



Safety Tip



The Diocese of Syracuse Risk Management Department . . . “CARES”

Guidelines for Using Volunteers

A volunteer is not an employee of the Diocese and is therefore not covered by Workers’ Compensation.

Because of the unique status of a volunteer working on the premises each accident involving these individuals must be investigated and evaluated to determine the extent of Diocesan responsibility.

Work assigned to volunteers should be done on a very selective basis, so these individuals are not exposed to unnecessary hazards.

We recommend the following guidelines be followed for using volunteers:

WORKING ABOVE GROUND LEVEL

Falls, even from modest heights, can result in catastrophic injury. Whenever possible, volunteers should work at ground level.

Ladders

- Ladders should be inspected before each use to help ensure side rails and rungs are not broken or split and that the ladder is in good condition.
- Proper supervision should be in place whenever the use of a ladder is required.
- Ladders over six feet are not to be used by volunteers.
- People under 18 years old should not be permitted to use ladders.
- The manufacturer’s directions for use (generally affixed to the ladder) must be strictly adhered to.

Scaffolds

Volunteers are prohibited from climbing or using **any** scaffolding.

Portable work platforms and personnel lifts

Volunteers are prohibited from operating or working from portable work platforms and lifts (such as scissor lifts, boom buckets, etc.).



PAINTING

The **six-foot climbing height limitation** restricts the scope of painting operations that can be taken on by volunteers. In addition to the need for working above ground level, there are other serious hazards with painting operations. These hazards include improper lifting of heavy materials, misuse of spray-painting equipment and chemical injuries due to solvents.

- Volunteers should not be allowed to use “airless” spray painting equipment.
- Volunteers should, in general, be restricted to using water-based paints and all associated Material Data Safety Sheets (MSDS) will be maintained and available as necessary.
- Volunteers should be cautioned of the dangers regarding the use of paint scrapers or other sharp objects associated with painting.
- Volunteers are not allowed to perform any paint removal projects involving any asbestos containing material, lead based paints, chemical paint strippers, or the use of torches.
- Protective equipment, such as safety glasses, dust masks, gloves, etc., must always be used when necessary.

ELECTRICAL AND STRUCTURAL WORK

Due to the possibility of severe injury to the volunteer and potential, related property losses, all electrical and structural work should be performed only by licensed, professional contractors.

PLUMBING

Due to the possibility of property damage (water damage, fire from torches, etc.) great care should be taken in allowing volunteers to perform large plumbing projects. We recommend large plumbing jobs be performed by licensed, professional contractors.

HAND AND POWER TOOLS

Serious injury can occur – wounds, amputations, and electric shock represent severe injury exposures associated with power tool use. Hand tools can cause serious injury. Generally, the use of power tools by volunteers should be discouraged.

- No one under (18) eighteen years of age should be allowed to operate power tools.
- Power tools owned by volunteers should not be used.
- All tools provided to the volunteer should be inspected to be sure they are in proper working order.
- Appropriate personal protective equipment must be worn. Safety glasses must be worn by all volunteers when operating any power tools.
- Pneumatic nails and staple guns should not be operated by any volunteer.
- The use of specialized power tools such as power augers, concrete saws, abrasive saws, etc. by volunteers is not permitted.





LAWN AND GARDEN EQUIPMENT

Electric and gasoline powered lawn and garden equipment (lawn mowers, hedge trimmers, string trimmers, etc.) present potential injury. Generally, we recommend that volunteers do not operate such equipment. If volunteers, for some reason, are allowed to operate power lawn and garden equipment, such operation should be within compliance with the recommendations outlined under “Hand and Power Tools”.

LIFTING

Back injuries are a common result of improper lifting techniques. It is extremely important that sufficient help is available when volunteers are moving any type of heavy or awkward objects. Mechanical lifting and moving aids should be used as necessary. Children and seniors should not be allowed to perform any heavy lifting.



RIGGING AND HOISTING

Operations that require special rigging and hoisting equipment should not be attempted by volunteer labor.

TREE TRIMMING

Except for light pruning, tree trimming should be performed by professionals only.

ROOF AND GUTTER WORK

Volunteers should not work on or about the roof of any building. Please refer to this type of maintenance work to a qualified contractor.

SECURITY SERVICES

Volunteers should not perform security services for parish or Diocesan events. Please utilize professional security contractors who are licensed and insured. Please refer to the contract and insurance guidelines.

OPERATION OF DIOCESAN VEHICLES

The operation of Diocesan owned vehicles by volunteers is prohibited.

VIRTUS TRAINING FOR VOLUNTEERS

All volunteers who have contact with children or young adults **must** participate in Virtus training. For more information contact the parish offices, school office, administrators or on-site coordinator.

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For additional information, please refer to the Risk Management section of the Diocesan website