

Disaster Preparedness and Response Volunteer Handbook



The Eagles Wings Foundation, Inc.

Pathfinders Task Force

375 Possum Pass

West Palm Beach, Florida 33413

(561) 689-6283

A 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization dedicated to short term disaster relief

Dear Volunteer:

On behalf of the Eagles Wings Foundation, Inc. (hereinafter “Eagles Wings), we would first like to take the time in welcoming and thanking you for becoming a team member. This handbook was created to give you important information that will enhance your volunteer experience. Please take the time to read through it, and refer back to it as questions arise.

Feel free to contact me for additional information, or to pass along suggestions or comments. Once again, welcome to Eagles Wings. We wish you a rewarding experience as a volunteer.

Sincerely,

Scott Lewis

Scott P. Lewis,
President
The Eagles Wings Foundation, Inc.

Introduction

About this Handbook

Thank you for becoming a part of our organization devoted to volunteerism. This handbook was prepared to give you some essential information about Eagles Wings’ policies and expectations of our volunteers. The handbook has been organized by topic to help you find information you need easily. You are also encouraged to talk with your supervisor if you have any questions about the content of this handbook.

Thank you for giving your time and talents to help others. We hope that you find volunteering through Eagles Wings a positive and rewarding experience!

Eagles Wings’ Mission

The mission of Eagles Wings is to provide short term disaster relief services to homebound victims via an organized and trained group of volunteers.

Eagles Wings’ Vision

Our vision is to incorporate a multi-faith based responsive and caring community defined by volunteerism.

Eagles Wings’ History

Eagles Wings began as a program dedicated at first to disaster relief needs based within the Caribbean Basin in 1999 following Hurricane Floyd’s devastating Category 5 Strike on the

Bahamas. After 5 years of public service to a variety of communities, Eagles Wings attained a designation from the IRS as a public foundation given its broad based support from a variety of areas. Eagles Wings' President has been a Governor's Points of Light recipient and has grown to provide numerous services from a variety of experiences. With a long history of involvement with Emergency Management dating back into the 1980's, Eagles Wings has evolved into a sophisticated volunteer leadership group which has been able to operate outside of the box and work with a wide variety of unaffiliated volunteers as well as National Guard personnel on a very large scale. A Task Force was used as the best Incident management tool to address the variety of issues confronting Eagles Wings.

PRIOR TASK FORCE EXPERIENCE:

The first use of this Task Force was in 1999 in the Bahamas with an extremely complex, joint Civil/Mil operation covering a 110-mile island chain, with 20,000+ residents, following Cat 5 Hurricane Floyd. The Bahamian Prime Minister appointed the Task Force Leader to be the Incident Commander for the entire international operation for the Command's first 14 days. That Command involved both airlift and seaboard relief supplies on a massive scale. A number of smaller-scale hurricanes since provided more variations and tests for the team. Hurricane Katrina perfected the model. In Gulfport, ESF 1, 6, 8, 11, 13, and 15 assigned the resources, including the formation of a Civil/Mil, Unified Command with 900+ members of National Guard assets and 400+ mostly unaffiliated volunteers, along with a host of public employees, who focused on the homebound victims, with an emphasis on senior citizens and persons with disabilities (including thousands of vaccinations administered via ESF 8 co-tasked units). PTF also provided staffing and support for up to 20 government distribution centers. Finally, the PTF staffed large, debris clearing teams to aid in first-pass, public facility clean up.

Facts about Eagles Wings

- Our role is centered on our ability to promote volunteerism, connect people with the opportunity to serve, build capacity of volunteers, and participate in strategic initiatives that mobilize volunteers from all sectors.
- We bring people and community needs together through a range of services based upon the impacted community's needs, demographic area, population size, and other factors.

Policies & Procedures

Policies

- I. Eagles Wings recognizes that volunteers are essential to the productivity, efficiency, and cost-effectiveness of government and encourage and welcome individuals and groups who have the skill, talent, ability, and time to volunteer.
- II. Definition: "Volunteer" is a person who, of his/her free will, provides goods or services to any unit of government without receiving monetary or material compensation.

Classes of Volunteers:

- A. "Regular-service volunteer" means a person engaged in specific voluntary service activities on an ongoing or continual basis.

- B. "Episodic volunteer" means a person who offers to provide a one-time or occasional voluntary service.
- C. "Material donor" means a person who may be unable to give the time required for volunteer service, but chooses to express his/her contribution by providing funds or materials.

