

Diocese of San Diego

POLICY ON VOLUNTEER WORKERS

Caution

Whenever volunteers are used, there is an increase in liability exposure to the Diocese of San Diego and the parish.

If volunteers are used to perform certain jobs or tasks, some consideration should be given to the risks or hazards associated with the work. There should also be close supervision and control over the activities of volunteers.

Volunteers should work at ground level, whenever possible. Falls from ladders or other heights can result in a substantial injury.

Tasks requiring special tools, equipment, or expertise could indicate that the job is not for a volunteer and should be performed by a licensed and insured contractor. The same could be said if the job involves risk of movement of heavy objects where physical injury could occur.

Court Ordered Community (Volunteer) Service

Persons ordered by the court to perform community service or volunteer work should not be considered as actual volunteers.

When the parish is approached by someone who has to do court ordered volunteer work, the request normally should be declined because of the added risks and exposure involved. Details of the offense committed could be misrepresented by the individual just to have parish officials agree to the community service work.

If the individual is a parishioner, some consideration could be given to allow him or her to do volunteer work. Background information concerning the offense should be obtained from the individual and verified by the court or probation officer.

The nature of the work to be done by a community service volunteer should be carefully considered and closely supervised. Further, the parish should not accept anyone who has committed an offense involving sexual misconduct, misdemeanors for violent acts or felonies of any kind.

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Use of Personal Vehicle by Volunteers

Volunteers who use their personal automobile to perform services are required to provide their own automobile liability insurance and should carry a minimum of \$100,000/300,000/50,000 in coverage. Volunteers are not covered by the parish or diocesan automobile coverage while performing volunteer work using their own automobile. Volunteers should be advised of this policy prior to using their personal automobile for parish business.

Volunteer drivers should be at least 21 years of age or older. The drivers should have a valid drivers license and no physical disabilities that could impair their ability to safely drive a vehicle.

Driving records should be checked annually with the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to make sure that the volunteer's record is good. Enrollment in the DMV Pull Notice Program can assist the parish in obtaining driving records. The volunteer can obtain a copy of his or her driving record from the DMV for a small fee and provide it to the parish or diocese if the Pull Notice Program is not used.

Parish or diocesan owned vehicles should only be driven by parish or diocesan employees. The use of parish or diocesan vehicles by volunteers is discouraged, however, if a volunteer must use a parish or diocesan owned vehicle, he or she should meet the requirements described above.

Coverage for Volunteers

If a volunteer is injured prompt notice of the injury should be given to Catholic Mutual (see below) for instructions on the appropriate procedure to be followed.

Liability coverage (excluding automobile liability) is usually extended to volunteers if they are acting within the scope of their duties as volunteers for the parish or diocese. Occurrences involving volunteers will be evaluated on the circumstances surrounding an incident to make sure that the volunteer will be covered. Volunteers should never concede responsibility for an incident at the scene. Any discussions regarding responsibility should be left to our insurance or legal representatives.

Additional Information

If any additional information is needed with respect to the use of volunteers and insurance coverage relating to volunteer activities, please contact:

Robert Blodgett, Catholic Mutual Group

Telephone (858) 490-8285

Fax (858) 490-8345