" in nature.

If it is clearly identified that performance, despite attempts at coaching, is not improving to the required level, or an incident of willful misconduct occurs then formal corrective action may be necessary. The Society's formal corrective action process involves the issuance of written warnings at Levels 1 through 4. Where reasonably required by the gravity of the conduct, one or all of the levels of progressive corrective action process may be skipped. If, at anytime, a volunteer violates BC SPCA policies or is deemed unfit for volunteering for any reason, the organization reserves the right to terminate his or her association. Please also refer to the BC SPCA Performance Improvement Guidelines on the BC SPCA internal website.

## 5.7 Resignation

The Society expects volunteers to see the term of their commitment through. However, we recognize that on occasion, circumstances may not make this possible. Volunteers are required to notify the manager as soon as they know of any changes that will affect their volunteer commitment so that we can make the necessary arrangements.

## Section 6.0 - BC SPCA Health & Safety for Volunteers

### 6.1 Minimizing Risks

The volunteer's personal safety, as well as the safety of other volunteers, staff, and the animals, is paramount when volunteering. Volunteers working directly with animals should take the following steps to minimize risks:

- Familiarize themselves with all BC SPCA health & safety policies and procedures.



- Familiarize themselves with staff and other volunteers on their shift.
- Only perform tasks they have been trained to do and ask for assistance when needed.
- Avoid any interaction with animals in kennels/cages designated “staff only”.
- Clean their hands frequently using antibacterial soap or the hand sanitizer found by sinks in every room. Wash hands after cleaning any animal or cage, after handling dirty laundry, before eating, before touching their mouth/eyes, and when leaving their shift.
- Wear closed-toed shoes, long pants, and t-shirts to prevent injury from scratches and bites. Bringing along a change of clothes and shoes is recommended.
- Stay home when they are ill.
- Inform a staff member immediately if they get scratched, bitten or cut.
- Notify the manager or volunteer coordinator if they have a compromised immune system.
- Keep food and beverages in the lunchroom or designated volunteer area at the location and never consume anywhere else.
- Do not bring valuables into the facility.
- Immediately report any safety hazards, incidents or accidents to a BC SPCA staff member.
- Never handle an animal without proper training. Ask staff to help if they feel uncomfortable handling an animal.
- Familiarize themselves with the emergency evacuation procedures and the location of the first aid kit and eye-wash stations.

## 6.2 Zoonotic Disease

Zoonotic diseases are diseases caused by infectious agents that can be transmitted between animals and humans. Select zoonotic disease hazards - and exposure risks - have been identified for staff and volunteers, in the course of their required work activities at various BC SPCA facilities located throughout British Columbia. These risks, if not properly addressed and managed, may lead to adverse health effects and illnesses/diseases.

A Zoonotic Diseases Exposure Control Policy has been developed and implemented to promote the well-being and safety of staff and volunteers who may encounter these hazards at various BC SPCA facilities. The BC SPCA is committed to proactively managing zoonotic disease hazards by eliminating, preventing and minimizing risks to all staff and volunteers and developing, implementing and ensuring use of proper and specific controls. Please refer to the BC SPCA Exposure Control Plan on the BC SPCA internal website.

## 6.3 Vaccinations

The BC SPCA will offer, at no cost to volunteers when required, any and all vaccinations and/or immunizations (i.e. rabies) required by the BC SPCA Exposure Control Plan and by the *Communicable Disease Control Immunizations Program Manual* issued by the BC Centre for Disease Control, as amended from time to time. All volunteers and staff members who will be working directly with the animals are encouraged to have their tetanus vaccination up-to-date. Residents of B.C. are entitled to a free tetanus/diphtheria shot once every 10 years. Employees can see their doctor or local health clinic for more information.

## 6.4 Reporting Incidents and First Aid

Volunteers must report all incidents to their manager or designate. An incident includes an accident or other occurrence which resulted in, or had the potential, for causing an injury or occupational disease. Volunteers who suffer an injury at work must immediately seek medical first aid and arrange for completion of the First Aid Report available on the internal website.