III. Eagles Wings will be responsible for the direction of this volunteer program and its compliance with all laws pertaining to volunteers including the recruitment of volunteers and the evaluation of the volunteer program. Specific Authority: Florida Statute 125.9501-06.

Procedures

I. Requirements

- A. Volunteers will work within the rules set by the responsible supervisor. Volunteers who do not adhere to the rules and procedures of the department or who fail to satisfactorily perform their volunteer assignment are subject to dismissal. However, no volunteer will be dismissed until the volunteer has an opportunity to discuss the reasons for possible dismissal with supervisory staff. Prior to dismissal of a volunteer, staff should seek the consultation and assistance of the Volunteer Chief.
- B. Volunteers may perform any task adhering to prior assessment of risk and liability issues assigned by their supervisors.
- C. Volunteers will maintain strict confidentiality of any information to which they may have access within their volunteer job.
- D. Volunteers are prohibited from using information or materials not generally available to the public and obtained by reason of their volunteer positions for the personal benefit of themselves or others.
- E. A back screening will be required when the volunteer will participate in the same physical labor that requires a screening for regular employees.
- F. Children under 18 years of age who wish to volunteer must be pre-approved by a designated supervisor and must have adult supervision.
- G. Volunteers will sign in and out in the Volunteer Log. A Volunteer Log will be maintained, and will contain volunteer names, dates, hours of service, and tasks assigned. Volunteers will use only the space, equipment, and materials authorized during their assignment.
- H. Volunteers will receive a name badge ASAP.
- I. Volunteers who are public officers/employees will not be permitted to voluntarily perform services which are the same as or are similar to their duties for which they are paid to perform by the same public agency.

- J. Volunteers may be required to submit to drug screening prior to performing services.

- K. Although Eagles Wings Foundation is a multi-faith based organization, volunteers are specifically not allowed to promote any personal or group religious views while working under the Eagles Wings banner. Volunteers commit to remaining sensitive to survivors' needs and rights in seeking out their own personal faith needs.

- L. Volunteers understand that, if used in a deployment, Pathfinders operates under a paramilitary structure, and they agree to follow and support the chain of command in place at the time of the response. Volunteers acknowledge that if deployed in an actual disaster that they will be encountering and working within hazardous environments and have volunteered of their own free will to do the same fully understanding the inherent risks therein.

Risk Management Guidelines For Employing Volunteers

- I. Volunteers must be trained for the jobs they will perform, including safety aspects.

- II. When personal protection equipment is required for the position. The volunteer must provide his/her own safety gear for operating any power equipment, as well as sign off on prior training or be trained in the use of the equipment prior to engaging in any such work.

- III. Volunteers must not be knowingly exposed to any unnecessary danger or hazards in the workplace and must not perform any functions requiring a license or certification unless they have a **current** license or certification to do so.

- IV. Volunteers will **not** be permitted to drive public vehicles without prior approval of the appropriate government agency.

- V. Workplace harassment will not be tolerated in the workplace or outside the workplace. Workplace harassment is defined as unsolicited, offensive or retaliatory behavior based on race, sex, color, national origin, religion, age, disability, ancestry, marital status, pregnancy, sexual orientation or an employee's exercise of constitutional or statutory rights.

- VI. It is the policy of Eagles Wings to provide a work environment that is reasonable safe, secure, and free from threats, intimidation, abusive behavior and physical violence. Acts of physical violence, direct or indirect verbal threats, stalking, aggressive or intimidating behavior, or provocation, which could lead to violence, will not be tolerated.

- VII. If a volunteer chooses to operate his/her own motor vehicle or any other donated equipment in the assistance of the relief project, Eagles Wings is **not** responsible in any way for any theft, breakdowns, malfunctions, etc. The Volunteer donating such equipment must certify to his supervisor that the donated equipment is in a safe and well-maintained condition.

Recruitment, Selection, and Management

Recruitment and Equal Opportunity

Volunteers are recruited on a pro-active basis, with the intent of broadening and expanding volunteer involvement to assist in mobilizing communities to help people respond to disasters and other life-threatening emergencies. Volunteers are recruited without regard to gender, disability, age, race or other condition. Volunteers are recruited based upon their skills, abilities, and suitability to perform volunteer responsibilities

Our volunteer intake process is as follows, the prospective volunteer:

- Completes a volunteer application;
- Participates in a orientation and interview;
- Indicates preference in volunteer position;
- Reviews and then agrees to abide by Eagles Wings' policies and procedures; and
- Receives necessary training for the assigned volunteer position.

