Municipal Volunteer Policy and Procedures Manual

Town of Sutton, West Virginia • Concise Council Edition

Core rule: No person may perform Town work, use a Town title, or access Town vehicles, equipment, nonpublic offices, systems, or records unless properly authorized under this policy.

1. Purpose and scope

This policy establishes uniform controls for all uncompensated persons who perform services for the Town. It applies to every volunteer regardless of relationship to a Town official or employee. It does not apply to elected or duly appointed officials acting within their office, employees, contractors, or members of the public attending an event without performing Town work.

2. Authorization

- A volunteer must complete the Town application and acknowledgment and receive written approval before service begins.
- Council must approve any continuing volunteer position, official-sounding title, access to sensitive information, or high-risk assignment. No official or employee may create an unofficial Town position.
- Approval must identify the duties, supervisor, work location, dates, and any permitted access. Volunteers may not self-assign work or exceed written authority.
- The Town may deny, restrict, suspend, or end volunteer service at any time, with or without cause, subject to applicable law.

3. Status and compensation

Service is freely offered for civic purposes without promise or expectation of wages, employment, benefits, or future appointment. A volunteer may receive only preapproved, documented expense reimbursement or benefits permitted by law. Employees may not volunteer to perform the same type of services they are employed to perform. Volunteer hours and duties shall be accurately recorded.

4. Screening and conflicts

- The Town may require identity, reference, criminal-history, license, or driving-record checks appropriate to the assignment and insurer requirements.
- Applicants must disclose immediate family relationships with Town officials or employees and any financial or personal conflict involving the assignment.
- A related official or employee may not select, assign, directly supervise, evaluate, discipline, or influence the working conditions of the volunteer. An independent supervisor shall be designated, and the related official shall recuse when required.
- Volunteers granted governmental authority are subject to the West Virginia Ethics Act and may not use Town service, information, property, or prestige for private gain.

5. Supervision and conduct

- Every volunteer shall have one named supervisor and shall follow lawful instructions, Town policies, safety rules, and standards of respectful conduct.
- Volunteers shall sign in and out, report injuries, accidents, hazards, complaints, and suspected misuse of Town property promptly, and cooperate with Town reviews.
- A volunteer may not bind the Town, direct employees, make policy, approve purchases, collect or handle money, sign documents, speak officially for the Town, or exercise enforcement authority unless specifically authorized by law and written Town action.

6. Safety, vehicles, and equipment

- The Town's insurer has advised that Town volunteers are not covered by the Town's workers' compensation policy or by separate volunteer injury or medical-expense coverage. Volunteers may nevertheless perform specifically approved, low-risk administrative, clerical, ceremonial, community-event, litter-removal, and light property or street-cleanup assignments under direct supervision and subject to the safeguards below.
- Permitted cleanup may include picking up ordinary litter or loose trash, bagging debris, light hand-weeding, sweeping, raking, and operating a handheld string trimmer (weed eater) after assignment-specific instruction. Before work begins, the Town must inspect the site, define the work area and duties, provide direct supervision, supply appropriate gloves, eye and hearing protection, high-visibility clothing when appropriate, and any other required protective equipment, and provide safe tools in good working order. Volunteers shall not work in an active roadway or travel lane, direct or control traffic, work alone in an isolated area, lift heavy or bulky items, or handle needles, sharps, chemicals, biological waste, dead animals, suspected drug materials, or other dangerous debris. Any unsafe item or condition must be left undisturbed and reported immediately to the supervisor.
- Volunteers shall not perform demolition; construction or structural repair; code-enforcement inspections; traffic control; police support or emergency response; work in or around condemned, unsafe, fire-damaged, or structurally questionable properties; work at heights, in excavations or confined spaces, or around electrical systems or hazardous substances; operate or ride in Town vehicles or mobile equipment; or operate heavy machinery, chainsaws, chippers, mowers, or similar higher-risk equipment. A waiver, release, acknowledgment of risk, personal health insurance, or willingness to accept risk does not create insurance coverage or authorize prohibited work. No oral exception is valid. Any proposed expansion beyond permitted low-risk duties requires written insurer confirmation, Council approval recorded in the minutes, assignment-specific written authorization, training, and appropriate protective equipment.

7. Offices, information, and Town property

- Access shall be limited to what is necessary for assigned duties. Keys, badges, accounts, passwords, purchasing devices, cameras, financial systems, personnel files, police information, and nonpublic records require specific written approval.
- Town records must remain on Town-controlled systems. Volunteers may not remove, destroy, alter, conceal, privately retain, or use Town information for personal purposes.
- Passwords may not be shared. The Town shall promptly disable access and recover all property when authorization ends.

