



Volunteer Handbook



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Welcome, from the National Volunteer Office

As a volunteer, you are at the heart of everything we do to support the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) Community and their families across Canada. Your dedication, teamwork, and community spirit make our programs and services stronger and more meaningful. We believe that your experience matters, and the National Volunteer Office is here to support you every step of the way, providing staff with the tools and resources needed to ensure your volunteer journey is rewarding, impactful, and valued.

Glossary

Volunteer

An individual who gives freely of their time, energy, and skills without being paid and/or compensated monetarily or in any other way.

Volunteer Supervisor

An individual who may be an NPF employee, a CAF or DND member, or a volunteer (internal or external to CFMWS) who is in the role of supervisor, person of authority and trust, and is responsible for the volunteer opportunity and volunteer resources.

Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services (CFMWS) and Non-Public Property (NPP)

Responsive to the changing needs of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), our programs and services contribute to operational readiness by strengthening our members at both the individual and community levels. Members who are stronger mentally, socially, physically, and financially are better prepared to serve our country and protect Canadian values.

Working on behalf of the Chief of the Defence Staff and under the authority of the Defence Minister, CFMWS is a trusted partner in the Defence enterprise, operating under the Non-Public Property framework, expending Public and Non-Public funds in a unique operating model that creates real value for the CAF Community. NPP is to be used for the benefit of CAF members, or any other purpose approved by the CDS, including the benefit of former CAF members and the families of CAF members and former CAF members. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO), in the role of Managing Director, NPP, has authority for the overall administration and management of NPP, as well as personnel management of the Staff of the Non-Public Funds Canadian Forces.

CEO Message



Welcome to CFMWS' National Volunteer Program,

We at Canadian Forces Morale & Welfare Services (CFMWS) understand that as volunteers, you are choosing to give generously with your time, knowledge, and skills to support our mission because you care deeply about contributing to "Serving Those Who Serve."

In return, we promise to honour your commitment by providing you with a safe, respectful, inclusive, and meaningful volunteer experience. We deeply value your role as a volunteer and will support your efforts through proper orientation, training, and recognition. As volunteers, you complement our dedicated teams and enhance our offerings to the Canadian Armed Forces community through various volunteer opportunities.

The National Volunteer Program, along with the collaboration of our partners, fosters a seamless process for volunteers to "Give Back and Get Involved" anywhere across Canada and all over the world.

On behalf of all of us at CFMWS, thank you for choosing to support our meaningful work. Together, we can ensure that members of the Canadian Armed Forces, Veterans, Ill and Injured and Military Families receive the support they so richly deserve.

A stylized, handwritten signature in blue ink. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Ian Poulter

Managing Director, Non-Public Property CEO, Staff
of the Non-Public Funds, Canadian Forces

About CFMWS

CFMWS Vision

Improving lives at home and around the world.

CFMWS Mission

We make our members stronger:

- Healthier People
- Stronger Communities
- Better Canada

CFMWS Values

- Uphold the highest ethical standards
- Support of one another
- Support the Canadian Armed Forces members, Veterans, and their families

- We put our people first – we **CARE** for our members, our community and one another.
- We act with **INTEGRITY** and strive to do the right thing – we say what we mean and do what we say.
- We are one **TEAM** – we have each other's backs and get it done together for our members.
- We constantly look for innovative ideas and find **CREATIVE** ways to provide our members with the best possible experience.



Commitment to Volunteers

Diversity and Inclusion

Our success depends on our ability to collaborate, share common objectives, celebrate our differences, and welcome innovative ideas. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion are a fundamental part of who we are. We work hard to create a healthy, safe, and respectful environment where all volunteers are free from discrimination and have equal opportunities. We value and are committed to a culture that prioritizes our most valuable resource, our volunteers. Diverse volunteers will help us better serve our increasingly diverse clients.

Enriching Opportunities

We believe every volunteer experience should be fulfilling and inspiring. If any volunteer discovers that the current volunteer position does not suit them well, they are encouraged to discuss with their Volunteer Supervisor. Together, they can explore alternative volunteer opportunities that may be a better match.

