

Volunteer Resources and Engagement

Standards of Conduct



This document provides guidelines to support ethical behaviour and decision-making for Island Health volunteers.

To provide the highest quality healthcare services, Island Health [C.A.R.E. Values](#), the policies and procedures outlined in this document, and the Volunteer Assignment Descriptions guide how volunteers conduct themselves on-site. Additional policies and helpful information can be found on our [Policies for Volunteers](#) webpage, in our volunteer handbook, or by reaching out to ask us questions.

As this Standards of Conduct cannot cover every situation, we trust our volunteers to recognize that some situations are complex and to use their good judgement. Please reach out to staff if you are unsure or require further information. We're here to help.

Code of Conduct

Island Health's Code of Conduct Policy is a set of guidelines intended to support ethical behaviour and decision making. Please review the Code of Conduct by clicking the link [here](#).

Confidentiality

At Island Health all staff and volunteers are expected to maintain the confidentiality of patients, residents, and clients.

Definitions:

- **Confidential:** private information, not to be shared.
- **Completing a training module:** a learning session, usually online through the MyImpact eLearning platform, available to volunteers after applying for a volunteer role.



Volunteers are expected to maintain Island Health's high practice standards when they encounter confidential information as part of their volunteer role. These standards include completing training in Confidential Information Management and refreshing this training annually. The completion of the training module demonstrates each volunteer's commitment to Island Health's [Confidential Information Policy](#).



Did You Know?

Volunteers are not permitted to take photos or record video of any kind without written permission.

Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest occurs when a volunteer has a personal or self-serving interest which clashes with their duties or responsibilities as a volunteer.

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This clash may result in the volunteer having a sense of responsibility to someone or to an organization other than Island Health, and therefore leave the volunteer unable to fulfill their role in a fair manner or to commit wholly to the policies and procedures of Island Health.

Here's an example: Let's say Susan is a Social Engagement Volunteer and regularly visits patients. Imagine that Susan is also a volunteer at a non-profit organization (we'll call it OrgX) that fundraises for a health related cause. It would be a conflict of interest for Susan to solicit donations for OrgX while volunteering for Island Health in her role as Social Engagement Volunteer.

Here are some guidelines that should help Island Health volunteers identify and prevent Conflict of Interest situations:

- **Volunteers should not gain financially from their time spent as a volunteer.** Volunteering is time spent freely and no money or gifts should be given or accepted, nor should any goods be sold or donations solicited from patients / residents / clients, visitors, or staff of Island Health.
- **Volunteers should not utilize Island Health information, networks, or facilities for personal use or advantage.** Please avoid the use of Island Health's networks (e.g. Wi-Fi, internet or computer use) and facilities for personal use, including involvement in community issues, partisan politics, religious matters, etc... Please review our [Acceptable Use of Assets Policy](#).
- **Volunteers should not discuss their own personal health issues or religious views with patients / residents / clients.**

Exceptions:

- Island Health Spiritual Health practitioners may choose to onboard their own volunteers to support the Spiritual Health department.
- Some volunteers join Island Health through partnerships with non-profit organizations focused on specific health conditions. The role of these volunteers may involve speaking about their personal history with the specified medical condition, as detailed in their assignment description.

- **Volunteers should not seek medical advice from staff through the connection of their volunteer role.** For example: Sally, a volunteer who supports a weekly physiotherapy group in long-term care, should not ask the physiotherapist leading the group to suggest back exercises for her sore back.



What if I'm offered a gift from a grateful patient?

Our rule of thumb is to thank them, let them know you appreciate the thought, but as a volunteer you are unable to accept their gift. Sometimes, if the gift is a small gesture, it may be more appropriate to receive the gift with thanks. Use your good judgement, making sure the gift does not create any sense of obligation. If unsure, ask staff.

Please note:

If a volunteer is receiving medical services from a unit in which they are also an active volunteer, a leave of absence or change to a different volunteer role should be discussed with their Volunteer Resources and Engagement Consultant.

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- **Volunteers must keep separate their volunteer role and any political activities in which they participate.** For example, if in conversation as a representative of a political party the volunteer may not reference their role as a volunteer.



Note: *Volunteers may not speak to the media on behalf of Island Health. If you are approached, please decline to comment.*

Remember: *Not every Conflict of Interest situation can be listed in this document. We ask that our volunteers always act in the best interests of Island Health, as this protects our patients / residents / clients, as well as everyone who works and volunteers within our facilities. Please take the time to stop and think about your personal situation. If you aren't sure, please ask.*

Please review our [Conflict of Interest Policy](#).



Respectful Conduct

At Island Health respect is one of our core values. We are committed to promoting an environment in which all individuals are free from bullying, harassment and discrimination.

Each Island Health staff and volunteer is expected to contribute to fostering a culturally safe, healthy and inclusive environment free from all forms of hate, racism, bigotry and bullying.



Training is provided to ensure the [Respectful Workplace Policy](#) is understood. A further [Respectful Workplace Procedures for Volunteers](#) document is available should the support outlined in this Standards of Conduct document not be sufficient to address a specific respectful workplace concern.

Everyone at Island Health deserves to work and volunteer in an environment that respects and promotes human rights and personal dignity.

