

Recordkeeping Responsibilities for Volunteers

This fact sheet provides an overview of the Recordkeeping responsibilities of volunteers working within a government agency.

What is a volunteer?

A volunteer is a person undertaking work for a government agency on an unpaid basis. This type of arrangement falls outside the definition of a Victorian public sector employee.

Generally, volunteers are not considered public sector employees because they are not paid and they do not have the same rights and responsibilities as paid public servants. This difference in status, may pose recordkeeping challenges for an agency to accurately capture records of activities undertaken by volunteers.

What are public records?

A Public Record is all information created, sent and received by a public sector employee in the course of carrying out the business of the agency including electronic documents, emails, websites, audio-visual records, databases and system-generated records, as well as physical documents and files.

By default, records created by volunteers become public records when they are incorporated into the recordkeeping systems of the agency. Alternatively, records created by volunteers will become public records when they are "received" by a public sector employee.

What should volunteers do?

To support effective administration, volunteers should be informed that they need to:

Create full and accurate records of all work-related decisions and activities.

Ensure records include information that will allow others to easily understand when, how, where, why

and by whose authority actions took place and decisions were made.

Ensure records are captured in accordance with organisational policies and processes (e.g. by saving to the corporate electronic document management or other business system or by printing and placing in the corporate file).

Ensure safety and security of records and the information they contain.

Not release or destroy records without authorisation.

What can agencies with volunteers do?

In accordance with the *Public Records Act 1973*, agencies have the responsibility to ensure that they manage their records appropriately. To do this, agencies need to ensure that volunteers are aware of their responsibilities regarding recordkeeping and provide recordkeeping training to all volunteers who deal with records.

It is also vital that public sector employees whose work involves supervision of volunteers be fully aware of volunteer recordkeeping responsibilities and undertake recordkeeping training.

Further Resources

For further information on recordkeeping responsibilities in the Victorian Government, please access the free PROV Recordkeeping Standards e-Learning course.

Fact Sheets are designed to give a brief overview of a key records management concept. For more information on records management topics see www.prov.vic.gov.au.

Volunteering Victoria provides useful assistance to volunteers through promotion, training, advocacy and networking, see www.volunteeringvictoria.org

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