Roles and Responsibilities

Your Volunteer Supervisor

As a volunteer, you will always have a designated volunteer supervisor—a CFMWS employee responsible for guiding and supporting you. Your volunteer supervisor ensures smooth operations, provides performance feedback, manages risks, and oversees any necessary disciplinary actions.

While you might collaborate with informal team leads, such as other volunteers who coordinate daily tasks, these roles do not replace your volunteer supervisor when it comes to managerial decisions or escalations. This structure makes sure you know exactly who you are accountable to and who has the authority to make important decisions on your behalf. A sample of the responsibilities of your volunteer supervisor are as follows:

- Provide a volunteer role description and a clear explanation of what is expected of the volunteers.
- Identify themselves to the volunteer(s) as the Volunteer Supervisor for the volunteer opportunity.
- Provide orientation, training, ongoing guidance, support, and supervision to the volunteer(s).
- Provide appropriate occupational health and safety awareness training for the volunteer role.
- Ensure that volunteer(s) is aware of the policies and procedures for handling complaints or any issues of concern.
- Support and encourage the role of the volunteer(s).
- Treat the volunteer(s) as you would all other team members.
- Acknowledge and recognize the volunteer(s) contributions.
- Provide letters of reference to the volunteer(s) if requested.
- Report incidents/accidents involving volunteer(s).

Your Rights and Responsibilities as a Volunteer

Volunteers have the right to:

- Volunteer in a safe and healthy environment.
- Receive information about unsafe conditions and refuse an unsafe volunteer task.
- A supportive environment in which to volunteer and contribute.
- Effective and meaningful volunteer involvement practices
- Provide and receive feedback at regular intervals.
- Ask for and receive support from their supervisor when needed.

Volunteers have a responsibility to:

- Complete all volunteer administrative forms and update forms when requested by your Volunteer Supervisor, or when there are significant changes to your personal information.
- Obtain a copy of your volunteer role and seek clarification when required.
- Only perform your volunteer role(s) as outlined in the Volunteer Role Description provided.
- Complete all training required to perform your volunteer role.
- Communicate any issues or concerns that may affect your volunteer role.

- Accept guidance and direction from the Volunteer Supervisor
- Understand the role of the paid staff and stay within the bounds of the volunteer role.
- Keep sensitive organizational information confidential.
- Comply with the organization's policies and procedures.
- Provide a current Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC) security record, Criminal Record Police Check, or Vulnerable Sector Check, and a Ministry of Transportation abstract, as required for your volunteer role.
 - *Please note that each volunteer opportunity may have varying requirements, which are listed in the volunteer role description. Alternatively, refer to the Volunteer Supervisor.*

Volunteer Code of Conduct

Volunteers must be familiar with and adhere to the Volunteer Code of Conduct. Non-compliance with the code of conduct may lead to being relieved of volunteer duties. Volunteers must also report potential or actual breaches of the code of conduct to their volunteer supervisor. **The Volunteer Code of Conduct is located at Annex A at the end of this document.**

Harassment and Substance Use Policy

CFMWS is committed to fostering volunteer spaces that are welcoming, inclusive, and safe, both physically and psychologically. Every person, regardless of rank, role, identity, or background, deserves to feel respected and supported while serving our military community.

Volunteers have the right to be free from harassment, bullying, and violence, and they are responsible for upholding the same standard toward others.

Volunteers must maintain a harassment and violence-free environment and advise the Volunteer Supervisor if they become aware of such behaviours. Harassment is defined in the Canadian Human Rights Act, Canada, Labour Code Part II, and is inclusive of volunteers and employees.

Harassment and Violence means any action, conduct or comment, including of a sexual nature, that can reasonably be expected to cause offence, humiliation or other physical or psychological injury or illness to a participant, staff member, volunteer, or member of the public while, including any prescribed action, comment or conduct.

