

Volunteer Attendance Policy

POLICY STATEMENT:

Volunteers play a key role in Sunnybrook Health Science Centre's (SHSC) ability to provide services to patients. Therefore, volunteers are expected to reliably attend all scheduled shifts. This includes arriving on time, completing the duration of the assigned shift, and ensuring VSys kiosk is used to enter their shift start and end times.

PURPOSE:

To define the importance of volunteer commitment and reliability and ensure a consistent and timely process for managing attendance. Absences impede the hospital's ability to provide services to patients and their families, compromise patient safety, delay important tasks, create additional workload for others and negatively impact morale, as well as the reputation of volunteers and the hospital.

DEFINITION(S):

Length of Volunteer Commitment: The length of time that each volunteer commits to attending a specific volunteer role. Minimum commitment is typically one half-day shift (3-4 hours) weekly for a minimum of six months to one year. However commitment will be determined with Volunteer Resources (VR) at the time of enrollment and may vary.

Approved Absences: Absences where VR has been informed and they have provided the volunteer with approval for the absence. Approved absences include but are not limited to:

- Illness
- Religious Holidays
- Approved vacations with sufficient notice
- Leave of Absence - absence of 3 months or more (see LOA policy)
- Hospital closures including outbreaks on units where volunteers are assigned

- Weather warnings from Environment Canada

Unapproved Absences: Absences where VR has not been informed or, reported absences that have not received approval. Unapproved absences include but are not limited to:

- Failure to attend a scheduled shift without notice of 1 week or more
- Extended/frequent requests for approved absences over periods of two or more weeks without reasonable explanations and approval from VR staff.
- Absences to complete homework, study for tests or requests for extended absences to accommodate exam periods.

If a volunteer is unsure what an unapproved absence is, they are expected to confirm with VR.

PROCEDURE:

1. When a volunteer is going to be absent due to illness, he/she must report this absence in person, by email or phone providing as much notice as possible.
2. When a volunteer requests an approved absence he/she must request this absence in person, by email or phone providing as much notice as possible (as soon as volunteer is aware of the conflict and inability to attend their shift or a minimum of two weeks' notice)
NB: contacting VR on the weekend regarding a Monday absence is not acceptable.
3. At the time of training, volunteers will be informed of the expectation for shift coverage in the area where they volunteer and who must be notified about their absence. For some roles, volunteers may be expected, but are not limited to:
 - Report an absence to VR and to their service area and/or designated staff contact
 - Contact other volunteers to switch their shifts or find a replacement to ensure coverage
 - Attend an alternate or make-up shift within two weeks to compensate for the absence (with staff approval)
4. If a volunteer does not comply with the attendance policy, after one to three absences, they will be contacted by VR to review their ability to fulfill their commitment and a progressive action plan will be implemented. This plan will begin with coaching or reassignment, and may progress to termination if there is no improvement in reliable attendance.

5. Final decisions regarding the outcome of poor volunteer attendance is at the discretion of VR and will depend on the volunteer role, and volunteer's performance history.
6. Documentation of volunteer hours will be provided for volunteers who have met the expectation of their volunteer commitment. Letters of reference may be provided and will reflect a volunteer's reliability and ability to fulfill their commitment.
7. Volunteers who are terminated due to unreliable attendance and lack of compliance with attendance policy will have this documented in their volunteer file.
8. All volunteers who either resign or are asked to discontinue by VR, are required to return their Photo ID, Parking Tag and Uniform and will receive their refundable deposit.

RELATED POLICIES: Leave of Absence/Return to Volunteer; Volunteer Placement/assignment
