

# THE SAFE STEP

*Your connection to protecting those who improve your community*



## TRAINING AND SUPERVISION FOR VOLUNTEER SAFETY AND SUCCESS

Creating a safe and effective volunteer environment begins with clear training and consistent supervision. This guide outlines best practices and provides tools to help your organization prepare volunteers for their roles and ensure ongoing support.

### PROMOTE ROLE-SPECIFIC SAFETY TRAINING

Tailored training ensures every volunteer is equipped to perform their duties safely and confidently. Consider implementing:

- Safe Lifting Techniques: For volunteers involved in physical tasks (e.g., setting up events, moving supplies).
- Child Protection Training: Essential for volunteers working with youth or vulnerable populations.
- Cash Handling & Fraud Prevention: For volunteers managing donations, event sales or financial records.
- Driver Safety Programs: For volunteers transporting clients or using organizational vehicles. Include motor vehicle record checks, vehicle-specific training (e.g., 15-passenger vans) and regular safety refreshers.

### MAKE TRAINING ACCESSIBLE:

- Offer training in multiple formats (written, video, live demonstration) and provide auxiliary aids/services when needed so communication is equally effective for people with disabilities.
- Use plain language, visuals, and check-for-understanding techniques, especially for safety-critical tasks.
- Provide reasonable language assistance and translated materials when appropriate for the community you serve.

### ENCOURAGE SUPERVISION AND BUDDY SYSTEMS

Volunteers thrive in environments where they feel supported and observed. To reduce risk and enhance safety:

- Pair Volunteers: Especially in isolated settings or when working with clients. This reduces the likelihood of misconduct or injury.
- Assign Supervisors or Team Leads: Ensure someone is always available to answer questions, provide feedback and intervene if needed.
- Use Returning Volunteers as Mentors: “Boomerang” volunteers can help onboard and supervise new recruits, sharing institutional knowledge and modeling best practices.

## OFFER DOWNLOADABLE TRAINING RESOURCES

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Make training accessible and engaging:

- Video Modules: Covering safety basics, role-specific procedures and emergency protocols.
- Printable Checklists: For onboarding, daily duties and incident reporting.
- Webinar Access: Register for live sessions or view replays via the Virtual Learning tab in the SHS Risk Portal.

## BUILD A CULTURE OF SAFETY

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Empower volunteers to be active participants in your safety culture:

- Train them to recognize and report hazards or policy violations.
- Encourage feedback and safety suggestions.
- Publicly acknowledge volunteers who contribute to a safer environment.

## ACTION STEPS FOR SUPERVISORS

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1. Assess training needs for each volunteer role and adapt materials for accessibility.
2. Schedule regular check-ins and feedback sessions with volunteers.
3. Document all training, supervision and incidents for accountability and improvement.
4. Encourage open communication and provide multiple ways for volunteers to share concerns or suggestions.
5. Review and update training materials regularly to reflect best practices and the needs of your diverse volunteer community.

## SOURCES

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- [OSHA: Materials Handling & Storage \(PDF\) – lifting/material handling](#)
- [CDC: Preventing Child Sexual Abuse in Youth-Serving Organizations \(PDF\) – child protection](#)
- [DOJ/OJP: Internal Controls & Separation of Duties \(PDF\) – cash handling/fraud controls](#)
- [ADA.gov: ADA Requirements—Effective Communication – accessibility/auxiliary aids](#)
- [NHTSA: 15-Passenger Vans – safety guidance](#)