Harassment can include, but is not limited to, any of the following acts or attempted acts:

- spreading malicious rumours or gossip about an individual or group,
- cyberbullying (threatening, spreading malicious rumours, or talking negatively about an individual online),
- threats over the phone, by email, or through other media to a Volunteer or Employee, or any other person as an extension to the volunteer role, including from an (ex)partner or family member,
- making offensive jokes or remarks,

- playing unwanted practical jokes,
- socially excluding or isolating someone,
- stalking or inappropriately following a person,
- tampering with someone's equipment or personal belongings,
- vandalizing or hiding personal belongings or equipment,
- impeding a person's task in any deliberate way,
- persistently criticizing, undermining, belittling, demeaning, or ridiculing a person; and
- intruding on a person's privacy,
- public ridicule or discipline,
- unwelcome physical contact,
- sexual innuendo/insinuation,
- unwanted and inappropriate invitations or requests, including sexuality,
- displaying offensive posters, cartoons, images, or other visuals,
- making aggressive or threatening gestures,
- misusing authority, including constantly changing responsibility guidelines, restricting information, setting impossible deadlines that lead to failure, and/or blocking applications for leave, training, or promotion arbitrarily, and
- engaging in any of the actions, conduct and comments outlined above against a person because of that person's race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, family status, genetic characteristics, disability or any of the other prohibited grounds that are listed in the Canadian Human Rights Act.

Volunteers are encouraged to report any disrespectful or harassing behaviour observed from clients, staff members, or other volunteers through the confidential incident-report process detailed below.

1. Document the Incident

Even if you're not filing a formal report, it's important to:

- Write down what happened, including dates, times, locations, and any witnesses.
- Save any relevant communications (emails, texts, messages).

3. Talk to a Trusted Colleague or Peer

- Share your experience with someone you trust.
- They may offer support, advice, or even accompany you if you decide to escalate.

4. Seek Support from your Volunteer Supervisor or Manager

- Choose someone you trust who is not directly involved.
- Explain the situation informally and ask for guidance or intervention.

5. Use Internal Support Resources

- Contact the National Volunteer Office at volunteer@cfmws.com
- These resources can offer mediation, advice, or next steps.

6. Speak directly to the Person (if safe)

Sometimes, harassment stems from a lack of understanding or a misunderstanding and may be resolved at the lowest level. If you feel safe:

- Calmly explain how their behavior affected you.
- Use “I” statements (e.g., “I felt uncomfortable when...”).
- Ask them to stop the behavior.

7. Speak directly to the Person (if safe)

- Document any of the actions that you have taken above
 - i.e., spoke to person; spoke with manager; contacted internal resources, etc.

Substance Use

Volunteers must follow all local laws regarding alcohol, cannabis, and drug use. Volunteers must also abide by any CFMWS, Department of National Defence, or Canadian Armed Forces policies, directives, or regulations regarding the possession and use of substances while on Department of National Defence premises, in a Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) Theatre of Operations, or in programming spaces.

Volunteer Insurance

CFMWS Non-Public Property (NPP) Consolidated Insurance Program includes Accidental Death and Dismemberment (AD&D) coverage at all Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) bases/wings. This coverage does not apply to military members who may volunteer while in Canadian Armed Forces Theatres of Operation.

This coverage is available to those persons who qualify under the CFMWS National Volunteer Management Policy and are Canadian Citizens.

To maintain eligibility, please ensure that the following forms are completed and submitted to the Volunteer Supervisor and kept up to date:

- CFMWS National Volunteer Intake form
- CFMWS National Volunteer Understanding and Agreement Form
- CFMWS National Volunteer Parent/Legal Guardian Consent Form (if applicable)

Volunteer Departure

Voluntary Departure

Volunteers may choose to end their volunteer experience under certain circumstances. Departing volunteers are handled with professionalism, confidentiality, fairness, and consistency. Volunteers who wish to resign must inform the Volunteer Supervisor in writing of their decision, providing a minimum of one week's notice.

Involuntary Departure

The Volunteer Supervisor may use their discretion to dismiss a volunteer who becomes inactive.