Included in respectful conduct: *While we can't list every situation, there are a few we'd like to highlight:*

- *Volunteers are prohibited from attending their role while under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs that impair performance and judgement. Intentional misuse of drugs, medications, and alcohol while performing the volunteer role can result in corrective action up to and including dismissal.*
- *While we respect the unique perspective each volunteer brings, we ask that volunteers do not express their personal opinions on topics such as politics, religion, or public health related topics (for example, vaccinations) in a way that may jeopardize the perception of impartiality during the performance of the volunteer role.*
- *Use of mobile devices: we ask volunteers to put away their mobile devices while performing their role. This allows the focus to be on the patients, residents, and clients we serve.*

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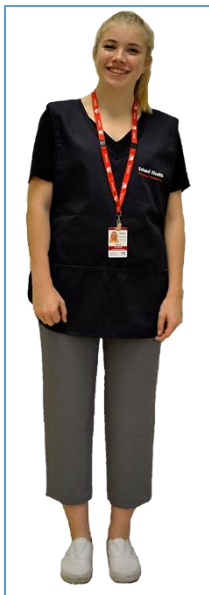
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Dress Code, Island Health ID, and Uniforms

How should Island Health volunteers dress for their shifts?

We ask that our volunteers are thoughtful in what they wear to their shift. For example, we ask for low-heeled, non-slip and quiet soled shoes that are closed at the toe and heel. This is an expectation of front line staff as well, and stems from the fact that we want to avoid unnecessary noise and keep your feet safe in our health care environment where spills are more common, wheelchairs are prevalent, and obstacles in the hallways are frequent.



There are a few other ways in which we ask our volunteers to be thoughtful:

- Please choose clothing that is neat, clean, and comfortable. Please don't wear clothing that is ripped, sheer, or has large branding / logos, or potentially offensive graphics. If wearing athletic wear, loose fitting is more suitable.
- Please keep shorts or skirts on the longer side (closer to, or below, your knees), and ensure tops are long enough to meet the waistband of pants.
- For safety reasons please avoid jewelry that dangles, tie up long hair, and take hats off before shifts begin.
- Please wear short sleeves or roll up long sleeves to allow for proper hand hygiene.
- Hand hygiene is more than just cleaning your hands; we ask you to leave hand and wrist jewelry at home and not to wear nail polish or false nails. Germs hide under jewelry and along the edges of nail polish. Hand hygiene is one of our best tools for preventing the spread of germs.
- Island Health facilities are scent free environments. No perfume, aftershave, or other scented products.

Similar to staff, the goal is for volunteers to appear safe and approachable for all people, no matter their age, culture, or background.

Uniforms

Red lanyards affixed to volunteer Island Health ID (all volunteers) and uniform vests (acute hospital volunteers only) serve to distinguish volunteers from visitors, patients, and staff, helping to make them more visible and identifiable at Island Health facilities. During every shift volunteers are required to wear their Island Health ID on the provided red lanyard unless otherwise directed. In acute care hospitals volunteers also wear their uniform vest. Regular laundering of the uniform and the red lanyard is the responsibility of the volunteer. See Volunteer Handbook for tips on laundering of these items.

Island Health ID

Carrying Island Health Photo ID comes with responsibility. Volunteers must only wear their ID during scheduled volunteer shifts. The ID must not be used for any other reason unless directed by Volunteer Resources and Engagement staff. Misuse of ID may lead to dismissal. Island Health ID must be returned to the Volunteer and Engagement Department when the volunteer is no longer active.

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Performance Management

It is our experience that volunteers come to us with good intentions and a desire to help. When difficulties arise it is often due to a misunderstanding or miscommunication.

OUR FIRST APPROACH

In the Volunteer Resources & Engagement department we strive to solve problems by listening, investigating, hearing all sides, and providing opportunities to communicate and make changes.



NEXT STEPS

In the unusual circumstance that an informal approach does not work, or if the situation is serious and calls for a more formalized approach, Volunteer Resources & Engagement staff will take the following actions:

Please note: We reserve the right to move directly to dismissal if the situation is recognized to be serious.

Corrective Action

If the volunteer repeatedly acts outside of the boundaries of the Assignment Description for their role, or exhibits inappropriate behaviour:

- A Volunteer Resources & Engagement staff will meet with the volunteer to review any actions taken to date and detail expectations moving forward.
- The volunteer will be given a three month probationary period, shifting once weekly (unless otherwise agreed upon) in which to demonstrate their willingness to volunteer within the boundaries of their Assignment Description and/or to modify their behaviour to match expectations.
 - This probationary period will be explained during the meeting, and a follow up email will be sent detailing the expectations

Probationary Period and Dismissal

If the volunteer's actions persist during the probationary period:

- In consultation with the Manager, Volunteer Resources & Engagement, the Volunteer Engagement Consultant will either:
 - Give the volunteer one final verbal warning, followed up in writing detailing the warning and reminding the volunteer of expectations. If the volunteer is given a final warning and the issue persists, Volunteer Resources and Engagement staff will inform the volunteer of dismissal, or;
 - Immediately inform the volunteer of their dismissal.

Volunteer Resources and Engagement staff reserve the right to proceed directly to dismissal.

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Reasons for dismissal may include, but are not limited to:

- Violation of the Standards of Conduct outlined in this document
- Breach of confidentiality
- Gross misconduct or insubordination
- Theft
- Abuse of Island Health's equipment or materials or facilities
- Illegal, violent or unsafe actions
- Falsification of Island Health records or misrepresentation of personal information
- Abusive treatment of others



Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart.

- Elizabeth Andrew

Questions

If you are a current volunteer and have questions about this document please reach out to your Consultant, Volunteer Engagement. If you are not a volunteer please contact the Volunteer Resources and Engagement Department at Volunteer@IslandHealth.ca.