Please also view the BC SPCA Health & Safety tutorial available on the learning management system (LMS).

## 6.5 Working Alone

Working alone is defined as working in isolation and without an ability to access assistance in the event of an emergency. Working alone can include two staff members or volunteers working at the same time but in different locations of the shelter resulting in an inability to communicate with each other in the event of an emergency issue by one or both of them. Volunteers who work in isolation at a closed location must ensure that all doors and entry points are closed and locked, and must carry a reliable communication device (i.e. cell-phone) at all times. Please also refer to Chapter 14 of the BC Human Resources Policies and Procedures manual on the internal website.

## 6.6 Violence in the Workplace

Workplace violence can include abuse, threats, intimidation or assault. Workplace violence can occur between staff, volunteers, customers or visitors to our shelters or other work sites. Work-related violence can occur at off-site business-related functions (conferences, trade shows), at social events related to work, in clients' homes or away from work but resulting from work (a threatening telephone call to your home from a client).

Any act of violence committed by or against any volunteer will not be tolerated. In responding to a potential or actual threat of violence in the workplace, the volunteer should immediately contact the manager or designate for assistance. If the manager or designate is immediately unavailable, the volunteer should excuse themselves and call 911 for emergency assistance. Under no circumstances should a volunteer put himself or herself in any danger to attempt to remove a member of the public from the premises. If a member of the public is potentially violent and demonstrates an intention to steal money, take an animal or destroy equipment, the volunteer should allow them to proceed and call the police immediately.

## 6.7 Alcohol & Substance Use

The use, sale, transfer or possession of controlled substances, or alcohol by volunteers creates a potential for harm for staff, volunteers, and the animals we care for and as such is contrary to policy and will subject a volunteer to discipline up to and including termination.

# Section 7.0 - BC SPCA Policies and Procedures

## 7.1 Dress Code

All volunteers are expected to maintain a clean, neat and tasteful appearance and a high standard of personal hygiene and grooming. Please note the following requirements:

- Facial jewellery may be worn; however this is limited to small and discrete bead type studs only. If multiple studs are worn they must consist of one neutral colour only. Individuals with enlarged earring holes must wear solid fillers in them at all times.
- Hair should be clean, styled neatly, and be professional in appearance. Moustaches and beards are acceptable provided they are trimmed and neat in appearance.
- Fingernails must be kept neat and trimmed.
- Cosmetics, hairstyles and jewellery should be conservative in nature. Tattoos should be covered by clothing whenever possible.
- All volunteers who have been provided a uniform (i.e. golf-style shirt, scrubs, volunteer t-shirt) must wear the approved uniform piece(s) at all times when the location is open to the public. Soiled or damaged uniform items should not be worn.

- The wearing of any part of the uniform while not working is strictly prohibited.
- Approved personal protective equipment (PPE) including gowns and coveralls may be worn over uniforms or clothing as needed.
- A nametag must be worn at all times when the location is open to the public, and during attendance at a public BC SPCA event.

For all positions which involve direct interaction with animals the following additional requirements apply:

- Loose, hanging, or hoop jewellery is not permitted. This includes facial jewellery (i.e. nose, brow, tongue rings).
- Long hair must be tied back.
- Scarves or any other hanging accessory may not be worn.
- Perfumes and scented deodorants must be avoided.
- Comfortable, closed-toe and ankle, non-slip sole shoes must be worn at all times. Waterproof shoes (e.g. rubber boots) should be worn during cleaning activities as needed.
- When working directly with the animals, volunteers should remove their clothes immediately when they arrive home and launder to prevent the spread of zoonotic diseases.

Unacceptable attire for staff and volunteer includes:

- Capri pants, shorts, and any other pant that does not cover to the ankle.
- Any pant or shirt that lacks thickness to protect from animal scratches (i.e. leggings, tights and yoga pants).
- Any clothing that is frayed, holed or cut-off.
- Clothing with slogans or offensive language or images.
- Sleeveless garments, including tank tops, halter tops, tube-tops and muscle shirts.
- Any clothing that exposes the midriff or chest.
- Any shoes that expose open-toes, or heels, and/or shoes that do not provide proper support (i.e. "ugg-boots", "crocs", sandals, or flip flops).