CFMWS does not decide to release volunteers lightly. Decisions are only made after considering all relevant facts and information.

A volunteer may be released for several reasons, including but not limited to:

- **Unsatisfactory performance:** If a volunteer is unwilling to improve their performance to the required standards of the volunteer opportunity.
- **Immediate dismissal for just cause:** This includes any act or omission that endangers CFMWS, its visitors, employees, volunteers, or damages the assets of the organization.

If a volunteer is released for reasons such as fraud, theft, vandalism, violence, or other willful disregard for the Volunteer Code of Conduct, the release will be immediate and without notice. These cases may also be subject to further investigation and formal intervention. If a volunteer's actions are suspected to be criminal, CFMWS will promptly involve the appropriate police service; any resulting police investigation will proceed alongside—and may supersede—an internal review.

It is the responsibility of every Volunteer Supervisor to ensure that volunteers are aware of the expectations and responsibilities, as well as all possible consequences for failing to meet these expectations, breaching a boundary, or engaging in inappropriate behaviour.

It is the responsibility of volunteers to understand the expectations of the dismissal process and follow each step accordingly.

1. Any instance of failure to meet the requirements of the role, behave within the boundaries and Code of Conduct, and/or misrepresent or contravene the mission of CFMWS will be documented in the volunteer's file using an Incident Report. Each occurrence will be shared and followed up with the volunteer. A plan will be created to improve behaviour and ensure instances are not repeated.
2. If such occurrences are repetitive or frequent, the volunteer will receive a written warning, accompanied by an in-person meeting. This warning will be recorded in the volunteer's file.
3. Depending on the severity of the issue, the number of warnings before termination will vary (a standard consideration should be two warnings), as the volunteer will be given opportunities to improve after each. Failure to improve after the second warning would warrant dismissal.
4. The duration between the last warning and informing a volunteer of their dismissal should be no more than 2 weeks – this depends on the volunteer's engagement (daily, weekly, monthly,

occasional) and should still allow for volunteers to improve behaviour and performance if possible.

5. An appointment should be scheduled to inform the volunteer of the decision to dismiss them in person. Present at this meeting will be the direct coordinator of this volunteer and one other member of senior staff. This meeting is to inform the volunteer of the decision, not to discuss or potentially alter it.
6. The volunteer should be supplied with a confirmation of their termination in the form of a Dismissal letter, signed by the Volunteer Supervisor.

Request for Review of Involuntary Departure

Volunteers who believe their dismissal is unwarranted may submit a written request for review within ten business days by following these steps:

Step 1: Send the request for review to the department manager for an initial review and written response within ten business days.

Step 2: If the issue remains unresolved, the volunteer may escalate it to the senior or regional manager (or equivalent), who will convene an impartial panel and respond within fifteen business days.

Step 3: If the matter remains contested, a final appeal may be lodged with the National Volunteer Office. The decision, issued within twenty business days, will be final and binding on all parties.

Privacy Notice

Personal information is used for the administration of the CFMWS National Volunteer Program and the management of volunteers within Non-Public Property (NPP) organizations.

Personal information is protected and is only used and disclosed in accordance with the provision of the Privacy Act and as described in personal information bank Volunteers – CFMWS PPU 100. Under the Act, individuals have rights of access to and correction of their personal information, and the right to file a complaint to the Privacy Commissioner of Canada regarding the institution's handling of personal information.

Training and Orientation

Volunteers are required to participate in a local orientation session, which provides an introduction to the organization and training relevant to their role, ensuring they can perform their duties safely and effectively.

Volunteers will also have access to:

- CFMWS Occupational Health and Safety Awareness Orientation

Operations

Schedules and Shifts

CFMWS follows the Volunteer industry standards:

- Volunteers are expected to dedicate a minimum of 4 hours per month.
- Volunteers are limited to a maximum of 20 hours of volunteering per week.
- Volunteers must sign in and sign out with their volunteer supervisor.
- Arrive on time for your scheduled shifts. If you anticipate being late, inform the Volunteer Supervisor as soon as possible.
- Provide as much notice as possible when cancelling a volunteer shift.
- Communication: Maintain open and honest communication with the Volunteer Supervisor regarding your availability and any schedule changes.