Note: Exceptions to these procedures may be made under some limited circumstances such as in a larger-scale disaster.

Placement

In placing a volunteer in a position, attention shall be paid to the interests and capabilities of the volunteer and to the requirements of the volunteer position. No placement shall be made unless the requirements of both the volunteer and the supervising staff can be met.

Recruitment of Minors (parent/guardian release form)

Volunteers who have not reached the age 18 must complete, sign, and date the Youth Volunteer Application and a parent or legal guardian must sign the Parental Consent Form. The volunteer services assigned to a minor should be performed in a non-hazardous environment and should comply with the appropriate requirements of child labor laws.

Volunteer Records, References, and Privacy

Eagles Wings maintains personnel records of each volunteer, which are confidential. Volunteers are required to notify the Volunteer Coordinator of any changes in contact information (*i.e.*, emergency contact notification, information, home address, telephone number(s), email address) and to report any additional educational and skill training acquired for becoming a volunteer and also to aid in volunteer placement.

Training for Volunteers

Volunteers have equal access to training for equivalent positions. Volunteer development is a collaborative effort between Eagles Wings, supervisors, and volunteers to align individual goals with the overall direction of our organization. Development efforts are focused on building the capabilities of all volunteers. Developmental activities may include both hands-on projects and formal training.

Disaster Services Training

Some of Eagles Wings' training is available on-line via ICS courses offered through NIMS. Training also is provided on site for walk-in volunteers at the scene of any given disaster, though such training necessarily is abbreviated due to the circumstances. FEMA also provides many programs, courses, and materials to support emergency preparedness and response for emergency personnel as well as the general public.

Information & Courses for Emergency Personnel*:

- Emergency Management Institute
- NIMS Training
- Noble Training Center
- EENET
- Community Emergency Response Teams
- Master Trainer Program
- National Fire Academy
- Fire Management Assistance Grant Program Resources
- Master Exercise Practitioner Program
- EMI Independent Study Courses
- Incident Command System / Unified Command System
- FEMA Higher Education Project (Higher ED)
- Professional Development Series (PDS)
- Integrated Emergency Management Course (IEMC)
- Advanced Professional Series (APS)

*Note: More FEMA information, available courses, and training can be found at www.fema.gov/tab_education.shtm

Role of Volunteer Supervisors

Each volunteer has a clearly identified supervisor who is responsible for direct management of that volunteer. Every volunteer must fall under a designated management position as defined within the Incident Management Organizational Chart in effect for that given operational period. If there ever is a question about whom a volunteer is reporting to, that person immediately seek clarification in this regard for a variety of safety reasons. During non-emergent situations, the format of the ICS Organizational Chart still will define the reporting structure for each and every volunteer within Eagles Wings. Each supervisor is responsible for the day-to-day management and guidance of the work of the volunteer and shall be available to the volunteer for consultation and assistance. The supervisor has a primary responsibility for developing suitable assignments for the volunteer, for involving the volunteer in the communication flow of Eagles Wings and for providing feedback to the volunteer regarding their work.

Attendance

Eagles Wings expects all volunteers to assume diligent responsibility for their attendance and promptness. Volunteers who are unable to come to work or who will be late should notify their supervisors as soon as possible prior to their scheduled start time. Frequent absenteeism or lateness that is unexcused or excessive may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Work Schedules

Eagles Wings establishes the time and duration of working hours as required for the efficient management of personnel resources, and any applicable laws. Daily and weekly work schedules may be changed from time to time at the discretion of Eagles Wings as needed. The schedule of work hours and meal period for volunteers is determined by the supervisor and changes in work schedule are announced as far in advance as practicable.

Performance Feedback

Volunteers and their supervisors are encouraged to have informal, open and honest discussion on an ongoing basis about work performance and goals of the volunteer. A more formal performance review may be conducted at any time at the discretion of the volunteer's supervisor. Performance reviews are intended to reflect the volunteer's effectiveness on the job, and are a continuing record of work performance. They allow the supervisor to measure the volunteer's work against the requirements of their positions, review results of negotiated business goals, and assess general performance behaviors.

Tracking Volunteer Hours

Eagles Wings tracks volunteer hours for two reasons. First and foremost is the safety of the individual volunteer. Secondly is the fact that Volunteer hours are valued currently at over \$18.00 per hour as a credit for the impacted community when it comes time to evaluating FEMA reimbursement schedules to that community.

Dress Code

Appropriately, dressed volunteers add to the overall credibility of Eagles Wings and display a sense of confidence to the American Public.