For more information regarding specific dress code requirements please refer to the BC SPCA Dress Code Policy on the internal website and the BC SPCA Organizational Policies & Procedures course in the learning management system (LMS).

## 7.2 Answering Questions from the Public or Media

Volunteers for the BC SPCA are representatives and ambassadors for the Society. On occasion volunteers may be asked questions from the public regarding Society policies, philosophies, or services that they do not feel comfortable with or qualified to answer. In these instances, volunteers should refer the inquiry to the manager, or to a staff member. It is perfectly acceptable to say: "I am a volunteer, I do not know the answer to your question", or "I do not know, but I would be pleased to find my supervisor for you."

Only designated spokespersons may publicly comment on BC SPCA policies and procedures or the impact of policies on local branches. In many cases of a local nature, the branch manager will be the official spokesperson of the Society. Any inquiries from the media must be referred to the manager or to the General Manager, Community Relations (604) 647-1316 or designated spokesperson.

### 7.3 Use of Organizational Affiliation/BC SPCA Logo

Volunteers may not use their organizational affiliation in connection with partisan politics, religious matters, or community issues contrary to positions taken by the organization. Volunteers of the BC SPCA are permitted to be involved in political activities as individuals; however the BC SPCA's resources must not be used to support an individual's personal political activities. The Society needs to remain politically neutral regarding the individual's political activities.

The official BC SPCA logo and names of publications and/or programs are all registered trademarks of the BC SPCA. Branches must seek the approval of the Chief Executive Officer to reproduce registered trademarks for merchandise purposes.

### 7.4 Euthanasia

Euthanasia is a difficult, but inevitable part of animal welfare and rescue. Our main goal at the BC SPCA is to achieve zero euthanasia of healthy, adoptable animals in our care. Decisions regarding the adoptability of animals are made by two or more trained shelter staff, including the branch manager, after reviewing temperament assessment data and all other available information about the animal. Animals who pose a significant risk to other animals or to humans may be humanely euthanized in order to protect public safety. Personal attachment to certain animals and empathy for those who may be euthanized is normal and understandable, but final decisions regarding euthanasia need to be respected. The euthanasia decision is emotionally difficult for everyone involved. If a volunteer is uncomfortable with euthanasia, he or she may wish to consider working in a capacity which helps the mission of the Society but which does not have direct one-on-one contact with the animals.

### 7.5 Social Media

Technology and social networks play an increasingly important role in daily communications, both for individuals and for professional organizations. The BC SPCA embraces technological change and has implemented many initiatives to increase our online presence and to use social media channels to disseminate information to donors and customers.

When volunteers express themselves in social media on issues related to, or about the BC SPCA, they contribute to the public perception of the BC SPCA brand. Volunteers should clearly state that they are not speaking on behalf of the BC SPCA, unless they are expressly authorized to do so. Volunteers may use a disclaimer such as: "This is my personal opinion, and does not necessarily represent the views of The BC SPCA". Please note that although this is good practice, this does not exempt an individual from being accountable and/or potentially legally culpable for the comments made. Volunteers must understand that they are personally responsible for the content they publish online through social media, and can be held liable for any commentary deemed to be defamatory, obscene, proprietary or libellous. Volunteers must also be aware that the content they publish is visible to the entire world and will remain public for a very long time. It is important that volunteers ensure at all times to protect their privacy and the privacy of others.

Volunteers who post materials or discuss topics related to their position must identify their relationship to the BC SPCA. Even if a volunteer takes part in an anonymous discussion or uses a nickname, they must disclose their connection to the topic at hand, and never pretend to be someone they are not. If a volunteer comes across a negative comment involving the BC SPCA, they should bring it to the attention of their manager or the General Manager,

Community Relations at the Provincial Office. They will work with the appropriate parties in the organization to respond. The goal with negative comments is to respond quickly and thoughtfully. Please also refer to the BC SPCA Social Media Policy on the internal website.