Dress Code

When representing CFMWS, it is essential to maintain a respectful appearance that reflects the organization's values and standards. Adhering to a minimum standard of dress ensures that all representatives present themselves in a manner that is respectful, appropriate, and consistent with the organization's image.

Here are some key points to consider:

- Adhere to any specific guidelines regarding the wearing of insignia, badges, nametags, etc.
- Avoid excessive use of scented products.
- Cultural Sensitivity: When selecting attire, be mindful of cultural norms and sensitivities. Ensure that clothing is respectful and does not offend or alienate individuals from diverse backgrounds. This includes avoiding clothing with offensive symbols, slogans, or imagery.
- Adherence to Policies: Follow any specific dress code policies set by the event or activity being attended. These policies may provide additional guidelines on acceptable attire and grooming standards (for safety purposes).
- If you are issued a CFMWS volunteer uniform, you are expected to wear it for all scheduled shifts and refrain from making any alterations or additions unless you have received prior approval from your volunteer supervisor.
- Uniform items remain CFMWS property and must be returned on resignation or dismissal.
- If you have any specific questions or need further details, check in with the Volunteer Supervisor.

Safety and Emergency Procedures

CFMWS is committed to providing a volunteer environment that is safe, inclusive, and supportive—physically and psychologically—for everyone involved in our programs. Health and safety are shared responsibilities, so ensure you are familiar with the locations of emergency exits, evacuation plans, and other safety protocols for the program and facility where you are volunteering. The Volunteer Supervisor can provide these resources.

As a volunteer, you are expected to:

- Arrive fit for duty, well-rested, substance-free, and ready to wear all personal protective equipment (PPE) and your CFMWS-issued uniform (when necessary).
- Follow written protocols, posted signage, and instructions. If you believe an activity is unsafe, stop immediately and inform your volunteer supervisor.
- All incidents, injuries, or near-misses* must be reported before leaving your shift. You are also expected to respect the personal space, dignity, and confidentiality of all participants.

These responsibilities ensure your own safety and well-being, model safe behaviour for others, and protect both participants and CFMWS from harm or liability.

Volunteers are encouraged to practise self-care and inform their supervisor if they feel fatigued, unwell, or under undue stress. Breaks, hydration, and mental-health resources are available; asking for help is always acceptable and expected.

**Near Miss: A type of incident where an unplanned event occurred, but no one was injured, and nothing was damaged.*

Incident/Injury Reporting

Under our safety protocols, it is mandatory for all incidents, including near misses, to be promptly reported and accurately documented under the supervision of the designated Volunteer Supervisor.

Reporting Steps

Volunteer

- Incident occurs.
- Inform the volunteer supervisor immediately.
- Provide the volunteer supervisor with incident details to the best of your ability.
- Seek first aid and/or visit an appropriate medical care facility.

Volunteer Supervisor

- Incident occurs.
- Provide first aid, ensuring own safety/call for medical assistance.
- Secure the scene if required.
- Complete the Occupational Health and Safety Incident Report for Non-Employees form.
- Email completed form to your senior local employee representative (SLER) and bikso.janice@cfmws.com

Confidentiality

Managing sensitive information, such as volunteer sign-up forms, personal contact details, and private communications, is essential to maintaining trust and integrity. Volunteers are expected to respect the privacy of others and ensure that any confidential information they encounter during their duties is not shared or disclosed.

Please refer to the Volunteer Supervisor for specific guidelines.

Photography and Social Media

Volunteers are welcome to share their volunteer experience on social media, provided they follow the same photo-consent and brand-usage rules that apply to employees:

- Obtain written permission from anyone identifiable in the photo (or ensure faces are not recognizable).
- Do not disclose personal details about clients, families, or incident specifics.
- Use only approved logos/hashtags and avoid commentary that could be perceived as political or discriminatory.