8. Confidentiality and public records

Volunteers shall protect confidential, personal, financial, personnel, law-enforcement, tax, security, and legally privileged information. Records created, received, or maintained during service belong to the Town and remain subject to applicable retention and public-record requirements. Only an authorized records custodian may respond to a public-record request.

9. Disability and equal treatment

Volunteer decisions shall be based on legitimate qualifications, safety, conduct, assignment needs, and uniformly applied policy—not assumptions about disability or receipt of public benefits. A volunteer is responsible for obtaining personal advice concerning any effect volunteer activity may have on benefits. The Town shall accurately document duties and hours and shall not conceal or mischaracterize volunteer activity.

10. Ending service

Authorization ends on the stated date or immediately upon suspension, resignation, removal, policy violation, loss of required license or coverage, or direction of the Town. The volunteer shall stop representing the Town and immediately return all records, keys, credentials, equipment, vehicle access, and other Town property.

11. Administration

The Town Clerk shall maintain volunteer applications, approvals, acknowledgments, hour records, training documentation, access authorizations, insurer confirmations, incident reports, and termination records. Department supervisors are responsible for daily oversight. No exception may waive or substitute for required insurance, workers' compensation, safety, licensing, bonding, wage, ethics, or records requirements.

Legal anchors

This policy is intended to operate consistently with W. Va. Code §§ 6B-1-3 and 6B-2-5 (ethics); § 8-3A-2 (municipal government structure); § 8-5-11 (municipal positions); § 17B-2-1 (driver licensing); §§ 23-2-1 and 23-2-1a (workers' compensation); and §§ 29-12A-3 through 29-12A-5 (municipal liability and scope of service), as amended. If law, charter, ordinance, insurer requirements, or a collective bargaining agreement imposes a stricter requirement, the stricter requirement controls.

Adoption

Adopted by the governing body of the Town of Sutton by Resolution No. _____ on _____. This policy is effective immediately and supersedes inconsistent informal volunteer practices.

Mayor: _____

Town Clerk/Recorder: _____

Volunteer Application and Approval

Completion does not authorize service. Written Town approval is required below.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone / Email: _____

Emergency contact / Telephone: _____

Requested service or assignment: _____

Relevant qualifications or limitations affecting safe assignment: _____

Immediate family employed by or serving the Town (name/relationship): _____

Potential financial or personal conflicts: _____

If driving may be requested:

Driver's license state/number: _____

Expiration date: _____

Applicant acknowledgment

I offer service freely for civic purposes without expectation of wages, employment, benefits, or future appointment. I have received or been given access to the Municipal Volunteer Policy. I understand that the Town's insurer has advised that volunteers are not covered by the Town's workers' compensation policy or separate volunteer injury or medical-expense coverage. I agree to perform only the low-risk duties specifically approved in writing; follow all supervision and safety requirements; immediately report any injury, accident, or hazard; protect Town records and property; disclose conflicts; accurately record my service; and immediately return all Town property when service ends. I understand that signing a waiver or accepting risk does not authorize prohibited work and that the Town may restrict or end my service at any time, subject to applicable law.

Applicant signature: _____

Date: _____

Town approval — required before service

Approved assignment/title: _____

Specific duties: _____

Named supervisor: _____

Work location: _____

Start date / End date: _____

☐ Identity/application reviewed

☐ Conflict/relationship reviewed

☐ Background check required and completed

☐ Safety training completed

☐ Assignment verified as an approved low-risk administrative, civic, litter-removal, or light cleanup activity

☐ Volunteer informed in writing that Town workers' compensation and volunteer injury/medical coverage do not apply

☐ No Town vehicle, mobile equipment, heavy machinery, or prohibited-work authorization

☐ Office/records/system access authorization attached

Supervisor signature: _____

Town Clerk verification: _____

Council approval/date, if required: _____

Volunteer Access Authorization

Complete only for access beyond ordinary supervised volunteer service.

Volunteer and assignment

Volunteer: _____

Supervisor / Department: _____

Approved access

☐ Town vehicle — prohibited unless new written insurer confirmation and Council approval are attached

☐ Low-risk office or cleanup tools — each item, training requirement, and protective-equipment requirement listed below

☐ Nonpublic office/building — location and hours stated below

☐ Keys/badge — identifier stated below

☐ Computer/account — system and permission level stated below

☐ Town records — categories and purpose stated below

☐ Other limited access stated below

Access details and limitations: _____

Business purpose: _____

Effective date / Automatic end date: _____

Required approvals

By signing, each approver confirms that access is necessary, appropriately limited, documented, and consistent with law, Town policy, and insurer requirements.

Supervisor: _____

Town Clerk: _____

Mayor: _____

Council approval/date, if required: _____

Closure

Date access disabled/property returned: _____

Verified by: _____