## 7.6 Privacy and Confidentiality

The BC SPCA is committed to adhering to the principles of PIPA (Personal Information and Privacy Act) and to the protection of the privacy and confidentiality of the personal information of its donors, members, staff, directors, volunteers, clients and other stakeholders. The BC SPCA values the trust of those we deal with, and of the public, and recognizes that maintaining this trust requires that we be transparent and accountable in how we treat the information individuals choose to entrust with us.

### **Definition of Personal Information:**

Personal information includes any factual or subjective information, recorded or not, about an identifiable individual or animal. This includes information in any form, such as:

- age, name, ID numbers, income, or ethnic origin;
- opinions, evaluations, comments, social status, or disciplinary actions; and
- personnel files, donation details, criminal record checks, reference information and medical records.

All staff, contractors and volunteers have a legal obligation to protect personal information obtained in the course of duties with the BC SPCA. All reasonable measures must be taken to ensure that personal information is collected, used, and disclosed only in circumstances necessary to conduct the business of the Society. Any confidential materials and personal information should be maintained under lock and key and appropriately discarded.

Breaches of confidentiality include intentional and unauthorized access to, use and/or disclosure of, confidential information. Intentionally viewing confidential information that is not necessary to perform an individual's role is considered a breach of confidentiality even if that information is not disclosed to another party. Confidential information must not be discussed in any physical location where others, not entitled to receive that information, are present and likely to overhear, unless required in order to fulfill one's professional role, by law or with permission from an authorized individual.

Examples of possible breaches include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Unauthorized access of a cruelty investigation file
- Unauthorized viewing or modifying of an adoption application or animal's file
- Telling friends or family identifiable information about a potential adopter, donor, or person of interest in a cruelty investigation
- Leaving file storage areas unlocked when they should be locked
- Sharing a password with a co-worker so that she can log into a computer system
- Being away from the desk while logged into an application containing personal information without locking the computer

All staff, contractors and volunteers are required to be familiar and abide by the BC SPCA Privacy & Confidentiality Policy available on the internal website.

## 7.7 Use of Cameras/Video Recorders

Authorized staff, volunteers and contractors are permitted to utilize camera equipment supplied by, or approved by the BC SPCA to carry out the duties associated with their position. Permitted usage includes, but is not limited to the following common uses:

- Capturing and distributing photos of animals available for adoption
- Capturing photos of staff, volunteers or members of the public who have consented to have their images captured and released

Use of BC SPCA or personal camera equipment for personal or unauthorized purposes to capture images in a BC SPCA facility without prior approval is strictly prohibited. Please also refer to the BC SPCA Photo & Video Policy on the internal website.

## 7.8 Vehicle Usage

A review of the ICBC Driver's Abstract of all individuals will be conducted prior to hire, transfer or promotion into a position that requires the frequent operation of a motor vehicle for BC SPCA business. All motor vehicle operators must be in possession of a valid Class 5 driver's license. In the event that an individual's job description requires him or her to drive a "commercial vehicle," the individual will be required to obtain and maintain a valid commercial driver's license. Motor vehicle operators must immediately report all accidents or traffic citations received while on BC SPCA business to their supervisor. They must also immediately report the onset of any physical or mental condition that may impair their ability to drive.

Motor vehicle operators are required to conduct a vehicle safety inspection prior to the operation of the vehicle. The vehicle safety inspection checklist needs to be completed and filed in the health & safety file folder. Windows and mirrors must be scraped and defrosted during inclement weather. Deficiencies or any mechanical defect that would jeopardize the safe operation the vehicle (such as a leaking gas line or overheating engine) must be corrected immediately and the vehicle must be regularly serviced in accordance with manufacturer specifications. Vehicles found to be in unsafe condition are not to be operated until repairs are made. It is the responsibility of all motor vehicle operators to drive in a safe manner and conform to all applicable laws and regulations. Please also refer to the BC SPCA Vehicle Usage Policy on the internal website.