Office Volunteers: Eagles Wings expects volunteers and paid staff to dress in a manner that is normally acceptable in business establishments. The wearing of suggestive attire or unkempt clothing is not permitted.

Field Volunteer: Those who provide the majority of their volunteer service outside of the office are expected to keep themselves as clean as possible given the circumstances so as to present an image favorable to themselves, their colleagues, and Eagles Wings.

Eagles Wings Communication System

All communication systems at Eagles Wings are property of Eagles Wings and are to be used for business purposes only. Because these communication systems are provided for business purposes, volunteers should have no expectation of privacy regarding their personal use of any communication systems, and their communications and systems use may be audited by authorized management at any time without notice. Our organizations communication systems include, but are not limited to, e-mail, telephone, Internet, fax, voicemail, bulletin boards, and interoffice mail. Volunteers are to use proper discretion in the amount and length of non-business use of Eagles Wings communication systems.

Volunteers must be mindful that their association with Eagles Wings will be visible to any recipient of an electronic communication, and assure that their communications are consistent with the Eagles Wings mission and accepted community standards. Prohibited use communication systems include, but are not limited to:

- 1.) Developing, accessing or distributing material which:
 - harasses or disparages others, or contains ethnic or racial stereotypes, epithets or slurs;
 - contains pornography, profanity, violent or sexually explicit images, messages, or cartoons;
 - solicits for commercial ventures or outside organizations;
 - advocates positions not officially endorsed by the Red Cross
 - violates any applicable law
- 2.) Personal mass e-mail distribution (“spamming”), unauthorized computer access (“hacking”), obtaining pirated software, or violating copyright protections.
- 3.) Distributing sensitive, proprietary, confidential, or private information of the organization without appropriate authorization.
- 4.) Obtaining unauthorized access to another volunteer’s or employee’s communication systems, or sending unauthorized communications under another colleague’s name.

Eagles Wings communication systems may not be used in situations that violate Federal, State, or Local Law. Inappropriate use of any communication systems may result in disciplinary action, up to and including separation.

Progressive Discipline

Eagles Wings has adopted rules and standards to ensure productive, harmonious operations. The best interest in ensuring fair treatment of all volunteers and in making certain that discipline is prompt, fair, and uniform.

Our organization endorses a philosophy of progressive discipline in which it attempts to provide volunteers with notice of deficiencies and an opportunity to improve whenever practical or reasonable. Volunteers’ performance and conduct is evaluated on an ongoing basis, with feedback provided when necessary. Informal discussions may be used to ensure that volunteers know and follow rules and standards. These discussions should focus on clarifying expectations, providing appropriate training and development and coaching volunteers.

In some cases, formal disciplinary action may be deemed appropriate. Progressive discipline steps may include, but are not limited to, verbal warnings, written warnings, suspension, and separation from service. Eagles Wings retains the right to administer discipline in any manner it

deems suitable and any of the steps listed above may be skipped. Separation from service may occur at any time without any progressive discipline steps having been taken.

Drugs and Alcohol

Eagles Wings maintains a workplace that is free from the effects of drug and alcohol abuse. Abuse of drugs or alcohol that imperils the health or well being of its staff or the customers it serves, threatens its operation, or compromises the safety of its products and services will not be tolerated. While on Eagles Wings property or while performing official business off premises, volunteers are prohibited from unlawful possession, use, manufacture, distribution, sale, or dispensation of illegal drugs or alcohol. Such conduct is also prohibited during nonworking time to the extent that it violates laws, negatively affects our organizations activities, or adversely affects the reputation of Eagles Wings.

Reasons for Dismissal

Every now and then, it is necessary to dismiss a volunteer. Reasons that a volunteer may be dismissed include:

- Attendance problems: frequent absences from work, chronic late arrival or early departure.
- Poor attitude: cynical responses; “passing the buck” when something bad happens; inability to accept suggestions or criticism; negative attitude toward the public, employees and volunteers; too much socializing with other workers or visitors.
- Difficulty with job duties: has to be supervised too much of the time, does not follow instructions, fails to recognize errors or problems.
- Fails to follow program policy or department rules
- Proselytizing while working under the Eagles Wings banner

It is necessary to approach volunteer work with a sense of commitment, open-mindedness, resourcefulness and initiative. By doing so, volunteering will be a rewarding experience

Emergency Contact Information For Eagles Wings Staff:

Scott P. Lewis

Office: (561) 689-6283

Cell: (561) 389-9667

Carol Lewis

Office: (561) 689-9122

Cell: (561) 313-0226