

Volunteer Orientation

Orientation Meeting

New volunteers need to feel like they're an integral part of the organization as soon as possible. If they don't feel comfortable voicing their opinions, you're losing valuable input! Information is what will help everybody feel at ease and valued.

No matter how well qualified your new volunteers are, it will take some time to get them up-to-speed and feeling comfortable as members of your team. But there are steps you can take to expedite this process.

Conduct an orientation session for all new volunteers. Have them meet with other volunteers and officers. Spend time going over background material about the organization and bring them up-to-date on the issues facing the society. Allow plenty of time for questions and answers. Try to cover these topics in a New Volunteer Briefing:

Introduce Everyone - Consider Protocol

- Elected Board of Directors
- President
- General Superintendent
- Officers
- Other Volunteers
- Committee Chairs and Members
- Staff
- Guests
- Other

Describe the Organization (Mission)

- Mission Statement
- Organizational Structure
- Who we serve
- What we do
- Other

Explain and Discuss

- Meeting attendance requirements
- Committee assignments and charges
- Board of Directors role and relation to administrator/staff
- Museum Operations
- Other

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Conduct Tours

- Administrative offices
- Museum Store
- Museum grounds
- Volunteer facilities

Provide Documents Organized in a Manual

- Mission statement
- Bylaws
- Code of Ethics
- Policy Manual (Policies and Procedures) **(can be viewed on web site)**
- Board Meetings, Minutes, Agenda submissions **(can be viewed on web site)**
- Minutes of Board Meetings for the past meetings **(can be viewed on web site)**
- Annual Report **(Board of Directors Only)**
- Audit Report **(Board of Directors Only)**
- Current Budget **(Board of Directors Only)**
- Current Financial Report **(can be viewed on web site)**
- Museum Practices (Association of Railway Museums (ARM) – Recommended Practices for Railway Museums)
- Publications, Newsletters, Magazines, and Web site(s)
- Strategic Plan

Rosters of Volunteers including addresses and telephone numbers

(This list is a list of active volunteers only)

- List of Volunteers and Officers
- List of Committee Memberships including Chairs
- Annual Calendar of Activities and Meetings **(can be viewed on web site)**
- Other

Collect Volunteer Data at the Meeting

- Addresses
- Telephone numbers (home, cell and office)
- Fax number
- E-mail address
- Best time to contact
- Best time for meetings
- General Release
- Emergency Forms
- Other

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Questions and Answers

- Time for new Volunteer
- Mentors (Possibly assign a veteran volunteer to new volunteer)

These are some ways to get volunteers comfortable with volunteer responsibilities and participation. Not only do the new volunteers start contributing right way, they also develop a good working relationship with the veteran volunteers.