## 7.9 Computer Usage

The BC SPCA makes available to our workforce access to one or more forms of electronic media and services, including computers, e-mail, telephones, communication devices, voicemail, fax machines, online services, intranet, and internet. Electronic media and services provided are the property of the BC SPCA and their purpose is to facilitate and support the mission of the BC SPCA. All technology users have the responsibility to use these resources in a professional, ethical, and lawful manner.

Every staff member, contractor and volunteer is responsible for using the BC SPCA's information system and computer system, including email and the internet, properly and in accordance with the Society's policies. To ensure the confidentiality and integrity of BC SPCA information users must refrain from saving files to the computer's desktop and should save to a personal folder or shared folder as required. Please also refer to the BC SPCA Technology Usage Policy on the internal website.



## 7.10 Cellular Phone Usage

Communications devices for the purposes of this policy will include cell phones, BlackBerries or any other device capable of transmitting electronic information to other sources, which are the property of the BC SPCA. If an individual is provided with a communication device to carry out the work duties of his/her position he/she is required to utilize this device in accordance with the Society's policies and all applicable legislation. Please see the BC SPCA Technology Usage Policy on the internal website for more information.

## 7.11 Expenses

From time to time, it may be necessary for a volunteer to incur expenditures in the exercise of their duties. Before an expense is incurred, the volunteer should seek direction from the manager or volunteer coordinator regarding whether such expense can be incurred and whether it has been provided for in the branch budget.

All expense claims must be submitted to the manager for payment within 30 days of incurring the expense. A copy of the expense reimbursement form can be downloaded from the internal website under the finance section. Please also refer to the BC SPCA Volunteer Enabling Funds - Reimbursement Policy on the BC SPCA internal website.

## 7.12 Internal Complaints

The BC SPCA is committed to providing the highest levels of internal customer service. However, we recognize that from time to time there may be concerns or complaints, that our staff and volunteers have the right to raise such complaints or concerns, and that there should be avenues within which to do so.

For the purposes of this section, a concern/complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction about the service, actions or lack of action by the BC SPCA as an organization or a staff member or volunteer acting on behalf of the BC SPCA, but shall not include the expression of an opinion on the policies of the BC SPCA.

Procedures for making a complaint

- a. Concerns/complaints about a specific branch or department of the BC SPCA are to be directed to the branch/department itself. If a staff member or volunteer has a complaint or concern, he/she will bring that concern/complaint to the attention of the staff member/volunteer most connected to the concern/situation. The staff member/volunteer will attempt to resolve the situation directly with the complainant.
- b. In the event that the staff member/volunteer is unable to resolve the concern/complaint to the satisfaction of the complainant, the staff member/volunteer will document the concern/complaint, including the name and contact information of the complainant; the date of the concern/complaint; a description of the concern/complaint; the redress sought and the action taken thus far. That information will be forwarded to the individual's supervisor. In most instances this will be the branch manager or department head.

The supervisor will acknowledge receipt of the concern/complaint within three business days and review and respond in writing to the concern/complaint within 10 business days.

- c. If the supervisor is not able to resolve the concern/complaint to the satisfaction of all parties, all documentation relating to the concern/complaint will be referred to a member of the senior management team (SMT) or in a limited number of cases, to the

- Chief Executive Officer (“CEO”). The senior staff person will acknowledge receipt of the concern/complaint within three business days and review and respond to the concern/complaint within 10 business days.
- d. Subject to section 5 below, the final decision with respect to the resolution of concerns/complaints rests with the CEO. The CEO may choose to bring a concern/complaint to the attention of the Board of Directors for review and advice. The CEO will determine the appropriate action or recommendation and will inform the complainant in writing of this information.
  - e. Complaints relating to the specific conduct of the CEO or a member of the Board of Directors should be forwarded in writing to the Board of Directors of the BC SPCA. The Board will determine the appropriate action or recommendation and will inform the complainant in writing of this information.