When in doubt, check with your volunteer supervisor before posting.

Volunteer Benefits

Recognition

Volunteers play a vital role in our organization, and their efforts do not go unnoticed. To express our gratitude, we have implemented several recognition initiatives. An annual volunteer appreciation event is held at every Base or Wing to celebrate the dedication and commitment of our volunteers.

Additionally, volunteers are eligible to be nominated for the CFMWS Volunteer of the Month award, which recognizes individuals who go above and beyond in their volunteering efforts. By highlighting these outstanding volunteers each month, we aim to inspire others and highlight the value of volunteering within our organization. Such initiatives not only boost morale but also foster a sense of belonging and camaraderie among our volunteers.

Other Benefits

- Contribute to the quality of programs and services offered to the CAF Community.
- Be part of a team of dedicated peers.
- Expand your network.
- Refine valuable soft skills.
- Bolster your resume.
- Learn new skills.
- Discover new career ideas.

Appreciation Message

Thank you to all our dedicated volunteers for your incredible contributions. Your time, effort, and passion have had a significant impact on the CAF community. Your continuous support is invaluable and plays a vital role in our organization's success. We encourage you to stay engaged and involved, as your involvement is crucial to achieving our goals and making a real difference. Your dedication inspires us all to work harder and accomplish more together.

We genuinely appreciate all that you do, and we look forward to continuing this incredible journey with you.

Annex A – Volunteer Code of Conduct

As a CFMWS volunteer, you help foster a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment for all. Your role supports a culture that values diversity and upholds the highest standards of professionalism, confidentiality, and ethical conduct. The following guidelines are designed to maintain a secure and welcoming space for everyone.

Compliance with CFMWS Policies and the Law

Volunteers will respect and adhere to all CFMWS policies, directives, and procedures, and conduct their volunteer duties in full compliance with applicable federal, provincial/territorial, and local laws and regulations.

Safety

Volunteers share responsibility for occupational health and safety: follow written safe-work procedures, wear required PPE, and report hazards, near misses, or injuries immediately.

Use of Resources

Volunteers are asked to use CFMWS, DND, and CAF property, assets, and resources only with prior authorization. This ensures responsible and appropriate use of organizational materials.

Information Accuracy and Security

Volunteers are expected to manage information with care, doing their best to ensure it is accurate, secure, and protected from unauthorized or unintended use or disclosure.

Brand and Intellectual Property

Volunteers should refrain from using, sharing, or reproducing any CFMWS-branded materials (including logos, phrases, or trademarks) without explicit permission.

Conflicts of Interest

Volunteers are encouraged to be transparent and declare any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest to CFMWS as soon as they become aware of them.

Gifts and Hospitality

To maintain impartiality, volunteers should not accept gifts, hospitality, or other benefits that could influence—or appear to influence—their objectivity in their volunteer role.

Impartiality and Political Neutrality

Volunteers are expected to remain impartial and free from undue political influence, both in appearance and practice.

Personal Conduct and Representation

Volunteers are asked to ensure that their personal conduct does not conflict with their role as a National Volunteer or with CFMWS messaging, branding, or values.

Fairness and Integrity

Volunteers must avoid giving preferential treatment to relatives, friends, or organizations with which they have a personal interest.

Ethical Behavior

Volunteers are expected to act with honesty, integrity, objectivity, and diligence, and to avoid any involvement in fraudulent or unethical activities.

Use of Mobile Devices

To maintain focus and professionalism, personal mobile devices should only be used during scheduled breaks or in emergencies. If an exception is needed, volunteers are encouraged to speak with their Volunteer Supervisor.

Media Inquiries

Volunteers are not authorized to function as official spokespersons. If approached by the media, please refer them to your Volunteer Supervisor immediately.

Non-compliance with this Code of Conduct may result in coaching, reassignment, or termination of the volunteer relationship.

I acknowledge that I have read, understand, and agree to abide by this Code of Conduct.

Signature: _____

Date: _____