### 7.13 Harassment, Bullying & Discrimination

The BC SPCA is committed to providing a respectful working environment in which all individuals are treated with consideration, tolerance, and dignity. Each individual has the right to work in a professional atmosphere that promotes respect, equal opportunities, and prohibits discriminatory practices. Workplace discrimination, harassment, and bullying will not be tolerated. All persons associated with the BC SPCA are accountable for their own conduct and must conduct themselves in a civil, respectful, cooperative, and non-discriminatory manner in the workplace. The BC SPCA encourages reporting of all incidents of workplace discrimination, harassment, or bullying. If evidence of disrespectful conduct, discrimination, harassment, or bullying is found, disciplinary action may result up to, and including termination of employment. The BC SPCA reserves the right to investigate incidents where there are concerns of alleged discrimination, harassment, or bullying. Please also refer to the BC SPCA Respectful Workplace Policy on the internal website.

### 7.14 Advocacy Issues

The BC SPCA works to create a more humane society by advocating on behalf of animals on many fronts. Our efforts involve pressing for evidence-based changes to local, provincial and national laws, increasing public awareness on animal issues, and promoting individual actions that lead to improved animal welfare. Volunteers can assist the BC SPCA in our advocacy efforts by staying up-to-date and familiar with the current advocacy campaigns. Information regarding these campaigns is regularly circulated through the BC SPCA Provincial Bulletin and is available on our public website - [www.spca.bc.ca](http://www.spca.bc.ca). Volunteers wishing to engage in personal advocacy initiatives not necessarily endorsed by the BC SPCA must seek approval of their department manager and the human resources department before seeking support from their co-workers at BC SPCA work locations and/or during BC SPCA work hours.

### 7.15 Fundraising & Donations

The BC SPCA is a non-profit organization funded primarily by public donations. All staff and volunteers are encouraged to be involved in fundraising events, become donors and/or assist in the acceptance of donations in accordance with the BC SPCA Gift Acceptance Policy available on the internal website.

Many volunteers who love animals also show their support by becoming monthly or annual donors. Interested volunteers can sign up on-line by visiting the BC SPCA website and clicking the green “donate” button, or alternatively by contacting our Donor Relations department at 1-800-665-1868.



*AFTER READING THIS MANUAL PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN THIS PAGE PRIOR TO YOUR FIRST SCHEDULED VOLUNTEER SHIFT.*

My signature on this form acknowledges that I have received, read and understand the BC SPCA Volunteer Handbook and will comply with all policies and procedures set herein, available to me on the intranet and/or available upon request from my manager. I understand that the policies presented within the handbook are presented in general terms and it is my responsibility to familiarize myself with the full policies available on the BC SPCA internal website. I understand that the policies contained within this handbook and available on the internal website replace any and all prior verbal and written communications regarding the BC SPCA's working conditions, policies, procedures and benefits. I understand that the BC SPCA reserves the right to change any part of this manual or any policy at any time with or without notice and will expect that all volunteers adhere to any change in policy.

I agree to conduct my activities in accordance with all BC SPCA policies and understand that breaching these standards may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination or other legal remedy available to the Society. I understand that the policies in this manual are for my safety and protection as a volunteer as well as for the animals in my care, other volunteers and staff. I agree to follow these procedures and to notify my manager or designate of any of the conditions that could bring harm to any person or animal.

I understand that BC SPCA accepts the service of all volunteers with the understanding that such service is at the sole discretion of the BC SPCA. I understand that the BC SPCA may at any time, for whatever reason, decide to terminate my volunteer participation in the BC SPCA. I understand that I may at any time, for whatever reason, decide to end my relationship with the BC SPCA. I agree to communicate this decision as soon as possible to the manager or volunteer coordinator.

I acknowledge that I have been provided a print or electronic copy of the BC SPCA Volunteer Handbook, have had a chance to review the employee handbook, and have been given an opportunity to ask questions about the contents of this handbook.

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**Volunteer Name**

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**Volunteer Signature**

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**Date**